

## Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere

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# Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere

*Jews and Christians in the Middle East*

*Edited by*

S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah  
H.L. Murre-van den Berg



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**PART 1**

*A Chronology of Space*





# Searching for Common Ground: Jews and Christians in the Modern Middle East

*H.L. Murre-van den Berg*

In the late 1990s, the taxi driver of a Tehran cab changed the cassette tape to the engaging sounds of the Hebrew song *Hava Nagilah* ('Let us rejoice'), a Jewish favorite for festive occasions. Not quite knowing whether I was being provoked into anti- or pro-Israel sentiments, I somewhat cowardly indicated approval without asking for details. While the tape played on, the conversation was not pursued further, and I later asked some Iranian friends what they made of it. They laughed at my discomfort and told me Israeli music was quite popular in Tehran and easily procured at the bazaar. As long as politics were kept out of it, the culture of the archenemy was not a problem. It was only later that I learned about the thriving music culture in Iran and in the Arab Middle East of which Jews and Christians formed an intrinsic part. Especially in Iran, Jewish ensembles were popular among all classes of the population and *Hava Nagilah* was often performed at weddings, even after the majority of Jews left Iran in the years following the Islamic Revolution.

While the link between this earlier musical scene and the 1990s interest in Israeli music is perhaps an indirect one, both phenomena point to music as a locus of interaction and sharing even between communities that are antagonistic. Often, this thriving and thoroughly mixed music culture has been quoted as an example of how people of different religious communities in the Middle East could live and party well together, sharing a common local culture. The Tehran example indicates that this may have been too rosy a picture of how these societies functioned in the past and present, not only because shared cultural practices do not necessarily imply shared outlooks on society, but also because even seemingly innocent songs have political overtones that might not always be shared by those who pass them on, but which remain part of the song's afterlife for those who want to see it.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, cultural practices

1 The song *Hava naqila* (composed in Palestine, 1920s) has a nationalist ring, with the vocabulary of the refrain '*uru, ahim*,' 'Awake, brothers,' echoing, among others, George Antonius' title and motto on Arab nationalism (taken from a nineteenth-century poem by Ibrahim Yazeji,

such as these continue to be used and interpreted as my friends interpreted them, as a sign of communality over borders created by religion and politics. It is precisely this ambiguity, between the political and the ostensibly neutral, that provides space for the participation of those to whom politics proper would otherwise be closed off.

This volume discusses cultural practices that in different ways constituted common ground between the various groups that made up Middle Eastern, especially Arab Middle Eastern societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It does so based on the premise that such cultural issues never constitute a separate domain apart from political and economic participation, but that they are part and parcel of patterns of interaction with all kinds of political implications. These cultural practices, therefore, address issues of power and presence of the so-called minorities in multiple ways. Thus, without dealing with the political participation of non-Muslims in Muslim dominated states as such, this volume aims to focus on the ways in which non-Muslims contributed to creating and developing spaces of encounter. These spaces of encounter sometimes took the form of actual political debates, but also took the form of literal spaces of encounter with public rituals or participation in language and educational reform. It is these types of common ground that constitute the main theme of this volume.

The contributors of this volume all participated in a conference that was organized in September 2013 by a Leiden research group based in the Institute for Religious Studies at the Faculty of Humanities, in cooperation with LUCIS, the Leiden Centre for the Study of Islam and Society. This research group, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) works on a project entitled *Arabic and its Alternatives: Religious Minorities in the Formative Years of the Modern Middle East (1920–1950)*. The project's focus is mostly on the British mandate areas of Iraq and Palestine, and this is reflected in the fact that most contributions to the conference and in this volume have the same strong focus on these two emerging states. This introduction and some of the contributions make a start in contextualizing the ways in which non-Muslims in the British mandate areas acted and were acted upon against the background of the larger Arab Middle East, also in French Mandate

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“Arise, ye Arabs, and awake”), Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938). Compare also Naum Fayiq's poem in Classical Syriac, “Awake, Son of Assyria” (1920), see David Gaunt, “Relations between Kurds and Syriacs and Assyrians in Late Ottoman Diyarbekir,” in Joost Jongerden, Jelle Verheij, *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 250.



areas. For that reason, the Maghreb is explicitly included, with its vibrant Jewish communities in mostly French-ruled contexts. This inclusion allows for a comparison of the two largest non-Muslim communities not only in contexts where the two communities lived alongside each other, but also where one of them dominates the local scene.

Rather than merely introducing the main themes of the search for common ground as described by this volume's authors, this introductory article pays special attention to the developments within the Christian communities, parallel to Schroeter's article on the Jewish communities. Over the last decades, the interwar developments of the Middle Eastern Christian communities have attracted considerable research attention. Thorough work has been done on the Coptic Christians in Egypt,<sup>2</sup> as on Palestine's Christians, often from the perspective of the wider nationalist movement, but not exclusively so.<sup>3</sup> Recently, the Assyrians in Iraq and Iran, after many years of near neglect, have found historians to write their story.<sup>4</sup> The post-World War I history of the Armenian, Syriac Orthodox and the various Catholic communities of Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, however, is scantily covered. Especially Lebanon's Christian history is usually subsumed in more inclusive narratives that do not always topicalize a specific 'Christian' experience.<sup>5</sup> While this is understandable from the perspective of those who want to emphasize the inclusive nature of Lebanese history, it

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- 2 Vivian Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt: The Challenges of Modernisation and Identity* (London/ New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in An Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
  - 3 Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), Roland Löffler, *Protestanten in Palästina. Religionspolitik, Sozialer Protestantismus und Mission in den deutschen evangelischen und anglikanischen Institutionen des Heiligen Landes 1917–1939* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2008).
  - 4 Sargon George Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in Twentieth Century Iraq* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church, A History of the Church of the East* (London: East & West Publishing, 2011).
  - 5 Asher Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia: the Search for Identity in Lebanon* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004/2014); For a specific focus on the Armenians, see Nicola Migliorino, *(Re)Constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria: Ethno-Cultural Diversity and the State in the Aftermath of a Refugee Crisis* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008). A recent thesis addresses Maronite identity in this period via the analysis of literary production: Amaya Martin Fernandez, "National, Linguistic, and Religious Identity of Lebanese Maronite Christians through their Arabic Fictional Texts during the Period of the French Mandate in Lebanon" (Ph.D. diss Georgetown University, 2009).

obscures both the many links to and the important differences between the Christian history of the various Arab countries. Before discussing the major themes of this volume from such a comparative and historiographic perspective, a number of crucial concepts that underlie the discussion need to be introduced. The most important of these are minority, modernity and the public sphere.

### Minority, Modernity, and the Public Sphere

The term ‘minority,’ as common as it is nowadays, in actual usage but also in its implied meanings is inextricably connected to twentieth-century nationalism. As has been shown for the emerging state of Syria, the term ‘minority’ started to be used in the context of the formation of the nation state, in a fluid context in which different identities vied for prominence, and in which international dynamics, especially those connected to the League of Nations, played a major role.

While in today’s parlance Jews and Christians are seen as prototypical minorities in the Muslim world, this was generally not the case when the term started to be used in the period following World War I. In fact, most Christians and Jews would resist the term and the accompanying political isolation that came with it, seeing it as an imposition from the mandate governments in Egypt and Syria, often linked to earlier policies of Western protection of Christian and Jews. An imposition, that is, that denied their longstanding cultural and economic participation as well as limiting their possibilities of political participation in the new states.<sup>6</sup> Especially in Egypt, Coptic Christians successfully resisted the label ‘minority’ precisely to ensure their position at the heart of the debates about the future of the Egyptian state.<sup>7</sup> In their rejection of a spe-

6 Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); Gudrun Krämer, “Moving out of Place: Minorities in Middle Eastern Urban Societies, 1800–1914,” in Peter Sluglett (ed.), *The Urban Social History of the Middle East, 1750–1950* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 182–223; Tsolin Nalbantian, “Going Beyond Overlooked Populations in Lebanese Historiography: The Armenian Case,” *History Compass* 11, no. 10 (2013): 821–832.

7 See especially Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016); Mahmood discusses minority discourses in Egypt against the background of larger discussions about the state, secularism and exclusion, both in the Middle East and Europe.

cial minority status, these Jews and Christians distanced themselves from other groups who for internal and external reasons came to identify as minorities, like the Assyrians in Iraq and the Armenians and Syriac Orthodox in Lebanon and Syria. Not coincidentally, most of them were recent arrivals in the new nation states, which explains at least some of the mutual suspicion and hostility. In this volume, the contributions by Robson and Müller-Sommerfeld deal with the complicated process of minoritization of the Assyrians that took place in mandate Iraq.

Gradually, however, the term minority began to refer more and more to all Christians and all Jews, whatever their origins and cultural-linguistic backgrounds. Despite these non-Muslims' legal rights resulting from full citizenship (at least for most of them), they were not seen as belonging to the core of the nation state and often were excluded formally or informally from crucial positions. Processes like these have been described for Palestine, about which both Sanchez Summerer (this volume) and Haiduc-Dale stress the agency of Christians (who mostly sided with Muslim Palestinian nationalists) and Druze (who were more easily brought over to the Zionist side) in defining what kind of minority they wanted to be.<sup>8</sup> Also the Copts, in the later decades of the twentieth century, started to revert on their rejection of the minority label, if only to ensure governmental protection and international support.

Discussions about minoritization are the flip side of those about the communalities undergirding the nation state. In the so-called 'Arab provinces' of the former Ottoman Empire (Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine), state formation following World War I led to an ongoing debate about what exactly are the characteristics of the model citizen.<sup>9</sup> While the concept of the 'Arab' state seems to presuppose an Arab ethnicity ('race' in the terms of the time) as the basis of the nation state, the debate over what 'Arab' was,

8 In addition to Haiduc-Dale's *Arab Christians*, see also his "Rejecting Sectarianism: Palestinian Christians' Role in Muslim-Christian Relations," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 26, no. 1 (2015): 75–88. Robson (*Colonialism and Christianity*) stresses the importance of British policy that divided Palestinian society along religious lines.

9 Nadine Méouchy, Peter Sluglett, Gérard D. Khoury, *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives / Les mandats français et anglais dans une perspective comparative* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London: Tauris, 2007); Sami Zubaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: The Case of Iraq," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 2 (2002): 205–215; Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), Kais M. Firro, *Inventing Lebanon: Nationalism and the State under the Mandate* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

who could be counted as Arab, and what the status of non-Arabs in these states should be, was by no means resolved. Does 'speaking Arabic' count as 'being' Arabic? Who is allowed to 'become' Arab, and who wants to become Arab?<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the debate over religion that had already started in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century continued. Does one need to be a Muslim to be a full citizen? And if not, on what grounds could non-Muslims participate in these societies?<sup>11</sup> These ongoing debates underline that who is and who is not a 'minority' is never clear-cut, is bound to change over time, and can and will be consciously changed by those involved.

When talking about the 'Arabness' of the region's Christians, often the term 'Arab Christians' is used. However, this term is rather vague, often including all Christians that historically or in the contemporary period used Arabic in their communities, the language of liturgy, written communication and literature, if not also as a spoken vernacular.<sup>12</sup> Such a definition then would include the Syriac and Coptic communities who used Arabic alongside Syriac or Coptic, the Maronites who were almost completely Arabic-speaking and writing but differ greatly to what extent they consider themselves ethnically 'Arab', and the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics, who may still use Greek in the liturgy, but are overwhelmingly Arabic-speaking and writing and in the contemporary period tend to see themselves as ethnically Arab. Thus, in the modern period, Arab Christians is mostly a blanket term for Christians from the majority of churches in the Middle East that are literate in Arabic and often also use an Arabic vernacular, regardless whether they consider themselves ethnically Arab or not. However, it could also be used polemically in nationalist discussions, to gauge one's stand on 'being' an Arab or not, supporting Arabism in some of its forms, or not. Suffice it to say that, as we shall see further on, being described as

10 James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003); Peter Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian and Pro-Fascist Inclinations, 1932–1941* (SOAS/Routledge Studies on the Middle East, 2006), Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

11 Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Ussama Makdisi, *A Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

12 So David Thomas' essay 'Arab Christianity' in Ken Parry (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* (Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007), 2–22.

an 'Arab Christian' does not automatically imply supporting Arab nationalism and even less implies identifying as 'Arab'.

In an attempt to avoid the ambiguities and contingencies implied in the term 'minority,' often the term 'community' is used. For most of the authors in this volume, Jewish and Christian 'communities' indeed form the starting point of their analyses. However, the term 'community' brings with it its own set of questions, most importantly whether or not the concept of 'community' is malleable and changeable according to circumstances and therefore just as slippery for analysis as 'minority.' While this is certainly true in an absolute sense (communities change in outlook, characteristics, and size), in the states under discussion here, 'communities' are usually defined by the less subjective notion of legal categories. The term 'community' thus follows the legal structures of the states under investigation, structures that were inherited from the Ottoman Empire and before, structures that assign a legal status to one's religious belonging.<sup>13</sup> As an aside, it is important to note that when interpreting 'community' as roughly the translation and modern continuation of the Ottoman *millet*, important differences between the two concepts are glossed over. First, in many ways *millet*, in the nineteenth-century pre-Tanzimat sense, had the clear meaning of referring to those groups that occupied social and political subordinate positions vis-à-vis the majority of Muslims, rather than to different religiously or ethnically defined subgroups in general. Also after these groups were officially granted equal rights in the Ottoman state, they continued to be seen as separate *millets*, whereas Muslims were not.<sup>14</sup> Second, not all non-Muslim communities were considered a *millet* in the way other non-Muslims were: Maronites,

13 Krämer, "Moving out of Place"; Schroeter and Goldstein-Sabbah in this volume. As such, communities can also be counted, by their own leaderships as well as by the state. However, reliable statistics are few and far between. In general it is assumed that over the whole of the Arab Middle East, Christianity declined from about 20 percent of the population in the early twentieth century to less than 5 percent towards its end. Despite the tremendous human impact of the genocide of Armenian, Syriac, and Assyrian Christians in the eastern Ottoman provinces, the main factor for decline in Christians is the lower population growth of Christians in relation to that of Muslims, see Hannelore Müller, *Religionen im Nahen Osten 1: Irak—Jordanien—Syrien—Libanon* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2009).

14 See Robson (*Colonialism and Christianity*) on this process in Palestine; according to her analysis, the British applied the Ottoman *millet* system to Muslims also, effectively creating an additional *millet*. While *millet* in this new sense is certainly a new phenomenon for the Muslim community, it must be noted that the term *millet* had been used for Muslims before the nineteenth century, when the terms *millet* and *ta'ifa* were less strictly defined and hence could also be used for the Muslim sub-group of the population.

Druze, and Assyrians living outside the direct reach of Ottoman tax collectors and state officials enjoyed a social and political independence unimaginable for non-Muslims at the heart of the Ottoman state. This included the right to carry arms and fight along their Kurdish or Druze neighbors that belonged to the same tribal federations.<sup>15</sup> Thus, while the relationship to the state differed between millets and the majority of Muslims, as well as between *raya* (subservient 'flock') and *ashiret* (independent clans), the importance of the community was the same for pretty much everyone. Belonging to such a group was predicated on and governed by overlapping religiously-inspired legal frameworks that mutually reinforced each other and bound people to the group in which they were born.

Though the rhetoric about the abolishment of the millet-system might suggest otherwise, not only did these legal structures survive in the new nation states, but often their importance increased under the influence of colonial and post-colonial bureaucratic demands. Put differently: legal equality between the different communal groups was to be strived for, but not the disappearance of the formal barriers between the groups. Based on the religion of one's father (or mother, in the case of Jews), every person 'belonged' to a religious community, a belonging that in most states was and continues to be explicitly mentioned on one's identity papers. Independent from personal devotion or active communal identification, this legal status, unless explicitly changed by conversion, positions its members within a specific community. This implies that the religious leaders of these communities have power over important issues such as marriage, child custody, divorce, inheritance issues, and burial.<sup>16</sup> While such 'communities' also change over time, the legal framework precedes any interpretation of these groups as 'minority', by themselves or by others. These legally defined communities therefore form a workable starting point for analysis, precisely in order to be able to describe the varied positions members of these communities (in the legal sense) take in the societies to which they belong.

15 Joachim Jakob, *Ostsyrische Christen und Kurden im Osmanischen Reich des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2014), Géraldine Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque: les tribus chrétiennes de Madaba, Jordanie, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2004).

16 Legal systems in many of the contemporary states of the Middle East are built along the same lines; this is true in Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria; see, e.g., Chibli Mallat, "The Lebanese Legal System," in *The Lebanon Report* (1997) 2, 29–44; Esther van Eijk, "Family Law in Syria: A Plurality of Laws, Norms, and Legal Practices," (PhD thesis, Leiden, 2013), and Michael M. Karayanni, "Two Concepts of Group Rights for the Palestinian-Arab Minority under Israel's Constitutional Definition as a 'Jewish and Democratic' State," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 10, no. 2 (2012): 304–339.

The formation of the nation states, so important in understanding the concept of minority, also begs a brief discussion of the modernization processes that took place in the Middle East. If anything, changing concepts of community and especially of people's expectations of their participation in the states to which they belonged are closely tied to the monumental changes that took place between 1850 and 1950, from the early days of the Tanzimat in the Ottoman Empire, to the independent Arab states created in the 1930s and 1940s. These changes included new expectations of education with regard to professional and personal development, of changing gender roles including women's participation in society, of social care and standards of health, of literature and popular culture as much as expectations of new standards of religious devotion, training, and leadership, and, indeed, of societal participation and democracy. In an intricate interplay between Western (including Russian) influences via missionaries, welfare organizations, literary exchanges and political, economic, and diplomatic ties, and local demands and pressures at the local and state levels, the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire started to look for ways to reorganize their society.<sup>17</sup>

As Keith Watenpaugh describes, the modernization processes that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries first and foremost created a middle class that embodied the ideals just referred to.<sup>18</sup> This class consisted of Muslims as well as Jews and Christians, though Jews and Christians made up a disproportionately large part of them: they, more than Muslims, had access to new forms of education, and via education to new kinds of jobs, new kinds of literature, and thus to new ideas about society, both within their own communities and with an eye toward the wider society. Among these ideas were also those about the importance of Arab identity and the

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17 On the nineteenth-century processes, including the impact of western missionaries, see Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2008), Heleen Murre-van den Berg, *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), Adam Becker, *Revival and Awakening: American Evangelical Missionaries in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015), and Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers and Education in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); further Schroeter, Massot, and Goldstein-Sabbah in this volume.

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

Arab nationalism that accompanied it, alongside other nationalisms of the day, Turkish, Armenian, and Assyrian.

One further aspect of this modernization process that accelerated in the early twentieth century is the modernization of religion and religious practice. As recently described by James Grehan, perhaps the most important and influential domain where different communities mixed, mingled, and shared, was that of religious practice. Outside formal prayer services in churches, mosques, and synagogues, but often with the involvement of religious leaders such as priests, imams, and rabbis, there existed a domain of religious practices that were shared by all in the region, regardless of religion and religious community. The veneration of saints, the practice of 'magic,' and an elaborate repertoire of bodily movements, were practiced by Christians, Jews, Druze, Sufis, Sunnī and Shī'a Muslims, often with rather little differentiation as to narrative interpretation.<sup>19</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, religious reformers of all religions increasingly began to interpret these practices as old-fashioned, uninformed, rural, and superstitious. Such interpretations led to an increase in the standardization of religion with regard to theological teaching and ritual practices as much as with religious institutions such as schools and church buildings, and a decline of such practices that very visibly erased borders between religions.<sup>20</sup> Notably, many of the practices survived until the present day, either unacknowledged or scorned by the religious establishment, or integrated into more 'acceptable' religious practices. Obviously, in the modernist interpretations of 'common ground,' which has been the starting point of the contributions in this volume, this older form of shared cultural practices is no longer considered relevant, even if it continues to exist and may even constitute an alternative ground for communality between religious groups. In many cases, however, these sacred spaces become locations of contestation, over religious modernization, in service of ethnic and national belonging.<sup>21</sup>

19 James Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints: Everyday Religion in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

20 In the missionary modernization project these themes played a crucial role; see the studies mentioned in n. 17.

21 Dionigi Albera and Maria Couroucli, *Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterraneana* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2012), Glenn Bowman, *Sharing the Sacra: The Politics and Pragmatics of Intercommunal Relations around Holy Places* (New York, NY: Berghahn Books: 2012). On Christian politicization of the Holy Sepulcher/Church of the Resurrection, see Raymond Cohen, *Saving the Holy Sepulchre: How Rival Christians Came Together to Rescue their Holiest Shrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).



While the above is certainly too brief a summary of the extensive and sophisticated debates that have taken place in analyzing processes of modernization and nation formation, the basis that undergirded the idea for this volume and the conference that preceded it, is that these changes enabled and encouraged Christians and Jews to rethink their position in society. It is from this rethinking that, implicitly or explicitly, many of the cultural practices that are described in this volume arose.

What further resulted from these modernization processes was a reshaping of the actual and metaphoric space where debates over society could take place. While it would be a mistake to suggest that no public space between state and government on the one hand and the private sphere of family and close relations on the other existed in the Middle East before the twentieth century, the twentieth century indeed brought new forms and spaces, spaces in the Habermasian sense, where debates over the common good were open to the participation of those who wanted to be part of it. Social and literary clubs with mixed memberships (in term of gender and religion), newspapers in standardized languages, a powerful women's movement<sup>22</sup> and non-sectarian political parties all brought new participants to a discussion that before the twentieth century would have been conducted in much smaller and more closed circles, such as the houses of the ruling elites, (all-male) coffeehouses, sharia courts, religious schools, bathhouses, markets or religious festivals. This public sphere continued to evolve and change, but all of these changes allowed for a greater variety of people to be part of it, even if actual political participation, under mandate rule or under later autocratic Arab rulers, was still limited to a few.<sup>23</sup>

The way in which Jews and Christians, as part of the majority or as minorities, participated in the emerging Arab states was characterized by a variety of

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22 For an overview, see Ellen L. Fleischmann, "The Other 'Awakening': the Emergence of Women's Movements in the Middle East, c. 1900–1940," in Karen Offen (ed.), *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 89–139. Among many others, see also Ellen L. Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its "New" Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement, 1920–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Marina Warner, *Memoirs of an Early Arab Feminist: The Life and Activism of Anbara Salam Khalidi* (London: Pluto Press, 2013; Arabic original, Beirut 1978).

23 Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Nehemia Levtzion (eds.), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002); Peter Sluglett (ed.), *The Urban Social History of the Middle East, 1750–1950* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Seteney Shami, *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2009); also Schroeter in this volume.

actions that are often overlooked when talking about the public sphere. It is in the variety of such actions, from public mourning to participation in Arab literary culture, from rap music to political demonstrations, from a preference for French-language education to moving to newly-built mixed neighborhoods, from political and cultural assimilation to the majority to the separatist nationalisms of Assyrians and Armenians, that the full breadth of the societal choices of the various religious communities can be shown. In the following sections, four major themes of this volume will be discussed in more detail: the literal space of the urban landscape, the language (especially Arabic in educational contexts), the creation of national identities and the violence that often accompanied it, and, finally, transnationalism as a force to be reckoned with in the creation of national common ground. These four themes roughly correspond to the subdivision of the contributions to this volume, with Daniel Schroeter's introductory overview article on the Jews in the Middle East touching on all of these issues, as does the final article by Aomar Boum. His work on North African hip hop artists in many ways provides a counterpoint to the other essays, with its starting point in Muslim youth that use the transnational common ground of YouTube to address issues of exclusion and belonging, of political participation and political impotence. Note that while the main focus of this volume and its introduction is on the first half of the twentieth century, the analysis and some of the examples stretch back to the nineteenth century and move forward into the later twentieth and even early twenty-first century, in an attempt to look at these developments from a broader perspective than the mandate period as such.

### Urban Space and Public Presence: Performances of Community

With images of the destruction of Syria's urban centers and historic monuments vividly in mind, one is reluctant to open Stefan Weber's magnificent two-volume work on the architectural history of Damascus in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>24</sup> However, doing so is perhaps the easiest way of understanding something of the momentous changes that took place in the urban landscape of the Middle East in this period, in Damascus as well as in other cities of the region. His documentation of building activities such as the

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24 Stefan Weber, *Damascus: Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation (1808–1918)* (Proceedings of the Danish Institute in Damascus, 2 vols.) (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2009).

sumptuous private homes in some parts of the Old City and the new neighborhoods outside the city, vividly illustrates the era of economic growth and population increase. More changed, however, than merely the scale and the luxury of urban planning. New types of buildings were allowed to appear, changing the outlook of the city in more fundamental ways. Some of these were connected to new institutions and public services, such as government buildings, post offices, and railway stations. Other buildings arose in conjunction with the increasing presence of westerners in the city, like consular buildings, missionary schools, and hospitals. And yet others embodied the socio-political changes of the period: new churches were built in the heart of the Old City.

While there had always been churches in Damascus, some more publicly visible than others, the Tanzimat reforms of the mid-nineteenth century made it possible for Christians to renew and expand their old buildings and to build new churches when and where they were needed. As described by Anais Massot in her article about Damascus in this period, the Christians of Damascus, supported politically and financially by western Christians, made ample use of these possibilities. Two neighborhoods of the Old City, one near Bab Tuma and the other between the Straight Street and Bab Sharqi, changed extensively with renewals of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate and new church complexes for the Armenians, Syriacs, and Greek Catholics. Similar changes also took place in Jerusalem, as they did in Beirut.<sup>25</sup>

Yet another form of non-Muslim public presence became much more common in post-Tanzimat times. Before the nineteenth century, Christian processions outside church grounds were rarely allowed. In her book on Copts in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Egypt, Febe Armanios describes the spectacle of sending off a group of Christians making pilgrimage to the Easter festivities in Jerusalem, much the same way as Christians and Muslims would see off those embarking on the hajj to Mecca.<sup>26</sup> When properly negotiated and paid for, such exceptions to the general rules of non-Muslim invisibility in the public domain were allowed; these occurred for the most part in neighborhoods that were predominantly inhabited by non-Muslims. After the Tanzimat reforms, such permissions were asked for and given more frequently, and this added another element to the public visibility of Jews and Christians.

25 See the contributions by Schroeter, Massot, and Wallach in this volume. For an analysis of more recent urban development in in multi-religious cities, see Chad F. Emmett, *Beyond the Basilica: Christians and Muslims in Nazareth* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

26 Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Both Schroeter and Massot describe a third element of the rules of the newly emerging urban landscape, that of changing sartorial practices. Here the development is in the opposite direction, away from differentiation. Tanzimat reforms meant that clothing no longer served to differentiate the various groups of society. In earlier periods, certain clothing and colors, especially of headgear that generally served to identify a wide range of different ranks and functions of members of society, had been restricted to Muslims. More importantly, with the Tanzimat, men of all religions started to discard the various types of traditional gear, including turbans, in favor of the *fez* or, in Iraq, the *siddara*. This had begun in the nineteenth century; in the twentieth century, middle-class urban women of all religions followed by shedding the veil, removing yet another outward sign of gender and religious differentiation. As a result, individuals were less easily recognized as belonging to one community or another. At the same time, the religious communities as a whole became more visible in the public domain; they were allowed to build large complexes with churches and synagogues, schools, and hospitals. They also organized expressive public processions that showed off the differences between Christians of various kinds as much as between Muslims and non-Muslims. While this may seem contradictory, both the mostly unproblematic public display of Christian symbols and buildings, and the new sartorial practices underline the same basic point: modernization and its new norms of public presence started to override the importance of distinguishing between Muslims and non-Muslims. Notably, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, sartorial practices again started to reflect religious differences as much as regional and class differences, especially for women. Muslim women tended to take up 'Islamic' dress in its different forms while Christian women (if not forced by law or social pressure to dress 'Islamic') emphasized their freedom to dress 'western'. At the same time, however, they started to wear visible cross pendants to identify as Christian.<sup>27</sup>

Yair Wallach, in the context of early twentieth-century Jerusalem, discusses another aspect of the urban developments of the time, which is the emergence of new types of neighborhoods. In all of the cities featured in this volume, Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Beirut, Essouira, and Tunis, new neighborhoods were created outside the traditional city centers. In some cities such building activ-

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27 Much has been written about the subtle codes of a variety of veiling practices, see among others, Jenny B. White, "The Paradox of the New Islamic Woman in Turkey" in Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Ingvild Flakerud, *Gender, Religion and Change in the Middle East. Two Hundred Years of History* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2005), 123–136, Julia Droeber, *The Dynamics of Coexistence in the Middle East: Negotiating Boundaries Between Christians, Muslims, Jews and Samaritans*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

ities had already begun in the nineteenth century, and took off in earnest in the early twentieth century. These new middle-class neighborhoods exemplified a new ideal of living, with freestanding buildings, preferably for individual families (even if extended family living remained the norm), with gardens surrounding them instead of the closed inner courtyards of the traditional houses. Important for our discussion today, as also described by Wallach with regard to his main protagonist Gad Frumkin, is the fact that these neighborhoods were much more mixed as to religion than was the case in the old city centers. Though most of the old neighborhoods were not strictly segregated (see Wallach's description of Jerusalem, where he counters the popular images of a city divided into four distinct neighborhoods), many neighborhoods would indeed have a majority population of one religion, with small groups of families belonging to other religions. What bound the inhabitants of these new neighborhoods together was not the earlier communal concerns, but their shared vision of what modern life should entail.

For many, these changing ideals about modern life included ideals about the nation state, also when the fundamental principles of the new states were yet to be negotiated. The ways in which the Jewish community of Baghdad participated in the mourning ceremonies over the death of two successive monarchs, King Fayṣal in 1933 and King Ghāzī in 1939, are indicative of their desire to be part of that newly emerging national community, in the varying political contexts of each event. Here the possibility of expressing itself publicly as a Jewish community emphasizes the community's adherence to national ideals and its symbols, symbols that in that period included the Hashemite monarchy's rule over Iraq. In her contribution, Aline Schlaepfer examines the Jewish community's sincere sympathy for Fayṣal and much more cautious assessment of Ghāzī, then juxtaposes the two occasions of mourning, first for Fayṣal, then the much more expressive mourning for Ghāzī. Her analysis underlines the political rather than emotional nature of these public stagings of grief: at the time of Fayṣal's death, the Jewish community still felt relatively secure about their own position in Iraqi society, by the time Ghāzī died in 1939, the Iraqi government's flirtations with Nazism and the increased politicization of Zionism in the wider Arab world made it all the more important to express, as publicly and explicitly as possible, their adherence to the Iraqi state's pan-Arabist stance.

Such a message of 'religious harmony and solidarity'<sup>28</sup> has become a staple of the rituals of nation states in the Middle East and elsewhere, where occasions

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28 Schlaepfer, this volume.

of grief, joy or external threat are used to express solidarity and conformity to the nation state. One of the earliest recorded events are the public celebrations, all over the Ottoman Empire, of the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. Everywhere people of different religions went out into the streets together, celebrating the constitutional changes that were expected to bring more freedom and more democratic rights to all citizens of the Ottoman state. These public demonstrations in support of Ottomanism were joined by people of all religions, but certainly not by everyone in every group. Wallach writes about Gad Frumkin, a young Ashkenazi Jewish journalist who reported on these celebrations in Jerusalem, where Sephardic Jews participated in great numbers, but Frumkin's own Ashkenazi peers were conspicuously absent.<sup>29</sup> Here, in contrast to the mourning rituals described by Schlaepfer, participation was not communally staged, and might have been mostly an individual affair. Clearly some parts of the Jewish community were much more interested in these new Ottoman ideals than others.

These changing relationships between the various communal components of the Ottoman Empire and its successor states constituted also a cause for violence that often has been interpreted as 'intercommunal.' Massot's detailed analysis of the context of the events in Damascus in 1860, when Christians in the Old City quarters were murdered and much of their property was looted and destroyed, shows that this is a far too easy generalization. Indeed, the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century saw an increased politicization of the various non-Muslim communities, a politicization that created what has been called a 'sectarianism' different from the forms of communal identity that existed in the eighteenth century and before. This new type of communal politics included, among other things, foreign protection of various communities, with the British extending protection to Jews and Druze, the French to the Eastern and Oriental Catholic Christians, and the Russians to the Greek ('Rum' or 'Antiochian') Orthodox. Such political protection, by virtue of earlier treaties between the Ottoman Empire and foreign states, also brought economic benefits, at least for some. It is the combination of political empowerment with economic advances that made the changes of the nineteenth century difficult to bear for those Muslims who in the process lost political and economic power. Therefore, as Massot argues, it was no coincidence that those hardest hit by the events of 1860 in Damascus were those Christians with the most obvious foreign connections and those who profited most visibly economically, i.e., those living in the prominent newly renovated neighborhoods

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29 Wallach (this volume) bases himself on Frumkin's journal.

of Bab Sharqi and Bab Tuma rather than those living in more modest quarters in the Maydan (Midan) neighborhood. While indeed Muslims attacked Christians, the conflicts are much better explained by economic and social rivalries among certain parts of the population, where the increased opportunities for one group were envied by another, than by more general tensions between Muslims and Christians.<sup>30</sup>

### Arabic and Its Alternatives: Language and Education as Tools of Belonging

When talking about ‘common ground’ and the role of the public sphere, the importance of a common language can hardly be overstated. In discussions on the emergence of the Arab states, therefore, the importance of Arabic is explicitly emphasized. More in-depth analyses, however, on types of Arabic and how they functioned as a means of communication between the various sub-groups of these societies, are mostly lacking.<sup>31</sup> Early nationalist authors such as George Antonius and Edmond Rabbath, in their English and French writings stressed the link between spoken Arabic and the Arab ‘race,’ with language and race together forming the basis of the ideology of Arab nationalism on which the emergent states were based. However, to account for the multiple

30 On the mid-nineteenth century violence in Lebanon/Syria, see Makdisi, *A Culture of Sectarianism*, and recently Feras Krimsti, *Die Unruhen von 1850 in Aleppo: Gewalt im urbanen Raum* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2014). Similar violence took place in the Hakkari Mountains (present-day Turkey) in the 1840s and 1850s; no monograph has yet been devoted to it, but see the relevant chapters in J.F. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England. A History of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), John Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East: Encounters with Western Christian Missions, Archaeologists, and Colonial Powers* [Studies in Christian Mission 26] (Leiden: Brill, 2000), and Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*.

31 For an extensive discussion of the relationship between Arabic and Arabic nationalism, see Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003), and from the same author, *Arabic in the Fray: Language Ideology and Cultural Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013). For a recent overview of a more strict sociolinguistic approach, see Reem Bassiouney, *Arabic Sociolinguistics: Topics in Diglossia, Gender, Identity, and Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009). For the Lebanese case, see John E. Joseph, *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) and Franck Salameh, *Language, Memory, and Identity in the Middle East: The Case for Lebanon* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010).

ways in which Arabic was part of the different communities that made up the states they envisaged (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine), Arab nationalists allowed for a rather flexible interpretation of what counted as Arabic, and, more importantly, for 'assimilation' and 'devenir arabe' with regard to culture and ethnic belonging.<sup>32</sup> Thus 'being Arab' was not necessarily an essentialist given, even if, ultimately, 'Arabness' was measured against a community's link with the ultimate Arabness of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>33</sup> However flexible this nationalist ideology may have been (intended as it was to include as many groups as possible), it needed a clearly defined form of practiced Arabic to support it. This 'Modern Standard Arabic' (MSA, or *fushḥa*), as it came to be called, was to function as a measuring rod for the degree of commitment to Arabness, as a symbol for a unity that did not yet exist.

However, the success of Modern Standard Arabic depended on the fact that, true to its origins in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary renewal, it was much more than a nationalist tool.<sup>34</sup> The standardized form of the Classical Arabic language emerged when the need for new types of learning and communication grew outside the bounds of traditional religious learning based on the holy writs of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Members of literary and journalistic circles transcended religious and regional differences and further developed this particular form of Arabic that gradually, sometime between the early and final decades of the nineteenth century, became the lingua franca of the Middle East. As a lingua franca it was well placed to transcend a host of linguistic, religious, and ethnic differences that threatened the success of state formation. The successful duo that supported the emergent nationalism was, therefore, linguistic modernization and standardization supported by the modernization and standardization of education. It worked the other way round as well: successful nation building (with the help of and in opposition to the mandate powers) enhanced the importance of MSA through state support and control of education.

32 Rabbath, *Unité Syrienne et devenir arabe* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1937), 43, 97. On the related issue of the categories of 'race' and 'religion' in Palestine, see Jonathan Marc Gribetz, *Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

33 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 17. On Antonius' linguistic ideologies, see Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "The Language of the Nation: The Rise of Arabic among Jews and Christians (1900–1950)", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2016), DOI: 10.1080/13530194.2016.1138641.

34 M.M. Badawi, *Modern Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).



It is essential, however, to keep in mind that the link between nationalism and educational and linguistic reform is by no means exclusive: a well-developed lingua franca can easily be put to other uses, usages that may easily contradict the tenets of particular nationalisms, be it in enabling rival political ideologies such as communism, pan-Arabism, and pan-Islamism, or in empowering subgroups to pursue their own specific aims—from a Christian interdenominational ecumenism to trans-regional business practices. The multiple functions of language, be they ideological, pragmatic or both, is one of the main themes of the essays in the second part of the volume. The role of Arabic in education, especially in private education as supported by western missionary and philanthropic organizations, and in private essays and letters, provides the starting point of the contributions by Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah, Karène Summerer-Sanchez, and Tijmen Baarda.

Before discussing in more detail the main conclusions of these three papers, the specific characteristics of the common ground we discuss in this section need to be delineated. Schools, especially those privately financed, constituted a particular kind of middle ground between public and private. As Goldstein-Sabbah argues in her paper on Jewish education in Baghdad, the administration of the various Jewish schools consciously devised their curricula and their public presence with a view towards the Iraqi Nation, similar to (and partly in conjunction with) the way the community devised the public rituals discussed by Schlaepfer. Similar conclusions can be drawn from Sanchez Summerer's paper, which describes how Catholic schools in Palestine reacted to the changing times of the mandate period. In addition, the Catholic Palestinian schools, more so than those in Baghdad, also constituted places of encounter just by virtue of their mixed population of pupils from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian families. Put differently, the modern schools of the twentieth century became places where, on a small scale, the sometimes conflicting ideological and pragmatic aims of the sponsoring communities, parents, and wider public (including governments) had to be negotiated in order to arrive at a workable curriculum. Thus, what was negotiated in the schools reflected discussions in the religious communities themselves, with all the nuances and differences that came with it.

Two major conclusions emerge from the contributions of Sanchez Summerer, Goldstein-Sabbah, and Baarda. The first is that in the two very different contexts, that of the Jewish community in Baghdad and that of the Catholics in Jerusalem, teaching of (and in) Arabic increased considerably over time (with the support of the clergy, especially the Melkite patriarch), in order to keep pace with the increased importance of Arabic at all levels of society in both Iraq and Palestine. Basing himself on private correspondence within

the Syriac community in northern Iraq, Baarda comes to a similar conclusion: here too the use of Arabic was widespread and its standardized form gained ground over and above non-standard forms.<sup>35</sup> However, the second conclusion of these papers must be that the strengthening of Arabic in each of these three cases was less straightforwardly connected to nationalism and modernization than one may have expected, mainly for two reasons: the interference of and tensions with governments and external donors who favored languages other than Arabic, and the conflicting ambitions within the communities themselves.

In Palestine, the Catholic schools that were sponsored and organized by French congregations had to negotiate between the demands of the British Palestinian government and those of the local population. French, which had been an important language in Palestine until World War I, lost its status under the mandate, and the official languages of the country became Arabic, Hebrew, and English. Furthermore, the mandate system favored clear distinctions between the Jewish-Hebrew system on the one hand, and the Arabic-Palestinian system on the other. The Catholic schools that had previously functioned mostly in a French-language context had to include English and more Arabic in their curriculum in order to provide their pupils with the means to function well in the local job market. In general, it seems that these developments were supported by the Arabic-speaking Catholics of Jerusalem, as they probably were by Muslim parents that sent their children to these schools. This change in focus implied that what in the nineteenth and early twentieth century had effectively become the *francophonie* of Middle Eastern Catholicism, now returned to its earlier arabophone leanings. As Sanchez Summerer notes, the Vatican, which sought the creation of an 'Arab' Christianity, supported this change. Ironically, French did indeed remain part of the curriculum, but mostly because of its worldly, rather than its religious benefits.<sup>36</sup>

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35 While the importance of Arabic among the Jews of Baghdad has been noted earlier (see Goldstein-Sabbah and Schroeter in this volume), Schroeter points to the much more varied picture for the rest of the Middle Eastern Jewish world. In many other places, spoken forms of Arabic, and the written Judeo-Arabic, were replaced not by modern Arabic, but by French (in North Africa) and English, or by Hebrew; for Hebrew, see Wallach; note that his protagonist argued for better knowledge of Arabic in the Jewish community.

36 On the importance of Arabic in the Catholic world of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Bernard Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche Orient au temps de la réforme catholique* (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 284; Rome: École Françaises de Rome, 1994); Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "Classical Syriac, Neo-Aramaic

In Baghdad, too, government pressures led to an increase in Arabic teaching, although the language had not been completely absent from Jewish communal schools in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Alliance schools, the most prestigious ones, with external funding, employed an Ottoman Turkish curriculum that also included French and Ottoman Turkish. However, Arabic also quickly gained importance in business and administration, perhaps more than it did in Palestine, and soon the schools wholeheartedly cooperated in increasing the amount and the level of Arabic. At the same time, as in Palestine, English was added to the curriculum, after having been nearly absent from most Baghdad schools.

As Goldstein-Sabbah notes in her overview of the Jewish communal school system, the time devoted to Arabic varied considerably from one school to another, with considerable differences not only between the more expensive Alliance schools and the much cheaper religious schools, but also between the boys' and girls' schools of the Alliance. By comparing these different curricula against the background of the governmental public schools, Goldstein-Sabbah differentiates between the various goals of language teaching within the Jewish community. Most goals were pragmatic and geared towards the future roles of boys and girls in and outside the Jewish community. Well-off families wanted their sons to know Arabic and English, because these were basic essentials needed to compete for jobs in public administration and commerce. Girls needed no such skills, and were taught high level French in addition to more homely subjects such as sewing, embroidery, and hygiene. Girls of the poorer families had little access to education; their parents had to make tough choices whether to send their male siblings to the governmental schools for a secular education in Arabic or to a free communal school that would teach mostly Hebrew and religion. While all of this appears to be the rather pragmatic outcome of needs and financial possibilities, Goldstein-Sabbah notes the interplay of these developments with larger changes in society. Not only was Arabic first introduced at a larger scale under government pressure in the 1920s, but when, in the 1940s, the nationalist rhetoric became more encompassing, all the

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and Arabic in the Church of the East and the Chaldean Church between 1500 and 1800," in Holger Gzella, Margaretha L. Folmer (eds.), *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* (Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission 50; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 335–352; Carsten Michael Walbiner, "Some Observations on the Perception and Understanding of Printing amongst the Arab Greek Orthodox (Melkites) in the Seventeenth Century," in Philip Sadgrove (ed.), *Printing and Publishing in the Middle East* (JSS supplement 24) (Oxford/Manchester, 2008), 65–76; and Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 5 vols (Vatikanstadt, 1944–1955).

schools increased their level of Arabic teaching, including the Laura Kadoorie girls' school and the religious Midrash Talmud Torah schools.

The growing importance of Modern Standard Arabic can also be examined from the perspective of the language itself. Baarda's contribution takes its starting point in the Syriac communities of Iraq, to see how scholars used the language in their correspondence in the 1920s. The two scholars whose Arabic he analyzes, Mattai bar Paulus of Mosul (1861–1947) and Nematallah Denno (1884–1951) both belonged to the Syriac Orthodox Church. Mattai was a deacon and an accomplished scribe of Syriac manuscripts, Nematallah presumably also knew Classical Syriac, the ecclesiastical language of the Syriac Orthodox Church. Despite their scholarly proficiency in Classical Syriac, both used Arabic in their writings: Mattai in his letters to Alphonse Mingana (c. 1870–1937), another Syriac scholar who had continued his career in Great Britain (Birmingham), Nematallah in a biographical note about Mattai that presumably was also sent to Mingana.<sup>37</sup> As Baarda notes, such usage of Arabic for personal and scholarly communication is not unexpected, because in the Syriac Orthodox communities of northern Iraq, Arabic had long been established as a spoken vernacular and in the form of a substandard 'Middle Arabic' form for writing, including the translation of Classical Syriac texts. This form of substandard, dialectally influenced Arabic was, until the early twentieth century, usually written in Syriac script, and as such indicated by the term 'Garshuni.' In the twentieth century, the use of Garshuni quickly diminished, and standardized Arabic in Arabic script increased. It is surprising that Mattai and Nematallah used two diametrically opposed forms of written Arabic, in ways contrary to what we knew so far. Mattai writes with a well-formed Arabic handwriting, but includes a number of substandard grammatical forms that do not take into account the recent standardizations of Arabic. Nematallah, by contrast, writes in Garshuni but in perfectly standardized Arabic. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in different educational trajectories: Mattai was trained earlier in traditional schools and Nematallah, being younger, was educated in a more modern school. However, we know almost nothing about these two men's personal histories, so this remains conjectural. Even more conjectural are the possible reasons for the Garshuni in Nematallah's text. Did he want to impress Mingana with his Syriac handwriting? Or did he agree with those in the Syriac community who thought that for internal purposes clergy and scholars should use the Syriac script (even for Arabic) to express their solidarity with the Syr-

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37 Nematallah's text ended up in the collection of Mattai's letters to Mingana in Birmingham; see Baarda in this volume for the details.

iac Christian community? Or did he intend to emphasize his Syriac communal, nationalist, leanings? Or was the text originally addressed to a different, local northern Iraqi clerical audience that would have preferred Syriac script?

Whatever the reasons for Nematallah's remarkable choice of Garshuni, its mere occurrence alerts us to the fact that the general picture of a straightforward development in which Arabic becomes standardized and other languages lose ground, may need further refinement, if only to account for the erratic ways in which individuals at various points made their own choices. If anything, these examples, like the trajectories of the curricula of the communal schools in Baghdad and Jerusalem, make clear that the choice of Arabic was not necessarily one that was motivated by Arab nationalism, even if the Christians involved may have been loyal supporters of Iraqi or Palestinian nationalist aims.

### **The Rough Edges of the Nation State: Between Belonging and Expulsion**

Common ground between the various communities that make up a nation cannot always be found. Many contributions in this volume touch on the negative side of the search for communalities, the failures, the stories of exclusion and expulsion, rather than integration. Peaceful coexistence or at the very least benign neglect were not always possible. Violence against non-Muslims, as discussed in Massot's article, usually arises from a complex interplay of socio-economic and political factors, playing out on a particular subgroup, which in that moment embodies societal anxieties. The violence against Christians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included these same ingredients, but then became exacerbated by nationalist ideologies that generalized the violence to an extent these Christian communities had not yet experienced. It was mostly Turkish nationalism, in conjunction with the very real international pressures upon the Ottoman Empire from Russia, France and England that paved the way for the genocide on Armenian and Syriac Christians in Eastern Anatolia, Hakkari and northwestern Iran. The Christian communities of North Iraq, as well as those from Lebanon/Syria, were mostly spared—it seems that for the Young Turks, the Arab provinces warranted a different political regime. In addition, the Armenians had incurred Turkey's wrath by passively or actively supporting the Russians, hoping to gain some kind of independence out of it—providing yet another pretext for the wholesale expulsion of Armenians from Eastern Turkey, an expulsion in most cases accompanied by the gruesome murder of the adult men and followed by the deaths of many who were put on marches to the Syrian desert.

Much has been written about the Armenian genocide, while the simultaneous massacres on Syriac, Assyrian and Chaldean Christians yet awaits full inclusion into the scholarly debate about this violent episode of Middle Eastern history. The expulsion and population transfer that befell the so-called 'Greek' Christians of Anatolia (who were mostly Turkish speaking) falls mostly outside the scope of this volume.<sup>38</sup> What is especially relevant for the current volume, is the fact that many of the genocide survivors, especially those from the Armenian and Syriac communities, ended up in the Arab mandate states, in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Although there had been modest Armenian and Syriac communities in most of these countries, there numbers swelled considerably by the new arrivals. This was the case especially in Beirut and Aleppo which welcomed large Syriac and Armenian populations. In places like Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Amman, the communities were practically new.

While the actual civil status of these refugees differed from place to place and country to country, most at some point received citizenship and were officially integrated into the new states. However, despite the fact that often they were not so different from the Christian communities that had already longtime roots in a particular region, many of these communities assumed a low profile and in many respects can be seen as the first Christian minorities. Most came with little Arabic and preferred to maintain the language and culture of their Anatolian hometowns. Also after many had caught up on Arabic and had managed to build up their lives again, their connection to the new Arab states was fundamentally different from that of the Christians who had lived there for many generations. For most, and in most locations, a minority position that allowed for the development of separate Syriac or Armenian identities fitted their needs well.<sup>39</sup>

Such type of minority integration, however, did not fit the wishes of the Assyrians from Hakkari many of whom had ended up in a refugee camp in

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38 On the Armenian genocide, Taner Akcam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2007) Hans Lukas Kieser: *Der verpasste Friede: Mission, Ethnie und Staat in den Ostprovinzen der Türkei, 1839–1938* (Zürich: Chronos, 2000); on the Syriac genocide, called Sayfo/Saypa ('Sword'), see David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006) and Florence Hellot-Bellier, *Chroniques de massacres annoncés: Les Assyro-Chaldéens d'Iran en du Hakkari face aux ambitions des empires, 1896–1920* (Paris: Geuthner, 2014).

39 Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "A Center of Transnational Syriac Orthodoxy: St. Mark's Convent in Jerusalem," *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3, no. 1 (2013): 61–83, Migliorino, *(Re)Constructing Armenia*.

Ba'quba. Their refusal to be integrated as Christian minority tragically ended in government-sanctioned massacre in Semele (North Iraq) in 1933. In several contributions to this volume, this event, which until recently had received rather limited academic treatment, is discussed. In current literature, the massacre of at least 360 disarmed men and a few women in the village of Semele by army troops led by army commander Bakr Sidqi (against a background of looting and killings in Assyrian villages in a wider area of north Iraq), is seen as a telltale event in the formation of the Iraqi state.<sup>40</sup> While in Assyrian historiography the events have often been interpreted as the logical outcome of British betrayal in combination with long-term anti-Christian sentiments in Iraqi society,<sup>41</sup> authors such as Husry and Zubaida stress the difficult position in which the Assyrians had placed themselves, a position that made them an easy target in a period of uncertain leadership and fierce discussions about the direction of the Iraqi state. At the time, many Iraqis understood the violence against these Assyrians as part of a national struggle against a rebellious group with British sympathies, a group that could count on little sympathy from the general population in Baghdad and other urban centers like Mosul and Basra, be they Christian, Jewish or Muslim.

As shown by Schlaepfer, in that context Bakr Sidqi's military actions worked in uniting the rest of population in support of the new government. The Assyrians themselves, though united in horror about what happened, were internally divided over the political course that had led to these massacres; many did not endorse the patriarch's attempt to advocate a separate status for the Assyrian Christian community, a status with greater legal and temporal powers for the

40 See the discussion of the literature by Sami Zubaida, "Contested Nations: Iraq and the Assyrians," *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 3 (2000): 363–382 and my interpretation of the importance of the event for the Assyrians in Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "Light from the East (1948–1954) and the De-Territorialization of the Assyrian Church of the East," in Wim Hofstee and Arie van der Kooij (eds.), *Religion beyond its Private Role in Modern Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 115–134. The earlier work of Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians* and Khaldun S. Husry, "The Assyrian Affair of 1933," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974), 161–176 (I) and 344–360 (II), as well as the contemporary analysis by R.S. Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935), remain important. For a recent re-evaluation of the sources from an Assyrian perspective, see Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History*.

41 Assyrian historiography is based largely on Yaquw bar Malek Ismail, *Āturāyē w-trēy plāšē tūlāyē, h.d., Āturāyē men 1914 hal 1945* ('Assyrians and the Two World Wars, i.e., Assyrians between 1914 and 1945'; Tehran: Maṭba'tā d-sī'ta seprāyā d-'allimē Āturāyē, 1964); Yusuf Malek, *The British Betrayal of the Assyrians* (Chicago: The Assyrian National Federation and The Assyrian National League of America, 1935).

patriarch and some kind of regional independence, and therefore fundamentally different from that of other Christian communities in Iraq. Many of the Assyrians, like the Chaldeans with whom they shared a long common history in northern Iraq, preferred non-preferential treatment by the Iraqi government and were inclined to acknowledge the state's power, relinquish dreams of a separate homeland, and allow restricting the clergy's powers to the spiritual realm.<sup>42</sup>

The contributions by Laura Robson and Hannah Müller-Sommerfeld address the importance of a refugee camp for displaced Assyrians and Armenians in understanding the dynamics of the failed inclusion of the Assyrians into the Iraqi state. The Ba'quba camp, not far from Baghdad, was set up under the responsibility of the League of Nations and administered by British officials. It arose from the need to cater to the tribal Assyrians who had been forced to flee first the Hakkari province (in today's eastern Turkey) to Urmia (in northwestern Iran), from where they joined the Russian and Armenian armies in their fight against Turkish and Kurdish troops. When the situation in Urmia deteriorated after the Russians retreated early in January 1918 and Turkish and Kurdish forces once more marched up to Urmia in Iran, many Assyrians decided to flee towards British-ruled territory in Iraq, preferring British protection opposed to Persian protection. In this period, the Assyrian leadership had been made to believe that the British would support not only resettlement in their ancestral homelands in Hakkari, but also some kind of Wilsonian semi-independence. Thus, for the Assyrians from Hakkari, the camp in Ba'quba essentially was a temporary provision before they could return to the north.<sup>43</sup>

While differing in their analysis of the causes, both Robson and Müller-Sommerfeld underline the significance of the camp in creating a new minority identity for the Assyrians. In the camp, the Assyrians were treated as stateless refugees, who, being largely dependent on the British colonial administration for jobs, education, and sustenance, were inspired to re-invent themselves in the post-war era away from Iraqi society. Robson stresses the way in which the camp, by virtue of its specific organizational and spatial set-up, fostered

42 Murre-van den Berg, "Light from the East," and Müller-Sommerfeld in this volume. On the Chaldeans in this period little has been written so far, but see Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*.

43 For more detail, see the contributions by Robson and Müller-Sommerfeld in this volume; the standard work for this period is John Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians*; see also the overview work by Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*. The most detailed discussion of this episode, based on many new sources, is found in Hellot-Bellier, *Chroniques de massacres annoncés*; she also traces the history of the much contested British promises (497–506).



separate 'national' identities for the Assyrians and the Armenians. The two groups were separated as much as possible from each other and from Iraqi society, with educational programs in the camp focusing on preparing pupils for a future return to a 'homeland' with some kind of separate existence from the Iraqi or Turkish states. Whereas Robson emphasizes the British agency in this respect,<sup>44</sup> Müller-Sommerfeld, by studying the so far largely untapped archives of the League of Nations, shows that the Assyrians themselves were keen to fully employ the League of Nations' system of minority protection in their favor. Her study of the archives underlines the divisions within Assyrian society, not only between those in the camp (mostly from Hakkari) and those outside the camp (Assyrians that had always lived in what was to become the state of Iraq), but also among the Assyrians from Hakkari, who had conflicting regional and familial interests. Earlier tribal and regional subdivisions often translated into different political positions among those who contested the leadership of the patriarchal family.

In the final analysis, the outcome of the process was that the Ba'quba camp, instead of easing the transition from being stateless refugees to becoming integrated citizens of the Iraqi state, sanctioned their separate trajectories. Even after it had become clear (Lausanne Conference, 1922–1923, final decision in 1925) that the Assyrians would not be allowed to return to Hakkari, nor would they be granted (semi-)independence within the new borders of Iraq, both the British and the League of Nations failed to convince the Assyrians to come to terms with this loss. The deep chasm between the nationalist hopes of the Assyrian leadership, especially the party supporting the young patriarch Mar Shimun Eshai (in office 1920–1975), and the avowed aim of British and Iraqi government officials to integrate the Assyrians in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Iraq, played a crucial role in developments leading up to the dramatic events of the summer of 1933. The patriarch was unwilling to consider proposals for the resettlement of the Hakkari Assyrians in other parts of northern Iraq, and even more unwilling to relinquish his temporal powers over the community and limit his leadership to the spiritual. Probably driven by fear of what might happen to the Assyrians once their British protectors had left Iraq, the patriarch refused to let the Hakkari Assyrians integrate into Iraqi society. Mar Shimun Eshai's refusal to adapt to the changing circumstances and instead to allow for the armed resistance of Assyrians in the north, were important factors in the chain of events that led to the massacre of Semele. This played out at a moment in time when power struggles in Iraq's administrative

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44 Cf. also Sanchez Summerer in this volume.

circles had destabilized the country and the events were easily framed as yet another indication of the Assyrian threat to Iraqi national unity. It was only towards the end of 1948 that the patriarch, who was forced into exile in 1933, officially relinquished his temporal powers and the Assyrian community in many ways became like other non-Muslim communities in Iraqi society: full citizens of an Arab state rather than a minority waiting for its full rights.<sup>45</sup>

The story does not end here, though. While the Assyrians from Ba'quba obtained Iraqi citizenship and settled in the north or in Baghdad, or emigrated to nearby Syria where many Hakkari Assyrians found a place to live,<sup>46</sup> or places further away, the tensions surrounding their place in Iraqi society were not over. Though some of the most ardent Assyrian nationalists emigrated to Syria or the United States, the old separatist nationalism remained popular among Assyrians in the north, in the slipstream of Kurdish nationalism. Suffering with the Kurds under Saddam's genocide in the 1980s, the Assyrians profited from independence from Saddam's Iraq in the early 1990s and were able to build up a Syriac (Aramaic)-based educational system and other cultural institutions.<sup>47</sup> Different from the Armenian and Syriac refugees that settles in Syria and Lebanon, the Assyrians found it difficult to settle for a mere quietist minority existence. At the same time, full cultural and linguistic integration, such as sought after by many Chaldeans, was practically anathema to the Assyrians, even if individuals, especially after World War II, would make different choices.

Thus, in conclusion, one could attribute the Assyrians' clash with the Iraqi nation state to a combination of their well-developed and thoroughly modern sense of their own national identity (based on an older tradition of political, social, and cultural independence), and their displacement, vulnerability, and colonial complicity in the post-war era. In deciding what was the most impor-

45 See Müller-Sommerfeld, this volume; Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians*, 175 ff.

46 Shabo Talay, *Die neuaramäischen Dialekte der Khabur-Assyrer in Nordostsyrien: Einführung, Phonologie und Morphologie* (Semitica viva, Bd. 40; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2008).

47 On Assyrians and Chaldeans in the twentieth century, see Herman Teule, *Les Assyro-Chaldéens. Chrétiens d'Irak, d'Iran et de Turquie* (Turnhout: Brepols 2008); Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "The Syriac Churches," in Ken Parry, *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* (Malden/Oxford/Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 249–268; Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*; and J.F. Coakley, "The Church of the East since 1914," in J.F. Coakley and K. Parry, "The Church of the East: Life and Thought," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 78, no. 3 (1996): 179–198, Suha Rassam, *Christianity in Iraq: Its Origins and Development to the Present Day* (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2005).

tant factor in this, we must take into account Müller-Sommerfeld's observation that in addition to the Assyrians, two other groups in Iraq started using the vocabulary of minorities: the Kurds and the Baha'is. Other Christians and the Jews refrained from doing so; they, with whatever uncertainties they may have felt for their future, identified at least superficially with the nationalist definitions of Iraq, with its combination of Arabism and state secularism. Clearly, the state's emphasis on Arabic and Arabism excluded Kurds, who emphasized their own different ethnic identity; this was an exclusion that was mitigated only slightly by some cooptation of Kurds in the central government. The exclusion of the Baha'is reminds us that this state secularism was predicated on Islamic definitions of acceptable religions, and thus in practice mostly excluded newer religions such as Baha'ism. In hindsight we may say that this implicit Islamic premise of acceptable religious difference proved the starting point for more extremist interpretations at a later phase.

### Transnational Dynamics

Meanwhile, another nation state in the making was to create its own minorities, inside and outside the country. The creation of the state of Israel, with the official backing of the United Nations, changed the rules of who belonged to the majority population overnight. This was the case in the confines of the new-born state of Israel, where many Palestinians were forced to flee during the war of 1948 and those that remained became minorities in a state that was predicated on Zionism, Judaism, and Hebrew. In reaction to this, Jewish communities in many places in the Middle East were cast as unwanted minorities, whether or not they identified with this new state and its non-Arabic identity, and whether or not they themselves preferred to see themselves as such. These events underline how issues of majority and minority are related not merely to the nation state as such, but to the nation state in its regional and transnational connections. That is, processes of minoritization and the success or failure of 'common grounds' cannot be understood without also taking into account the process of migration (caused by varying degrees of material violence as well as social, economic, and politic pressures) and the emergence of transnational communities.

As referred to above, World War I led to the emergence of a number of refugee communities of Syriac, Assyrian, and Armenian Christians, mostly from today's Turkey. These population movements changed the social dynamics of many places in the Arab Middle East: these Christians became minorities in urban areas such as Jerusalem, Beirut, Aleppo, Baghdad, Cairo, and Mosul,

whereas the rural Jazirah region in northeast Syria was transformed by the influx of Christian farmers from eastern Anatolia and later by Hakkari Assyrians expelled by Iraq.<sup>48</sup> In addition, large groups of Syriacs, Assyrians and Armenians moved outside the region, to the Americas, to the southern states of the USSR, and to Europe. In the process they created ever expanding transnational networks with nodes both in and near their places of origin and throughout the rest of the world. These nodes and networks that were created in the interwar years made use of trajectories and expatriate communities that were established in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Then too, violence and social pressure played a role in stimulating migration (the first large group left Lebanon/Syria after the massacres of 1860), though longstanding commercial networks (especially those created by Persian Armenians in the seventeenth century) and contacts in the Christian world (Catholic networks of the sixteenth century onwards and Protestant connections built in the nineteenth century) were just as important.<sup>49</sup>

Thus it is no surprise that these transnational networks play a role in many of the contributions to this volume even if these networks, as such, are not the principle theme. When one reads the articles in the volume from this perspective, one is inclined to assume that the rapid expansion of these transnational networks often impeded the further development of common ground that provides space for discussions about the common good. The transnational space that the Iraqi Jews created for themselves, in which they were culturally, familiarly, commercially, and religiously bound to Asia, Palestine, England, France, and America, made it easier to disconnect themselves from Iraq when societal pressures increased. Similarly for the Assyrians from Hakkari, whose ties with Russia, Lebanon, Europe, and America dated from before World War I.

48 Sedah Altuğ, "Sectarianism in the Syrian Jazira: Community, Land and Violence in the Memories of World War I and the French Mandate (1915–1939)" (PhD, Utrecht University, 2011); Talay, Shabo, *Die neuramäischen Dialekte der Khabur-Assyrer in Nordostsyrien. Einführung, Phonologie und Morphologie* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2008), idem, *Neuramäische Texte in den Dialekten der Khabur-Assyrer in Nordostsyrien* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2009).

49 Albert Hourani, Nadim Shehadi, *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (London: The Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992), Naures Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses among the Assyrian/Syriac Elites in the European Diaspora* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), Murre-van den Berg, H.L. (2002), "Migration of Middle Eastern Christians to Western Countries and Protestant Missionary Activities in the Middle East. A Preliminary Investigation," in *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* [Formerly *Het Christelijk Oosten*] 54, 1–2, 39–49.

The situation was somewhat different for the Catholics in Jerusalem and Palestine at large. While their connections to the French-Catholic world initially may have held them back in their identification with Arab and Palestinian nationalism, in later decades these wider Catholic networks stimulated their identification with the region, rather than with the West in general or France in particular. Thus, depending on the further religious and political developments within these networks, they either grew into alternative communities or into support structures for local identification. Though overall the Catholic (and the Protestant) network might have been more effective in stimulating local rootedness, in the end its effects are the same as with the other transnational networks. The mere existence of such networks made the communities vulnerable to accusations of disloyalty to the state, while at the same time these networks increased the access of the communities to opportunities outside the region.

In the period following World War II, the benefits of migration mostly went both ways, with the transnational connections and transcultural skills that came with it serving the Christian communities in the Middle East. When in the 1960s and 1970s the Arab countries were eager to take further steps on the road of cultural and economic westernization, it was often the Christians that functioned as cultural brokers. Christians were relatively well educated and much more acquainted with western mores and habits; they spoke the languages of the West as well as the languages of the region, in literal and metaphoric ways. As a result, they occupied crucial and highly visible positions in public life, in education, journalism, music, literature and arts, science and medicine, thus contributing actively and publicly to the creation of a common ground.

From the late 1970s onwards, however, this fragile equilibrium started to break down. The Christians' position as cultural brokers was challenged by the double effect of a quickly growing well-educated Muslim middle class that competed for the same jobs in societies that increasingly looked in other directions than Europe and America for ideological inspiration, cultural role models, and economic power, be it to Turkey, China or the Gulf.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, political instability in the region made for increased migration of the Christian communities. Palestinian Christians followed their co-religionist to

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50 Tarek Mitri, "Christians in the Arab East: An Interpretation of Contemporary History," in Habib Badr, et al., *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut: Middle East Council of Churches, 2005), 933 pp; Translated from: *Al Masihiyya 'Abra Tārikhihā fi al-Mashreq* (Beirut: Middle East Council of Churches, 2001), 851–867; Najib George Awad, *And Freedom Became a Public-Square: Political, Sociological and Religious Overviews on the Arab Christians and the Arabic Spring* (Vienna/Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2012).

the America's after the war of 1967, when Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Massive migration from Lebanon started in 1975, when both Christians and Muslims fled the devastations wrought by the Civil War. Coptic Christians started to leave Egypt from the 1970s onwards, first to other places in the Middle East, then also to the America's, Europe, Australia and Africa. Meanwhile, the small Syriac community from Turkey was caught in the war between the Turkish army and the PKK (1980s–1990s). From 1990 onwards, political and economic pressures pressured Iraq's Christians to migrate, seeing ever increasing numbers from 2003 onwards when during what grew to be a straightforward civil war, Christians were targeted expressly, mostly by Sunni extremists.

All of this did not immediately break down the communality between Christians and Muslims that had been created in the first part of the twentieth century. Much of the structures and places of encounter remained intact. The combination, however, of numerical and cultural marginalization of the Christians with the increased political clout of the diaspora communities, made for a different dynamic, both within the Christian communities and between them and the rest of society. It is then that the concept of minority again becomes important. For the first time also those communities that for most of the twentieth century resisted the label of 'minority', seeing themselves as part of the 'majority' community of Arabs, such as the Copts, the Greek (Antiochian/Rum) Orthodox and Greek Catholics, started to use the label. As has been recently described by Saba Mahmood, the complex interplay of realizing that the equal rights that had been expected never fully materialized, the pressures of minority discourses originating in the diaspora communities and in international organizations, and the internal, Middle Eastern rhetoric about the state, all contributed to the minoritization of those Christians that, different from those displaced in the various wars, had never left their countries of origin and had always been loyal supporters of the Arab states.<sup>51</sup>

Much of the transnational dynamics affecting Jews and Christians in the Middle East is not so different from what happens in other parts of the world where a combination of socio-political, economic and cultural factors gave rise to large expatriate diasporic communities that maintain a connection to their homelands. There is one cultural factor, however, that is fairly unique, which is the fact Jerusalem and the surrounding region occupy a special place in three religions, the adherents of two of them together, Christianity and Islam, counting for over half of the world's population. Whereas certainly not every

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51 Mahmood, *Religious Difference*.

Christian or Muslim worldwide is invested in the so called 'holy places', at least part of the cultural and political interest in the region from other parts of the world can be explained by these cultural-religious connections. Much of the missionary and humanitarian efforts from Catholics and Protestants in the modern period arose from a heightened interest in the state of Christianity in the lands of its birth, trying to save and preserve it, not only for its own sake, but as much for that of global Christianity, many parts of which consider the Holy Land as part of their religious heritage. The rise of Zionism (including its Christian varieties) and the ensuing Israeli state further added to the global public with stakes in the region. While sometimes these global interests in the region have contributed to the creation of common ground, often the multiplicity of actors and stakeholders has exacerbated many of the processes of contestation and exclusion described above.<sup>52</sup>

Boum's article highlights the importance of Jerusalem as a cultural and political symbol for Christians and Moslems of the Middle East, taking the perspective of the disenfranchised youth of North Africa. Their hip hop songs sample the rich repertoire of cultural themes that were produced in earlier phases of Arab resistance to the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, a repertoire that ranges from the violent and aggressive videos of Islamists, to the melancholy work of Fayrūz, the Christian Lebanese singer (Nihād Wadī' Ḥaddād, b. 1934). However, while the texts and symbols of these North African musicians are explicitly aggressive and activist, overall the political and cultural effects of these videos remain limited. Not only is the number of people that watch these videos not as high as the topicality of the issue leads us to expect, but more importantly, their activist stance has little to no effect on the politics of North African states, while the rappers, even if they attract the attention of the security forces, do not seriously threaten the status quo. As such, the musicians are reproached by other young North African activists who would rather invest more time in real life political activism than in online cultural expressions.<sup>53</sup>

52 See, e.g. several articles in the edited volume *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3, no. 1 (2013), Steven Kaplan and Merav Mack's "Editors' Note", Galia Sabar, "Between Israel and the Holy Land, between the Global and the Local: The Role of African Initiated Churches within African Transnational Migration to Israel," Adoram Schneidleder, "The Imagined Christian Ecumene and the Quest for Return: Christian IDPs in Israel and the 2009 Visit of Benedict XVI," Michelle Syen, "E-Transnationalism: The Case of the Christian Zionist Community in Israel," and Steven Kaplan, "The Transnationalism of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahedo Church in the Holy Land."

53 For a discussion of the fast growing field of research on online cultural expressions and identity politics, see Boum's contribution in this volume.

Meanwhile, the ongoing civil war in Syria, with constantly rising numbers of casualties, homeless refugees, and devastated urban landscapes, has produced its own varieties of global performances, with musical expressions intended to address the world's silence in the face of cultural and political disaster. A case in point is the controversial video clip produced by two Syrian sisters from Sweden, Faia and Rihan Younan from Aleppo.<sup>54</sup> 'To our countries' (*li-biladi*) consists of a mixture of classically phrased political statements written and recited by Faia (an Edinburgh-trained journalist), and tied in with fragments of songs by Fayrūz sung by Rihan (including the song on Jerusalem discussed in Boum's volume); the video clip was shared widely, both in the West and the Middle East. The minimalist video conveys the pain over what is happening in the Middle East; it skillfully distributes blame without naming anyone in particular, and brings together in one nostalgic narrative the cases of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine while glossing over differences of religion and politics. While many people appreciated the sisters' efforts to bring the woes of the Arab world to the fore, critical voices soon chimed in, most importantly because the sisters were seen as supporting the Assad regime. Others criticized their perceived one-sided blaming of the West for the Middle East's problems, and yet others blamed the sisters for denying their 'Assyrian' background and glossing over the way in which the Assyrians were treated by the Arabs. Where the sisters and their crew thought they could transcend differences of religion, region, and ethnicity by creating hope built upon the idealized Middle East of Fayrūz's generation, others saw this as hopelessly naïve and old-fashioned, and in no way relevant to resolving the real conflicts in the Middle East.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, verbal contests about how clips like this one contribute to lasting peace in the Middle East continue against the background of youth who take matters into their own hands by joining the armed struggle against the Assad regime and more generally against what is seen as the West oppressing Muslims.

54 YouTube, 'To our countries' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GO52ioxui8>), posted 9 October 2014, 1,786,114 viewings (13 February 2015).

55 For more extensive discussions, in addition to the postings on YouTube, see <http://www.taz.de/YouTube-Video-Li-Biladi/148495/> (largely positive; last seen 28 January 2015), Eli Shalal, <http://www.aljadid.com/content/twisted-logic-younan-sisters-and-julia-boutros-sing-same-deceptive-tune> (very critical; last seen 28 January 2015), building on an article by Martina Sabra on Qantara.de (<http://de.qantara.de/inhalt/syrisches-antikriegs-video-to-our-countries-peinlicher-medienhype>; last seen 28 January 2015); see also Daily Star (31 October 2014) <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Oct-31/276015-supporters-opponents-of-assad-in-viral-video-confrontation.ashx> (last seen 28 January 2015).



What then, does this mean for the dynamics between majorities and minorities in the states of the Middle East, what does this mean for the creation and maintenance of common ground? Most importantly, perhaps, the transnational and global stage of cultural practices is here to stay. Whether in the form of YouTube videos, online political activism, world politics, Christian Zionism and Catholic advocacy for Middle-Eastern Christians, or in the attempts by NGOs, UNHCR, and UNESCO to mitigate the worst effects of war and strife, or in violent jihadist actions, all actors perform on a global stage and seek a global public that is asked to choose sides. Even if much of that involvement does not go beyond 'liking' and 'retweeting', it considerably widens the circle of people that have a stake in the developments on the ground. Certainly, the positive side of this is the fact that abuses of power, gross injustice and oppression of minorities can find a hearing much quicker and in wider circles than before, putting extra pressure on governments to adjust their policies and protect minorities. At the same time, however, these global performers all too easy may lose sight of the complicated dynamics of local context, the value of silent diplomacy and saving face in difficult situations—valuing applause on the global scene over concrete results on the ground. Minorities of all kinds thus may suffer as much as gain from such global involvement, especially where the state is weak and unable to protect those who for political, cultural or religious reasons are not considered part of the majority that exemplifies the unity of the state.

### Conclusions

The overview by Schroeter of Jews in the Middle East and the varied case studies that are brought to the fore in this volume vacillate between opposite positions, one in which we can see a wide range of possibilities of finding common ground and the other, which makes obvious the limits to that same endeavor. Yes, there is a common ground, but it is fragile and its survival is very much dependent on the circumstances. These circumstances therefore are important in the analyses of this volume, and indicate the importance of stable and strong states that allow for a variety of interpretations of the definition of and criteria for citizenship. These definitions and criteria must be enforced against those that challenge it by advocating mono-cultural, mono-ethnic, and mono-religious societies. The case studies also point to the importance of understanding how communities that are seen as minorities (whether they like it or not), deal with that minority status. Are they able to negotiate the boundaries of their separateness with a view towards the common good of

these societies as a whole? Or do they, with or without outside support, focus on their own survival only and so willingly and unwillingly contribute to their isolation?

The case studies show that, time and again, common ground was found: in Arabic as the language of the nation, in shared educational and cultural activities, and in political parties and social activism, even though that sometimes also led to new fissures and schisms—schisms, however, not between the all-to-easy essentialized boundaries between religious or ethnic communities, but between people with different opinions and different social and regional backgrounds. History tells of many occasions in which religion was not a hindrance to cooperation, when Jews and Christians, despite their numerical minority within a society that structures itself on religion, could function optimally in society at large. It is from these cross-cutting cleavages, and the ways in which these cleavages were bridged time and again, that we can draw hope for the future, even if today's trends seem bound towards greater uniformity and less tolerance towards those who do not fit.

# The Changing Landscape of Muslim-Jewish Relations in the Modern Middle East and North Africa

*D.J. Schroeter*

Mr. Hatchwell, or Si Hatweel as he was also known to the local residents, was one of the few remaining Jews who inhabited the elite casbah quarter in the Moroccan town of Essaouira (or Mogador as it was formerly called by Europeans) in 1981. In thinking about how changing patterns of public space in the nineteenth century Middle East and North Africa (MENA) affected and transformed Muslim-Jewish relations, I am reminded of my conversations with him that year. I recall one day strolling with him in Essaouira, where he proudly showed me the places of importance to him—*lieux de mémoire*—a nail on the wall where the Paquet steamship line of Marseilles once posted their schedules, the former foreign consulates that were located in the casbah quarter, the sign commemorating the visit in 1884 of the intrepid Father Charles de Foucauld, whose account of his travels in Morocco disguised as a native rabbi remain the most celebrated of the pre-colonial period.<sup>1</sup> He bumped into an elderly Muslim similar in age, precipitating a warm embrace and a few dance steps, almost like a reunion between two octogenarians, Muslim and Jew, both respected members of the *Chambre de Commerce*.

Jacob Hatchwell came from a family that moved from Marrakesh to Essaouira in the late nineteenth century, joined the elite Jewish merchants who lived in the casbah, and engaged in an import-export trade with Manchester, London, and Hamburg, the latter after the expansion of German commercial interests on the southern Atlantic coast of Morocco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Essaouira was already in decline as an international

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- 1 Not only is Charles de Foucauld an iconic figure in French colonial literature, but stories about him, and his guide Mardocheé Aby Serour, are remembered by Muslims in the south of Morocco where they traveled. See Aomar Boum, *Memories of Absence: How Muslims Remember Jews in Morocco* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 18–28.
  - 2 On German expansion in Morocco, see Pierre Guillen, *L'Allemagne et le Maroc de 1870 à 1905* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1967). With the exponential growth of German ships

port of trade when members of the family emigrated from Morocco, opening up stores or import-export firms in various locales: London, Brighton, Alexandria, and Cairo, or set up business in more prosperous locations in Morocco, especially Casablanca and Safi. Several Hatchwells ventured to South America following in the wake of the rubber boom, and settled in Iquitos in the Peruvian Amazon. Jacob's brother David was among the few remaining Jews in Iquitos; many left with the declining rubber economy or had intermarried and assimilated into the Amazonian Indian population. The family stayed connected through visits to Essaouira and a correspondence back and forth between three continents in Judeo-Arabic, French, English, and Spanish.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of my encounter, Mr. Hatchwell was the owner of the rather modest Hotel Beau Rivage, formerly managed by his late wife, above the popular Café de France located in the large Place du Chayla (now named Place Moulay Hassan), which is accessed from the port.<sup>4</sup> At the time I lived in Essaouira in 1981, Mr. Hatchwell's main occupation seemed to have been acting as the agent for the Pullman coach company, the "deluxe" sleeper coach line of buses that traveled overnight between Agadir and Casablanca, making a stop in Essaouira at about 11 pm. Four places were reserved for Essaouira, and to obtain a ticket one was required to pay a visit to Mr. Hatchwell in his house in the casbah, where he received customers in his "European salon," which boasted an upright piano and a portrait of Queen Victoria hanging on the wall.<sup>5</sup> On one occasion, I met his elderly sister there, who babbled in the incoherent though fluent English that she had learned at the English girls' school (long since closed) attended by Essaouira's Jewish elite.

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calling at the port of Essaouira, the Deutsche Seewar Company of Hamburg was authorized to build and operate a meteorological observatory in the harbor of Essaouira. *Le Guido—le magazine d'Essaouira*, no. 32 (2011), 5–7.

- 3 Archives of the Hatchwell family of Essaouira are found in the library of the Centre de la Culture Judéo-Marocaine (Brussels) (<http://www.judaisme-marocain.org/>); it contains both personal and business correspondence and documents. On Moroccan Jewish emigration to the Amazon, see Susan Gilson Miller, "Kippur on the Amazon: Jewish Emigration from Northern Morocco in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Harvey E. Goldberg (ed.), *Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries, History and Culture in the Modern Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 190–209. On Jews of Iquitos, see Ariel Segal, *Jews of the Amazon: Self-Exile in Earthly Paradise* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999).
- 4 See the description in the memoir by David Bensoussan, *Le fils de Mogador* (Montreal: Les Éditions Du Lys, 2002), 77–79.
- 5 See Daniel J. Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira: Urban Society and Imperialism in Southwestern Morocco, 1844–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 58–59.

Most of the Jews of Essaouira had lived in the overcrowded *mellah*, the Jewish quarter built in 1808 where no Muslims lived.<sup>6</sup> The casbah, by contrast, always housed both Muslim and Jews of the elite, foreign merchants and consuls, and government officials. The Attias synagogue in the casbah, built in the late nineteenth century, imported woodwork from Manchester,<sup>7</sup> while homes of the affluent were embellished by furniture and other English accoutrements, as was the case in the Hatchwell household.<sup>8</sup> Among the Jewish elite, English was often spoken and a number of English expressions were a part of everyday Judeo-Arabic speech in Cultural affinities to England lingered in the twentieth century, especially among the elite, but French influence became more pronounced in the Protectorate period largely owing to the Alliance Israélite Universelle school (where Mr. Hatchwell studied), though Arabic remained the dominant language of the Jewish masses of the *mellah*—Jewish space, where nonetheless the elite Jews of the casbah rarely, if ever set foot. Thus Mr. Hatchwell's walking tour did not include the *mellah*, which in 1981 was the poorest, most overcrowded and dilapidated quarter of the town. Only a few Jews still resided there: a plumber and his family, and a jeweler. One distillery of *mahya*, the ubiquitous *eau de vie* once produced by Jews throughout Morocco, remained in the *mellah*, where there was frequently a long queue of Muslims waiting their turn to purchase a supply. Jews had long provided Muslims with forbidden alcoholic beverages, and it was a reason for Muslims to venture into Jewish space, a common phenomenon in other places in MENA as well. Yet crossing ethno-religious boundaries into Jewish space for forbidden fruits could also be a source of friction. In 1906, when rural revolts were rampant in Morocco and when foreign intervention had exacerbated internal divisions and interreligious tensions, Anflus, a rebellious local tribal leader, invaded Essaouira with his followers and expelled Jews from the *medina*, the popular Muslim quarter that they had begun to inhabit. During Anflus' brief occupation of the town and before order was restored by central authorities, Jews were

6 In an 1807 decree, Mawlay Sulayman ordered Jews in a number of cities to sell their homes and to move to mellahs within boundaries to be demarcated. In Essaouira, however, some elite Jews were allowed to live in the casbah quarter alongside Muslims and foreigners. Daniel J. Schroeter, *The Sultan's Jew: Morocco and the Sephardi World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 90–93.

7 Dilapidated and no longer in use, there are plans to restore the Attias synagogue and convert it into a Jewish museum. See *Le Guido—Magazine d'Essaouira* no. 38 (2013) 5–8.

8 On transformations of domestic space and European furnishings in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, see Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 151–154.

forced to remove their shoes when walking past a mosque or Muslim shrine, compelled to release their slaves, and *mahya* distilleries were shut down. As the story goes, some of the authorities thought it better that the Jews should remain outside the *medina*, but the *mahya* distilleries were quickly restored and back in operation.<sup>9</sup>

With the partial exception of Tangier, Essaouira was in some ways unique to Morocco: it was a small cosmopolitan town before European influence had begun to significantly influence Moroccan society. It had a rather special elite connection to England and an openness and conviviality existed between ethnic and religious groups and between Europeans and Moroccans in an era when foreigners were all but banned from the major inland cities of Marrakesh, Fez, and Meknes. And yet, though Essaouira was an atypical case, there are many aspects of this vignette that can be seen as a microcosm reflecting the transformation of the public sphere, one in which new encounters and new spaces redefined patterns of Muslim-Jewish relations, not only in Morocco, but in many parts of MENA.

There is another reason to begin the discussion with a story from the recent past. By studying Jews that remained in the Islamic world after the mass emigration, we shift the focus from the narrative of failed integration and departure that dominates most scholarship on Muslim-Jewish relations in the modern period. The study of Muslim-Jewish relations has been shaped by the traumatic mass emigration from the societies in which Jews once lived. The incontrovertible fact that the majority of Jews in MENA departed during the period from 1948 to the early 1960s and the virtual absence of Jewish communities from MENA outside Israel seems to provide powerful evidence of the impossibility of Jews integrating into the countries in which they lived. This has been explained in two ways that essentially reflect the Israeli-Palestinian political divide. One side argues that the Islamic world provided a haven for Jews, and that the peaceful coexistence that prevailed through the Middle Ages was undermined by colonialism and Zionism. Colonialism, by its system of divide and rule, by favoring Jews over Muslims, drew Jews over to the side of the colonial occupiers, while Zionism, in the age of decolonization completed the process of severing Jews from their native lands. The other side emphasizes a constant state of conflict throughout history and hardly differentiates the modern from the

9 AIU (Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle)/Maroc XXXIII.E.582, 2 September 1906, 9 September 1906, Benchimol; *al-Maghrib al-Aqsa* (15 September 1906). The occupation of Essaouira by Anflus remains in the historical memory of the Jews. See Salomon Haï Knafo and Asher Knafo, *La vie juive à Mogador* (Ashdod: Ot Brit Kodech, 2009), 137–138.

medieval period. This side presents non-Muslims as living in a state of oppression, dubbed “*dhimmitude*,” a neologism that has gained much currency in recent years; it thereby implies a primordial condition that is rooted in the origins of Islam itself.<sup>10</sup> The emerging Arab states, in this paradigm, failed to develop civil societies to which non-Muslims belonged, because they remained “Islamic” to the core. Thus it is argued that Jews left because of Islam and the appeal of a Jewish state that would empower them. The years of colonialism and decolonization are considered unimportant except insofar as they helped exacerbate pre-existing tensions and precipitated a final rupture by removing Jews from their *dhimmi* condition, exposing their new status as minorities, and introducing European style anti-Semitism into MENA.<sup>11</sup>

While these stances are oppositional, they share a sense of the inevitability of mass departure; both emphasize conflict and exclusionary categories and identities that developed in Middle East and North African societies in modern times; the first sees the divisions as entirely a product of the modern era, while the other assumes that the divide was always present. Both approaches are teleological, predicated on the belief in failure, or the impossibility of Muslim-Jewish coexistence either because of internal or external circumstances. Consequently, scholarship has all but ignored new patterns of coexistence, modern

10 The idea of the oppression of Jews and non-Muslim minorities, and the notion of “*dhimmitude*” has been influenced by the many publications of Bat Ye’or, *The dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1985; originally published in French in 1980); *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press/Associated University Presses and Lancaster, UK: Gazelle Book Services Ltd., 2002).

11 This latter approach to the understanding of Jews in the Islamic world is found in the last chapter of the often cited book by Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 154–191; also in *idem*, *Semites and Anti-Semites* (New York: Norton, 1986). A recent example of a book that follows this approach is the voluminous and richly documented study by Georges Bensoussan, *Juifs en pays arabes: le grand déracinement, 1850–1975* (Paris: Tallandier, 2012). For a critical evaluation of the historiography, see Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3–14; Daniel J. Schroeter, “From Sephardi To Oriental: The ‘Decline’ Theory of Jewish Civilization in The Middle East and North Africa,” in Richard Cohen and Jeremy Cohen (eds.), *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization: Reassessing an Idea* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007), 125–148; Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics, and the Formation of a Modern Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 14–19; Orit Bashkin, *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 9–10.

developments that enabled new encounters and a common ground to develop between Muslims and Jews in the period before the mass exodus that began in the late 1940s.

Much of the focus on the Jews of the modern Middle East and North Africa has been on the question of legal status, which is fundamental for understanding changes in the position of Jews and minorities in predominately Muslim societies. The Ottoman Empire, under pressure from foreign powers and an internal impetus to preserve the empire, undertook reforms to eliminate the traditional *dhimmi* status of non-Muslims. From the Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane (1839) to the Hatt-i Humayun (1856), the Tanzimat reforms effectively transformed non-Muslims from protégés of the Islamic state to Ottoman citizens with civil rights. Yet it was still an empire composed of many ethno-religious groups and the state maintained its system of separate communities, now reorganized into *millets* that would be closely kept under the surveillance of the Ottoman Porte. Egypt, still nominally a part of the Ottoman Empire but ruled by an independent dynasty, enacted a series of reforms that eliminated *dhimmi* status; thus some of the inequalities that existed during the time of Muḥammad ‘Alī were removed and then *dhimmi* status was abrogated and in 1882 non-Muslims were granted full civil equality.<sup>12</sup> The condition of MENA Jews came under the scrutiny of the European powers and their emancipated Jewish citizens and organizations, notably the Alliance Israélite Universelle (founded in 1860); both found an important goal in the protection of the Jews and their “emancipation,” though each for its own, sometimes, overlapping purposes.<sup>13</sup> Islamic law, degrading to non-Muslims, was seen as responsible for keeping Jews in their abject state.

Following the Hatt-i Humayun, the British and French put pressure on the Bey of the Husaynid dynasty of Tunisia, nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, to implement the Tanzimat reforms. The execution of Batto Sfez, accused of

12 For a survey of the changing legal status of the Jews of MENA, see Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 8–18; Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 134–141.

13 There is a considerable literature on the Alliance Israélite Universelle and its impact in MENA. See especially Aron Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims: Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Modern Times* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003); idem, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey 1860–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Michael M. Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862–1962* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).



blaspheming Islam, provided the opportunity: under threat of the French fleet bombarding Tunis, Muhammad Bey issued the so-called “fundamental pact” (*‘ahd al-amān*, literally, “the pact of security”) which embodied the principles of the Ottoman reform movement as they related to religious minorities, removed civil inequalities that affected the Jews (here we should be reminded that in the Maghrib, with the disappearance of indigenous Christians in the Middle Ages, the only *dhimmi*s were Jews; Christians were regarded as foreign). These changes were stipulated in the Constitution of 1861, which in effect formally ended the laws that defined the legal status of Jews as *dhimmi*s.<sup>14</sup>

Outside the Ottoman Empire, in Morocco and Iran, the rulers of these independent dynasties also came under increasing foreign pressures to “emancipate” their Jews. In these cases, it was the Anglo-Jewish leader and global advocate of emancipation, Moses Montefiore, who campaigned and obtained in 1864 and 1865, respectively, imperial decrees that guaranteed that Jews would be treated with justice.<sup>15</sup> In the case of Morocco, the sultan made it clear that he was only reiterating the law that already guaranteed the Jews just treatment,<sup>16</sup> and *dhimmi* status remained. The French Protectorate, established in Morocco in 1912, was legitimized by the idea of preserving native institutions; the Protectorate maintained the monarchy, an Islamic ruler with Muslim and Jewish subjects. While the civil inequalities associated with *dhimmi* status were eliminated, Jews remained indigenous *dhimmi* subjects of the sultan, now under the supposed tutelage of the French.<sup>17</sup>

The end of the Ottoman Empire brought colonial rule and eventually independence to much of the Arabic speaking world, which was divided into new nation states. In most places Jews—no longer *dhimmi*s or members of a *millet*

14 Paul Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie: des origines à nos jours* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1991), 116–121; Yaron Tsur, “‘Ahd al-Amān,” *EJIW*, 1:93–94.

15 Mohammed Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans au Maroc, 1859–1948* (Rabat: Université Mohammed v, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, 1994), 123 ff.; Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 300–319, 365–367; Michel Abitbol, *Le passé d’une discorde: Juifs et Arabes depuis le vii<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 1999), 168–172; Daniel Tsadik, *Between Foreigners and Shi’is: Nineteenth-Century Iran and its Jewish Minority* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 57–59.

16 Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī, *Kitāb al-Istiqṣā li-akhbār duwal al-Maghrib al-aqṣā* (Casablanca: Dār al-Kitāb, 1956), 9:113.

17 Daniel J. Schroeter and Joseph Chetrit, “Emancipation and its Discontents: Jews at the Formative Period of Colonial Rule in Morocco,” *Jewish Social Studies* 13, 1 (2006): 170–206.

with well-defined boundaries—became minorities, often with tenuous rights and an uncertain future. Arab nationalism and nationalist politics appealed to a very few, with the major exception of Iraq, and most left en masse when the opportunity was presented.

The change in legal status of Jews, from *dhimmi*s who were discriminated against to unassimilable minorities, is the focus of many studies on Jews in the modern MENA and offers an explanation of important changes in the position of Jews in MENA society. Yet the emphasis on the Jews' status—legal, political, social—has tended to dominate discussions with the result of precluding important questions about how Jews interacted with non-Jews in the emerging public sphere that was reshaping the landscape of the modern MENA.

To think about the emerging public sphere of Muslim-Jewish interaction in the modern MENA, it is important to consider what constituted those spaces, both public and private, where Muslims and Jews interacted in the premodern period. In urban structures, Islamic law distinguished between the private, residential sector, represented spatially by residential quarters with alleyways and culs de sac, and public space, with wide open thoroughfares where *suqs* were located.<sup>18</sup> Throughout the cities of MENA, including Tunis, Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, and Baghdad, Jews were concentrated in specific residential quarters, and in the case of Morocco, in some locales it was compulsory for Jews to live in Jewish quarters, which became known as *mellahs*.<sup>19</sup> These quarters thus might be defined as Jewish space, where family and religious life was located and where ethno-religious boundaries were conceptually constructed. It was, above all, the market place, the *suq*, in both urban and rural settings that functioned as a shared public space where Muslims and Jews intermingled.<sup>20</sup> The move

18 Besim Selim Hakim, *Arabic-Islamic Cities: Building and Planning Principles* (London: KPI, 1986), 63; André Raymond, *Grandes villes arabes à l'époque ottomane* (Paris: Sindbad, 1985), 172–174.

19 See Daniel J. Schroeter, “Le quartier juif et la cité islamique,” in Shmuel Trigano (ed.), *Le monde sépharade: histoire et civilisation*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006), 2:565–583; idem, “The Jewish Quarter and the Moroccan City,” in George K. Zucker and Yedida K. Stillman (eds.), *New Horizons in Sephardic Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 67–81. For a focus on minority space in the Mediterranean city and its historiography, see the introduction by Susan Gilson Miller, in Susan Gilson Miller and Mauro Bertagnin (eds.), *The Architecture and Memory of the Minority Quarter in the Muslim Mediterranean City* (Cambridge, MA: The Aga Khan Program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2010), 10–33.

20 Clifford Geertz, drawing from his research on Sefrou in Morocco, focuses his attention on the *suq* as an institution that characterizes MENA as a whole. See “Suq: The Bazaar

from the interiority of the home and neighborhood to the marketplace marked a quotidian spatial passage from the private to the public. It is also significant that Muslim religious endowments (*habus* in the Maghrib, *waqf* in the Middle East), which one might think of as the quintessential Muslim space, were often leased for commercial uses as *funduqs*, shops, and coffeehouses and as such were an important domain of Muslim-Jewish interactions.<sup>21</sup> In Morocco, Jews were tenants of *habus* properties in places that were outside the Jewish quarters in the marketplaces and commercial “public” districts of cities.<sup>22</sup> Rural markets as well functioned as a space where Muslims and Jews intermingled and exchanged goods and services. In Morocco, shared sacred spaces, or intermingling during the times of pilgrimages (*mawsims* or *hillulot*), also became places of commercial exchange, thus complicating any notion of a sharp dichotomy between the sacred and the profane. Jewish peddlers and traders were woven into the fabric of the rural economy in many parts of MENA,<sup>23</sup> as expressed in a Moroccan proverb “A *suq* (market) without Jews ... is like bread without salt.”<sup>24</sup>

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Economy in Sefrou,” in Clifford Geertz, Hildred Geertz, and Lawrence Rosen, *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 123. See also Eugen Wirth, “Villes islamiques, villes orientales? Une problématique face au changement,” in Abdelwahab Bouhdiba and Dominique Chevalier (eds.), *La ville arabe dans l’Islam* (Tunis: Université de Tunis, Centre d’études et de recherches économiques et sociales, 1982), 198–226.

- 21 For an argument that proposes the *waqf* as a key institution that constituted a public sphere, see Haim Gerber, “The Public Sphere and Civil Society in the Ottoman Empire,” in Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Nehemia Levtzion (eds.), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 75–77.
- 22 The voluminous registers and archives of the *habus* administration of the French protectorate were found in the Bibliothèque Générale et Archives, Rabat, accessed in 1980–1981. For Essaouira, numerous shops in the markets were leased to Jews. See also “Report on Leasehold Makhzen and Habous Properties held in British Hands,” 10 May 1918, National Archives of the UK, FO 835/164.
- 23 Boum, *Memories of Absence*, 29–55; “Morocco in the Nineteenth Century,” in Mark R. Cohen and Abraham L. Udovitch (eds.), *Jews Among Arabs: Contacts and Boundaries* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1989), 113–140; on Jerba and its vicinity, see Abraham L. Udovitch and Lucette Valensi, *The Last Arab Jews: The Communities of Jerba, Tunisia* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic, 1984), 100–106; on Muslim-Jewish relations in rural Yemen, see Bat-Zion Eraqi-Klorman, “Yemen: Religion, Magic, and Jews,” *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 39 (2009): 125–134; on Libya, Harvey E. Goldberg, *Jewish Life in Muslim Libya: Rivals and Relatives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 68–81.
- 24 Boum, *Memories of Absence*, 13–14.

Language is another aspect of this shared space in the marketplace. While almost everywhere, Jews historically spoke their own languages, or dialects of the dominant languages (Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish, and so forth) within Jewish or communal spaces, in the marketplaces, Jews, especially men, communicated in the vernaculars of their surroundings, yet were still distinguishable by their accents or sartorial customs, especially headgear. Jews were thus often bilingual or multilingual in the often monolingual environments in which they lived.<sup>25</sup>

While the demarcation of private and public space was expressed spatially by divisions between residential Jewish quarters and the marketplace, this did not imply a rigid separation between the private, communal space of the Jewish quarter and the public sections of the city. Indeed the very concept of insulated and largely self-contained *dhimmi* communities is belied by the many ways in which communal boundaries were constantly negotiated, transcended or transgressed in everyday life in many spaces besides the marketplace.<sup>26</sup> Contrary to common assumptions about the legal separation of *dhimmis*, Jews often went to Muslim courts.<sup>27</sup> In many places, Muslims frequently shopped, purchased meat from kosher butchers, bought or consumed alcohol in Jewish quarters. In most of MENA as well, though there was a tendency for *dhimmis* to concentrate in ethno-religious neighborhoods, the boundaries were permeable and Muslims would purchase, lease or reside in homes in the Jewish quarters, as evidence from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Syria shows.<sup>28</sup>

25 On dress, language, and distinguishing symbols of identity, see Udovitch and Valesi, *The Last Arab Jews*, 24–29.

26 This has been clearly documented and analyzed for Marrakesh in Emily Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh: Jewish and Muslim Space in Morocco's Red City* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

27 Studies of *shari'a* court records and government archives demonstrate the extent to which Jews often sought justice in Muslim courts. See Amnon Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam: Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Jessica Marglin, "In the Courts of the Nations: Jews, Muslims, and Legal Pluralism in Nineteenth-Century Morocco" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2013).

28 Najwa al-Qattan, "Litigants and Neighbors: The Communal Topography of Ottoman Damascus," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44 (2002): 511–533. For the Middle East generally, see Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 31–37; Antoine Abdel Nour, "Habitat et structures sociales à Alep aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles," *La ville arabe dans l'Islam*, 86–89; Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 44.

Coffeehouses, widespread throughout the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century, also constituted public space, and could be located throughout the city and, as in the case of Damascus, could be found in residential districts and markets, in both intra- and extra-mural quarters.<sup>29</sup> Coffeehouses became the unrivaled space of male social life and leisure, where people of various social backgrounds gathered for conversation, news, games, and entertainment. As primarily a space of Muslim male sociability, we cannot know to what extent Muslims and non-Muslims intermingled in coffeehouses. Yet it is well known in many places in MENA that Jewish musicians performed in coffeehouses to diverse crowds. If coffeehouses were the primary public space of male sociability, bathhouses (*hammam*) provided women with gendered public space.<sup>30</sup> Outside the private space of the home, Muslim and non-Muslim men and women, either in separate facilities or at separate times, used the bathhouses as public spaces of socialization. There was, perhaps, concern about how undressed Muslims and Jews might be distinguished; thus sometimes they were given different towels or robes with particular markings.<sup>31</sup>

The change in status of Jews, from *dhimmis* to Ottoman or colonial subjects or citizens, or to minorities in the nation states of MENA did not necessarily mean that premodern forms of social relations and spatial structures were replaced with a secular society where Muslims and Jews interacted in a commonly shared public sphere. Yet new kinds of relations nevertheless developed alongside the old and interacted with older types of Muslim-Jewish encounters. Port cities especially were conduits of change, bridgeheads of modernity that led to the development of new kinds of common grounds. To take the example of commerce, it was not so much that the *suq* was displaced but new institutions and forms of interaction and exchange between Muslims and Jews developed alongside the old. These included chambers of commerce, places of exchange outside the *suq*, grocery stores, pharmacies, hotels, and so forth. In Cairo and Baghdad, for example, Jews were often entrepreneurs in new, more

29 James Grehan, *Everyday Life and Consumer Culture in 18th-Century Damascus* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 140–146.

30 Ralph S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 94–98; Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 158–159; on Aleppo, see Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve*, 43–44, 231–235; on Tunis, see Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 138–140.

31 Amnon Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam: Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 73, 138–139; Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve*, 41–42.

“modern” commercial sectors, from furniture and grocery stores to European style department stores.<sup>32</sup> Jews were innovators also in the development of modern banks and financial institutions in the key cities of MENA: Tangier, Cairo, Alexandria, Beirut, Aleppo, and Baghdad. Because of their extensive networks with Europe, Jews were owners and agents for steamship and shipping lines, and were important in the development of railroads and transportation, and in general were instrumental in the introduction of modern industry and technology.<sup>33</sup>

New commercial practices entailed new patterns of consumption and brought together Muslims and Jews on common ground in new public spaces. Modern shops were to be found also in developing public spaces, as cities expanded *extra muros*, with new neighborhoods outside the traditional old city walls, the *nouvelle ville* in French colonial terminology was distinct from the *medina*. Outside the walls or traditional quarters, with shops, wider avenues with spacious apartments, cafés, clubs and associations, theaters, cinemas, music halls, sports stadiums, the promenade and beach, Muslim and Jews interacted in public spaces in ways unimaginable in the past. Families strolled in parks and the wide boulevards, where new fashions and hairstyles were displayed.<sup>34</sup> New modes of interaction were reflected in changing residential patterns, and as Jews began to move to Muslim quarters, the result was both peaceful coexistence and increased tensions and violence as the older patterns were disrupted.<sup>35</sup> At the same time that the embourgeoisement of a growing sector of society caused Muslims, Christians, and Jews to intermingle in new ways

32 On the transformation of Cairo’s commercial district and the development of department stores, see Nancy Y. Reynolds, *A City Consumed: Urban Commerce, the Cairo Fire, and the Politics of Decolonization in Egypt* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

33 Gudrun Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1915–1952* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989), 39–41; Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*, 44–49; Michael Menachem Laskier and Reeva Spector Simon, “Economic Life,” in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 41–43; and Reeva Spector Simon, “Iraq,” in *The Jews in the Middle East*, 362–363; Reeva Spector Simon, “Banking,” *EJW*, 1:335–337.

34 Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 181–183.

35 For Tunis in the nineteenth century, see Abdelhamid Larguèche, “La communauté juive de Tunis à l’époque husseïnite: unité, contrastes et relations inter-communautaires,” in *Histoire communautaire, histoire plurielle: la communauté juive de Tunisie: actes du colloque de Tunis organisé les 25-26-27 février 1998 à la Faculté de la Manouba* (Tunis: Centre de Publication Universitaire, 1999), 176–177.

as the new social class often cut across religious and ethnic divisions, ordinary Jews and Muslims maintained their separate communal space. In some places new inter-confessional tensions caused Jews to concentrate even more in mainly Jewish quarters,<sup>36</sup> intensifying the separation of poor Jews from Muslims, and Jewish quarters became increasingly overcrowded slums, not only reinforcing ethno-religious boundaries, but also reflecting the widening division between social classes in each respective religious community, as Muslim, Jewish, and Christians of the growing middle class resided in the modern, bourgeois, more cosmopolitan European neighborhoods. And yet, the old Jewish quarter remained an important symbolic marker of Jewish space. As has been observed in literature on Jewish Baghdad, “the city’s ‘Jewishness,’ so to speak, is a function of its cosmopolitan character, which depends both upon an implicit recognition of the city’s intercultural essence, on the one hand, and on the performance of communal identity through linguistic and spatial boundaries, on the other,”<sup>37</sup> an observation that could also be applied to Cairo, Tunis, and other major cities in MENA.

Even in places where ethnic tensions and intra-communal divisions were accentuated and expressed by reinforcing spatial segregation, modernity in its many forms increased encounters between Muslims and Jews in shared public spaces. Coffeehouses, for example, already numerous in MENA in the premodern period, continued to grow in many places, while with the increasing degree of foreign influence and colonialism, taverns owned or run by non-Muslims served alcoholic beverages to a mixed clientele.<sup>38</sup> The development of this secular common ground—spaces of sociability, and the leisure activities associated with them—at times provoked the reproach of both Muslim and Jewish religious leaders, who believed that it was causing a laxity in morality and religious practice.<sup>39</sup> Yet even in the disapprobation of religious leaders,

36 Abdel-Nour, “Habitat,” 88–89.

37 Lital Levy, “Self and the City: Literary Representations of Jewish Baghdad,” *Prooftexts*, 26, no. 1–2, (2006): 165.

38 Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans*, 138–140; Zvi Zohar, *Rabbinic Creativity in the Modern Middle East* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 259–261.

39 On rabbinical criticism of Jews engaged in leisure activity and laxity in religious practice, see Zohar, *Rabbinic Creativity*, 116–117, 233–268; see Matthias B. Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature and Ottoman Sephardic Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 82–88; on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Baghdad, see Shlomo Deshen, “Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times: The Emergence of Social Classes and of Secularization,” *AJS Review* 19, 1 (1994): 37–40; on Syria, see Walter P. Zenner, “Jews in Late Ottoman Syria: Community, Family and Religion,” in Shlomo Deshen and Walter P. Zenner (eds.), *Jews*

whose authority was growing weaker in this period, we see the emergence of new patterns of public discourse. Theories on the emergence of a civil society and the Habermasian notion of bourgeois public sphere privilege the development of secularism produced by the modern (European) state that would enable access to all individuals, regardless of religion. Secularism was indeed a factor in the new public sphere in MENA, but for the vast majority of people, secularization coexisted with the continuation of religious observance and ethno-religious ties. Indeed, one can talk about a public sphere in which Muslims and non-Muslims participated, without the corollary of the modern secular state as it developed in the European setting.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, one can better understand the new shared public spaces, if one eschews the more linear or hegemonic definition of Western modernity, and assumes rather that their were “multiple modernities,” or a variety of trajectories in which to understand the development of modernity in MENA.<sup>41</sup>

Language also reflected the dialogue between the inner, communal space and the wider public, and the strategic positioning of Jews in the dominant society.<sup>42</sup> Jewish languages or dialects of the dominant languages (Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish, and so forth) increasingly coexisted with European languages, the latter linked to European networks of trade and eventually, empires. The communal languages of the Jews from the mid-nineteenth century also became a part of a new secular public sphere, expressed especially in the proliferation and dissemination of newspapers in Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-Arabic; Jews in MENA also participated in the Hebrew revival movement, by publishing articles in Haskalah newspapers in Europe.<sup>43</sup> Though it varied from place to place,

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*among Muslims: Communities in the Precolonial Middle East* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 180–184; on rabbinic criticism of Jews frequenting Muslim owned coffeehouses in Tripoli, see Harvey E. Goldberg and Claudio G. Segre, “Holding on to Both Ends: Religious Continuity and Change in the Libya Jewish Community, 1860–1949,” *Maghreb Review* 14, 3–4 (1989): 170.

40 For a critical discussion of theories about the public sphere in Muslim societies, see the introduction in Armando Salvatore and Mark LeVine (eds.), *Religion, Social Practice, and Contested Hegemonies: Reconstructing the Public Sphere in Muslim Majority Societies* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 1–17; Dale F. Eickelman and Armando Salvatore, “The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities,” *European Journal of Sociology* 43 (2002): 92–115.

41 S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129, 1 (2000): 1–29; Dale F. Eickelman, “Islam and the Languages of Modernity,” *Daedalus* 129, 1 (2000): 119–135.

42 Joëlle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937–1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 87–88.

43 Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Lit-*



French became the language of modernity for many Jews,<sup>44</sup> especially because of the network of schools established by the Alliance Israélite Universelle; after its first school was opened in Morocco in 1862 they expanded throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>45</sup> Alliance schools, which promoted French language and culture, proliferated throughout MENA; its teachers often came from one part of the Mediterranean Basin, were trained in Paris, then dispatched to other parts of the Mediterranean.<sup>46</sup> Their network of schools further expanded in countries under French colonial rule, with the exception of Algeria, where, from 1870, Jews were French citizens and often attended state schools. English competed with French, especially in Egypt and Iraq which were under British colonial rule. At the Shammash high school in Baghdad, the language of instruction was English, though the Alliance schools continued to offer a French education and attract students.<sup>47</sup> Education in European languages not only highlighted differences between Jews and non-Jews, but also sharpened generational divisions within Jewish communities, and transformed gender relations at home and in society.

The Alliance is sometimes blamed for sowing divisions between Muslims and Jews, or for being an instrument of imperialism because it was attached to or identified with the language or culture of dominant colonial powers.<sup>48</sup> Yet in places of French colonial rule, the French language also became asso-

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*erature*, 26, 45–48; Joseph Chetrit, “Moda’ut ḥadashah la-anomaliyut ve-le-lashon—niṣanehah shel tenu’at hasqala be-Maroco be-sof ha-me’a ha-19,” *Miqqedem Umiyyam* 2 (1986): 129–168; idem, “*Haskala* hébraïque et *haskala* judéo-arabe à Tunis à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Entre orient et occident: Juifs et Musulmans en Tunisie* (Paris: Éditions de l’éclat, 2007), 289–320; Joseph Chetrit, “La question linguistique dans la presse judéo-arabe de Tunis à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in Claude Nataf (ed.), *De Tunis à Paris: Mélanges à la mémoire de Paul Sebag* (Paris: Éditions de l’éclat, 2008), 47–71.

44 For the influence of French on Judeo-Arabic, the hybridization of Jewish languages, and the development of bilingualism in North Africa, see Joseph Chetrit, “L’influence du français dans les langues judéo-arabes d’Afrique du Nord,” in *Judaïsme d’Afrique du Nord aux XIX<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècles: Histoire, société et culture* (Jerusalem: Institut Ben-Zvi, 1980), 125–159; for a case study of Meknes, see idem, *Diglossie, hybridation et diversité intra-linguistique: Études socio-pragmatique sur les langues juives, le judéo-Arabe et le judéo-berbère* (Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2007), 431–460.

45 Michael M. Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862–1962* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

46 Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*; Frances Malino, “*Institutrices* in the Metropole and the Maghreb: A Comparative Perspective,” *Historical Reflections* 32, 1 (2006): 129–142.

47 Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 80–81.

48 Abitbol, *Le passé d’une discorde*, 220–228.

ciated with the “modern,” public sector to which Muslims might also aspire. Under colonial rule, French became a vehicle for advancement. It is certain that Jews saw the value of modern education in a European language, and in the language of the colonizer, which, as a minority they realized could give them an edge over Muslims;<sup>49</sup> the gap between French-educated Jews and Muslims was also noticed and commented on by Muslim intellectuals. Even more radically, education for women in European languages was seen as a way to acquire Western ways and manners, which was important for the marriage market or for new forms of work and sociability in public spaces that were transforming gender roles. Jewish girls, along with boys, acquired modern education in various kinds of schools, not only of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, but also in state schools, as in Algeria and Iraq, Italian schools in Libya, or Christian and missionary schools, as was the case in Egypt. Jewish women also acquired vocational skills in schools, which they used in their expanding public roles in the workplace.<sup>50</sup> If Muslim nationalists criticized the willingness of Jews to attend French and other foreign schools, it was also recognized that Jews were conduits of modernity that was facilitated by modern education in European languages, and for some Muslims, this may have provided a model or incentive to also become modern and even address the question of changing gender roles.<sup>51</sup> In some places in Egypt, Iraq, and Morocco, Muslims, though in small numbers, enrolled in AIU schools.<sup>52</sup> French education was also seen by Muslims as important cultural capital in Egypt, as it was the *lingua franca* of the business community from the late nineteenth century on and was essential for working in the private economic sector. In Egypt, therefore, Muslims attended French schools, including Christian missionary schools together with Egyptian Christians and Jews.<sup>53</sup> The gap in the modern literacy of Jewish men and women

49 Sara Reguer, “The World of Women,” in *The Jews of the Middle East*, 242–243; Reeva Spector Simon, “Europe in the Middle East,” in *The Jews of the Middle East*, 24; Keith Walters, “Education for Jewish Girls in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Tunis and the Spread of French in Tunisia,” in Emily Benichou Gottreich and Daniel J. Schroeter (eds.), *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 270–271.

50 Rachel Simon, *Change within Tradition among Jewish Women in Libya* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 99–102, 111–153; Krämer, *Jews in Modern Egypt*, 38, 80–81, 91, 192.

51 Walters, “Education for Jewish Girls,” 278.

52 In Tanta, Egypt, for example: Krämer, *Jews in Modern Egypt*, 111.

53 Frédéric Abécassis, “L’enseignement du français en Egypte dans les années 1920: une nébuleuse à plusieurs degrés de francité.” *Documents pour l’histoire du français langue*

relative to the Muslim population accelerated under colonial rule, but did not, however, cause Muslims to reject the advantages of a modern, European education, but rather, to decry the growing disparity between Muslims and Jews.

Although Muslims and Jews became increasingly divided politically during the course of the twentieth century, the educated elite and intelligentsia of both communities participated and communicated in new forms of public discourse, in the writing and publication of newspapers and books, and by engaging in debates in the public sphere. While in most Arabic-speaking regions, local Jewish dialects remained, the status of Judeo-Arabic as the communal language was challenged by modern education. Judeo-Arabic was modernized in places, as newspapers and the printing press began to publish works. A similar observation could be made of Judeo-Spanish. In colonial North Africa, French language newspapers were becoming the official organs of the Jewish communities. Alongside Jewish languages, European languages became public languages, with the multiplication of newspapers of various political persuasions.<sup>54</sup> Jewish-owned newspapers in French engaged in debate with Muslims who also wrote in French-language newspapers.

For Jews in Egypt and especially Iraq, modern Arabic was also a public language of the Jews. Historically, literary Arabic written in Arabic script had rarely been the language of the Jews. This exclusion of the Jews from a modern Arabic education was perpetuated during colonial rule in the Maghrib, because the French were anxious to maintain the distinctions between ethno-religious groups, while the Jews saw European languages as “modern,” and Jewish schools paid little or no attention to Arabic. It was only after independence in Morocco, when the Alliance became known locally as the *Ittihad Maroc* and was partially subsidized by the Moroccan government, that the Arabic curriculum was mandated by the government and integrated into the Jewish educational system.<sup>55</sup> The situation in the Arab Mashriq, or East, was somewhat different. As Arabic speakers redefined their identities amid the rapid changes in the late Ottoman period, a number of Jews participated in the *nahḍa*, the renaissance of Arabic letters, and were educated in Arabic in Beirut and Cairo. Arabic was taught in the Alliance schools in the Arab Middle East, especially Iraq.

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*étrangère ou seconde* 27 (2001): 97–114; idem, “Approche d’un champ: l’enseignement étranger en Égypte, d’après la statistique scolaire de l’Égypte, 1921–1951,” *Égypte/Monde arabe*, Première série, 18–19 (1994): 169–196; Beinín, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*, 50.

54 For an excellent overview of the Jewish press in MENA, see Rachel Simon, “Journalism,” *EJW*, 3:33–39.

55 Laskier, *The Alliance*, 334.

In polyglot Egypt, with perhaps the most diverse community of the Middle East, a result of waves of immigration from the late nineteenth century, Arabic competed with a multitude of languages used by educated Jews—French, Italian, Ladino, etc. Italian and then increasingly French were the main languages of the communal or Jewish schools. English gained headway from 1882, following the British occupation of Egypt. With the plethora of communal, Christian, and missionary schools that Jews attended, Arabic began to lose ground as the spoken language of the educated, but remained dominant among the Karaites and poorer Jews of Cairo and provincial towns.<sup>56</sup>

However, as the nationalist movement gained momentum in the interwar years—the British granted nominal independence in 1922, though they maintained the upper hand in Egypt for many years—literary Arabic lingered on as some Jews participated in the growing Arab public sphere in Egypt. The example of the last Arabic language Jewish newspaper, *al-Shams* (published from 1934 to 1938), is indicative of this participation in the public sphere. The owner and editor of the newspaper, Saʿd Yaʿqūb Malkī, used the newspaper as a vehicle to represent the Jewish community to the Egyptian public and government; he supported an Egyptian reformist agenda as well as Zionism while emphasizing the adoption of Arabic by the Jewish community and integration into Egyptian society.<sup>57</sup> Some Jewish intellectuals, political activists, and community leaders sometimes supported both Zionism and Egyptian nationalism or joined the nationalist Wafd party.<sup>58</sup>

The increasingly contradictory agenda of supporting both Zionism and Arab nationalism demonstrates not only the mounting tensions between Muslims and Jews, but also underscored Jewish participation in the public sphere and in political space that would have been unimaginable in the nineteenth century. With the notable exception of Iraq, Jews remained largely on the sidelines of nationalist politics in MENA, uncertain of their future and in some places, alienated by the Islamist reformist agenda of the nationalist and independence movements. Further complicating their participation was the conflict in Palestine and the increasing linkage, real or imagined, of Jews to Zionism. Yet we can also note that the level of participation in nationalist politics by the population as a whole remained limited, and in some spheres of political life Jews

56 Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt*, 26–29.

57 Lital Levy, “al-Shams,” *EJIW*, 4:341–342.

58 Ruth Kimche, *Şiyonut be-şel ha-piramidot: ha-tenu’ah ha-şiyonit be-Miṣrayim, 1918–1948* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2009), 28–30, 166–169; Krämer, *Jews in Modern Egypt*, 28; Beinun, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*, 33–35, 46.

participated disproportionately to their numbers. Take, for example, the case of communism, a kind of secular middle ground, where in theory one's religious background is irrelevant. In Iraq, Egypt, and Tunisia Jews were very active in communist parties, and in Egypt and Tunisia in particular, were among some of its founders and leaders.<sup>59</sup>

Some Jews went further than the rejection of Zionism that was characteristic of communist parties; in Iraq in 1945, Jewish communists were the leaders and founders of the anti-Zionist political organization, the League for Combating Zionism, and its journal, *al-'Usba* (The league).<sup>60</sup> In Morocco, on the eve of independence, Jews joined Muslims in forming a new organization, al-Wifaq, which announced in the main hall of the Chamber of Commerce in Casablanca, their expression of national unity and solidarity regardless of religion; in 1956, al-Wifaq denounced the French, British, and Israeli aggression against Egypt, and disseminated its statement to the public in Judeo-Arabic, Arabic, and French, symbolically representing the communal languages of each religious community respectively, while French represented the modern public language shared by Muslims and Jews.<sup>61</sup>

Even in the participation of Jews in Zionist parties, especially those active in Egypt and Tunisia in the interwar years, the very debates and denunciations that Zionist activism engendered, not only between Muslims and Jews but also internally within the Jewish community, demonstrated the extent to which Jews and Muslims had become a part of a common public sphere. Polemics and debates, for example, were exchanged in 1948 between an Arabic daily newspaper, *al-Nahḍa* and a French Jewish daily, *Le Petit Matin*, over the question of the inclusion of Jews in the civil service in Tunisia; the polemics were exacerbated by the Israeli-Arab conflict.<sup>62</sup> This is not to deny that Zionism eventually

59 Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 141–161, 179–182; Habib Kazdaghli, *Ṭaṭawwur al-ḥaraka al-Shu-yū'yya bi-Tūnis, 1919–1943* (Manūba: Manshūrāt Kuliyat al-Ādāb, Jāmi'at Tūnis, 1992); Irmgard Schrand, *Jews in Egypt: Communists and Citizens* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004); Beinon, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*, 142–148.

60 Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 161–177.

61 On al-Wifaq, see Mohammed Hatmi, "al-Jāmā'at al-yahūdiya al-maghribiyya wa-al-khiyār al-sa'b bayn nidā' al-shahyūniya wa-rihān al-Maghrib al-mustiqill: 1947–1961" (state doctoral diss., Université Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah-Fès, 2007), 429–435; Mohammad Kenbib, "al-Wifāq," *EJW* 4:608; Boum, *Memoires of Absence*, 114–115. Thanks to Paul Dahan, President of the Centre de la Culture Judéo-Marocaine (Bruxelles) for giving me a copy of this declaration.

62 Mohsen Hamli, "The 1948 Controversy over the Accession of Jews to the Caïdal Corps in Tunisia," *Journal of North African Studies* 11, no. 4 (2006): 435–445.

became irreconcilable to the Arab public, and indeed was eventually banned in independent Arab states, but if we think of the public sphere as a space where political opinion can be formed and debated, then Zionist politics was as much a part of the public, political realm as Jews joining forces with Muslims in communist movements, labor unions, or nationalist parties.

To the extent that one thinks of the public sphere as political space, Iraq in the interwar years offers the most striking example of a developing common ground. Despite the multi-ethnic sectarianism, perhaps more pronounced than anywhere else in the Arabic-speaking world, there was also a thriving, non-sectarian nationalism in Iraq, where Jews articulated an identity in the Arab public sphere.<sup>63</sup> Iraq was unique in the sense that most Jews there were citizens of an independent Arab nation state, were educated in modern Arabic in their communal schools, attended state secondary schools in disproportionate numbers, were actively engaged in the Arabic-language press, letters, and arts, and worked in various public institutions. Jews published newspapers in Arabic, notably *al-Miṣbāḥ* and *al-Ḥāṣid*, that also had Muslims contributors, while some Jewish authors, feeling a part of the larger pan-Arab issues, also published articles in Egyptian and Lebanese newspapers.<sup>64</sup> A growing number of Jews participated in and supported both Iraqi and pan-Arab nationalism; they were clearly staking their future as citizens of an independent Iraq and defining themselves as Arabs. Even in the 1940s, as tensions grew over the issue of Palestine, a larger than ever Jewish public was being educated in Arabic and participating in the Iraqi and Arab public sphere.

Iraq was, in many respects, a unique case, but it also raises “what if” questions about other parts of MENA. It is no coincidence that mainly among members of the Iraqi Jewish diaspora, including second-generation immigrants, the term “Arab Jews” is used to describe the Jews of Arab lands and in this manner they assign an identity for contemporary political reasons that did not exist in most places in the past, at least in the way Jews represented themselves.<sup>65</sup> Yet Iraq, with the partial exception of Egypt, presents a somewhat different picture than the ideational construct of the Arab Jew. Nowhere else were there so many Jews involved in the modern nationalist project. And in Egypt, with its very hybrid cosmopolitan Jewish population, many Jews did

63 Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 6–7.

64 *Ibid.*, 24–37.

65 See Lital Levy, “Historicizing the Concept of Arab Jews in the *Mashriq*,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 98, 4 (2008): 452–469; Emily Benichou Gottreich, “Historicizing the Concept of Arab Jews in the Maghrib,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 98, 4 (2008): 433–451.

not become Egyptian citizens. No more than 10,000 of Egypt's 80,000 Jews held Egyptian citizenship, about half were stateless, while 30,000 were citizens of foreign states. The secular-liberal ideology that accompanied the 1919 nationalist uprising that promoted citizenship for all attracted some Jews to become citizens, but Egyptian independence in 1922 was limited by the continued British presence and maintenance of European privileges. The perpetuation of communal courts, and the continuation of mixed courts where foreign citizens still retained the right to adjudicate, helped preserve the legal divisions and separations that worked against the fuller membership of Jews in the Egyptian nation.<sup>66</sup> Had there been a similar experience of living as full citizens in an independent Arab country as there was in the interwar years in Iraq, perhaps Jews elsewhere might have become a part of the Arab public sphere. By the time the Maghrib had achieved independence and ended colonial rule, the state of Israel was born and the age of mass emigration had already begun.

If colonialism in the Maghrib precluded the possibility of Jews becoming a part of an Arab public sphere or identifying themselves as Arabs and members of Arab nations, it did not prevent the development of a public sphere where Jews and Muslims participated in a common Arab cultural milieu. Perhaps the best example of this is in the world of MENA music, certainly an important space that could transcend religious and ethnic boundaries. Before modern times, music making and performance functioned as a kind of special common ground for Muslim-Jewish interaction. In many places in MENA Jewish musicians were disproportionate in numbers to their Muslim counterparts. While Jews made music for the internal communal world and in communal languages, such as for the liturgy in synagogues, they also produced and performed music of many different local genres for Muslim patrons, in palaces and the homes of the wealthy, and in coffeehouses throughout the Ottoman Empire, which reached a public beyond the elite. Orchestras and musical ensembles were also sometimes mixed, with Muslim and Jewish musicians performing together. Essaouira, for example, was known for its Jewish performers and artists, but also had mixed ensembles that played for Muslims and Jews in the public sphere. Ironically, this shared space of "Judeo-Arab" music as it is still called in France today reached its apogee in the colonial era. Modernity and the public sphere under colonial rule greatly expanded the spaces and venues for musical performance and production, both instrumental and vocal, and also contributed to the development of new genres.

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66 Beinin, *Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*, 6–7, 36–38.

Muslims and Jews participated on common ground, not only in the cafés, nightclubs, concert and dance halls, and weddings, but in the development of a recording industry, film industry, and in radio broadcasting.<sup>67</sup> In Iraq, Salāḥ al-Kuwaytī launched a modern school of Arabic music, and together with his brother Dā'ūd helped develop the national Iraqi Radio Orchestra, which was broadcast from the royal palace in the 1930s.<sup>68</sup> In Algeria especially, the collaboration of Muslims and Jews was crucial for the preservation of a common cultural heritage; new styles developed from the cross-fertilization of music across the Mediterranean, and were performed and recorded in the many new public spaces.<sup>69</sup>

Yet the expanding public realm of musical performance and production also, like politics, produced tensions between Muslims and Jews. This was perhaps most poignantly expressed by the 1961 assassination in Constantine of Cheikh Raymond Leyris, the dominant figure in the Algerian music scene. The common Muslim-Jewish performance and production of music remains a subject of memory long after the period of mass emigration, not only in MENA, but in the contested spaces among emigrant communities, both Muslim and Jewish, from France to Israel.<sup>70</sup>

Nowhere is this more evident—to return, so to speak, to my place of origin—than in Essaouira. Long in decline, dilapidated, and rarely the destination of tourists, it has in recent years been revived by the massive annual Gnawa music festival and in new hotels along the beachfront and traditional houses converted into hotels (riads, *riyāds*) within the walled town, often in homes of the casbah formerly owned by wealthy Jews accommodating the many visitors. The new tolerance, represented by the blending of African, Moroccan, and world music at the festival, is promoted alongside the official and more elitist representation of the *Convivencia* expressed in the common Muslim-Jewish heritage of the Andalusian and North African musical tradition, that was much a part of the town in the era when there was a thriving Jewish community, and

67 Edwin Seroussi, "Music," *EJIW*, 3:501–519.

68 Edwin Seroussi, "Salah and Daud al-Kuweiti," *EJIW*, 3:194–195.

69 Hadj Miliani, "Crosscurrents: Trajectories of Algerian Jewish Artists and Men of Culture since the End of the Nineteenth Century," in *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa*, 177–187.

70 Hisham D. Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2014), 260–261, 281–289; Ted Swedenburg, "Against Hybridity: The Case of Enrico Macias/Gaston Ghrenassia," in Rebecca L. Stein and Ted Swedenburg (eds.), *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 231–256, 328–334.



since 2003 publicly celebrated in the Festival des Andalousies Atlantiques.<sup>71</sup> During the much more massive and popular Gnawa festival—the “Moroccan Woodstock” as some have called it<sup>72</sup>—the Judeo-Arab musical tradition takes a back seat, relegated to lectures for small audiences in the *riyāds*, as the sounds of the rhythmic, stringed *gumbri* and chants of the Afro-Moroccan Gnawa performers waft through the streets of the casbah from the stage set up at the square where Mr. Hatchwell, already in 1981 the remnant of a bygone age, once owned his modest hotel.

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71 Aomar Boum, “The Performance of Convivencia: Communities of Tolerance and the Reification of Toleration,” *Religion Compass* 6, no. 3 (2012): 180–182.

72 Aidi, *Rebel Music*, 145–146, 148, 152.

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**PART 2**

*Arabic and Its Alternatives*





## Standardized Arabic as a Post-*Nahḍa* Common Ground: Mattai bar Paulus and His Use of Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni

*T.C. Baarda*

The need to have a common ground is most obvious where members of a minority community must access the arenas defined by members of a majority community. But common grounds are present in all situations in which different communities meet, and even in intra-communal situations it can be necessary to negotiate common means of communication. In this paper, I look at a case in which members of different branches of Syriac Christianity in mandatory Iraq communicated with each other; I examine the ways they used the Arabic and Syriac languages, and how this varied according to the functions of their language and their audiences.

While Arabic is by far the most dominant language in the Middle East, the linguistic environment in the region is not straightforward at all and has never been. Diglossia is a well-known phenomenon, as is the existence of minority languages for both Muslim and non-Muslim communities.<sup>1</sup> What makes the situation even more complicated is the fact that most minority Christian communities have a liturgical language that is normally not used outside church contexts, but that does play a significant role in the expression of the community's identity.

This linguistic complexity is certainly the case for Syriac Christians, the group of Christians central to this paper. The Syriac Christians formed a significant minority in Mandate Iraq, especially in the northern part. Apart from Neo-Aramaic, which is a group of dialects spoken and written by members of the community until today, they used the liturgical language of Classical Syriac.

One particular case is central to this paper: the letters from the Syriac Orthodox deacon Mattai bar Paulus of Mosul, to Alphonse Mingana, who was originally a Chaldean from a village close to the city of Zakho (modern northern Iraq) and who later became known as an Orientalist in Britain. Mattai, a dea-

1 For an introduction to the phenomenon of diglossia, see Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 189–208.

con, worked as a scribe for his church and produced numerous manuscripts. Mingana, as an Orientalist, was his customer and a personal friend. The men were from different branches of Syriac Christianity. A large number of letters from Mattai to Mingana have been preserved and are available in the Special Collections of the Cadbury Research Library in Birmingham, England. Combined with a biography that was made about Mattai by the Syriac Orthodox author Nematallah Denno, we can make interesting assertions about the various choices Mattai made when communicating with Mingana and in his other writings.

In Mattai's writings and his biography, he uses Arabic the most, rather than Syriac or Neo-Aramaic. This is not very surprising. For many centuries Arabic had had an important position with the Syriac Orthodox Christians, especially as a written language, and in certain places it had even replaced Aramaic as the spoken vernacular.<sup>2</sup> But Arabic had never replaced Syriac and Aramaic completely: it has always had a position alongside Syriac and Neo-Aramaic, and it is this position that interests me most: what made an author decide to favor Arabic over their "own" communal Syriac or Aramaic? And from another perspective: to what extent did the author's use of Arabic correspond to the use of Arabic in the Muslim environment?

Using Arabic was a choice that in itself makes perfect sense from the perspective of Mattai bar Paulus, as a Syriac Orthodox Christian in Mosul he used the language that he would normally use. But the documents do not show the usage of Arabic alone. In specific places Classical Syriac is used as well, and even more important, we see the use of Garshuni, which is the practice of writing Arabic in the Syriac alphabet. The mix of different languages and scripts presents us with an ideal case to assess to what extent Christians, who had Arabic at their disposal but who also had their own communal language, communicated on common grounds with their Muslim neighbors and their fellow Christians from other denominations. The way Mattai and Nematallah use Arabic is just as interesting. A considerable number of scholars have pointed out that the *nahḏa*, the literary revival of the Arabic language that began in the nineteenth century, is related to the linguistic integration of Christians into the rest of the Arab world. Evidence for this is, however, mainly restricted to Lebanon and Syria. Is this phenomenon, which in this article I refer to as the *nahḏa* hypothesis, also true for the texts we consider here?

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2 John Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The Case of the Jacobites in an Age of Transition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 22.

Even though the current case of an early twentieth-century Syriac Orthodox scribe in Mosul cannot be taken as representative of all Christian communities in the Middle East, my aim in this article is not only to highlight the case of Mattai bar Paulus, but also to show that Mattai's case can serve as an example by which we can study the process in which Christians in the Middle East used Arabic and other languages during the nineteenth and twentieth century to create a common means of communication.

After an introduction to the material, I briefly discuss the documents that form the basis of this paper. I follow this with a comparison to developments in Iraqi church inscriptions, where features in the material call for a discussion of the notions of Middle Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and the significance of Garshuni; I address these in a separate section. In the last part of the article I discuss the common grounds between Muslims and Christians on the one hand, and among Christians from different denominations on the other. As I argue, Mattai appears to be in a different position than that of other contemporary Syriac Christians.

### **Twentieth-Century Manuscript Production: The Scribe Mattai bar Paulus and His Letters to Mingana**

Mattai had always been based in Mosul, the most important city of northern Mesopotamia that was incorporated, during the years after World War I, into the new state of Iraq. Northern Mesopotamia, known for having a majority of Kurdish inhabitants, is in fact a place of great religious and ethnic variety. Harry Charles Luke, who worked for the British Colonial Office at the time of the British mandate in Iraq, shows that the British had also seen this when they entered Mesopotamia: "There are few parts of the world (outside the Caucasus, than which there is no more intricate mosaic of races) so baffling to the ethnographic mapmaker as the district which was once known as the Vilayet of Mosul."<sup>3</sup> While the vast majority of the population was Muslim, both Kurdish and Arab, all branches of Syriac Christianity were present in Mosul and the surroundings.

Compared to cities like Beirut and Damascus, Mosul was a relatively peripheral city in the Ottoman Arab world, at least with regard to its intellectual activity. Pierre-Jean Luizard noted that in the latest phase of Ottoman history, Mesopotamia, and especially Mosul, lagged behind in comparison to other

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3 Harry Charles Luke, *Mosul and its Minorities* (London: Hopkinson, 1925), 13.

places in the Arab world; he wrote that the intellectual elite had yet to rise, though it had already developed in the Levant and in Egypt.<sup>4</sup> While Mosul was an important regional center, as well as an important place of Syriac Christianity, it was not central to the new intellectual developments spreading across the rest of the Arab world.

It was in Mosul that Mattai bar Paulus<sup>5</sup> (1861–1947) was active. He was a deacon (*shammās* in Arabic and *mshamshōnō* in Syriac) of the Syriac Orthodox Church, and in this function he worked as a scribe. We do not know much about him. We know him mainly through Alphonse Mingana, to whom Mattai delivered a large quantity of manuscripts. A considerable number of these were produced by Mattai on Mingana's request. Mingana mentions Mattai a few times in his publications, most notably in his catalogue of the Syriac manuscripts in his own collection.<sup>6</sup> In 1959, the Dominican scholar J.M. Fiey, who stayed in Mosul for a long time, mentions him first in his description of the city's Christian buildings. He calls him a "copiste jacobite fameux" (famous Jacobite copyist) and mentions that he met with him in person.<sup>7</sup> Later, in 1967, Fiey writes, in the context of a manuscript that Mingana used in one of his works, that Mattai was a deacon whose full name was "Matti b. Paulos, b. Na'mat-Allah, b. 'Awdicho', b. Potros" and that he used to work for Mingana. It is especially interesting that he mentions that Mattai did not know any foreign language.<sup>8</sup>

Mattai is mentioned in the *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences* by the late Syriac Orthodox patriarch Ignatius Afram 1 Bar-

4 Pierre-Jean Luizard, *La formation de l'Irak contemporain: le rôle politique des ulémas chiïtes à la fin de la domination ottomane et au moment de la construction de l'Etat irakien* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1991), 81 and 84.

5 Mattai's name has an abundance of forms, and Mattai himself did not use the same form consistently. We will see some of the names that he used himself later on. In western scholarly literature he is most commonly known as Matti/Mattai bar Paulus and Matthew, son of Paul.

6 A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts, now in the Possession of the Trustees of the Woodbroke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham*, part 1: *Syriac and Garshūni manuscripts* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1933).

7 J.M. Fiey, *Mossoul Chrétienne: Essai sur l'histoire, l'archéologie et l'état actuel des monuments chrétiens de la ville de Mossoul* (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1959), 30. Fiey, a well-known Catholic priest and scholar, wrote this description after a stay of twenty years in Iraq. While the book was meant to describe the Christian monuments of Mosul, it also gives interesting information about the situation of the Christians during his visit (1939–1959).

8 J.M. Fiey, "Auteur et date de la chronique d'arbèles," *L'orient syrien, revue trimestrielle d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Eglises de langue syriaque, publiée avec la collaboration du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* 12 (1967): 269.

soum, who writes that “[d]eacon Matthew Paul transcribed more than forty volumes of different subjects, including commentaries on the Pentateuch, the-ology, ecclesiastical jurisprudence, history, literature and asceticism. They are preserved in different libraries. He is still living and has passed his eighty-sixth year of age.”<sup>9</sup> He is also mentioned in a chapter on Syriac scribes, at the end of a long list. Mattai is the only deacon in the list, the others held higher ranks in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and he is the only one of whom Barsoum writes more than just his name and year. J.F. Coakley writes that the number of manuscripts that Barsoum ascribes to him, forty, is too low.<sup>10</sup>

As stated, Mattai belonged to the Syriac Orthodox Church, while Mingana was originally a Chaldean. Both are Syriac churches which, together with the Syriac Catholic Church and the Church of the East, use Classical Syriac as their liturgical language. Without going into the historical or theological details, it is important to mention that the Syriac Orthodox Church belongs to the western branch of Syriac Christianity, and the Chaldean Church belongs to the eastern branch. This difference is significant in relation to the Syriac language, which is written in three different but similar scripts. The oldest of the three, *eṣṙangelō*, is used by both branches, but the younger two are specific to the church: West Syriac Christianity has a script called *serṭō*, and the eastern branch has a script that is called *madhnḥōyō*, which simply translates to “eastern”—therefore it is usually referred to as East Syriac script. The use of the scripts therefore reveals to which community the writer belongs, even if the text would otherwise not reveal it.<sup>11</sup> Besides a difference in script, there is also a difference in the tradition of pronunciation, but because this is not terribly relevant in relation to written material, I do not go deeper into that.<sup>12</sup>

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- 9 Ignatius Aphram 1 Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, trans. and ed. Matti Moosa (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003), 22. There is a translation of Ighnāṭiyūs Afrām Barṣawm, *Al-lu’lu’ al-manthūr fi tārikḥ al-’ulūm wa-l-ādāb al-suryāniyya* (Aleppo, 1956) which I did not have access to.
- 10 J.F. Coakley, “A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 75 (1993), 113. Coakley must be right, as there are already fifty manuscripts in the Mingana collection (see below).
- 11 This is, for instance, apparent in modern-day Ankawa, a Christian city close to the Iraqi Kurdish capital of Erbil, where many signs on the street have three languages: Kurdish, Arabic, and Aramaic. The Aramaic is printed in East Syriac script. Though upon inquiry people say that none of the Syriac branches is favored, the script reveals that the Eastern branch is dominant.
- 12 It is, however, important for the transcription of Syriac words. In this paper, the West Syriac pronunciation has been followed consistently in transcriptions, which is characterized by the use of the long *ō* for the East Syriac long *ā* and for the merging of *b* and *v* in *b* as well as *p* and *f* in *f*.

There are many links between Mattai and Alphonse Mingana (c. 1870–1937). Mingana was originally a Chaldean Christian who lived close to Zakho in modern Iraq, but in 1913 he broke with his church and moved to Britain.<sup>13</sup> In Britain he became known as an Orientalist with an extensive collection of manuscripts that he collected during his travels to the Middle East and from manuscript sellers in Europe and the Middle East. Mattai was thus one of the people who provided Mingana with manuscripts.

In his *Catalogue*, Mingana was normally not very informative about the provenance of the manuscripts that were part of his collection, but he gave information about the age of the manuscripts and the copyists, usually by providing a summary of the colophon. Mattai always made himself known in his colophons, and thus we know that he produced about fifty of the manuscripts in this collection—part of these were simply bought by Mingana, but a considerable number were copied especially by Mattai for Mingana's collection; Mingana acknowledged this in various places in his *Catalogue*.<sup>14</sup> This is probably what Fiey meant when he writes that Mattai worked for Mingana (see above). A few manuscripts copied by Mattai are further to be found in the John Rylands Library in Manchester (United Kingdom); these were brought there by Mingana. The Syriac manuscripts in Manchester were cataloged by J.F. Coakley, who identifies twenty-five manuscripts of this collection as acquisitions by Mingana. Four of these were copied by Mattai, but none on Mingana's request.<sup>15</sup>

13 The sources concerning this dispute are obscure and partly contradict each other, but for our present purpose it is interesting that Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje mentions, in correspondence with Theodor Nöldeke in 1925 many years after his move to Britain in 1913, that the Catholics did not want to be in contact with him anymore. C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Abdoel-Ghaffaar: Sources for the History of Islamic Studies in the Western World*, vol. 1: *Orientalism and Islam: The Letters of C. Snouck Hurgronje to Th. Nöldeke from the Tübingen University Library*, published by P.Sj. van Koningsveld (Leiden: Documentatiebureau Islam-Christendom, Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid, 1985), 335. There is an indication that Mingana had developed positive feelings toward the Syriac Orthodox Church: right after his election, he writes about their patriarch Ignatius Afram I Barsoum, that he is the “highest ecclesiastical dignity found in this world.” Cadbury Research Library, DA66/1/3/5 (“Correspondence concerning the Church of Malabar”), letter from Mingana to Barsoum, dated 3 January 1933. The letter was written in English instead of Arabic or Syriac because at that time Mingana was not able to use his right hand, while for English a typewriter could be used. Another letter, dated 8 December 1932, expresses his fear that “a great number of the members of the Syrian Church of India will join the Church of Rome.”

14 See for instance Mingana, *Catalogue*, 1:429.

15 Coakley, “A Catalogue,” 112–113.



Mingana is not the only manuscript collector who commissioned or purchased Mattai's manuscripts. Coakley's catalog reveals that part of the Syriac manuscripts in the John Rylands Library, the manuscripts of Mingana's patron James Rendel Harris, were sold to Harvard University in 1905.<sup>16</sup> A quick search in the digital catalog of the Harvard libraries shows that some of these manuscripts were copied by Mattai, long before Mingana went to Britain.<sup>17</sup>

Mattai cannot be found listed in the indices of four important manuscript catalogs that describe Syriac manuscripts in various ecclesiastical libraries in and close to Mosul. The catalogs describe libraries from different denominations, including the Syriac Orthodox.<sup>18</sup>

Mingana's personal archive in the Cadbury Research Library in Birmingham contains a vast amount of personal correspondence in English, French, and German, mainly with other scholars around Europe and the United States.<sup>19</sup> One folder of the *Mingana papers* contains a good number of documents in Arabic and Syriac, and except a number of letters from the Syriac Orthodox patriarch Barsoum (written in Syriac) most of the documents are letters from Mattai bar Paulus. Only the letters from Mattai to Mingana are preserved—from the letters that went to the other direction nothing is available.<sup>20</sup> All the letters are in Arabic and in Arabic script.

In this article, I consider the material in two parts. First, there is the large amount of correspondence between Mattai bar Paulus and Alphonse Mingana.

16 Ibid., 107.

17 Many thanks to Dr. Jan van Ginkel (Leiden University), who mentioned the existence of Mattai's manuscripts among Rendel Harris' manuscripts. He also pointed out that documents on Mattai might also be present in the Rendel Harris' correspondence, of which at least part is available in the Special Collections of the John Rylands Library.

18 *Fahāris al-makhtūṭāt al-suryānīyya fī l-ʿIrāq*, part one, *Maktabāt al-Mawṣil wa-aṭrāfihā*, and part two, *Makhtūṭāt ʿAqra, dayr mār Mattā, Duhūk, kanīsat mār Kūrīs fī Barʿalla, muṭranīyya al-suryān al-urthūduks fī l-Mawṣil* (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿa al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī l-ʿIrāqī, 1977–1981). The indices of these volumes, which were prepared by the Iraqi scholar Benjamin Haddad, include an index of scribes. The other two catalogs are Bihnām Dāniyāl, *Fahāris al-makhtūṭāt al-suryānīyya fī Barʿalla* (Duhok: Dār al-Mashriq al-Thaqāfiyya, 2013) and Bihnām Sūnī, *Fahāris makhtūṭāt bīʿat wālidat Allāh Maryam—al-ṭāhira fī Baghdadēdā—Qaraqōsh* (Duhok: Dār al-Mashriq al-Thaqāfiyya, 2010), both kindly provided by Father Shlīmūn Iṣhō Khōshābā at Dār al-Mashriq in Duhok, Iraq.

19 The fonds is called Papers of Alphonse Mingana, carrying finding number DA66. Its comprehensive inventory can be found in the library's excellent online catalog.

20 This is probably because Mingana wrote to Mattai in Arabic or Syriac script, so that it was not possible to produce carbon copies of the letters, as he (or his secretary) did with letters that he wrote in European languages.

Second, the *Mingana papers* contain a document written by the prominent Syriac Orthodox writer Nematallah Denno.

### Mattai's Letters to Mingana

Almost a hundred letters from Mattai to Mingana are present in the *Mingana papers*. They are dated from 1926 to 1935, a year after Mingana's second journey to the Middle East (both the first and the second journey brought him to Mosul), and up until two years before Mingana's death. All the letters are written in Arabic. The letters were written on sheets that were usually folded in half, so that each sheet consisted of four pages to write on. Some letters consist of multiple sheets and sometimes only half a sheet is inserted. In other cases Mattai used a full sheet without folding it in half.

Mattai's handwriting is identifiable as *ruq'a*, which is an Arabic script that was probably developed during the second half of the eighteenth century in the Ottoman chancery.<sup>21</sup> *Ruq'a* is nowadays the most popular script for handwriting, especially in the Middle East (though not in North Africa). The fact that Mattai used *ruq'a* for his correspondence is not surprising, as the script had become standard for correspondence throughout the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire after first being used in the Turkish-speaking Ottoman government.<sup>22</sup> This tells us that Mattai was able to use the standard script in the same way as his Muslim contemporaries. This is interesting in light of his biography by Nematallah Denno.

The use of *ruq'a* is usually accompanied with the application of many ligatures. Because the script is utilized for daily tasks, it is often written quickly and with absence of many diacritical dots. Adam Gacek writes that *ruq'a* is never written with the auxiliary signs used to denote vowels in Arabic.<sup>23</sup>

21 Arabic has a number of different scripts, the most common are *naskh*, *nasta'liq*, *maghribi* and *ruq'a*. Printed Arabic script is usually an adaptation of *naskh*. Adam Gacek, "Ruq'a," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, ed. Kees Versteegh et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 4:98–100.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid. The Arabic script has some characters that are only distinguishable from each other by diacritical dots. The dots are a relatively late invention and while they are considered obligatory, at least in printed texts, they are often omitted in manuscripts and other handwritten material. In addition, there are auxiliary signs to indicate the short vowels, the absence of a vowel (*sukūn*), gemination (*shadda*), and the glottal stop (*hamza*). These are normally not written but are used in places to overcome ambiguity.

While the letters are generally written in Arabic, a considerable number of them contain text in Classical Syriac. The Syriac text is written, as one would expect, using the *serṭō* script of West Syriac Christians, of which Mattai's Syriac Orthodox Church is part. Syriac script is mainly used to list titles of Syriac texts and books that Mattai could provide to Mingana. The main text is never in Syriac.

A detailed examination of one of the letters reveals some interesting aspects of Mattai's use of both languages. Below is the letter sent by Mattai to Mingana on 4 October 1926 and the first letter in the collection—at that time Mingana was living in Manchester. A photograph of the letter is given and the beginning is transcribed and translated below:

موصل ٤ تشرين الاول ١٩٢٦ مانجستر  
 حضرة الاجل الاكرم الدكتور ا. منكنى المحرم  
 بعد السلام والسؤال اعرض وصلني تحريركم المورخ ٧ ايلول وشرحك صار معلوم ذكرتم رسل  
 لكم الكتب مع البوسته ونوضع عليهم عنوانكم الاعتيادي صار معلوم واليوم قومنا لكم مع  
 البوسته رزمة عدد ٢١ داخل كل واحد كتابين وعليهم ثمرات

نمره ١ كتاب دسونه دسونه  
 ٢ كتاب فوشوق انجيل يوحنا  
 ٣ كتاب ميمره د-موره نارساي وفي داخله ورقه ٢٨ فارداسو دا دن  
 ٤ كتاب ميمره د-موره نارساي واوراق قديمه لكثير

Mosul, 4 October 1926, (to) Manchester

The great and noble Doctor A. Mingana, the reverend

After a salutation and inquiry [of your well-being] we present [our letter].

I received your writing dated 7 August, and we understood your explanation. You mentioned [that you would like for us to] send the books to you by mail, and we [will] put on them your usual address, [the one] that we know. Today we arranged for you by mail two packages, each of which contains two books, carrying the numbers:

- Number 1 *Kthōbō d-sunhōdōs* (Book of the synods)  
 2 *Kthōbō Fūshōq ewangelīyōn d-Yuḥanan* (The book *Commentary on the Gospel of John*)  
 3 *Kthōbō d-mimrē d-Mōr Narsai* (Book of homilies of Mar Narsai) and therein 28 leaves *Fardaysō da-Den* (Garden of Eden), very old leaves

#### 4 *Kthōbō zqurō mlahmō* (Book of good composition)<sup>24</sup>

The transcription above is as faithful to Mattai's handwriting as possible. Auxiliary signs have only been reproduced where they were present in the original text, and the same is true for the dots above the *tā' marbūṭa* and under the *alif maqṣūra*, which are often omitted in handwritten texts. Certain features are not visible, such as the way Mattai marks numbers with a line with a little hook underneath, in the usual practice. In some cases the noun to which the number belongs is written under the number and the line, indicated in the transcription with a slash (/). The year at the top of the letter is indicated with a similar line, but the cipher indicating the thousand (١) is integrated in the line. Further note should be made of the fact that Mattai uses the western Christian era instead of the Seleucid era ("of the Greeks"), which was still in use.

Looking at the orthography, there are some peculiar features. The uppermost line of the letter tells us that it was sent to Manchester; this is written in Arabic as *مانجستر* *Mānjastir*, while the modern spelling is *مانشستر* *Mānshastir*. Mingana is addressed as a doctor, for which Mattai uses the word *دقتور* *duqtūr* instead of *دكتور* *duktūr*. These deviations from the usual practice can be explained by the age of the letters and the fact that these words were less well established than they are nowadays.

Mattai was quite consistent in writing all the diacritical dots that are necessary to distinguish a number of Arabic characters, but he often leaves out the two dots above the *tā' marbūṭa* and of the final *yā'*, for which no regularity can be found. While vowel signs were not used in this letter, a few other letters do have them on a some words. The latter fact is contrary to Gacek's statement that *ruq'a* is never written with auxiliary signs (see above), and this demonstrates that Mattai employed a special kind of *ruq'a*.

The most interesting aspect of these letters is Mattai's use of Arabic. We have seen that Mattai uses a script that was the most common among contemporary Muslims in the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire. While it can be said that the use of auxiliary signs, even sparingly, is not common practice with this script, it is clear that Mattai used them in a professional way. The orthography shows some peculiarities, but these relate to European words that were not commonly used when Mattai wrote his letters. By looking at the syntax and other grammatical aspects, we find that even this small piece of writing stimulates discussion of a number of issues.

24 All cited letters are to be found in the Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham, DA66/3, unless otherwise indicated.

In both Classical and Modern Standard Arabic grammar, plural inanimate nouns are considered feminine singular grammatically. While their forms are the same as those of animate plural nouns, they behave as feminine singular nouns in terms of agreement. We see in Mattai's texts that he does not apply this rule: plural inanimate nouns are simply treated as plurals and the agreement is as such. Interestingly, Mattai is quite consistent in carrying out this "incorrect" agreement. The first instance is the word *الكتب* *al-kuṭub* (the books); a few words later he refers to writing *عليهم* *'alayhim* (upon them), which is the preposition *'alā* with a masculine plural pronominal suffix. Standard Arabic grammar would require that one refer to them/the books using a feminine singular pronominal suffix, which would be *عليها* *'alayhā*.

There are different possibilities as to the origin of these peculiar features of Mattai's Arabic. Classical Syriac was probably the language in which Mattai wrote the most, as the vast majority of the manuscripts he copied were texts in this language. This language does not have the same rules of agreement—these are a specific feature of Arabic. Another factor relates to colloquial Arabic: in this region it is very common to ignore the agreement rules of Standard Arabic, or to apply them only sometimes. Thus Mattai's practice could also reflect, in one way or another, the colloquial Arabic of the region of which Mattai was most probably a native speaker.

While the letter consists of three pages (the third page is on the left half of the backside of the leaf), Mattai's signature is visible in the lower left corner of the photograph, after which the text continues for a few lines. Under the signature we see Mattai's name in Arabic (*الشماس متى بولوس* *al-shammās Mattā Būlūs*), and also his name in Latin characters, which can most probably be deciphered as "Matti Balis." In some other letters Mattai writes his name in Syriac as well, where it appears in various forms. In a letter dated 14 February 1928 he writes *ܡܫܡܡܫܗܘܢܐ ܡܬܝ ܒܘܠܘܫ* *Msham. Matay* with a line above the first word, which is a common way of indicating an abbreviation in Syriac manuscripts. Another form is found in a letter dated 23 August 1927, where it is *ܡܫܡܡܫܗܘܢܐ ܡܬܝ ܒܘܠܘܫ* *Mshamshōnō Matay Fawlōs*.

The *Mingana papers* contain one letter from Mattai in English. This letter is not part of the large stack of letters in Arabic, but can be found in the main collection of Mingana's correspondence, which was held, for the most part, by European and American scholars. The English letter is one of condolence to Mingana's Norwegian wife, Emma Mingana, and was sent three months after Mingana's death.<sup>25</sup> It is remarkable that Mattai wrote this letter in English in

25 University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, DA66/1/5/6, dated 25 March 1938.

light of the statement by Fiey that Mattai did not speak any foreign language. As Fiey met with Mattai several times, it does not seem probable that Fiey was wrong about this. Mattai must have had access to someone who could write this letter in English. There are numerous obvious mistakes, but apart from those, the English is remarkably good.

### Mattai's Biography by Nematallah Denno

Mingana's archive in Birmingham, the *Mingana papers*, contains a very interesting document that is not written by Mattai, but that is about him. It is written by the Syriac Orthodox writer Nematallah Denno (1884–1951),<sup>26</sup> who was a prominent writer for a periodical called *Lisān al-mashriq* (Tongue of the east, 1946–1951).<sup>27</sup> The caption at the top of the document informs us that it is a *tarjama* (biography) of Mattai; indeed it contains a wealth of biographical information about him, although the nature of the laudatory text is such that one would almost be inclined to call the document a letter of recommendation.

It is not clear how this document became part of Mingana's archive. The document has a printed letterhead and is dated 21 November 1929, but does not carry the name of the addressee. Assuming that it was addressed to Mingana, it seems improbable that the document was meant to recommend Mattai to Mingana, as, at that time, they had already been cooperating for many years. It is possible that Mingana was in need of biographical information about Mattai for other reasons, but then the question remains why he did not ask Mattai himself for this information.

Like Mattai's letters, this document is written in Arabic, but the script is different than that of Mattai. While Mattai used a common Arabic script, Nematallah wrote this document in Syriac script. This practice, called Garshuni, used to be widespread for Syriac Christians in a variety of places. Just like later forms of Judeo-Arabic, the Arabic language was rendered in Syriac script by using one Syriac character for each character that would have been used for Arabic,

26 More information can be found in Rudolf Macuch, *Geschichte der spät- und neusyrischen Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976), 440–441. Just like Mattai, Nematallah's name has various forms and I prefer to use here the rendering in Latin characters that he used himself.

27 The periodical was at the beginning called *al-Mashriq* and carried also the Syriac title (*Leshōnō d-)**Madhnhō*. The periodical is exhibited in the Syriac Heritage Museum in Ankawa (Iraq), where Nematallah is mentioned in the description. Inquiry among local scholars made clear that Nematallah was well known, while Mattai was not.

that is to say, the Arabic orthography was completely reproduced, it is only the graphemes that were different.

By examining this document, of which the top part is shown, some aspects of Nematallah's specific use of Garshuni emerge. In contrast to the text of the document itself, the printed letterhead is not in Garshuni: the part at the right is completely in Arabic, and the part at the left is in French, with the exception of the upper left part, which is in Syriac. The Arabic part has at the top a calligraphic version of Nematallah's name (نعمة الله دنو *Ni'mat Allāh Dannū*), followed by the name of the place (Mosul, Iraq) and the telegraph address, which is simply his name followed by the name of the city. The bottom part is the place and date, with the place (Mosul) and the first two ciphers of the year preprinted. Like the preprinted text, the date is completed using Arabic in Arabic script instead of Garshuni. The script type is again sophisticated *ruq'a*.

The first line of the left part of the printed letterhead is in Syriac. As "Nematallah" is an Arabic name, this part of the name is in Garshuni, while the part rendering "Denno" is different from its Arabic counterpart, written with two *dalath-s* while it has one *dāl* in Arabic (دنه). Interestingly, the name of the place (Mosul, Iraq in Arabic) is given in Syriac as ܕܢܘ ܕܢܘ ܕܢܘ *Ōthur, Bayt Nahrin*. While *Bayt Nahrin* means Mesopotamia and refers to Iraq, the word *Ōthur* (Assyria) can indeed refer to the city of Mosul. Although the part on the left below the line in Syriac can be identified as French, the city of Mosul is spelled in the English way (instead of "Mossoul" in French), and Iraq has the odd spelling of "Irag" (French "Irak").

Below I illustrate the main body of the document again by transcribing and translating the beginning of it (lines 1–8). For the sake of Arabic readers, I transcribed the Garshuni into Arabic characters. Nematallah's handwriting is so clear that transcription is not necessary.

### ترجمة الشماس متى فولوس السرياني الارثودوكسي

هو الشماس متى بن فولوس آل نعمت الله الموصلی ابصر النور في الموصل مسقط راسه سنة ١٨٦١ ورضع لبان التقوي والفضيله عن ابويه الورعين واستاذه الفاضل المرحوم القس يوسف عقراوي وكان يومئذ شماسا ومعلما في مدرسة كنيسة الطاهرة الطائفية وتلقن في المدرسة المذكورة مبادئ السريانية والعربية والعلوم الدينية فاحرز نصيبا صالحا منها. وشيخ خاصة بالسريانية فتهذب فيها. فأتقن طقوسها وبرع في اناشيدها الدينية. والطقس السرياني اغنى الطقوس المسيحية بالاناشيد العديدة المختلفة التي تربو على الالفى نعمة وزنا ولحنا. فعد الشماس متى بكل جدارة اكبر اساتذة الطقس السرياني.

### Biography of the Deacon Mattai Paulus the Syriac Orthodox

He is the deacon Mattai, son of Paulus, of the family of Ni‘mat Allāh, of Mosul. He saw the light in Mosul, his place of birth, in the year 1861; he sucked milk of devotion and virtue from the fatherhood of piety, and his teacher was the late priest Joseph ‘Aqrāwī—he was at the time deacon and teacher in the confessional school of the al-Ṭāhira church—and he learned at the mentioned school the foundations of Syriac and Arabic and the religious sciences, and he obtained his good fate through it. He loved especially the Syriac language, which was the language of instruction. He was proficient in its rituals and distinguished himself in its religious hymns. The Syrian liturgy is richer than the other Christian liturgies with numerous different hymns, exceeding two thousand songs, both with meter and melody. Therefore, Matthew the deacon is considered with all appropriateness the greatest master of the Syrian liturgy.

Not long ago George Kiraz finished a volume on Syriac orthography as part of a large project that aims to explain Syriac grammar in a comprehensive way; thus far, it contains the most complete description of the practice of Garshuni. Nematallah's use of Garshuni appears to comply to the body of Garshuni literature that Kiraz has taken into account.<sup>28</sup> This still leaves a considerable amount of freedom for the user of Garshuni in terms of the way Arabic is rendered. Because the Syriac alphabet has only 22 characters and Arabic has 28, a few characters are left ambiguous. Garshuni solves this by adding diacritical dots, but this is not obligatory. In addition to that, Syriac has no *tā' marbūṭa* and no *alifmaqṣūra*, so that for these respectively a *he* and *yodh* have to be used. In the case of *tā' marbūṭa* it is possible to mark it explicitly by adding two dots on top of a *he*, as in the Arabic script, but this is not possible for the *alifmaqṣūra*.<sup>29</sup> Where the Arabic script can indicate short vowels, gemination, and the glottal stop, this is also possible in Garshuni, as exactly the same auxiliary signs are used (the vowel signs and *sukūn*, *shadda*, and *hamza*). Nematallah is relatively generous in adding diacritical dots and auxiliary signs; he even added them in some cases where no ambiguity would arise.

Below the end of the quotation above there is another bit of Syriac. Because it is in the same script, this is not immediately visible when looking at the

28 George Anton Kiraz, *A Grammar of the Syriac Language: Orthography* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2012), 1:294–298.

29 This is not possible because the Syriac *yodh* that is used to render both Arabic *yā'* and *maqṣūra* never has dots, while in Arabic the *alifmaqṣūra* is marked by the omission of the dots.





The use of Garshuni in inscriptions displays two interesting features. First, many of the inscriptions are in colloquial Arabic rather than Standard Arabic. This was particularly true in the eighteenth century, while in the nineteenth century the Arabic in Garshuni started to “become more sophisticated”; this development is in line with the decline of Garshuni at the same time (the Arabic became standardized, both in language and in script). Second, most of the Garshuni inscriptions are translations from Syriac, and because of that the Arabic of the Garshuni inscriptions contain Syriac features to a great extent.<sup>31</sup>

In comparing the use of languages in inscriptions, a few observations are interesting to our case. First, as mentioned above, from the beginning of the twentieth century on Garshuni was not used for inscriptions, and this corresponds to the general trend of Garshuni dying out with the beginning of the *nahḍa*. Second, while in Harrak’s inscriptions (before the twentieth century) Garshuni inscriptions appear in the colloquial Arabic of Mosul, our Garshuni writings use only Standard Arabic.

Harrak’s data suggest a link between the standardization of Arabic and the disappearance of Garshuni beginning in the nineteenth century and concluding in the twentieth century. Our data seem to point in a different direction: Mattai’s Arabic is in Arabic script while it is not completely standardized, and Nematallah used Garshuni, but his language follows the common rules. Before addressing the question of how this can be interpreted, I delve more deeply into the varieties of Arabic that we see in the documents.

### Middle Arabic, the Emergence of Modern Standard Arabic, and Garshuni in a Wider Perspective

The phenomena we have seen concerning the language of the authors discussed thus far does not stand on its own and has been studied by others. Nevertheless, in the context of the early twentieth century the data are somewhat marginal, and existing research on Arabic provides less anchors to posit the material under consideration than one would normally have. In this respect, I discuss three issues: (1) Middle Arabic and the possibility of applying this term to Mattai’s letters, (2) the emergence of Modern Standard Arabic, and the question: to what extent do our documents fall under it, and (3) the significance of Garshuni. Positing the material in the discussions concerning these three phenomena will not only help us to understand its significance for the way Mattai

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

and Nematallah used languages in communication, but it will also show where the material can be used for the further study of the linguistic phenomena in a general sense.

In his introductory book on the Arabic language, Kees Versteegh gives a simple definition of Middle Arabic as “the collective name for all texts with deviations from Classical grammar,”<sup>32</sup> but it is generally only applied to pre-modern texts that were presumably meant to be in Classical Arabic but which show a considerable number of deviations from the standard, many of which have their origin in colloquial Arabic.<sup>33</sup> Had Mattai’s letters been written a few centuries earlier, they would almost certainly be described as Middle Arabic because of the peculiar features I describe above, and with recent research in mind it is worthwhile to ask if perhaps the term ought to be applied to Mattai’s texts.

The term Middle Arabic became especially well established after the studies by Joshua Blau, which are still almost always referred to when the phenomenon is discussed.<sup>34</sup> But research on Middle Arabic has not stood still and a few developments are worth mentioning. In the introduction to a volume on Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic that appeared after the third conference of the Association internationale pour l’étude du moyen arabe et des variétés mixtes de l’arabe, Johannes den Heijer gave a very useful description of recent developments that arose from the variety of conference contributions.<sup>35</sup> One conclusion is that the definitions of Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic (the latter term traditionally refers to spoken Arabic that does not fully comply with the standard, but is also not completely colloquial) should not be

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32 Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 114.

33 The word “Middle” in Middle Arabic is ambiguous, as it can refer to a time period (between Classical and Modern Standard Arabic) and to the fact that the language of Middle Arabic is positioned between the standard and the colloquial. Most authors assume the latter meaning, even though Middle Arabic texts are usually considered to fall in the period between the peak of Classical Arabic and the emergence of Modern Standard Arabic, which makes the situation even more confusing.

34 See for instance Joshua Blau, *A Handbook of Early Middle Arabic* (Jerusalem: The Max Schloessinger Memorial Foundation, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2002), which contains an outline of “Middle Arabic grammar” accompanied by a number of texts through which the reader can get acquainted with Middle Arabic texts and its peculiar features.

35 Johannes den Heijer, “Introduction: Middle and Mixed Arabic, a New Trend in Arabic Studies,” in Liesbeth Zack and Arie Schippers (eds.), *Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic: Diachrony and Synchrony* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1–25.

limited to a certain period of time. In other words, while Middle Arabic usually refers to texts written between 800 and 1800,<sup>36</sup> and Mixed Arabic generally refers to modern spoken Arabic, this restriction is by no means necessary: the same framework that is used to analyze a medieval Middle Arabic text can be applied to analyze modern forum discussions on the Internet.<sup>37</sup> The difference between Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic is therefore only that the former term is used for written texts, and the latter for oral material. Indeed preliminary evidence shows that there are similarities in the phenomena in modern and medieval substandard texts, and only the use of a common framework can reveal that.<sup>38</sup> This idea is rather new, as the research on Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic only gained momentum during the last decade. More and detailed research on Middle (and Mixed) Arabic texts from the widest possible timespan is needed.<sup>39</sup> No mention is made of texts that lie between the medieval and modern period, such as Mattai's, but they certainly fall under Den Heijer's definition.

A further important consideration is the question of whether it is possible that an author made a deliberate choice to write in Middle Arabic. Versteegh asserts that this is not the case, but Den Heijer questions this.<sup>40</sup> Studying (written) Middle Arabic next to (spoken) Mixed Arabic is also useful in this sense, because it has been established that for spoken Arabic it is possible that one might deliberately use an intermediate form between the standard and the colloquial.<sup>41</sup> Also in Mattai's case this question has to be asked.

Den Heijer's discussion makes it evident that texts like Mattai's could form a very important contribution to the study of Middle Arabic. Alone, they form too small a body of evidence to make more general assertions concerning post-medieval Middle Arabic, because we cannot yet determine to what extent Mattai's personal language represents a wider phenomenon. For our purposes the value of Den Heijer's discussion lies in the fact that it allows us to posit Mattai's Arabic as a form of Middle Arabic, even if it is neither the phase of Middle Arabic that was already firmly established (that of medieval texts) nor the one that appears in the conference volume to which Den Heijer wrote the introduction (on modern substandard texts).

36 See, for instance, Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 114.

37 Den Heijer, "Introduction," 10.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid., 22–24.

40 Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 114, and Den Heijer, "Introduction," 10–12.

41 For instance in Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 191, where a proposed continuum of standard to colloquial spoken Arabic is cited.

Seeing Mattai's Arabic as Middle Arabic is one thing, but if Mattai's intention was to write according to the standard, of which standard are we speaking? And what was the standard that Nematallah apparently applied? The second issue is therefore the emergence of Modern Standard Arabic and to what extent our writers were influenced by that.

The standard form of Arabic is generally referred to as *lughat al-fuṣḥā* ("the pure language"), regardless of what time period one is speaking about. Western scholarship normally makes a distinction between Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. There are good reasons for this, among them the obvious differences in vocabulary and grammar, especially syntax. A considerable volume of literature has been written on the emergence of Modern Standard Arabic, though this mainly deals with the necessity of creating new words for modern concepts, and the involvement of language academies in creating those.<sup>42</sup> Discussions have also taken place about a grammatical reform of the language; in the end this had very little effect.<sup>43</sup> This is not to say that there are few grammatical differences between Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic. On the contrary, grammars have been written that deal explicitly with Modern Standard Arabic and provide ample evidence of significant differences, especially in terms of syntax and vocabulary. In this respect I mention the work by Badawi, Carter, and Gully, which, apart from giving a synchronical description, also compares modern forms with their classical counterparts.<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, apart from how new words have been added to Modern Standard Arabic, this research tells us very little about how Modern Standard Arabic came to be. We know the end result (Modern Standard Arabic), but we do not know how Modern Standard Arabic actually developed, that is to say, how the language changed over time in different contexts (places, religious communities, and individual authors). Because of this it is difficult to assess Mattai's ideal (taking for granted, again, that he was aiming for the standard) and Nematallah's Arabic with regard to whether we should see this as Modern Standard Arabic, or as a preliminary phase between Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic.

42 See, for instance, Rached Hamzaoui, *L'académie de langue arabe du Caire: histoire et œuvre* (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1975).

43 Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 184–186. See the whole chapter (173–188) for a general overview of the emergence of Modern Standard Arabic.

44 Elsaid Badawi, M.G. Carter, and Adrian Gully, *Modern Written Arabic: A Comprehensive Grammar* (London: Routledge, 2003). As only written texts are used, the authors deploy the term Modern Written Arabic rather than Modern Standard Arabic.

The third issue is the use of Garshuni and its significance. Various reasons for authors and scribes to write in Garshuni have been proposed, the most prominent of those being that it is a way to express Syriac identity. This is because Garshuni copies Arabic orthography and is therefore easy to learn for someone who knows the Arabic language and the Syriac script.<sup>45</sup> It is an understandable solution for people who want to express themselves in the language they felt most comfortable with (in many cases Arabic, not Syriac) while at the same time expressing their Syriac identity through the script. But as we have seen, Nematallah's use of Garshuni is very late compared to the Garshuni in the inscriptions studied by Harrak, which cease in the nineteenth century. In a more general sense, Garshuni is considered to have been in decline as Arabic script increased from the beginning of the *nahḍa*.<sup>46</sup>

### Common Grounds: Arabic as the Best Solution

The three issues described in the section above have one thing in common: they position the writings that form the basis of this paper in a preliminary phase between the premodern and the modern. As to the use of Middle Arabic (Mattai) and Garshuni (Nematallah), current literature suggests that the two writers were continuing traditions that might be considered anachronistic in the twentieth century. In this respect it is useful to take into consideration the beginning of the *nahḍa*, the period or movement of cultural revival (or “renaissance”) in the Arab world.

The early history of the *nahḍa* is a controversial subject. Traditionally, scholars have considered it to have begun either with Napoleon's invasion in Egypt 1798, or later, in the second half of the nineteenth century. Initially, western influence was seen as the main catalyst of the *nahḍa*—most obviously Napoleon's invasion, but also the influence of western missionaries that spread

45 F. del Río Sánchez, “El árabe karshūnī come preservación de la identidad siríaca,” in P. Bádenas de la Peña (eds.), et al., *Lenguas en contacto: el testimonio escrito* (Madrid: Editorial CSIC, 2004), 185–194.

46 Alessandro Mengozzi, “The History of Garshuni as a Writing System: Evidence from the Rabbula Codex,” in F.M. Fales and G.F. Grassi (eds.), *Casemud 2007: Proceedings of the 13th Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics, Held in Udine, May 21st–24th, 2007* (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2010), 300. For a recent and innovative history of the *nahḍa*, see Boutros Hallaq and Heidi Toelle (eds.), et al. *Histoire de la littérature arabe moderne*, part 1: 1800–1945 (Arles: Actes Sud, 2007).

through the schools they established. More recent scholarship has tried to change this narrative by pointing to internal developments in the Middle East that started well before 1800.<sup>47</sup>

In a recent monograph, written to establish a new narrative drawing mainly upon Arabic sources, Abdulrazzak Patel devotes an entire chapter to one development that is very interesting in relation to our sources: “The Reintegration of Pre-modern Christians into the Mainstream of Arabic Literature.” From approximately 1600 to 1800, Christians once again became active participants in the Arabic literary realm, which they had been well-known participants of during the translation movement and through the thirteenth century. According to Patel, “[b]y the *nahḍa* the reintegration of Christian writers into the mainstream of Arabic literature was complete and an inter-religious, almost supra-religious, space had evolved where Christian writers were no longer hampered by specific religious or theological considerations.”<sup>48</sup> This process can therefore be seen as a “preparatory” internal development that opened the way for the *nahḍa* to begin full scale.

Other authors have noticed similar developments. In the course of the *nahḍa*, the language of literary production became more standardized, creating a link between the *nahḍa* and the emergence of Modern Standard Arabic, and new textual genres began to be deployed, such as novels and articles in journals. Christians took part in the *nahḍa* like Muslims, and already in the eighteenth century we can see that they adapted genres that had been deployed solely by Muslims.<sup>49</sup> During the *nahḍa* Christians and Muslims began to use the Arabic language in the same sorts of ways; the tendency of Arab Christians to use Garshuni less is an explicit case of this.<sup>50</sup>

The documents presently under consideration show a picture that does not comply to this *nahḍa* hypothesis, as I will call this link between the *nahḍa* and the integration of the Christians’ use of Arabic. Mattai writes in non-standard Arabic, while Nematallah’s Arabic, though it complies to the standard, is written in Garshuni, both practices associated with pre-*nahḍa* behavior. The fact that no Garshuni inscriptions are present in Iraq in the twentieth century, and the fact that the inscriptions in Arabic became more stan-

47 Abdulrazzak Patel, *The Arab Nahḍa: The Making of the Intellectual and Humanist Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), in particular 4–5.

48 Ibid., 69.

49 Farouk Mardam-Bey and Hilary Kilpatrick, “L’état des lieux dans le monde arabe à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in Hallaq and Toelle (eds.) *Histoire de la littérature arabe moderne*, 70.

50 Mengozzi, “The History of Garshuni as a Writing System,” 300.

dard in the nineteenth century, reinforces the *nahḍa* hypothesis and therefore further distinguishes the practices of Mattai and Nematallah from the wider trend.

Our documents also bear witness to the use of the Classical Syriac language. While Mattai wrote a large number of manuscript colophons in Syriac (in addition to those he wrote in Garshuni), in his letters the Syriac is limited to the titles and the names of authors of books he could deliver, as well as his signature in some cases. This resembles the few examples of Syriac that we find in Nematallah's document, where we also find it used for book titles and authors, and as part of the trilingual printed letterhead.

Given that the two languages were used by both authors, the question is what reasons did they have to choose one or the other for these specific situations. Mattai was certainly able to write in Syriac, as Nematallah accounts for it and Mattai shows it through the colophons he authored. For Nematallah we do not have enough evidence from the documents, but we can speculate that he was likely also able to write in Syriac. Certainly they assumed that their intended readers (Mingana and possibly someone else) were able to read it. But writing a manuscript colophon is different than writing a letter: a colophon has a more or less fixed structure and uses a limited set of formulas. Writing a letter discussing modern-day problems (such as the cost of sending manuscripts by mail) is something for which a living writing tradition was needed, and while it is known that contemporary Syriac authors did write original texts in Syriac, we do not know if such a tradition was available to Mattai, and if so, if he was acquainted with it. The fact that Mattai even wrote some of his manuscript colophons in Garshuni suggests even more that he was not completely comfortable in composing Syriac. This leaves us with the possibility that they used Classical Syriac when it was needed (for book titles and authors) or for small symbolic pieces of text (Mattai's signature and Nematallah's printed letterhead).

The *nahḍa* hypothesis, discussed above, holds that during the period of the *nahḍa* Christians and Muslims used the Arabic language in similar ways and created a common standard in terms of language, script, and genres. In this way, the Arabic language in its standardized form created a very important new common ground between Christians and Muslims. Most of the evidence for this hypothesis, however, is based on material from Syria and Lebanon, mainly from Maronite, Greek Orthodox, and Catholic authors. This includes all of the authors that Patel discusses in his chapter on this topic. Mattai and Nematallah, based in Iraq, did not fully participate in this new common ground. While this can be seen as an argument against the *nahḍa* hypothesis, with the current evidence it is more likely an indication that the Mosul center of Syriac



Christianity, at least with regard to its representatives Mattai and Nematallah, did not keep pace with Syria and Lebanon. Luizard's assertion that intellectual life in the city of Mosul lagged behind the rest of the Arab world, mentioned at the beginning of this paper, is in line with this hypothesis.

Mattai's and Nematallah's practice was nevertheless not an obstacle for their communication with Mingana, thanks to the fact that he was also of a Syriac Christian background, albeit from another denomination. By using Arabic in Arabic script in his letters, Mattai might have wished to put Mingana at ease, as he was (originally) an East Syriac Christian, not a user of Garshuni with West Syriac (*serṭō*) characters. Nematallah did not feel constrained to use Garshuni, but we do not know the intended readership of his document. It can be said, therefore, that the communication between Mattai and Mingana forms another common ground—one common to Syriac Christians.

### Conclusion

Mattai's letters to Mingana and Nematallah's biography show the use of a variety of languages and scripts. While this variety in itself is not surprising—it has always been a feature of Syriac Christian textual production—preferences for certain languages or scripts and ways of usage changed over time and differed according to place and denomination. The material addressed in this article shows that, by using non-standard Arabic, Garshuni, and occasionally Classical Syriac, Mattai and Nematallah deployed a style that was specific to Syriac Christianity. In comparison, contemporary writing of other Syriac Christians shows a move towards a common standard with Muslims and the use of Arabic; there is no indication that Mattai and Nematallah took part in this movement, or they did so to a lesser extent.

The post-*nahḍa* common ground of standardized Arabic, which I called the *nahḍa* hypothesis above, was not in use by everyone. Mattai and Nematallah are only one case. If other textual material from the early twentieth century written by Middle Eastern Syriac Christians and minorities in general becomes available, we will be able to map a more detailed view on the assumed common linguistic ground based on a standardized form of Arabic that began to form at the beginning of the *nahḍa*. At the same time, this will be of importance for the study of non-medieval Middle Arabic and the emergence of Modern Standard Arabic.

We have not heard the last word on Mattai bar Paulus. The large body of letters calls for comprehensive study, both to facilitate a linguistic analysis for the wider study of late Middle Arabic and/or early Modern Standard Arabic, and

because of its relevance for Syriac Orthodox Christianity in early twentieth-century Mosul. In addition, comparing the letters with the manuscripts in the Mingana collection might provide valuable information about the acquisition history and policy of Alphonse Mingana, which is still largely unknown. Publishing an edition of Mattai's letters is therefore a possibility that might be worth taking into consideration, as it would also shed light on this period of renewed use of Arabic among Syriac Christians.

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## Jewish Education in Baghdad: Communal Space vs. Public Space

*S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah*

The Levant of the early twentieth century was a place of rapid political, social, and cultural transformation. This era ushered in a new, for lack of a more precise term, “modern” era for the region characterized, in part, by a burgeoning middle class and an increase in intercommunal dialogue that resulted from new forms of public space.<sup>1</sup> The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the combining of three former Ottoman provinces—Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul—into a new Iraqi state led to numerous challenges in unifying an ethnically and religiously diverse population and caused decades of political instability. However the British mandate and early years of the Iraqi state are also viewed as a time of religious pluralism and an attempt to build an inclusive secular state<sup>2</sup> with the city of Baghdad as its political, cultural, and economic center.

In Baghdad, as in many other Middle Eastern cities, the modern era meant the creation of new public spaces, such as chambers of commerce, modern companies, hotels, and cinemas to name a few examples.<sup>3</sup> One type of area not often associated with public space are schools run under the auspices of religious communities. However, in Baghdad, schools run by religious authorities were a key factor in forging the new national identity; they often served as public spaces and as public symbols for religious communities to demonstrate their belonging to the nation.

In Baghdad the first modern schools teaching secular subjects were established under the authority of religious communities. This is ironic when measured against conventional ideas of modernity and the role of modern education. In the case of the Jewish schools, as we would expect, these schools

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- 1 Keith D. Wattenpugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006) for a full discussion on modernity and the middle class in the Middle East.
  - 2 Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).
  - 3 See Daniel Schroeter’s chapter for a greater discussion on these new public spaces. I am grateful to Prof. Schroeter for his help and comments in putting together this chapter.

strengthened a religious/ethnic (Jewish) consciousness. However, they also fostered a national (or public) consciousness, and facilitated the development of ties with the larger (non-Jewish) society. In one space, namely the schools, students developed a simultaneous awareness of both the communal and the public, thereby shattering the assumption of a dichotomy between “communal” (or sectarian) and public (or national) space.

In this chapter I look at the importance of education within the Jewish community of Baghdad as an example of how the boundaries between public and communal space became blurred beginning in the Mandate period. I argue that the Jewish schools of Baghdad had a fluid identity. The schools simultaneously strengthened the Jewish community’s ties to the emergent Iraqi nation while fostering ties to the transnational Jewish world through their engagement with foreign philanthropic Jewish organizations. In this manner, the schools were a public platform for the community to show its integration into the new state and its desire to participate in its construction while leveraging and strengthening its ties with Jewish communities outside Iraq. I apply this thesis to the schools that fell under the jurisdiction of the Jewish community of Baghdad.<sup>4</sup>

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4 This fact is demonstrated most clearly in the English language report from 1930 entitled *Report of the Jewish Schools Committee on the Jewish Schools in Baghdad 1930*. The report was most likely prepared for the Anglo-Jewish Association, to demonstrate how the association’s contributions had been spent, and help make the case for allocating additional funds to the Baghdad schools. For this chapter I have also used a 1924 letter from the office of the chief rabbi to Judah Magnes while he was still living in New York (later, the first Chancellor of Hebrew University). The letter was written in response to a request for information on the Jewish community of Baghdad for the Jewish Encyclopedia and therefore describes in great detail the functioning of the Jewish community of Baghdad, and gives detailed information on its revenues and expenditures. Both of these documents describe the Jewish schools from the perspective of a communal leader wishing to present their community to Jews living outside Iraq and the tone is one which shows both the community’s commitment to modernity and the preservation of Jewish culture. The two documents belong to the collection of material on the Jewish community of Iraq held at the Central Archive for the History of the Jewish people at the Hebrew University Givat Ram campus. For general demographic information I have taken the numbers used by Hanna Batatu in his *The Old Social Classes & the Revolutionary in Movement in Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978). For Jewish demographic information I have used Hayyim J. Cohen’s book, *The Jews of the Middle East: 1860–1972* (Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1974), which contains demographic data on Levantine Jewry based on primary source material and surveys from the 1950s. The volume fortuitously contains a whole section dedicated to education in Iraq. For general information on Iraqi education I have used the numbers and curriculum details from the 1948 study by Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi commissioned by the American Council on Education; it also provides a summary history of education in Iraq beginning

By looking at the evolution of these schools during the formative years of the Iraqi state, we can see how the community positioned itself vis-à-vis the state and other Jewish communities.

Although the type of education offered by these schools was diverse in nature I consider them as a single unit because of their dependence on the lay council for financial administration. Officially there was no singular unified Jewish school system but a grouping of schools that had varying attachments to either the spiritual council of the Baghdad Rabbinate (*al-Majlis al-Ruḥānī*), or the Jewish Lay Council (*al-Majlis al-Jismānī*), the two main official organs of the Jewish community. From the 1920s onward all of these schools were under the official jurisdiction of the “School Committee” which reported directly to the lay council,<sup>5</sup> a fact that coincides with a decline in the rabbinate’s power over the community and a strengthening of the authority of the lay council. The school committee made decisions primarily related to the distribution of funds, though it also controlled some decisions on curriculum, and the hiring of faculty.

Communal reports from the era differentiate between four types of Jewish schools in Baghdad:

1. Religious schools, such as the Midrash Talmud Torah established in 1932, which was essentially a religious school with elementary studies in Arabic. After 1840 the Yeshiva of Baghdad<sup>6</sup> offered religious education and, beginning in the early twentieth century, limited secular education. The Midrash Menashe Saleh school was founded in 1935 and offered both religious and secular subjects on a par with the Iraqi national curriculum.<sup>7</sup>
2. The Alliance Israélite Universelle girls and boys schools, based on a French curriculum.
3. The community schools followed a modified government syllabus teaching biblical Hebrew and Jewish history instead of Islamic studies, and added extra hours to the school week for English lessons (in comparison to the government schools).
4. The Shamash school, a community school based on the English curriculum.

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during the Mandate Period. Finally, I have supplemented these sources with information from the autobiographies of students who attended these Jewish schools during the said period.

5 Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East*, 122–123.

6 Orit Bashkin, “Religious Hatred Shall Disappear from the Land’ Iraqi Jews as Ottoman Subjects, 1864–1913,” *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 4, no. 3 (2010), 308 (doi:10.1386/ijcis.4.3.305\_1).

7 Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East*, 115.

Towards the end of the 1920s the Iraqi government also began to build public schools in the Jewish quarter; these were aimed at instructing Jewish students<sup>8</sup> but these schools had no affiliation with the lay council of the Jewish community and therefore cannot be considered community schools because the community was not responsible for the curriculum or the funding, although the majority of the teachers in these schools were Jewish graduates of the communal schools.<sup>9</sup>

The argument that the education students received in the Jewish school system both enabled intercommunal understanding and prepared Jews to participate in public space itself has been discussed in great detail by authors such as Orit Bashkin, Abbas Shibli, and Nissim Rejwan.<sup>10</sup> Learning to read and write classical/standard Arabic was key to this participation. With access to Arabic literature and culture, Jewish students were able to engage with the emergent society as a whole, a phenomenon that Bashkin defines as practicing Arab Jewishness.<sup>11</sup> It is my contention, however, that these schools, as institutions, were tools for the community to demonstrate its commitment to the nation and thereby become public spaces themselves, an idea not developed in the aforementioned works.

In this paper I equate Jewish Arabization with Jewish participation in the new public spaces both physically (such as employment in the civil service and teaching public schools) and intellectually during the Mandate and early years of the Iraqi state. Some striking examples of this are found in autobiographies. For example, it is during the Mandate period that we begin to find references to beloved children's books in Arabic and subscriptions to Arabic literary magazines.<sup>12</sup> This is also the period during which the first Arabic language periodicals appeared in Iraq, most notably *al-Ḥāṣid* and *al-Misbāḥ*, whose Jewish editors were graduates of the Alliance schools.<sup>13</sup> By receiving an education in formal Arabic youth were exposed to a dialect that was distinct from the Judeo-Baghdadi spoken in Jewish homes, and this exposure prepared them for a life beyond the community. It allowed Jews who later joined the Iraqi civil service

8 Report of the Jewish Schools Committee on the Jewish Schools in Baghdad 1930, 6 CAHJP—Hebrew University doc. Iraq File—6382.

9 Abbas Shibli, *Iraqi Jews: A History* (London: Saqi Books, 2005).

10 Bashkin, *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012); idem, *The Other Iraq*; Shibli, *Iraqi Jews*; and Nissim Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq: 3000 Years of History and Culture* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985).

11 Bashkin, *New Babylonians*.

12 Ibid., 23, 244.

13 Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East: 1860–1972*, 125.

and foreign companies to converse in a style similar to that of their non-Jewish colleagues.<sup>14</sup> Finally, neither the faculty nor the student body of these schools was homogenous in composition, with the exception of the Midrash Talmud Torah. Records indicate that non-Jewish children, particularly those from the Chaldean community, were among the student body, although this tapered off in the 1930s as more Christian schools were opened, as the Iraqi government began to open more state schools, and as the general level of public education improved. Finally, non-Jewish teachers were regularly employed in the Jewish schools, particularly for the study of Arabic. The interactions with non-Jewish students and faculty gave the Jewish students regular meaningful contact with individuals outside their community.

The schools were also tools of the community that served to show its loyalty to the monarch and the state. One example of this expression of loyalty can be seen in the schools' active participation in the pageantry of the state. For example, at the invitation of the community, King Faysal visited the Alliance Laura Kadoorie girls' school in 1924 with Ja'far al-'Askari then prime minister of Iraq; they made a similar visit to the Rachel Shahmon community school a year later. Prince Ghazi, the minister of education at the time, attended the graduation ceremony of al-Wataniyya community school in 1925.<sup>15</sup> And as Aline Schlaepfer<sup>16</sup> discusses in her chapter, the Alliance school in Basra publicly mourned the death of King Ghazi in 1949 with teachers fashioning black armbands for the students and faculty to wear. These examples demonstrate the ways in which the schools, as institutions, were used to further the idea of the Jewish community as an integrated sector of Iraqi society.

As Hannah Mueller-Sommerfeld mentions in her chapter on the role of the League of Nations on the Mandate in Iraq, Jewish communal leaders, although initially desiring British citizenship,<sup>17</sup> accepted the idea of being citizens in an Iraqi state, urged the community to be loyal citizens, and stressed integration as opposed to segregation; this is evidenced by the above-mentioned very public overtures within communal space. And yet, "Arabization" is only one side of the coin. The Jewish community also officially asked for the preservation of

14 Naim Kattan, *Farewell Babylon* (London: Souvenir Press, 1975), 11–16. This is evidenced in an anecdote he tells of a Jewish friend who speaks in the Judeo-Baghdadi dialect among their non-Jewish friends.

15 Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 39.

16 I would like to thank Aline Schlaepfer for her invaluable suggestions in preparing this chapter.

17 Norman A. Stillman, *Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991) 256–258.



the “free opportunity for economic and educational development” as the main pillars of their community, which guaranteed their history and communal life in Iraq. These requests were relatively mild compared to Assyrian hopes for independence, but were certainly in line with the rights that other religious and ethnic communities hoped to gain in the new state.<sup>18</sup> It was this balance between integration into the new Iraqi society and the preservation of their communal identity that was key to the Jewish schools of Baghdad. Part of this preservation of communal identity went beyond the borders of Iraq, as some schools worked to forge what can be considered a modern Jewish identity, i.e., one not grounded in theology or local family bonds but based on a transnational Jewish identity. Thus the schools presented students with the ideas of Jewish nationalism, taught students about foreign Jewish communities, and gave students the opportunity to study abroad in foreign Jewish schools or with the help of scholarships from foreign Jewish humanitarian organizations. By understanding the fluidity between public and communal within these schools we can begin to understand how the Jewish community navigated between public and communal space within the Iraqi state.

### The Development of a Jewish School System

On the eve of the Mandate the Jewish community was the oldest and most organized provider of secular education for boys and girls in Baghdad, the seeds for the system having been planted a century before. Although Jewish education in Baghdad had a long tradition, beginning with the fabled Abbasid-era yeshivot,<sup>19</sup> these schools had ceased to exist by the eighteenth century, concurrent with the general decline of the city due to plague and political instability through the mid-nineteenth century. It was not until 1832 that a new religious school opened, the Midrash Talmud Torah, which educated 2,049 students divided into 27 classes; this was followed by the Baghdad Yeshiva in 1840 for students wishing to continue their education. These schools focused on religious instruction, teaching such as subjects as the Talmud, Zohar, and other religious works, but notably they also provided education in elementary Hebrew and

18 Müller-Sommerfeld, in this volume.

19 Yaron Ayalon and Ariel I. Ahram, “Baghdad,” *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2:602–617; Brill online, accessed 11 April 2014: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/baghdad-SIM\\_000468](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/baghdad-SIM_000468).

Arabic.<sup>20</sup> Prior to attending the Midrash, young boys were sent to some thirty *ustadhs*, literally one-room schoolhouses where young boys received religious education by rote until they were old enough to help support their families or continue their education at the Yeshiva. The curriculum and hierarchy in these types of establishments was analogous to the Muslim and Christian educational options of the time, limited to boys whose parents could afford the school fees, they were organized either by schoolmasters in private homes or by the religious leadership in larger institutions and endowed by a *waqf* set up by wealthy members of the community. Other options for education included apprenticeships for those entering trade or private tutoring for the wealthy. Although technically, girls could attend the *ustadhs* (but not the Midrash Talmud Torah) in reality, few if any girls ever attended.<sup>21</sup> It is more likely that upper class girls received private tutoring, as the existence of correspondence by women from the nineteenth century demonstrates that some had the ability to read and write in both Hebrew and Latin scripts, although this was surely the exception.<sup>22</sup>

For the Jewish community this limited choice in education began to change when the Alliance Israélite Universelle opened its first school in Baghdad in 1864, at the request of members of the community who had heard about the recently opened Alliance boy's school in Tetouan, Morocco. By way of comparison, the first elementary school teaching secular subjects to Muslim boys in Baghdad was established in 1869 by Midhat Pasha.<sup>23</sup> So although at the time of the British Mandate the Jewish community had developed the most extensive network of schools, the importance of modern education also had advocates in other religious communities in nineteenth-century Baghdad, albeit access to these schools was limited to a privileged few. The original Alliance school (later named in honor of Albert Sassoon) met with limited success; it closed shortly after it opened, then reopened a few years later. Protests from the religious authorities regarding the concept of secular education were relatively mild, it is possible that the Rabbinate did not feel threatened by the Alliance because of its small size and high school fees, in comparison the Midrash Talmud was less costly and better established. The end of the conflict between the Alliance school and the Rabbinate came when the chief

20 Maurice M. Sawdayee, *The Baghdad Connection* (Self published, 1991), 25; David Sassoon, *The History of the Jews in Baghdad* (London: Simon Wallenberg Press, 2006), 17.

21 Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East: 1860–1972*, 114.

22 The Sassoon archives at Hebrew University have nineteenth-century correspondence from women in both Judeo-Arabic and French.

23 Rejwan, *Jews of Iraq*, 181.

rabbi, Abdullah Somekh, sent his son to the Alliance school, although he himself was head of the Midrash Beit Zilkha, a branch of the Midrash Talmud Torah.<sup>24</sup>

When an Alliance girl's school opened in 1893, it was the first of its kind in Iraq. By 1920 Jewish schools enrolling both boys and girls had been established in Basra, Mosul, Hilla, 'Amara, and Kirkuk. Parallel to the expansion of the Alliance system, Jewish communities in Iraq began to build their own modern schools beginning with what was initially a coed school, Noam (also referred to as Haron Saleh) in 1902;<sup>25</sup> they also slowly integrated more secular subjects into the religious schools.<sup>26</sup> Over time these new options made the role of the Alliance less important than in many other Jewish communities in the Islamic world,<sup>27</sup> where often the Alliance schools were the only Jewish education option.

The ideology of the Alliance Israélite Universelle was to educate modern Jews to be productive members of modern society.<sup>28</sup> This philosophy corresponded to the philosophy of the Jewish community and in particular the lay council with regard to the community's integration into the new Iraq during the early years of the Iraqi state. These schools represented one way that the local Jewish community could leverage their international connections for the betterment of their local community. The importance of this is twofold, first, these schools cannot be compared to missionary schools, whose objective, at least in part, was to convert their pupils and their families. The Jewish community actively requested that these schools be established and continued to seek guidance and aid from the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Anglo-Jewry Association, and later the Joint Distribution Committee even after the management of the schools had officially been transferred to the lay council's school committee. Once the management of the schools was under local authority, these organizations began to function as philanthropic organizations; they were no longer administrators offering grants both for the regular budget and for special initiatives. This continued support was essential to the stability and the growth of the schools, especially in the wake of the destruction wrought by World War I

24 Sasson Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday: The Making of an Arab Jew* (London: Ibis Editions, 2007), 55. See also Schlaepfer in this volume.

25 Jewish Schools Report, tables, page 2.

26 The chief rabbi's office makes a note of this fact in its letter to Magnes.

27 Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq*, 186.

28 Aron Rodrigue, "Alliance Israélite Universelle Network," *EJW*, 1:171–180; Brill online, accessed 11 April 2014: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/alliance-israelite-universelle-network-COM\\_0001600](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/alliance-israelite-universelle-network-COM_0001600).

and with the challenge of expanding education to a community where few had the means to pay fees and were therefore dependent on scholarships and other types of subventions. Second, the actions of these foreign philanthropists benefitted Iraqis of other confessions who either attended these schools or used the public health clinics (sometimes located in the school) that they were also instrumental in opening. In more general terms these schools played a role in educating the first generation of Iraqi civil servants (both Jewish and non-Jewish).<sup>29</sup> Therefore the presence of foreign Jewish philanthropy did not lead to increased sectarianism but benefitted the residents of Baghdad as a whole, beyond simple enrollment figures.

Although information exists as to the enrollment at the Alliance schools from their founding it is difficult to situate this information within a larger context as there is little reliable demographic information for the province of Baghdad from the Ottoman period and it is therefore difficult to estimate the number of Jews residing in Baghdad during the late nineteenth century. With that in mind we can safely state that although modern education was expanding in the Jewish community throughout the nineteen and early twentieth century, reaching more and more students each year, it remained limited to a privileged few; for example, in 1900 there were 296 boys and 166 girls enrolled in all of the Alliance schools in "Mesopotamia," the term the Alliance used when referring to the region prior to the formation of the Iraqi state.<sup>30</sup> However, the community's decision to open its own schools with lower enrollment fees, in addition to expanding the capacity of the Alliance schools during the first two decades of the twentieth century, demonstrates the communal desire to reach a wider social spectrum of students. This desire is clearly stated in an English language report from the 1930s entitled *Report of the Jewish Schools Committee on the Jewish Schools in Baghdad 1930*.<sup>31</sup>

To understand the centrality of the Jewish schools to the community itself and to place the evolution of the Iraqi education system between 1920 and 1951 in context, it is important to compare the size of the Jewish community with that of the general population both as a whole and in relation to those who had access to education. In the early 1920s the population of the city of Baghdad<sup>32</sup> was approximately 200,000 people. Of the general population there were

29 Shiblik, *Iraqi Jews*, 40.

30 Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East 1860–1972*, 117. A complete table listing the children enrolled in Alliance schools is included.

31 Jewish Schools Report.

32 This number refers to the province of Baghdad, as opposed to the city itself.

somewhere between 65,000 and 80,000 Jews living in the province of Baghdad, at least 55,000 of them living in the city of Baghdad itself.<sup>33</sup> Proportionally, this means that at least a quarter of the city's population was Jewish, making the Jewish community the single largest religious/ethnic group in the city and as Nissim Rejwan (among others) argues, the best educated as a communal whole.<sup>34</sup> In 1920, the Jewish community of Baghdad lists seven primary and secondary schools plus three vocational schools educating 4,030 boys, 1,481 girls for a total of 5,521 pupils.<sup>35</sup> By comparison, in 1920 in the whole of Iraq there were only 88 primary and 3 secondary schools (for a total of 8,110 students) for a national population of around 3 million.<sup>36</sup>

This means that during the 1920s a large percentage of those who received a modern education were Jewish. And as the Jewish schools dedicated more hours to the study of foreign languages the Jewish students had a strategic advantage over those educated in the public schools who received less training in English and French. One consequence of this was that the graduates of Jewish schools greatly benefitted from the British presence in Iraq during the British Mandate, as there was a sharp increase in white-collar employment opportunities with the increase in foreign companies in Baghdad, and an expanded civil service.

By the 1930s, educational opportunities for the general population had increased. The national population had grown to over 4.5 million inhabitants<sup>37</sup> and it now had 335 primary and secondary schools with 27,467 male pupils 6,573 female pupils and an additional 293 children in coeducational kindergartens. The Jewish school system had also grown along with its population but not at the same speed as the nation. For a population of around 65,000 Jews in Baghdad, in the 1930s there were ten primary and secondary schools with 5,031 boys and 2,151 girls plus an additional 700 poor girls receiving vocational training.<sup>38</sup>

33 Page 3 of a 1924 report from the office of the Chief Rabbi to Judah Magnes, in Jerusalem, p3/2464 Iraq plan CAHJP.

34 Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq*, 210–211. Other groups included Sunnīs, Shī'īs, Persians, Kurds, and Chaldeans.

35 Jewish Schools Report.

36 Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, 35; Roderic D. Mathews and Matta Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East: Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1949).

37 Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, 40.

38 Jewish Schools Report CAHJP, Jerusalem.

Based on the growth of the public schools between 1920 and 1930 one could postulate that the Jewish schools became less central to the community and the nation as a whole. This idea was suggested by scholars such as Shiblik and Twena,<sup>39</sup> the main argument in support of this claim being the newly founded government schools. This assumption is corroborated by a 1930 school report from the Jewish lay council, which notes the establishment of a public boys school in the Jewish quarter<sup>40</sup> and the relative stagnation in the number of boys attending the Jewish schools.<sup>41</sup> Until this point those students unable to pay school fees or secure scholarships could only attend the Midrash Talmud Torah or a vocational program, neither of which offered the possibility to prepare for entrance exams for secondary schools, which in turn opened up the possibility of employment in foreign firms or the civil service—both channels to social mobility. And yet, the Jewish school system continued to expand as the table below indicates; therefore, it is impossible to argue that the Jewish schools lost their relevance in the wake of expanded public education. There are multiple reasons for the continued relevance of the Jewish schools. First, Jewish schools maintained higher academic standards, this was a result of the lower student-teacher ratio and the larger proportion of teachers with a secondary education.<sup>42</sup> For secondary education the Jewish schools were among the few institutions that offered students the possibility to prepare for the French Baccalaureate (in the case of the Alliance schools), or the London matriculation examinations (in the case of Shamash school); other options in the city were private, primarily Christian, institutions with comparable school fees.<sup>43</sup> Up until the dissolution of the community the Alliance schools and the Shamash school remained the gold standard of both primary and secondary education in Baghdad. This was particularly true in the opportunities they presented for girls. Finally, the continued communal investment resulted in lower school fees, and the free vocational opportunities for poor children and orphans all helped the schools to remain relevant. Even during the uncertainty of the 1940s and World War II, the *Farhūd*,<sup>44</sup> and general political tensions between the Jewish community and the state, six new communal schools were

39 Shiblik, *Iraqi Jews*, 41.

40 Jewish Schools Report CAHJP, Jerusalem, 2.

41 The overall number of Jewish students increased between 1920 and 1930 as the small decline in the number of boys was offset by an increase in attendance by girls.

42 Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East 1860–1972*, 121.

43 Matthew and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East*, 209–213.

44 The *Farhūd* was the anti-Jewish riot that broke out in the wake of the coup d'etat in 1941; in it approximately 180 Jews were killed and millions of dollars in damage was sustained.

built, including two between 1948 and 1949.<sup>45</sup> With these facts in mind, it is clear that the Jewish schools remained crucial to the community. The opening of public schools worked to further expand the educational opportunities for Jewish youth but did not reduce the student base of the Jewish schools, which, as the table below illustrates, continued to grow steadily.

*Schools under the supervision of the Jewish community in Baghdad (primary and secondary)*

Year	Number of schools	Number of pupils
1920	8	5,511
1930	11	7,182
1935	12	7,911
1945	14	10,021
1949	20	10,391

See table in Cohen Hayyim J.<sup>46</sup>

*Public Schools in Iraq (Primary & Secondary)*

Year	Number of schools	Number of pupils
1920	91	8,111
1930	335	36,595
1940	791	104,490
1945	949	108,945

See table Matthew and Akrawi<sup>47</sup>

In the early twentieth century the Jewish schools faced challenges similar to those of the state run schools, namely a lack of funds and a lack of trained teachers.<sup>48</sup> In a 1924 letter from the office of the chief rabbi to Judah Magnes (the first chancellor of Hebrew University), the secretary to the chief rabbi carefully

45 Shiblik, *Iraqi Jews*, 40.

46 Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East 1860–1972*, 123.

47 Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East*, 140.

48 Jewish Schools Report, 8; Stephen Hensley Longrigg, *Iraq 1900 to 1950* (London: International Book Center: 1968), 110.

explains the finances of the community. In the case of the Jewish community the most significant revenue came from the *gabelle*, essentially a tax levied on the sale of kosher meat. In addition to this, the community also received money from the rents on three buildings they owned and the sale of sheep intestine casings from slaughtered animals, all traditional sources of communal revenue.<sup>49</sup> For the purpose of financing education the community solicited external financial aid from wealthy Baghdadi Jews residing in the Far East (such as Albert Sassoon and Elias Kadoorie) and from foreign Jewish philanthropic agencies, specifically the aforementioned Alliance Israélite Universelle and the British Anglo-Jewish Association (established in 1871), and also from the American Joint Distribution Committee (established in 1914), thereby reinforcing their links to foreign Jewish communities. They also received regular contributions from the Iraqi government, however these funds were extremely limited, representing less than 4 percent of the annual budget.<sup>50</sup>

Overall, education was one of the main expenditures of the Jewish community;<sup>51</sup> the communal organization of schools became more structured as the Rabbinate yielded considerable power to the lay council, which by 1920 was composed of white-collar professionals and merchants, the majority of whom were graduates of the Alliance and community schools.<sup>52</sup> By the end of the 1920s the Jewish community had a mature established school system, whereas the national education system in Iraq was still in its infancy. This is partially because the Mandate government allocated insufficient funds to education in Iraq for fear of developing an educated class that would be unable to find suitable employment.<sup>53</sup> The Jewish schools surely suited the British, as these schools provided graduates from an indigenous community that was known for its sympathy towards the British presence in Iraq.

In addition to these challenges, the Iraqi ministry of education obviously faced challenges that were not shared by the Jewish community, particularly the fact that they had to deal with a larger more diverse population both geographically and culturally. Thus the Jewish school system was able to grow and expand their services faster to a larger segment of its population than the general school system; they built new schools, lowered general school fees, and provided more scholarships to meet the demands of the community. Even with

49 The chief rabbi's office makes a note of this fact in the letter to Magnes, 19.

50 Shiblik, *Iraqi Jews*, 40. Jews Schools Report, 1–3.

51 The chief rabbi's letter provides an overview of the budget, 20.

52 Shiblik, *Iraqi Jews*, 45.

53 Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 193–194.



the loss of students that resulted from some opting to attend public schools for financial reasons and others attending non-Jewish private schools after moving to new middle-class suburbs during late 1930s and 1940s,<sup>54</sup> the number of Jewish schools and students enrolled in them continued to grow up until the dissolution of the community at the end of the 1940s and early 1950s.

The Jewish schools consistently employed trained teachers who brought an international flavor to the profile of the schools. Initially, in the nineteenth century, the certified teaching staff in the Jewish schools was made up of foreign Jewish faculty, primarily teachers from other parts of the Muslim world who had been trained at the Alliance teacher's school in Paris. Once the community had its own graduates, they too began to fill the ranks of faculty in the schools, although some had little more than primary school training. In the 1920s the Jewish community took several steps to improve the quality of teaching in schools by sending local teachers to secondary education evening classes. And yet, the presence of foreign Jewish teachers remained prevalent in the schools well into the 1940s. Examples of this include the hiring of Mr. A.G. Brotman in 1926 to assist the schools' committee and oversee education, and in 1928 two additional teachers were recruited for the Shamash school, one from England and another from Beirut. Beginning in 1925 the community invited Jewish teachers from Palestine to Baghdad to instruct students in Hebrew language, literature, and Jewish history. All of the teachers from Palestine were eventually deported when the ministry of education prohibited the study of Modern Hebrew and Jewish history education in the communal schools in 1935; in addition the teaching of Zionism was banned.<sup>55</sup> Even the local Jewish teachers brought an international flavor to the schools as many of those with higher education had been educated in Europe or elsewhere in the Middle East or even the United States.<sup>56</sup>

By the 1920s the faculty of the Jewish schools also began to include non-Jewish teachers. This was partly due to the paucity of Jewish teachers skilled in teaching Arabic language and literature. It appears, however, that well into the 1940s, the schools hired only Jewish headmasters, many of them trained in the United Kingdom or France. For example, the Alliance continued their policy

54 Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, 47. An example of this is Sasson Somekh, whose family moved to Bustan al-Khass in 1937 where he attended a private elementary school run by a Christian woman for a few years until he later transferred to the Shamash high school.

55 Lev Hakkak, *The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Literature in Babylon from 1735–1950* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2009), 19.

56 Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, 59.

of employing former students from other areas of the Muslim world who had studied at the ENIO in Paris, whereas the Shamash school employed a series of British schoolmasters, the most well known being Emile Marmorstein and the aforementioned Adolf Brotman. Ironically, even as the Jewish schools began to hire more non-Jewish teachers, the public schools were pressured to employ Jewish teachers, particularly in the schools where the majority of students were Jews. This diversity of faculty greatly affected the students, giving them varying perspectives on the world at large, as the examples below illustrate.

Sasson Somekh received his introduction to Iraqi politics from his Arabic language and literature teacher at the Shamash school, Muhammad Sharara. Somekh recalls Sharara eschewing semi-official government textbooks in favor of lectures in which he could share his leftist political views—this was in the late 1940s when those suspected of having communist affiliations were imprisoned or even executed.<sup>57</sup> Teachers also brought the concept of Jewish nationalism into the classroom, sometimes in very subtle ways. Violette Shamash, who attended the Alliance Laura Kadoorie school in the 1920s, remembers her teacher Mme. Sabbagh, from Paris, teaching the children *Hatikva*, the then unofficial anthem of the Zionists in Palestine; it was only later in life that she learned the significance of the song.<sup>58</sup>

The influence of teachers on students was of course also found in public schools. In his biography, Nissim Rejwan recalls the days he attended Madrasat Ras El-Qarya. Ras El-Qarya was one of the public boys' schools in the Jewish quarter that catered almost exclusively to Jewish students and for the most part employed only Jewish teachers. Rejwan recalls a teacher named Dawood Afandi who taught Hebrew Bible.<sup>59</sup> Afandi, according to Rejwan, devoted a whole lesson in the spring of 1933 to a discussion of the need to boycott German products in solidarity with the Jews of Germany.<sup>60</sup> This anecdote illustrates how even in a government run school a classroom could become the place of a communal discussion; the idea of boycotting Germany had developed outside Iraq and was imported by Zionist circles present in Baghdad. It also offers an

57 Ibid., 77–80.

58 Violette Shamash, *Memories of Eden* (Surrey: Forum, 2008) 35–36. Shamash mentions the teacher being from Paris although given her last name and the average profile of an Alliance teacher it is more likely that she was originally from somewhere in North Africa and was educated at the ENION in Paris.

59 Rejwan refers to the teacher as Dawood Afandi, however it is likely that Afandi simply refers to his title.

60 Nissim Rejwan, *The Last Jews in Baghdad: Remembering a Lost Homeland* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 59–60.

example of a teacher discussing a very sensitive political subject, even as certain factions in the Iraqi government were professing Nazi sympathies, primarily in protest against British colonialism.

### Curriculum

The first Alliance school in Baghdad followed the Franco-Ottoman education model. Neither Arabic, the local language, nor Ottoman Turkish, the language of the administration, was central to the curriculum although both were taught to varying degrees through the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Originally, when the Alliance girl's school was opened in 1893, Arabic was not part of the curriculum. This is not surprising as during the Ottoman period the language of instruction in the Muslim schools was Turkish.<sup>61</sup> And even in 1919 of the 75 public primary schools in Iraq only 56 taught in Arabic, 11 taught in Turkish, 7 taught in Kurdish, and one taught in Persian.<sup>62</sup>

It was not until the 1920s that Iraqi state legislation began to mandate the study of Arabic. In 1924, in written correspondence from the office of the chief rabbi to Magnes in Jerusalem, we see notes that the government was pressuring the schools to teach in English and Arabic, but that the schools were slow to deviate from the curriculum developed by the Alliance. Although by this time the majority of Jewish schools were already teaching some Arabic, this educational legislation, in addition to the growing importance of Arabic in commerce and civil society, led to an increase in Arabic instruction throughout the Jewish schools. By 1930 all Jewish schools in Baghdad taught Arabic and all but one taught English. The one school not teaching English was the Alliance girl's school, Laura Kadoorie, where French was the main language of education, and Arabic was a distant second. If Laura Kadoorie represents one extreme in language division, it is also far from the exception: instruction in Arabic was not uniform throughout schools, grades, or genders, with schools allocating anywhere from 6 to 20 hours a week towards the study of Arabic.<sup>63</sup>

The lay council report of 1930 provides a clear breakdown of the subjects studied divided by language and providing the number of hours dedicated to each language for all but the Midrash Talmud Torah. By 1930 four schools were being administered by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Albert Sasson

61 Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 197.

62 Longrigg, *Iraq 1900 to 1950*, 110.

63 See lay council curricula tables.

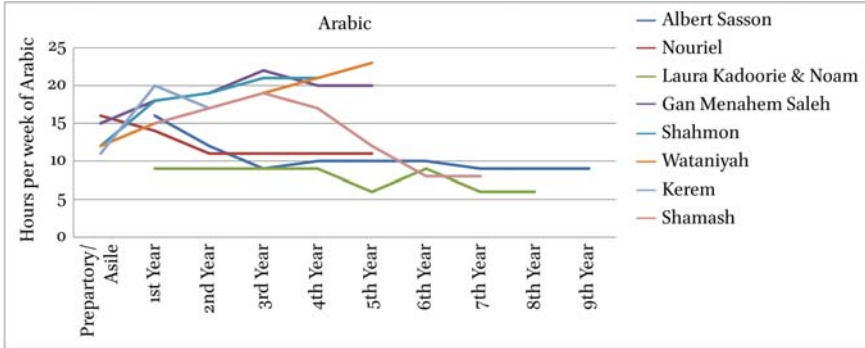


FIGURE 4.1

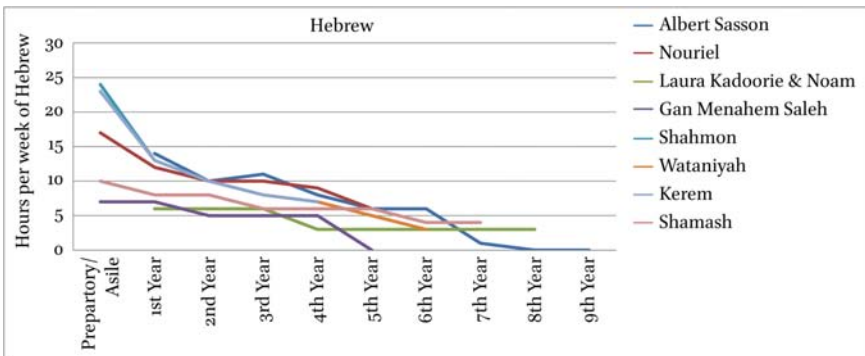


FIGURE 4.2

(founded in 1863), Nouriel (founded in 1902), Noam (founded in 1902), and Laura Kadoorie (founded in 1895). At the Alliance boy’s schools, Albert Sasson and Nouriel, the curriculum was divided between Arabic, French, Hebrew, and English, with French and Arabic being the dominant languages. The allocation of hours per language was such that as a student neared matriculation, the time allocated to French would increase as the time for Arabic would decrease. For the less dominant languages such as Hebrew and English, hours allocated to Hebrew would decrease as hours allocated to English would increase. The Alliance girls’ schools operated in a strikingly different way than what we see in this report. At Laura Kadoorie and Noam the dominant language during the entire duration of study was French, with Arabic second, and Hebrew far behind.

For the community run schools there was significantly more Arabic in the curriculum from their inception, regardless of gender. In addition, all of the schools dedicated substantial time to the study of Hebrew and English. The only communal schools which offered hours in French, and then only in the

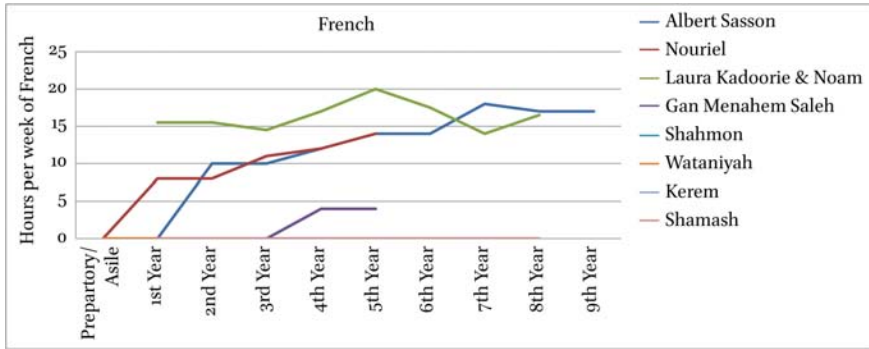


FIGURE 4.3

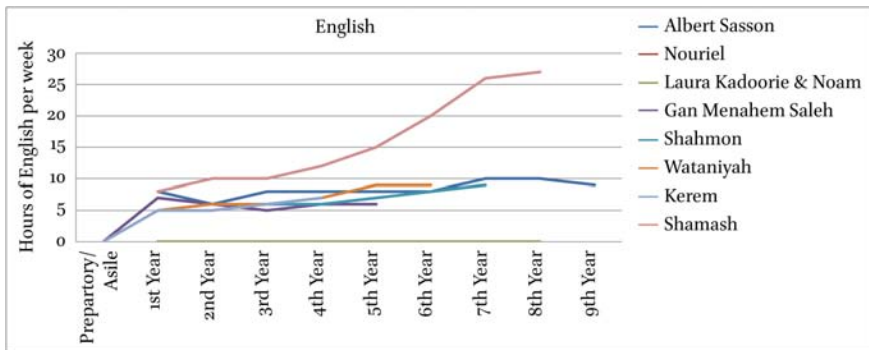


FIGURE 4.4

final two years, was the girl’s school Gan Manehem Daniel Saleh (founded in 1910); it offered four hours per week in the final two years, most likely to prepare girls who wished to continue their education through year eight at the Alliance Laura Kadoorie school, the only Jewish girl’s school offering courses for the final three years of secondary education. For the boy’s community schools, Shahmon (founded 1909), Wataniyya (founded 1923), and Kerem (founded in 1924), Arabic was the dominant language. In the first years of education more time was allocated to English, though this slowly reversed as students progressed. Finally, Shamash (founded in 1928), which was also a community school but with an objective of preparing students to take the London matriculation exams, focused almost exclusively on English in the later years. Figures 4.1–4.4 compare the hours of study allocated to each language based on the numbers provided from the 1930 report.

When grouping the Alliance and communal schools together, the clearest differentiation in curriculum is between the sexes. Arabic was not universally included in the girl’s curricula until much later, a point illustrated in Sasson

Somekh's autobiography when he writes about the experience of his parents at the Alliance schools. Born in 1909 Somekh's mother learned to read and write in French and English at the Alliance girl's school in Basra, but was never taught to read or write Arabic. His father, born in 1900 and educated at the Alliance boy's school in Baghdad, studied European languages in addition to Arabic.<sup>64</sup> This contrast relates to the fundamental philosophical differences between boy's and girl's education in the Jewish community. Whereas boys were educated to be successful in their chosen careers, have the means to support their future families, and participate as active citizens of the state, a women's role was much more limited. The impetus behind educating Jewish girls was based on the ideas of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century bourgeois society in western Europe and America. A girl's education was supposed to develop the qualities she needed to become a wife and homemaker, girls were essentially educated in domesticity. Education was synonymous with social prestige, making an educated girl a more desirable match on the marriage market.<sup>65</sup>

Girls' education began to change in the 1930s when some occupations became open to women, such as teaching and nursing. However the difference in focus between boys' and girls' education is still evident when looking at the gender divide in the curricula of 1930. The clearest indicator of this is the importance of the Arabic language in boys' education compared to girls' education, but there were other differences as well. In general, boys had three to six more hours of class time per week than girls and more time was dedicated to the "hard sciences," whereas girls dedicated significant time to subjects like embroidery, sewing, hygiene, and home economics.

These differences in and of themselves are not particularly surprising, given the role of women in Iraq at the time. However, if we consider standard Arabic as one of the main facilitators and markers of national identity, it is surprising that this was deemed more important for boys than for girls. One can postulate that, initially, the study of Arabic was not ideological but pragmatic—it was necessary for employment in the civil service and in commerce in the 1920s and early 1930s. As upper and middle class women were not expected to work, the importance of mastering Arabic was seen as less important. This fact is illustrated in a 1924 letter written by David Sasson,<sup>66</sup> then a teacher at the

64 Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, 55–56.

65 Esther Meir-Glitzstein, *Zionism in an Arab Country: Jews in Iraq in the 1940s* (London: Routledge, 2004), 117–118.

66 Sasson (no relation to the Baghdadi Sassoon Family) was a Persian born Jew educated at the Alliance school in Tehran and the Alliance ENIO in Paris.

Alliance girl's school, in which he deplors the fact that families prefer for their daughters to learn English over Arabic, even though English has less practical use for these women. He goes on to note that girls who are not taught to read Arabic will become women completely dependent on their fathers and spouses.<sup>67</sup> Eventually this changed: by 1930 Laura Kadoorie had dropped the study of English in favor of Arabic, although only 6 to 9 hours a week were allocated to the language.

In the 1930s the only girls who received a comprehensive education in Arabic were those attending the one community girl's school, Gan Menahem Daniel Saleh. These girls received up to 22 hours of Arabic a week, making it the dominant language of their education. However Gan Menahem Daniel Saleh represented a minority of those girls who received an education, as the school only had 306 students compared to the two Alliance girl's schools that enrolled, in total, 1,826 students.<sup>68</sup> As Arabic became a symbol of the nation and represented unity and integration, the number of hours dedicated to Arabic increased for girls, particularly in the 1940s. We cannot know whether the increase in Arabic was designed to facilitate women's integration into Iraqi society, or if the community wanted to demonstrate its commitment to Arabic, or whether it was a result of simple pressure from the government ministry of education, we do know, however, that it was an example of the growing importance of Arabic as an Iraqi national symbol.

Beyond the gender divide, the other major difference in curriculum was between the "religious" and the "secular" communal schools. Although all of the secular Jewish schools taught Hebrew, Jewish history, and religious studies, a point regularly mentioned in the Jewish schools report, they remained focused on a secular education. Obviously, the two branches of the Midrash Talmud Torah had a very different perspective: linked directly to the rabbinate and only open to boys, they offered the least "modern" education. The 1930 lay council report does not discuss the curriculum of the Midrash Talmud Torah in the same detail as it does the other schools, yet it does mention that in addition to being a religious school it offered elementary studies in Arabic. The teaching of Arabic was most likely due to government pressure; after all, in the 1920s the members of the communities attempted to persuade the rabbis to include more secular subjects, but the initiative was largely unsuccessful. In general, the Talmud Torah provided the lowest quality education among the Jewish schools. This was due not only to the lack of breadth in the curriculum but also

67 Monique Nahon, *Hussard de l'alliance* (Paris: Editions du Palio, 2010), 84.

68 Jewish School Report, 3.

to the overcrowded classes and the lack of qualified teachers, and little changed in the school over the course of a century. It was also the most isolated from Iraqi society. And yet the religious schools did not close, and continued to have overcrowded classes until the 1950s. Knowing that the general bias of the community was toward modern education it is surprising the Midrash continued to attract students. Somewhere between 1925 and 1930 the Midrash abolished all school fees, thereby providing an option to those who could not afford the fee-based Jewish schools and were weary of sending their children to public schools. The abolishment of fees was perhaps their attempt to remain relevant in the wake of the secular Jewish schools and the free public schools. It was not until 1935 that a modern Talmud Torah was opened that offered a traditional religious education, taught secular subjects from the state curriculum, and prepared students to take the entry exams for secondary education. This school was relatively successful, and is a testament to the fact that it was not opposition to religious education that turned people away from traditional education, but a desire for a modern education for their children. However the student body continued to be made up of boys from poor families, from which we can infer that the Midrash was not the first choice for schooling among Baghdadi Jewish families.<sup>69</sup>

Beyond the actual curriculum, these schools were social spaces that allowed linguistic creativity in all languages to flourish. The school was a place that allowed students to interact with others outside their family circle and to practice languages not regularly spoken at home. The alliance archives are replete with elegant essays written in French by students comparing themselves to heroes and heroines of French literature or equating Jewish Iraqi history with French history. Although I have primarily focused on the study of English and French versus Arabic, Modern Hebrew also flourished in Iraq. This is due in great part to its instruction in the Jewish schools, although formally forbidden after 1935 it continued to be taught as biblical Hebrew.<sup>70</sup> Lev Hakkak's book on modern Hebrew creativity in Iraq offers many examples of students experimenting with the Hebrew language during the 1920s and 1930s, the best example being the Shammash school's Hebrew language periodical, *Shemesh*. The school newspaper, written in Modern Hebrew and using Modern Hebrew script, only lasted three years, but throughout that time was read throughout the community.<sup>71</sup>

69 Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East: 1860–1972*, 115.

70 Hakkak, *The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Literature in Babylon*, 189–190.

71 *Ibid.*, 18–20.



Linguistic creativity in Arabic in the schools is perhaps best demonstrated through the “pageantry of the state,” these were the official ceremonies referenced earlier, in which students would read poems by famous Arab poets, sing traditional Arab songs, and give speeches demonstrating their loyalty to the nation and the monarchy. In some cases students composed their own poems, a testament to the high level of Arabic they had been taught. This multilingual education benefitted Iraqi society as a whole, as it was the graduates of these schools who were responsible for translating many of the great works of European philosophy and history into Arabic.

### Conclusion

The Jewish community of Baghdad during the Mandate and early years of the Iraqi state continued to function with the large measure of communal autonomy that it had for centuries prior, even as its constituents became more integrated into the new Iraqi nation. The Jewish community, led in tandem by the religious and lay councils, continued to levy taxes, act as the official representative of the community, and most importantly for our discussion, invest heavily in the development of educational institutions. From this statement it would be easy to assume that those schools attached to the Jewish community were insular in nature or that their objective was to foster a purely communal identity. However, on closer inspection, we see that this is not the case. Instead, the public policy of the Jewish community was to embrace the idea of the new Iraqi nation and the Jewish community’s place in this new nation.

The Jewish schools were a tool to demonstrate this ideology both in their principles but also as physical spaces in which the community could learn about and engage with the greater nation. Schools were not, however, uniform in their curricula: students received varying levels of access to Arab, Western, and Jewish culture. The differences between individual schools is most clearly delineated through the number of hours dedicated to the study of different languages and the importance placed on secular subjects. Although it is clear that the schools were agents of Arabization, and in this capacity acted as public spaces, this is only one aspect of their identities. It is more accurate to state that Jewish students were given the tools to participate in the new state and society that was being built, and they were also exposed to Western ideas and Jewish culture. However, the extent of their exposure to these different cultures and ideals varied based on gender and socioeconomic status. In very broad terms, middle class males received the greatest exposure to Iraqi society either by attending the community school or later public schools. The poorer families

were more likely to send their boys to the Midrash Talmud Torah, the program with perhaps the least external exposure or to communal vocational programs available for both boys and girls.

The Jewish schools of this period were remarkable in that they were able to produce Iraqi citizens who identified themselves with Arab nationalism, who not only participated in the nascent secular society but also at times became active architects of it.<sup>72</sup> That being said, not all students received the same degree of exposure to Arabic or the ideals of the new state. The most striking difference, as mentioned earlier, is one of gender: on average less of the curriculum for girls was dedicated to Arabic and they were taught by fewer non-Jewish teachers. Girls also tended to leave school earlier than boys to marry and this abbreviated education plus the reduced hours for the study of Arabic limited their introduction to public debates. And yet, over time, even girls began to have increased access to Arabic, the ideals of the nation, and public space in general. As Bashkin notes, some Jewish girls did attend government schools, particularly in the 1940s when more options were available, and it was becoming socially acceptable for women to appear in public unveiled.<sup>73</sup>

The other difference in education was subtler, and relates to socioeconomics. Although the school committee was cognizant of the prohibitive expense of schools and endeavored to provide scholarships and a sliding scale for tuition, it never altogether abandoned fees for the Alliance or the community schools, rather it offered scholarships for the best students. Therefore families not able to afford these fees and not offered scholarships were faced with two diametrically different options, either the free religious school that offered little by way of secular education, or the public schools that were outside the community and provided less exposure to foreign languages and therefore Western society. The fact that the religious schools continued to exist is evidence that some families still chose to forgo a secular education and exposure to secular society in favor of having their children attend a Jewish school. However, even in this construction there was flexibility: it was not unheard of for children to change schools throughout their studies or to hire tutors for religious education.<sup>74</sup>

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72 For a detailed discussion of the reception of the idea of the nation among Iraqi Jewish intellectuals see the unpublished 2012 doctoral dissertation, Aline Schlaepfer, "A Bagdad je resterai! Réception et diffusion du concept de 'nation' chez les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad entre la révolution jeune-turque et l'émigration (1908–1951)," (PhD diss., University of Geneva, 2012).

73 Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 87–88.

74 Schlaepfer, "A Bagdad je resterai!," 42.

In summary, in Iraq from the beginning of the Mandate period the boundaries between communal space and public space became increasingly blurred. Given the diversity of students that the Jewish schools of Baghdad produced and the fluid way in which the space functioned, it is clear that these schools were able to function both as public and communal space. For the Jewish community of Baghdad, schools were a tool with which the community could make itself relevant to the new nation while preserving its communal identity.

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CAHJP—Hebrew University, Jerusalem doc. Iraq File p3/2464.
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## Preserving the Catholics of the Holy Land or Integrating Them into the Palestine Nation (1920–1950)?

*K.M.J. Sanchez Summerer*

To British officials, Jerusalem appeared to be a divided city, with its different ethnic and religious groups, they saw it as a vivid image of ‘Babel alive.’<sup>1</sup> Ronald Storrs, the governor of Jerusalem, underlined the multilingualism of pupils when he visited the French Catholic school of the Collège des Frères, and the ‘harmony’ between the pupils of different religions studying together.<sup>2</sup> This diversity presented a challenge for the British administrators who, from the early years of the Mandate, sought to expand and separate the educational system along linguistic lines; as a consequence, the division of public space became more prominent.<sup>3</sup> Empowered by its role as official protectorate of the Christians in the Levant, France played an important role in what it perceived to be the “preservation of the Catholic community/minority of the Holy Land.”<sup>4</sup> French Catholic schools proposed one education for Christians, which was opened to Jews and Muslims from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards; these schools, set up before the Mandate (1904), challenged the governmental education offered during the first years of the Mandate.

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- 1 The religious and ethnic groups and the cacophony of languages were perceived as “one of the principal attractions,” John de V. Loder to mother, 4 May 1918. Private Papers Collection, Middle East Centre, St Antony’s College, Oxford; quoted in J. Sherman, *Mandate Days: British Lives in Palestine, 1918–1948* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 38.
  - 2 ACJ (Archives of the Jerusalem College of the Brothers of the Christian schools—Frères des écoles chrétiennes, Jerusalem), Historique, 1926, “note de Ronald Storrs.”
  - 3 Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).
  - 4 It is not our intention to discuss the concept of ‘minority’ here. We refer to Benjamin Thomas White and his general argument, according to which the political concept of “majorities” and “minorities” makes sense only in the context of the modern state, especially the nation state. We focus more on how the Catholics saw themselves between the two wars. Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East, the Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

In this paper I reveal a neglected aspect of colonial linguistic and religious policy governing the Catholics of the Holy Land, the impacts of French Catholic education on the identity-building process carried out in Palestine, and their reception by the Palestinian Catholic community. I focus on a discussion of the missionary schools as public and communal spaces, meeting places for missionaries, the elite, the middle classes, colonial, and religious powers. I also seek to understand how language practices, beliefs, and management intersect with religious beliefs, convictions, and ideologies at the local and international levels; the ways in which dominant discourses about language and education were played out, negotiated through Catholic schools and their environment, and I attempt to envisage the effect of a conflict in the conceptualization of language as a tool, at the individual and group level.

How did France use its schools as a platform, as a French spearhead in the Holy Land to confront Great Britain? How did the French language act as both a 'temporal' and 'spiritual' asset to the Christian community, but also, to a certain extent, to the Jewish and Muslim communities? How did the Roman and local Catholic actors perceive and use language as a tool for the defense of the interests of the Catholic community? How did the local Catholic community react to this religious language policy?

In the recent publications on Christianity in British Mandate Palestine, the category of Palestinian Christian Orthodoxy has been studied more than the Palestinian Catholic communities, though the latter were fundamental during the growth of international institutions in Palestine and were instrumental to France, and to a lesser extent to Italy, during and even after the establishment of the protectorate for the Christians of the Holy Land. Thus far, the linguistic aspects of the various Christian identities have been neglected. Historians agree on the important role of Arab Christians during the Mandate, but disagree on how Christians fit into the wider Arab society and to what degree they relied on their religious affiliation at certain times. Works dealing with Catholics in Palestine are for the most part interested in the holy places, diplomacy, politics, and religion, while the history of education and language use of indigenous Catholics have yet to be explored.<sup>5</sup> While the major works of Y. Porath and D. Tsimhoni on Palestinian nationalism and Christians are based on British interpretations of Arab society and highlight the intercommunal discord,<sup>6</sup> the work of B. Spolsky and R. Cooper do not tackle the Catholic commu-

5 דבורה, אדן, הבריטי המנדט בתקופת בבלשתניה הערבי החינוך 1989, 370.9 (91) E3.

6 Daphne Tsimhoni, "The Arab Christians and the Palestinian Arab National Movement during the Formative Stage," in G. Ben-Dor (ed.), *The Palestinians and the Middle East Conflict*

nity's use of languages during the Mandate period in relation to their Muslim and Jewish fellows, nor does the recent work of Haiduc-Dale on Christian communities and communalism.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the close link between the preservation of and further dissemination of the French language and the promotion of the Catholic religion in Palestine under Ottoman and British rules, this aspect of colonial linguistic policy has not been studied before;<sup>8</sup> the focus until now has been on Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. The impact of language policies on Palestine has been underrated in the different historiographies despite the conspicuous nature of the European legacy in Palestine and despite the linguistic motivation of missionary education, cited since the 1950s. More recently, Aslanov in his analysis of the position of the French language in the Levant, maintained that religious factors were more decisive than political ones in preserving the language.<sup>9</sup> He demonstrated that the 'preservation,' and the 'revival' of French was not necessarily based on an administrative or military occupation, and that the Levantine Francophone communities should not be considered a simple corollary of colonial and imperial policies, as it had been deeply rooted in this area before France entered onto the scene. However, he did not expand upon the part played by the schools in the area.

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(Ramat Gan: Turtledove Publishing, 1978), 73–98 and Yehoshuah Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918–1929* (London: Cass, 1974) both believe that Christians did not organize communally and this led to an overall decrease in Christians' importance throughout the Mandate.

- 7 Bernard Spolsky and Robert Cooper, *The Languages of Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) and Noah Haiduc-Dale, "Arab Christians in Palestine Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948" (PhD diss., New York University, 2010).
- 8 This absence could be explained by the fact that the study of French in Egypt has been prevalent in the historiography of the French presence in the Levant, and in the study of the traditional links between the Maronites of Lebanon and the French language. The Palestinian case, which occupies a separate place though it remains in the Levantine Francophonie, has been forgotten. Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); John E. Joseph, *Language and Identity, National, Ethnic, Religious* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); John Myhill, *Language, Religion and National Identity in Europe and the Middle East* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006); Jean Riffier, *Les œuvres françaises en Syrie—1860–1923* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000); Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*; Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in the Age of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
- 9 Cyril Aslanov, *Le français au Levant, jadis et naguère. A la recherche d'une langue perdue* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006).

Historical sociolinguistic studies of the Jerusalem communities and their relations in the public space face specific challenges that relate to historical inquiry; they contend with sometimes unreliable sources, with limited access to reliable spoken language data, and “imperfect data.”<sup>10</sup> The present study is based on primary and secondary published sources and archival material. The Latin Patriarchate and Vatican archival material on the Palestinian Catholic community question whether the current studies on Catholics is representative of the variety of cultural and linguistic choices made by the Catholics during the British Mandate period. In order to understand the social and cultural dimensions of the use of languages in the Catholic communities, in contact with other communities, I have based my analysis on the private archives and photographs provided by various French schools,<sup>11</sup> as well as the Latin Patriarchal archives, the Congregation for Oriental churches archives (part of the Holy See archives), the Vatican Secretariat of State archives, the Sainte Anne Melkite seminar of Jerusalem archives, and the files of the Chief Secretary of the Palestine government.<sup>12</sup> In this paper I have tried to include the Catholic

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- 10 Brian D. Joseph, “Historical Linguistics and Sociolinguistics: Strange Bedfellows or Natural Friends?,” in *Language and History, Linguistics and Historiography*, ed. Nils Langer, Steffan Davies, and Wim Vandenbussche (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 70.
- 11 Few memoirs of the schools’ alumni and magazines were published to voice the indigenous perspective on missionary educative activities, in contrast to the ones available in the Lebanese and Egyptian cases. Some of the archival material was preserved and classified during a project (“Archiver au Moyen-Orient, faiseurs d’histoire, faiseurs d’archives,” 2006–2008) entered into with the French consulate, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives Department, and the French National Research Agency CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique), in order to preserve and classify the archives of these schools still remaining. The loss of certain archives can be partially explained by the political events that have affected the schools, such as the 1947–1948 and 1967 wars.
- 12 The following acronyms will be used: ACB (Archives of the Bethlehem College of the Brothers of the Christian schools, Bethlehem); ACJ (Archives of the Jerusalem College of the Brothers of the Christian schools—Frères des écoles chrétiennes, Jerusalem); ACTS (Archives of the Custodia di Terra Santa, Jerusalem); AMAE (Archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris and Nantes); AMG (Archives of the General House of the Brothers of the Christian schools, Rome); ASSJ (Archives of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Jerusalem); ANDS (Archives of the Sisters of Zion, Jerusalem and Rome); ASC (Archives of the Sisters of the Charity, Soeurs de la Charité, Paris); BBDE (Blue Books, Government of Palestine, Department of Education); COCA (Congregation for Oriental Churches archives, Congregatio Pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus); LPA (Latin Patriarchate Archives, Jerusalem); JSSA (Jerusalem Schmidt Schule archives); MECA (Middle East Centre Archives, Oxford), PRO-FO or WO (Public Record Office, Foreign Office or War Office, United Kingdom); SASA (Sainte Anne Seminar archives); and VSSA (Vatican Secretaria di Stato archives).



subnarrative and the possibility that it used religious identification in political decision-making and societal relations (attempts to establish, resist, or modify language policies ‘from below’). Local Catholic community archives (schools, Latin Patriarchate and Melkite seminar archives) are underused resources for Mandate era studies, while the Mandate archives give greater nuance to the study of the writings of the Catholic community.

Histories of public space in the Holy Land tend to describe events as macro-level phenomena. More recent works point out the important role of languages in Jerusalem public space and the different combinations in the old city of Jerusalem (the new part of the town was more “cloisonné”).<sup>13</sup> Examining these phenomena through the lens of daily school life provides a counter voice and offers an account of different kinds of combinations and competitions.<sup>14</sup>

Here I envisage the French schools as public, communal, and to a lesser extent, private spaces. I focus on two main French Catholic schools that were strategically located inside the old city of Jerusalem: the Collège des Frères, situated near the New Gate opened in 1889, it was on the road of many Catholic pilgrimages and on the line of separation between fighters in 1948 and 1967; the second school was the Melkite (Greek Catholic) seminar and boys’ school of Sainte Anne, situated on the Via Dolorosa, the French ‘lieu de mémoire’ in Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> Under French jurisdiction, it symbolized the ‘eternal’ links between France and the oriental Catholics, where French pilgrims gathered in 1853 and the meeting place of the French community in Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup>

13 Y. Wallach in his chapter in this volume examines the possibility of evoking “shared spaces” in pre-1948 Jerusalem. He argues, as does Salim Tamari, that the Old City was far more mixed in confessional terms than the European descriptions tend to present it. Oral history and some memoirs of pupils of these Catholic schools point out these intercommunal moments between Catholics, other Christian communities, and Muslims, also more often in the domestic space than in the public space. Here we focus on the contacts in and around the two schools in the Old City. During the 1920s, the wealthier families moved to the new part of town, while holding on to their family properties in the Old City.

14 Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (eds.), *al-Quds al-intidābiyya fi l-mudhakarāt al-jawhariyya* (Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies, 2005) and Salim Tamari, *Year of the Locust, A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

15 Dominique Trimbur, “Sainte Anne, lieu de mémoire et lieu de vie français à Jérusalem,” in *Chrétiens et sociétés—XVIIe–XXe siècles*, n° 7 (2000), 39–69. The author analyzes the political context of the French presence in Sainte Anne and the French political representation via the area of the Church of Sainte Anne.

16 SASA, 2a1, La vie du séminaire des origines à la guerre de 1914–1918, “la France de Saint

I begin by analyzing the Catholic communities and their importance for the European presence, linguistic policy of the Catholic communities, and missionary education policy in the Holy Land. I will then focus on the linguistic and proto-national British agenda in Palestine, the educational and linguistic conflict between France and Great Britain, and its consequences for the process of identity formation in the Catholic schools and on the links between language and religion in educational policies. Finally, I examine the indigenous Catholic reaction to the European presence and the Catholic perception of the role of Arabic as a common ground with the Palestinian Muslim population.

### The Palestinian Catholic Communities and the Jerusalem Educational Space

#### *Catholic Communities, European Powers in Palestine, and Educational Challenges*

Considered the Holy Land by Christian European countries, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards Palestine became the theatre of European rivalries and interference.<sup>17</sup> For Great Britain, Palestine constituted the link between Egypt, Iraq, and India, and the “holy city.”<sup>18</sup> For France, who considered itself as the *‘fille aînée de l’Eglise’* (the eldest daughter of the Catholic church) and the protector of the Christian minorities in the Middle East, Palestine was perceived as an essential area, near the French sphere of influence over Syria and Lebanon, and as the “most French Land of the Levant.”<sup>19</sup> The Sykes-Picot agreements (1916) redrew the geopolitical map of the Middle East and considered Palestine an international zone, and the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) placed Pales-

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Louis,” “la France éternelle” are evoked for both the Melkite seminar, the boys’ school, and the church of Sainte Anne.

- 17 Henri Laurens, *La question de Palestine (1922–1947). Une mission sacrée de civilisation* (Paris: Fayard, 2002); Dominique Trimbur, “Catholiques français et allemands en Palestine, XIXe–xxe siècles,” *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français de Jérusalem* 18 (2007) 92–106; Anthony O’Mahony, “The Latins of the East: The Vatican, Jerusalem and the Palestinian Christians,” in *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Studies in History, Religion and Politics*, ed. Anthony O’Mahony (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 90–114.
- 18 Ethan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799–1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).
- 19 Maurice Barrès, *Une enquête aux pays du Levant* (Paris: Plon-Nouritt, 1923). Laurens, *La question de Palestine*.

tine under the responsibility of the British government, bringing a de facto end to the French protectorate for Catholics (it ended de jure in 1924).<sup>20</sup>

The French Catholic schools were at the forefront of a renewal in education and among the oldest European educational institutions in Palestine. The Tanzimat reforms of 1869 led to the development of public schools (*umumiyya*)<sup>21</sup> and the professionalization of western education;<sup>22</sup> the Ottoman reformers adopted a law that made elementary schooling compulsory for Ottoman citizens for a minimum period of three years and provided education that was no longer primarily religious.<sup>23</sup> Europeans thus came to perceive Palestine, and especially Jerusalem, as an educational arena.<sup>24</sup> However, the commercial and industrial French presence remained less developed than in the coastal towns of Palestine,<sup>25</sup> and the inner cities of Palestine offered fewer public educational structures.<sup>26</sup> Taking the reforms as an opportunity to spread French education throughout Palestine, the French schools proposed a curriculum—both classical and professional—valued by the Ottoman authorities;<sup>27</sup> the last quarter of the twentieth century saw the rapid growth of the French congregations teaching in French, then recognized by the Ottomans as a semi-official language. The French Catholic establishments opened rapidly across the Palestinian territory (one school opened every two to three years until 1904). The brothers of the Christian schools and the sisters of Saint

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- 20 The French Protectorate of Catholics takes its roots in the Capitulations given to France and its citizens (*ressortissants*)—commercial, religious, juridical favors—in 1575; Catherine Nicault, *Jérusalem 1850–1948, des Ottomans aux Anglais, entre coexistence spirituelle et déchirure politique* (Paris: Autrement, 1999).
- 21 Divided into primary (*ibtidā'iyya*, created in 1890) and secondary schools (*rushdiyya*, created in 1902); Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*.
- 22 The French order of the Brothers of the Christian schools, from Jean Baptiste de la Salle, were asked to help the Ottoman authorities to implement training schools for boys, AMG, NH701.
- 23 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity, the Construction of a Modern Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 86.
- 24 ACJ, Report of the German Archeological Institute, *Schools for Arabs* (Jerusalem, 1905).
- 25 Frederique Schillo, “Les commerçants français en Palestine pendant la période ottomane,” in *De Bonaparte à Balfour, la France, l'Europe occidentale et la Palestine, 1799–1917*, ed. Dominique Trimbur and Ran Aaronsohn (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2008), 135–167.
- 26 Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 136. French schools were not intended for French nationals as there were only few in Palestine.
- 27 The 1901 Mytilène and the 1913 Constantinople agreements (for the preservation of the rights of the Christian communities) gave schools that were established without official permits the right to continue to function.

Joseph's establishments enrolled the majority of the Christian students.<sup>28</sup> In 1895 private schools outweighed public schools, among the private institutions the French schools preponderated.<sup>29</sup> These schools aimed to educate not only boys, but girls as well, and this relatively early when compared to the laws on girls' schools (of 1867) in France.

Competition with other missionary institutions, especially the British schools,<sup>30</sup> began in the 1860s for primary education, and at the end of the nineteenth century for secondary institutions. The French educational model operated differently than the German and English systems, which held that the pupil's mother tongue had to be mastered before any other language teaching could take place.<sup>31</sup> The Germans and English were unsettled by the concern that teaching French would create a "confused linguistic identity" and become a sign of the "degeneration" of Palestinian society,<sup>32</sup> they focused on Arabic, while the Catholics presented French (until 1920) as the language of Catholicism. Furthermore, different Christian communities (Catholic and Orthodox) opted for French Catholic institutions because they did not have community schools.<sup>33</sup>

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- 28 The most important French Catholic educational facilities established in Palestine (boys and girls) were the following: Saint Joseph Sisters schools: 1848 Jerusalem (1849 Jaffa, 1853 Bethlehem, 1872 Ramleh, 1873 Ramallah, 1875 Beit Jalah, 1889 Nazareth, 1904 Naplouse). The Dames de Nazareth was established in Nazareth in 1855 but nowhere else in Palestine, followed in 1856 by the Zion Sisters. The Brothers of the Christian schools (Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes) started by opening a school in Jerusalem in 1876, then the main cities of Palestine followed; 1880 Rosary Sisters (Soeurs du Rosaire); 1883, Fathers of Zion (Pères de Sion), 1886 the Charity Sisters (Filles de la Charité, Saint Vincent de Paul); Karène Sanchez, *Politiques, éducation et identités linguistiques, le college des frères des écoles chrétiennes de Jérusalem, 1922–1939* (Utrecht: LOT, 2009), annexes.
- 29 Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie, géographie administrative, statistique descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie mineure* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1895), 563; Cuinet indicates that of the schools for the Jerusalem region there were 8 public, 27 Catholic, 5 Protestant, and 3 Orthodox.
- 30 German and Russian institutions had two schools during the Ottoman period, and these were partially closed after World War I. Italians did not run their own schools in the Bethlehem and Jerusalem areas, but their influence was predominant in the Franciscan schools for the poor Christian population.
- 31 Hans-Georg Wolf, "British and French Languages and Educational Policies in the Mandate and Trusteeship Territories," *Language Sciences* 30, no. 5 (2008), 553–574.
- 32 ACJ, Report of the German Archeological Institute, *Schools for Arabs* (Jerusalem).
- 33 The Latin Patriarchate and the Custodia di Terra Santa archives contain educational censuses. They show that the Sisters of Saint Joseph and to some extent, the Brothers of the Christian schools worked partly for the local Catholic authorities, but also opened their

In the field of language education, the European powers competed fiercely. In the late nineteenth century, knowledge of languages was a way of accessing ‘modernity.’<sup>34</sup> Each European institution claimed preeminence in addressing its linguistic and religious community. Fully aware of the linguistic acquisition process as a marker of identity, France and Great Britain confronted one another through their respective educational systems and also through the local schools ‘inspired’ by the French and British models. French linguistic and cultural influence constituted a response to British linguistic and educative initiatives.<sup>35</sup> The Italian influence on the Catholic community, essentially via the Custodia di Terra Santa who ‘insured’ the protection of the Catholics until the rebirth of the Latin Patriarchate in 1847, was manifest in the spread of Italian in the Franciscan schools; this lasted until the mid 1920s.<sup>36</sup>

For the French public and its government, in the early 1920s Palestine remained “the most French land of the Orient,” at a time when the loss to Great Britain of the French Catholic protectorate in the Holy Land was confirmed, and the French therefore focused on the schools to preserve their influence.<sup>37</sup> Even during British Mandatory rule, the French General Consulate continued to support French educational work and assisted the French communities, which were viewed by French officials to be “its residual influence in the Holy Land.”<sup>38</sup>

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own private sections that offered a more diverse curriculum; ACTS, Sisters of Saint Joseph and Brothers of the Christian schools files.

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

35 PRO, FO 371, E3051/44.

36 VSSA, 51 P.O. 56–57, 1924, Missione straordinaria di Mons. Doci in Turchia, promemoria del Sig. Schiaparelli, Segretario Generale dell’Associazione Nazionale per soccorrere i missionari italiani: proposte per la laicizzazione delle scuole religiose; VSSA, 81 PO 87 Palestina 1927–1938 Attegiamento dei Consoli, Note del Nuovo Console Generale italiano A Gerusalemme Orazio Pedrazzi. ‘il Levante mediterraneo e l’Italia’, ‘Custodia e Italia’, 1927. For the Italian linguistic and cultural agenda during the Ottoman period, cf. Pieraccini Paolo, “Schiaparelli e i Francescani. Fondazione e primi passi dell’Associazione Nazionale per Soccorrere i Missionari Italiani (1886–1905),” *Studi Francescani*, vol 112, pp. 71–137.

37 AMAE, E312-1, R. de Caix to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 19 May 1920. From 1926, her specific prerogative was restricted to the “reception of the liturgical honours” by French representatives when entering Catholic churches.

38 In a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert de Caix, collaborator of the Civil French High Commissioner in Syria and Lebanon and primarily responsible for the development of French policy in the Levant, stated that “[i]t is in the preservation of religious insti-

French Catholic schools acted as a 'spearhead' for French linguistic and cultural policy in the Holy Land.<sup>39</sup> The French missionaries were indeed perceived as French 'agents' by the British authorities.<sup>40</sup> Both schools appeared as French places and spaces that were marked symbolically by flags, personnel, hymns, and cultural references in the classrooms. The presence of French pilgrims ("a pre 1789 French Revolution taste of France") and the fanfare of Sainte Anne's school band playing French republican and Catholic hymns was supported by the alumni and members of religious associations wearing banners written in French and Arabic.<sup>41</sup>

*Linguistic Challenges of a Diverse Community: Catholic Schools as Spaces of Encounter?*

In his study of the construction of a Palestinian identity, Khalidi showed that in Palestine a (single) language did not always correspond to a (single) religious community, and he highlighted their overlapping identities.<sup>42</sup> The linguistic landscape of Jerusalem was indeed characterized, at the end of the Ottoman period, by a coexistence of Turkish (the official language of the empire, which was spoken by relatively few outside what is now Turkey),<sup>43</sup> Arabic (the language of the majority and the language of instruction in Ottoman schools), Yiddish, Hebrew, Greek, Armenian (languages of ethnic minorities), and languages of the colonial powers such as French, English, and German (dominant languages in terms of social prestige, but minority languages in terms of the number of speakers).

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tutions and the French character of their teaching that we must focus our efforts. This is what constitutes our residual influence in the Holy Land." Robert de Caix to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, *La position de la France en Palestine*, 28 Oct. 1920, AMAE, 312-1, n°404.

39 AMAE, E 312-1, n°90, Rapport du vice-amiral de Bon, 14/09/1920; AMAE, Nantes, B, 200, n°84, Consul of Jerusalem, Rais, to Aristide Briand, MAE, 15 June 1921; AMAE, E 312-32, n°10, 2 July 1928.

40 PRO, WO, 106/189, GSI, Advanced French Propaganda in Jerusalem.

41 COCA, LPA, and SASA photographic archives.

42 Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*.

43 In 1910: 3,560 Roman Catholics, 12,000 Muslims, 5,900 Greek Catholics, 1,600 Protestants. In 1922, the Catholics represented 25 percent of the Jerusalem-Jaffa area population, while the Melkites constituted 40 percent of the population of the northern district; Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). LPA, 1.1 B, LB, Melkites, 1936: in the Jerusalem area: 29,679 Latins, 21,800 Melkites, 360 Armenians, 350 siro puro (Syriac Catholic Church), a total of 52,389 Catholics.

The Catholic community characterized itself by its multilingualism, which highlights its shifting motivations, its communal self-understandings, and the complexity and elasticity of its linguistic identities. The community indeed used French and Italian as languages of instruction, while Arabic remained the main language of daily communication until the end of the 1920s.

Significantly, Haiduc Dale places the self-identification of the Christian communities in the wider historical context of the organization of communal groups in British Palestine. He points out that later in the 1930s Christian intellectuals, mostly writers, started to qualify Christians with the term 'minority,' as a protest to the mandate administration, though they had stressed years earlier that they could not be classified as minorities because they were Arabs first and thus members of the majority population.

The Latin and Melkite (Greek Catholic) communities constituted the majority of the Catholic community of Jerusalem (and to a larger extent, of Palestine). According to the British Mandate censuses of 1922 and 1931, and the numbers that appear in the local archives,<sup>44</sup> the Latin community was the most numerous in Palestine (a small Melkite community was present in Jerusalem, most of the Melkites resided in Galilee). The Catholic community included only a few Chaldeans, Maronites (14 percent of the Christian population in 1931, more importantly, were primarily located in Galilee) and Armenians<sup>45</sup> (from ten in 1910 to 500 in 1945, most of them arrived after 1915; they emphasized the Armenian language, the majority of them attended Armenian Orthodox schools, while some attended French Catholic schools). The Melkite community boasted that it was the only Christian community in Palestine that was completely Arab, both laypeople and the clergy; they but recurrently complained that they lacked educational institutions of their own.

As far as private schools were concerned, French Catholic schools were the most numerous; they represented between 75 and 85 percent of the Catholic schools' enrollment during the British Mandate period and more than 60 percent of the private schools enrollment. The French Catholic institutions enrolled the majority of the Christians from Jerusalem until the mid 1920s and they played an essential diplomatic role in the dissemination both of the French language and Catholicism. Inside the schools, the journals of the educational community reveal several references to communal discussions about the issue of Arabness and local catholicity; the French Catholic brothers also

44 COCA, LPA, and SASA.

45 The first vicar arrived in Jerusalem in 1885, when the residence and the church were built (they have been present at the 4th station of the Via Dolorosa since 1856).

aimed to educate their pupils in a way that would infuse them with a strong communal identity. Over time, more indigenous teachers (of Arabic but also the sciences) were recruited (not more than 30 percent of the personnel until the beginning of the 1940s).

The number of Catholic schools was disproportionate to the percentage of the population that was Catholic,<sup>46</sup> and these schools played a key role in raising the educational level of the inhabitants of the Old City. The Collège des Frères, like the one in Jaffa and Caiffa, continued to expand its activities under the British Mandate. We consider these two French Catholic schools as “spaces of encounter” between Christians, Muslims, and Jews and refer to H. Lefebvre’s<sup>47</sup> concept of “space of representation”; according to him the notions of “space of everyday experience” and “spatial practices” appear as central to the functioning of the public sphere, this in contrast to “conceived space.” These two schools can be seen as spaces of encounter and spaces dedicated to maintaining the Catholic identity of their pupils.

The Vatican archives reveal the role of the Holy See in the Catholic influence in the Jerusalem public sphere. According to the Vatican, from the beginning of the 1920s, they aimed to establish a ‘shared space’ between Latin Catholicism and the Oriental Catholic communities and the Muslims.<sup>48</sup>

The Collège des Frères of the New Gate welcomed Christian, Muslim, and a few Jewish pupils (according to the attendance lists, *sefaradim* represented from 6 to 9 percent of the total school population).<sup>49</sup> We envisage it as an intermediate space between that devoted to the educational arena and that of the brothers’ private communal space, where language choices and language use were discussed,<sup>50</sup> where it became clear which languages they preferred, they should use, or they simply used.

Sainte Anne’s school welcomed Catholic priests and teachers who devoted their time to oriental Catholicism; some of them eventually converted to Greek Catholicism. They discussed the language of the rituals though they functioned under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Latin Patriarchate and the temporal

46 PRO, BB, ED, 38 French Catholic private schools in 1931; 21 British private schools.

47 Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 109 (and chapter 6 on space).

48 COCA, Melikiti, 2030, Haggear, Ponzona personale. The Bishop evokes the confidence of the Muslims in the Holy See equity and its protection in Palestine.

49 ACJ, Rapports, 1928–1933.

50 The order of White Fathers was created by the French Cardinal de Lavigerie in Algeria in 1868, some of them specialized in the study of Islam and oriental Catholicism.



civil authority of the French consul.<sup>51</sup> The domain of Sainte Anne was French territory where a part of the Nabi Musa procession passes. It faced the eastern entrance to the esplanade of the Dome of the Rock, and played a role in the Palm Sunday procession. When French communal space competed for public space, the procession came from the Mount of Olives to the Church of Sainte Anne, thus reflecting the importance of the linguistic appropriation and promotion: French flags, hymns, pupils associations along with Arab Catholic associations.

During the interwar period, the French consulate set its sights on the growing Jewish population, while at the same time it tried to exert more influence on Catholic school life. The French consulate and the schools, each at their own level, focused on the preservation of the French language. They sought to accomplish this goal by employing a large proportion of French-speaking students in good posts in the administration. They also noted that Jewish and the Muslim pupils were less numerous at the beginning of the 1930s.

## Catholics and the Palestinian Nation

### *Catholics and the "Modernization"/"Neutralism" of the British Government Displayed through the English Language*

The language question in the public/private educational space of Jerusalem can be read as a question of language power, power to bring the inhabitants together or to divide them. The archives of the Catholic schools and the foreign consulates reveal a real consciousness of the power of language on the Jerusalem educational and communal scene. The city embodied the linguistic battle between France and Great Britain; it was a situation that poses the question of the linguistic policy of the British Mandate in Palestine. There was no official linguistic policy, but language planning in the public space can be discerned from the official British discourses on the three communities.

Palestine government officials, through the organization of the governmental school system, argued that a unified school system was undesirable. The desire of the Palestine government to put an end to the Catholic privileges is a

51 During the reception of Cardinal Dubois and the High Commissioner of Beyrouth, the French role towards the Catholics was reaffirmed. The Congrès français de Syrie was established in 1919 to investigate the French interests in the Levant. In its correspondence with the Holy See, the Melkite hierarchy expressed itself in French only, having been trained in French mostly at Sainte Anne, until World War I.

recurrent theme not only in the schools, but also in the archives of the minister of education, H. Bowman.<sup>52</sup> The Mandate authorities took direct control of the former Ottoman public schools and nominal control over a plethora of private schools (including those of the Zionist organization).<sup>53</sup>

British administrators claimed that the educational separation of communities along linguistic lines was a pedagogic necessity, a declaration that was well received by Palestinian and Zionist nationalist camps.<sup>54</sup> Such a policy contributed to the fragmentation of the public space into Jewish and Arab sectors, each with its own 'native' language.<sup>55</sup> From the official start of the British Mandate in Palestine, the British foresaw their role as the "sacred task of civilization,"<sup>56</sup> which implied a change in language planning and the establishment of an official division of the population into two linguistic groups, an Arabic-speaking group and a Hebrew-speaking group. The formal British Mandate on Palestine was ratified by the League of Nations on 24 July 1922.<sup>57</sup> Articles 15 and 16 enjoined the Mandate to ensure the rights of the religious communities to maintain schools for the education of their own members. Article 22 of the Mandate recognized English, Arabic, and Hebrew as official languages,<sup>58</sup> and one year after the Mandate was granted to Britain in Palestine in 1923,

52 COCA, 438, Ingenerenza del Governo inglese nelle scuole cattoliche.

53 Arab governmental schools: 171 in Palestine in 1920 to 403 in 1940; 550 Muslim and Christian private schools.

54 Suzanne Schneider, "Monolingualism and Education in Mandate Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 52 (Winter 2013), 68.

55 The British classified Hebrew as a 'mother tongue' in their 1922 census, though, according to Schneider (74, note 3), Hebrew could hardly be classified as anyone's native or mother tongue on the eve of World War I; McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine*, 82 (inhabitants by mother tongue). Interestingly, schools in Yiddish never gained recognition as public entities "on the ground of that Hebrew was the true native tongue of the Jews," Schneider, "Monolingualism and Education in Mandate Palestine," 71 n. 12. Laura Robson makes the claim that the Mandate authorities made no accommodation for a non-sectarian public space.

56 Laurens, *La question de Palestine*.

57 PRO, BB, class B Mandate—in contrast to class A Mandate, the B Mandate was not destined for independence; Wolf, "British and French Languages."

58 Article 15 guaranteed "the right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language while conforming to such educational requirements of a general nature as the administration may impose." However, the Catholic schools were not recognized as public entities by the British Government, rather they were considered part of the Arab school system. The Education Ordinance, promulgated in 1933, recognized this double educational reality (part 1).

French, which had previously had the status of a semi-official language, was no longer recognized as the language of examination for all primary, secondary, and professional schools in Palestine.<sup>59</sup> The Education Department (created in 1922 by the government of Palestine to develop primary education, and secondary, urban, and rural teacher training), although favorable to the religious communities' institutions, separated language from religion in its first piece of legislation and left each community responsible for the teaching of its own religion.

At the beginning of the Mandate, the British administration took little note of education. As the memoirs of the high commissioner Herbert Samuel illustrate, the British-sponsored schools lagged far behind the French schools. At the same time, inside the schools and the entire Mandate administrative, executive, and judiciary spaces, the personnel faced the institutionalization of English. From the archives of the British and the schools, the British educational and linguistic agenda appears as the propagation of an alternative language culture model, the language ideology of the Mandate, as for any colonial power, was to reinforce the power structure, mainly through governmental administration, education, and mass communication.<sup>60</sup> But more importantly, the Mandate administration seemed to have thought that 'modernization' was inherent in English and synonymous with economic modernity.<sup>61</sup>

The Mandate government was animated by practical considerations: for the government, reading in English was not a cultural exploration but a preparation for entry into life. The Bowman archives reveal that for director of the department of education (1920–1936), another language culture beyond the local vernaculars was perceived as a potential political threat. Humphrey Bowman promoted a doctrine of education along a 'native language line' and wanted to avoid literary education because the linkage of English to the education policy was perceived as a failure,<sup>62</sup> as the context of English colonial education policy was largely based on the British experience in India. In this respect, Bowman discouraged private and missionary school alternatives—above all he was virulent against the Catholic schools, which were the most numerous not only in Jerusalem but also in the major cities of Palestine—he saw them as institutions of "low calibre."

59 AMAE, E 312-32, 26 April 1924.

60 Andrea Stanton, *This is Jerusalem Calling: State Radio in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013).

61 MECA, Humphrey Bowman archives (Director of Education, Mandate Palestine, 1920–1936), private diary.

62 In 1931, for example, only one in a thousand boys completed secondary education.

At the beginning of his work at the directorate, Humphrey Bowman proposed a state-sponsored binational version of English public schools (Arab children could not be expected to speak Hebrew nor Jewish children to speak Arabic):

the only way in which we can hope to get Jew and Arab [to] work together is to get the children to work and play together and that can be only achieved by having them sit cheek by jowl in the classroom and living in the same school house. As long as the Palestinian Government is carrying out the policy of His Majesty's Government, it is absolutely essential that every effort should be made to get two Semitic divisions to work together ... The language of Arabs is Arabic; the language of the Jews is Hebrew. Both races attach very great importance to the education in elementary schools through their own language. It would be impossible in my opinion to have Arabs and Jews in one school as long as the language difficulty exists and I see no possibility of that language difficulty being solved.<sup>63</sup>

In this context, the French Catholic schools faced a large-scale linguistic change at the beginning of the 1920s: the institutionalization of English and Arabic. But despite the Palestine government pressures, the French Catholic schools did not turn into bilingual (English–Arabic) educational institutions. They continued to value multilingualism.

### *Language Usage in Catholic Schools*

From the beginning of the 1920s onwards the high commissioner stressed the importance of developing linguistic facility among the employees. Therefore, though the discussions in the French Catholic schools were not about the potential 'anglicization' of their curriculum, they proposed a progressive increase in hours of English instruction.

63 Testimony of H. Bowman, Director of Education, 27 Nov. 1936, in the *Palestine Royal Commission Minutes of Evidence Heard at Public Sessions* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1937), cited in Schneider, "Monolingualism and Education in Mandate Palestine," 72. The author stresses the monolingual agenda of the department of education of Palestine. It is only the Palestine Royal Commission that praised the work of a small number of private 'mixed' schools and their form of education as playing a role in bringing the communities together; the government of Palestine never supported this idea.

The demand for education among the Arab Palestinian population continued to draw pupils to the missionary schools, as the government schools could not offer Palestinian society the opportunities it needed.<sup>64</sup> They faced a structural problem throughout the period of British Mandatory rule in Palestine, whose budget focused on the problems of defense and counterinsurgencies. Fewer Catholic pupils were enrolled in governmental schools than in other Christian communities (and among them, most of the Melkites attended Catholics schools in the urban areas<sup>65</sup>), perhaps because the Latin Patriarchate made several declarations against the so-called 'secular governmental education.'<sup>66</sup> The birth of an urban middle class contributed to the demand for education and emancipation.<sup>67</sup> Until the mid-1930s, a good education was still based on language education, and foreign languages were still a benchmark, a key factor in obtaining a good social position in Palestinian society. French was essential in education until the mid-1920s because, according to the missionaries, the French government, and the Palestinian elite, it mirrored the "universal values of rationalism and the clarity of expression."<sup>68</sup> That is why enrollment in the French Catholic schools remained stable during the interwar period.

The Catholic school directors questioned the desirability of French and English in their curriculum. Arabic instruction began at the 4th grade, and came to occupy the same number of hours (8 to 12 hours weekly) as French (though some students did not achieve full competence in their native Arabic), followed by English (between 6 and 8 hours a week during the 1930s). In these French Catholic schools, the English language was not used as the primary language in education, in contrast to Terra Santa College (founded in 1926 under the auspices of the Franciscan Custodia di Terra Santa, the second 'secondary' school), and the last grade of the Collège des Frères, which competed with the Arab College, a unique secondary governmental school.<sup>69</sup> To the 'more

64 Humphrey Bowman, *Middle East Window* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942), 250–254; PRO, BB, DE, annual reports.

65 Most of the Melkite schools were situated in Galilee, and the majority of them were rural boys' schools, whose level was fiercely criticized by the White Fathers of Sainte Anne Seminar in Jerusalem. In the Galilee cities, Latin schools enrolled the majority of the Melkite students, ASSA, Annual reports.

66 LPA, reactions to the education ordinance.

67 In 1935, 1 percent of rural girls enrolled, and 40 percent of urban girls.

68 Reem Bassiouney, *Arabic Sociolinguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 212.

69 Paolo Pieraccini, *Un universita cattolica a Gerusalemme? L'opera cardinal Ferrari e il collegio francescano di Terra Santa, Rivista Antonianum*, 81/1 (2006), 135–161.

and better English' promoted by the Mandate government, the French schools answer was "less and better French." This meant that schools had to manage heterogeneous groups of pupils in language teaching; we see evidence of this in the inspectors' reports. British and Irish Brothers of the Christian schools (Baptiste de la Salle) were sent to Jerusalem to teach English. In June 1930, the director of the Collège des Frères was proud that Keith Roach, then governor of Jerusalem, praised the English teaching level in the school.<sup>70</sup> English and Arabic, crucial for earning a diploma under the British Mandate, became for the French schools a way of preserving French education and of ensuring that their students found a suitable place in the Palestinian job market. Along with this official language use policy, social activities took place in colloquial Arabic, less curbed during the 1920s than during the Ottoman period of 'francization.'

Interestingly, French 'national' exams proposed in Catholic schools and in the schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) brought together Jewish teachers of the AIU and the Catholic missionary school teachers, under the umbrella of the French consulate.<sup>71</sup> The archives reveal one attempt to implement a Hebrew course at the Jerusalem Collège des Frères, in 1934, but the initiative was aborted with the beginning of the Great Arab revolt against the British (summer 1936–1939).<sup>72</sup> During the period of political turmoil, the Jewish pupils left these schools.<sup>73</sup>

Discussions took place about what was called in French '*l'arabisation des programmes*' (the arabization process).<sup>74</sup> Both schools agreed on the increase of Arabic, progressively insured by professional language Arabic teachers. In Sainte Anne, the discussion also touched on the use of and the teaching of Greek (in the Melkite liturgy and in the curriculum) but the White Fathers

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70 ACJ, Rapports, 1928–1933.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid. This was also a result of the position of the Catholic Church towards Zionism. According to a discussion between Weizman and the Secretary of State Gasparri and recorded in the Vatican archives, the Catholic Church believed that Jews could return to Palestine and settle there, but must not act against the interests of other groups. The Holy See negated Zionism as the restoration of the Jewish Gospel revelation and condemned the Zionist 'boldness' that was responsible for the 1928–1929 and 1936–1939 clashes between the communities.

74 For Daphne Tsimhoni, arabization started only after World War II; *Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1948: An Historical, Social, and Political Study* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996).

opted for the reinforcement of Arabic. They followed on this topic the Melkite Patriarch who underlined the importance of Arabic.<sup>75</sup>

Although we do not refer in this chapter to girls' educational space in Jerusalem, it is interesting to mention the case of the girls' Catholic schools because it reveals an interesting interplay between political and educational power of the linguistic agendas of the schools. While like other private girls' schools under the Mandate, Catholic schools intended to educate future good mothers and wives by offering an increase in value on the 'marriage market' (as pointed out by Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah in this volume for the case of Iraq); they also considered languages as fundamental in the identity-building process of young girls. The archives of the German Schmidt's Girls College in Jerusalem, for example, reveal how this German institution used English to promote German and Catholic values to its mixed Christian and Muslim pupil population.<sup>76</sup> The study of the reactions of the Catholic teachers and pupils at the girls Catholic schools in the public sphere help us to identify the evolution of a common ground: progressively, the Christian girls are perceived to be more free and venture more easily into public spaces than their Muslim peers (the British officials justified the spatial gender segregation as a way of maintaining "harim conditions.")<sup>77</sup> Catholic girls' schools also reflected the same tensions in Catholic communities, and struggles for loyalty between France and the Holy See. On one hand Christian girls were separated from Muslim girls (concretely, they did not sit on the same benches). On the other hand, the Rosary Sisters that emerged from the order of the French Sisters of Saint Joseph reflected the

75 The few letters of the Melkite Bishop and Archbishop expressing opposition to Sainte Anne evoke this tension around the need to teach in Arabic and consider the seminar school as a 'state' apart (*'un Etat dans l'Etat'*); Mougabgab, le 13 Dec. 1928 to Sincero.

76 The German cultural and linguistic case is better known in regard to the Ottoman period. In 1885, the Palästina Verein merged with another association and in 1895 became the Deutschen Verein vom Heiligen Land (Order of Saint Vincent). During the Mandate period, the Germans established the second training center for girls after the British administration, almost 100 students, became teachers themselves or got involved at another level, in the educational development of Palestine. The curriculum was proposed in English (German was only a subject). JSSA, Private archives, Schmidts College Jerusalem; for the Ottoman period, Haim Goren, *"Echt katholisch und gut deutsch"—Die deutschen Katholiken und Palästina, 1838–1910* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2009).

77 Bowman, *Middle East Windows*, 260. On segregation in the Sisters of St. Joseph schools in Palestine, ASSJ (diaries) and COCA, 451. Ela Greenberg, "Invading Spaces: Challenging the Private-Public Dichotomy in Girls' Education in Mandate Palestine," *Hawwa* 10, nos. 1–2 (2012), 59.

desire of indigenous Catholic nuns to offer an education to Palestinian girls (and in this sense, also preserve the Catholics).

*Arabic, Palestinian Nationalism and the Catholic Communities*

At the end of the Ottoman period and during the interwar period, French was presented as a language of coexistence<sup>78</sup> by several French and indigenous Latin Catholic elites who supported the promotion of an official 'coexistence between communities' in the French boys' schools and girls' schools.<sup>79</sup> The French missionary schools attempted to find a middle ground between the objectives of the French authorities and the educational and linguistic objectives of Catholic authorities, in order to promote a *modus vivendi* within the schools. Several Greek Catholic (Melkite) parents criticized this neutral position, as they were more deeply engaged in the Palestinian national movement.<sup>80</sup>

The political context of Mandate Palestine exposed teachers and their pupils to a very public sphere of activism, though most French missionaries avoided talking about 'national feelings.' Politics crept into these two schools, at a time in which British officials believed very few Catholics were active in the Palestinian national movement. The schools did not provide meeting spaces as such to parents and political activity was officially banned, but discussions between parents, pupils, and alumni took place in and outside the schools, more generally in an informal way. The Melkite leaders took a clearer position than the Latin Patriarchate towards Arab nationalism, as the correspondence between the Melkite Church and the Holy See about the 'Palestine Fatherland' makes clear.<sup>81</sup> The Melkites clearly affirmed that they constituted an integral

78 Few archives among the Central Awqaf archives of Abu Dis mention the warning to parents from the Muslim religious authorities and Jerusalem leaders to beware of the missionary schools. Few cases of intimidation were reported by the directors of the schools, Central Awqaf archives (Abu Dis), 13/25/2, 31/1/75.

79 AMG, NH101, 'Admission des dissidents dans nos écoles', Frère Onésime, Visiteur, 1910. The author of the letter evoked "fewer prejudices ... pupils grateful to their masters and their religion ... segregation and separation cannot offer reconciliation." The girls' schools, providing education to future mothers, played a role in establishing and maintaining 'Christian homes,' while they continued to enroll a large number of Muslim pupils.

80 VSSA, 108 PO 103, 22 Dec. 1929, Apostolic Delegate to the Secretariat of State, Vatican, reaction of Bishop Haggear and VSSA, 131 PO 115, Palestina 1932–1936, Centro Internazionale per la protezione degli interessi cattolici Minaccia sionista (directors of Catholic schools in the committee).

81 LPA, Correspondance with the Oriental Congregation, 01/1933, 'communion avec le prêtre



part of the national movement and criticized firmly the ‘neutrality’ of the European consuls and missionaries. After the increase in tensions between Arabs and Jews that took place in 1928–1929, they moved towards a common ground ‘imposed’ by the political circumstances in their correspondence with the Holy See:

Our people are Palestinians and they are summoned by Muslims to walk *with* or *against* them: neutrality is not allowed. [They] would expose themselves to the greatest dangers if they would not go hand in hand alongside with the Muslims. They are, in fact, a small minority scattered among a large majority of boiling fanaticism. I stand in good relation with Muslims to protect my people.<sup>82</sup>

The French schools’ linguistic policy mirrored the interplay of the European powers, which was even stronger after the opening of the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association)<sup>83</sup> in May 1933. An analysis of their pedagogical materials shows that a progressively important place was given to local heritage and the figure of the Palestinian Christians.<sup>84</sup> Some Catholic school magazines emphasized identity as being based on religion, the Arabic language, and local history, and argued that students were able to study French culture or Western culture without losing their identity.<sup>85</sup>

Both actors, French and British, imported a language system, and their national languages were appropriated and rejected to different degrees by the Catholic communities. Thus it seems as inadequate to describe Arabic as ‘the’ language of nationalism, as it is to describe French as simply the language of the protector of the Catholics.

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en arabe ... le rite représente l’expression pure et élevée de son idéal national ... il s’attache à son rite comme il s’attache à sa patrie’ (interview with a Catholic Belgian newspaper).

82 COCA, Melikiti, 2030, Haggear, Ponenza personale, Letter of Haggear to Sincero (cardinal, Propaganda Fide, 13 Dec. 1929—in French in the original letter), “Nos fidèles sont des palestiniens et ils sont sommés par les musulmans de marcher avec ou contre eux: la neutralité n’est pas admise. Or nos fidèles s’exposeraient au plus grands dangers s’ils n’allaient pas main dans la main aux côtés des Musulmans. Ils constituent, en effet, une faible minorité éparse au milieu d’une grande majorité bouillante de fanatisme. Je me tiens en bon rapport avec les musulmans afin de protéger mes fidèles.”

83 AMAE, Nantes, B, 188 and 200, 18A.

84 ACJ, French language books.

85 ACTS, Magazine of the Terra Sancta (Franciscan) College, 1924–1929.

Both schools, through their relations with the various ecclesiastical institutions to which they had to pay allegiance (the Vatican, Latin and Melkite Patriarchates) were instructed not to interfere with temporal powers. The Holy See insisted from the early 1920s that missionaries should remain neutral and should not be “agents of colonial powers”; it emphasized the incompatibility between the roles of language and faith missionaries.<sup>86</sup> On a number of occasions the Vatican and the Latin Patriarchate insisted that the missionaries’ duties not interfere with the temporal powers, and they stated that missionaries should not be “agents of colonial powers,” and reproached them for seeming “more concerned about the interests of their country than the salvation of souls.”<sup>87</sup>

### Protecting the Catholics?

#### *Catholic Communities, the ‘Most French Oriental Land’ and the ‘Language of Protestantism’*

While the doctrine of papal supremacy and the hierarchical organization of the Catholic community might convey an impression of uniformity in Catholic communal responses, in comparison to the multiple responses of the Anglican and protestant communities;<sup>88</sup> in fact, Catholic actors displayed diversity at different levels (Rome, French consulate, Latin and Melkite Patriarchates). The terms of the debate over the functions of English, Arabic, and French tended to be formulated between an international language, a humanistic and ‘civilization’ language, and the language of God.

French Catholic schools had a monopoly when it came to representing France because other linguistic and cultural institutions (Cultural Centre, Mission Laïque, Alliance Française<sup>89</sup>) had not succeeded in establishing themselves in Palestine. French schools gradually opened their doors to enroll children from the Muslim, and to a lesser extent Jewish, elite. These institutions (primary, secondary, and vocational education) continued to be used as a plat-

86 AMG, Maximum Illud, 30 Nov. 1919, Acta Apostolicae, sedis XI, 440. Nationalism is assimilated to heresia, December 1922, Pie XI, *Ubi Arcano Die Consilio*.

87 LPA, *Circulaire du Patriarche Barlassina*, 2 Oct. 1920.

88 Roland Loeffler, *Protestanten in Palästina. Religionspolitik, Sozialer Protestantismus und Mission in den deutschen evangelischen und anglikanischen Institutionen des Heiligen Landes 1917–1939* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 2008).

89 *Alliance française* (“French Alliance,” founded in 1883) or the *Mission Laïque française* (“French Lay Mission,” founded in 1902).

form for French cultural influence and to sponsor Catholic protection, while also providing an alternative to British linguistic and educational initiatives.

Significantly, the arrival of the Crusaders in Jerusalem and the ‘prise de la Bastille’ by the people of Paris were celebrated every summer on the 14th of July in the French schools. For this reason, the French consulate supported them financially and diplomatically (with annual subsidies, examinations presided over by a panel of French adjudicators, diplomas equivalent to French ones, and negotiations with the Ottoman authorities to obtain their authorization for the teaching and building permits for schools).<sup>90</sup>

Despite heralding the end of the French Catholic protectorate, the early 1920s were marked by symbolic links between the government and the Catholic religion in France (the canonization of Joan of Arc on 16 May 1920, the completion and consecration of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Paris), but also in the East (the visit of Cardinal Dubois to the Levant in 1920 was seen as an appropriation of the French Levant).<sup>91</sup>

At the beginning of the 1920s the Vatican and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem condemned the French nationalist attitude towards the Catholic schools, but not the teaching of French.<sup>92</sup> For the Holy See, this teaching of French along with Arabic, was also, if not mainly intended to resist to ‘the language of Protestantism.’

The promotion of the catechism (both text books and religious education) in Arabic was part of a bigger project directed by the French ecclesiastic Abbé Guervin from Amiens and approved by the popes Benedict XV and Pius XI to attempt to preserve the Catholics (via schools, cultural associations, and international organizations).<sup>93</sup> At the end of the 1920s the Catholic authorities (both local and in Rome)<sup>94</sup> required that the French schools implement their

90 AMAE, Nantes, B, 200, 16 Jan. 1918 and AMAE, E 312-1, n°83, A. Guerin to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 16 Oct. 1920.

91 Dominique Trimbur, “Une appropriation française du Levant—La mission du cardinal Dubois en Orient,” in Patrick Cabanel (ed.), *Une France en Méditerranée—Ecoles langue et culture française, XIXe–XXe siècles* (Paris: Creaphis, 2006), 109–128.

92 COCA, 465 I Fratelli delle scuole cristiane; 465 I Fratelli delle scuole cristiane, 1671/24 A Sua. Em. Rev.ma Card Camillo Laurenti, Prefetto della s. Congregazione dei Religiosi.

93 VSSA, 33, PO. 49, Palestina, 1923–1936, Opera della Preservazione della Fede in Palestina e scuole cattoliche and SCO, 481, Opera della preservazione della Fede in Palestina.

94 The Latin Patriarchate, jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle East was restored on 23 July 1847 (between the period of 1291, after the last Crusaders left the Holy Land, and 1847, the Franciscans were the curators of the Christian Holy places and the legal representatives of the Latin Catholic authorities).

curricula and develop Arabic teaching rapidly, in order to counter Protestant educational initiatives (in which Arabic played an important role).<sup>95</sup> The Latin Patriarchate invited the French institutions to improve their teaching of religion in the Arabic language, and invited the missionaries to provide catechism classes only in Arabic.<sup>96</sup>

To promote the international dimension of Catholicism, the Latin Patriarchate and the Vatican supported the creation of the *Confrérie du Très Saint Enfant* in Bethlehem in 1909, which after only one year became the *Archiconfrérie du Très Saint Enfant*. Several months after its establishment, this international Catholic association, created by the French Brothers from Christian schools and devoted to the promotion of Catholic values in education, was already recruiting its members from more than 200 countries. Its journal, *L'Echo de Bethléem*, was published in five languages before the beginning of World War I.<sup>97</sup>

### *Arabic, the Language of the "Local Catholics"?*

Did the Catholic community view Arabic as a national language and commit to it as such? The newspaper of Bethlehem, *Sawt al-sha'b* ('the voice of the people'), established by Issa al-Bandak,<sup>98</sup> was distributed in and around Bethlehem and Jerusalem and to the families of the pupils of these two schools. Different articles reveal one aspect of the Catholic answer to the Palestinian Arab orthodox community claim to be the only 'indigenous' Catholics, emphasizing its 'Arabness.' These articles bring elements on the Catholic movement to assert the rights of the indigenous Catholics in the face of European educational missionary orders, and to promote Arabic and 'national' rights. Several

95 COCA, 466 i Protestanti in Palestina; 504 scuole media di lingua inglese in Palestina (to thwart the British influence); 463 L'ospizio de Tantur, desire to fight against the influence of the YMCA and attract the Catholic youth, but also the other Christians and Muslim youth. LPA, *Circulaire du Patriarche Barlassina*, 02 Oct. 1920; LPA, General correspondence, 1918–1924, correspondence after the Education Ordinance and the erection of the YMCA, 1933.

96 AMG, GB351, 1932; AMAE, Nantes, SOFE, n°362, 13 Dec. 1941.

97 Karène Sanchez, *L'Archiconfrérie du Très Saint Enfant de Palestine ottomane et mandataire-Soutiens spirituels internationaux et locaux à la 'croisade pour l'éducation religieuse de l'enfance et la jeunesse'* (Paris: Karthala, forthcoming).

98 COCA, Latini, Propaganda Fide, 417, *Sawt el Chab* n° 144, 19 Feb. 1925 (in Arabic) ASCAES, ss (Archivio della Sacra Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici straordinari Segretario di Stato), Latini e missionari locali chiedono un Patriarca arabo.

editions of this newspaper from 1923 to 1925 qualify the Catholics of Palestine as “members of the Palestinian nation, having the same language, traditions, uses (*‘coutumes’*) as the Muslim.”<sup>99</sup>

The newspaper also evokes a ‘Comité de défense national catholique’: the title indicates a possible equation between a communal and a national identification, though we cannot envisage to what extent it represented the Catholic community in all its different components. This committee was presented as acting for the promotion of an indigenous clergy and an Arabic Palestinian patriarchate, to preserve the indigenous interests of the Catholics against the European clergy and to emphasize the use of Arabic “common to Christians and Muslim.”<sup>100</sup>

In their publication, the members of this committee underlined the danger of foreign institutions in Palestine. The correspondence between the Holy See and the Latin Patriarchate on this matter gives us an account of the controversy among indigenous Catholics about European education and European Catholic missionaries, and the feeling of ‘annihilation of their rights’ this European Catholic presence represented. They denounced the “national and patriotic fanaticism of some Cardinals” and clearly decried the influence of missionary schools and their negative consequences in terms of the identity building process.<sup>101</sup> With regard to the use of Arabic in Catholic schools, some elements referred to Khalil Sakakini’s argument after the opening of the national school Dusturiyya (the ‘constitutional school’ renamed Wataniyya during the Mandate—a school that used Arabic as the primary language of instruction) in 1909, in which he advocated a largely secular curriculum.<sup>102</sup>

This went along with the creation of the first indigenous educational missionary order, the Rosary sisters. These were Palestinian nuns who originally belonged to the French Catholic order of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and were well established in the Ottoman territories and later Mandate Palestine. The order of the Rosary sisters spread after 1920, and focused on the importance of an indigenous education given mainly in Arabic. During the Mandate period, the foundation and the development of the schools around the Arabic language

99 COCA, 417, Movimento di xenofobismo contro il clero straniero; n°2080, 1927, article Shoura, Caire, n°153, 27 Oct. 1927 E fino a quando, n° 150, 6 Oct. 1927, Cose latine.

100 COCA, Latini, Propaganda Fide, 417, *Sawt el Chab*, 2 Aug. 1923, Il risorgimento religioso del popolo arabo catolico in Palestina.

101 But from 1924 these sensitive discussions ceased to appear, most probably stifled by the Latin Patriarchate.

102 Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*, 29–32.

was praised both by the Holy See and the Latin Patriarchate.<sup>103</sup> There was not an equivalent for boys.

The Vatican's interest in Arabic as the language of the indigenous Catholics was already present before the beginning of the British Mandate: Arabic had an important position in the curriculum at the Pontifical Institute for Oriental studies, created in 1917 to reinforce the links with the oriental congregations (the expression referred the Greek Catholics who had been united with Rome since 1724, but also referred to the Latin community, mainly converted from Orthodox communities). From the early 1920s, the Holy See expressed the desire to implant itself in the Palestinian landscape via linguistic choices. But while supporting the Catholic community of Palestine and the underlying necessity of addressing it in Arabic in order to address this community in its mother language and to reinforce a common ground with their Muslim fellows, the Holy See emphasized the international Catholic sphere and space, thus detaching, in its declarations, the Catholics from their Muslim Palestinian fellows.<sup>104</sup>

Among the internal discussions in Sainte Anne (between the White Fathers but also with the Melkite hierarchy), some elements underlined the linguistic aspects: the Melkites were considered part of the larger Arabic world and Arabic was needed to dispel Muslim and other Christian stereotypes of Melkites. There was also a need to have a level of Arabic sufficient to engage in theological and philosophical discussions, and that Arabic could be an aspect of the common ground in the discussions with the Greek orthodox community.<sup>105</sup>

Though the Holy See actively supported the Rosary Sisters, it did not support the Catholic National Committee (after 1927, it disappeared from the archives, supposedly eliminated by both the Holy See and the Latin Patriarchate). The variety of the correspondence in the archives leads us to believe that the language choices of the Catholic community were not necessarily just responses to Zionism or efforts to use Islam to mobilize resistance against the British. Inter-communal rivalries between Latin Catholics and Melkites also led to a more nuanced yet unique communal reaction.

103 COCA, 451, Le Suore del Santo Rosario a Gerusalemme, and R. Génier, *La congrégation des sœurs du Rosaire de Jérusalem* (Paris: J. Gabalda et Compagnie, Paris Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1913).

104 COCA, 426, Progetti di venire in aiuto dei catholici in Palestina; COCA, 461, L'opera Cardinal Ferrari, n°1310, Milan is financially supporting the new Catholic institution.

105 SASA, Motifs d'insistance sur la langue arabe.

## Conclusion

From the mid 1930s onward, the British administration took on the task of bringing the inhabitants of Palestine together via a linguistic program; the task remained unrealized, and had clear consequences in the educational system (the public as well as the private). The protection of the Catholics was an official leitmotiv of French cultural and linguistic policy and then of the Vatican in the Holy Land. Catholics from Palestine were trapped between different policies that influenced linguistic ideologies and practises: the centralizing Catholic interests of Rome which for lay believers first favored French, but later mostly Arabic; the national interests of Catholic European powers present in the Holy Land that favored their own languages along with English from the 1930s onwards; and an Arab majority that favored Arabic over and above French or other western languages.

Until the end of World War II, Catholic schools remained instrumental in shaping Palestinian identities, Christian and Muslim; the schools continued to favor multilingual education, against the monolingual approach of British actors. French remained part of the curriculum but as an inner-worldly ('un bien temporel') rather than a spiritual (universalist Catholic) good, though both Latin and Melkite Catholics praised Arabic as their national language. French should be seen as one element of a complex linguistic and multicultural situation in which linguistic usage depended on context. French coexisted with other foreign languages: Italian, German, and at a later stage English and the linguistic accommodation of the Catholics was a complex process, languages being a symbol and a tool in Mandate Palestine.

Language education policy in Palestine included decisions about which languages were to be used as a medium of instruction and/or taught in schools, and also included analysis, to some extent, of this policy within its social, ethnic, religious, political, cultural, and economic contexts. The repositioning in Catholic communities towards the use of languages and the role of the Vatican in fostering divisions/reconciliations in the Palestinian Catholic community influenced the conceptualization of language as a tool, at the individual and group level. French, Arabic, and English were perceived as symbolic resources in this tiny community, as an instrument to counteract conflict. Further socio-historical and linguistic study should be undertaken to investigate the issue of the to which extent the Catholic community used a colloquial Arabic different than that of the Muslim and the Yishuv communities.

The resulting 'story' proved to be fragmentary, not only because of its actors' divisions, but also because of the shifting motivations and self-understandings of the Catholic community. There are no unifying narratives that describe

the behavior and beliefs of the Palestinian Catholic community with regard to the linguistic challenges of the Mandate period and its translations into the public space of Jerusalem, other than to say that local and international actors influenced the way this community engaged with (and was perceived by others). The experience of French missionaries and indigenous Catholics as they relate to language use and perception in Palestine differed in spirit, practice, and results.

The Catholic case illustrates and causes us to reassess the complexity of the functional and symbolic roles of languages in the Middle East between the two world wars. Further studies on the linguistic agenda of the Catholic diaspora and its impact on the Jerusalem scene might reveal other aspects of language use in social, political, and religious processes, of the role of language in affirming or negating political agendas and self-identities in areas of conflict, of the entanglement of language use in conflict situations inside Palestine but also transnationally. A study of the Melkite and Latin responses to the situation in Galilee to the Peel Commission report of 1937 (according to which most Melkite areas would be ceded to the proposed Jewish state) would bring another Catholic sub-narrative on the multifaceted common ground. Finally, the new digitization of archives, like the photographic collection of the *Ecole biblique et archéologique* of the Dominicans of Jerusalem that contains a vast photographic collection of the Melkite seminar of Sainte Anne, might reveal possible manifestations of common ground in the public spaces of Mandate Jerusalem.

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**PART 3**

*Urban Presence*





## Ottoman Damascus during the Tanzimat: The New Visibility of Religious Distinctions

*A. Massot*

In the nineteenth century Damascus was characterized by inter-confessional tensions that culminated in an attack, in 1860, against the Christian neighborhood of the city; many Christians lost their lives or property. Relations between religious groups in Damascus during the Tanzimat period were shaped both by local events and, during this period of foreign intervention and military defeats, by a variety of issues related to imperial sovereignty. This context led to a dichotomous image of the Ottoman city and its population: on the one side Christians were perceived to be allied with foreign powers—France, Russia, and to a lesser extent England—and on the other, Muslims were seen as loyal to the Ottoman authorities. Christians were also at the center of the power struggle between two authorities, the foreign consuls and the Ottoman governors, and this contributed to a politicization of religious distinctions. This struggle not only underlined conflicts over space and visibility but was also shaped by them. In this paper I first explore the political and social context of the Tanzimat and the ways in which public space was transformed into a tool for social change. Second, I examine the relation between the consuls and the governors, and address the issue of the struggle for sovereignty and its spatial dynamics. Finally, I look at the case of conversions as one arena in which these dynamics materialized.

### Laying the Foundations of a New Order: The Tanzimat and Visibility

#### *The Context of the Tanzimat in Bilād al-Shām*

In the first part of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire witnessed a vast array of internal and external changes of an economic, societal, and political nature. In terms of its foreign policy, the Sublime Porte suffered military and diplomatic defeats by Russia in 1812, 1829, and during the Crimean war (1853–1856). Simultaneously, it faced revolts and internal secession threats from Greece (1821–1830), Serbia (1804–1817), and Walachia (1829), ultimately

leading to the independence or autonomy of those regions. The sultan's rule over the *Bilād al-Shām* was challenged by his own viceroy of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī, who conquered the region in 1831 and retained it until 1841. The various revolts and secessions were in some degree supported by foreign powers. The empire, conscious of its military weakness, embarked on a vast program of reforms, which were limited, initially, to the military but soon spread to the societal and political fields. One of the consequences of these changes was a reshuffling of existing social and political hierarchies.

In order to finance these costly reforms, the empire took loans from European countries and was forced to allow for a greater intervention of foreign representatives in its own affairs. New capitulations were signed and foreign ambassadors and consuls were given greater influence in political matters. The enactment of the reforms relied on internal cash flows through new forms of taxation and mandatory military conscription. These changes met with rebellion by various groups in Syria, especially by the Maronites and Druzes in Mount Lebanon<sup>1</sup> and in the Hawran.<sup>2</sup> One of the main concerns of the reformers was the promotion of loyalty to the empire in this context of internal threats and secessions. Inter-confessional relations in Damascus must be understood in this context of imperial transformations, foreign intervention, and internal rebellion.

### *Clothing as a Tool of Reform*

Public space, which is understood here to include clothing, visibility, as well as the built environment, played an important role in the struggles for legitimacy and power in this changing context. From the start of the Tanzimat period, visibility and clothing were strongly politicized and thereby shaped into signs of loyalty. This dynamic was emphasized by Mahmud II (1808–1839) who emphasized the idea that the sultan, rather than the state, was to be the focus of loyalty of the subjects. This new allegiance was to be displayed through clothing. Mahmud II saw the adoption of European clothing fashions as a betrayal that damaged the success of Ottoman production and challenged social hierarchies. He thus promoted a 'buy Ottoman' clothing campaign.<sup>3</sup>

1 Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 31; The consular correspondence in the Foreign Office (F.O.) 78/447 describes the issues of taxation in Mount Lebanon at length.

2 F.O. 78/872, Wood-Palmerstone, 28 June 1857.

3 Donald Quataert, "Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720–1829," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 3 (1997), 411.



His rule was also famous for the abolition of the institution of the Janissaries in 1826; this act marked the beginning of the reform period. The lack of military preparedness of the Janissaries and their involvement in civil affairs was seen as the cause of the military weakness of the empire and its defeats at the hand of Russia.<sup>4</sup> A new army was created to replace this institution. At the same time, a new military hierarchy was adopted and presented to the populace in new uniforms. Homogeneity was promoted through the imposition of the fez, which replaced former sartorial customs that were based on status and represented by various turbans.<sup>5</sup> Turbans displayed one's religion, rank, wealth, and occupation, while the fez came to represent the equidistance of all subjects to the state. This change in clothing was part of the centralization process, which aimed at eliminating intermediaries and shifting relationships of loyalty and patronage exclusively towards the state. Other measures included the creation of regional councils designed to give rise to a new group of individuals who did not belong to the traditional elite.<sup>6</sup>

While in earlier periods displays of allegiance were predominantly directed towards local power structures, in this period these displays were shifted toward the state. The previously flexible internal hierarchy of Ottoman cities was slowly replaced by a top-down order based on the principle of loyalty to the state rather than on status. Clothing policies show this new direction and the attempt to shape the bodies of the Ottoman subjects to promote political change. This focus on clothing persisted throughout the Tanzimat period.

### *Laying the Foundations: The Egyptian Occupation (1831–1841)*

The Tanzimat were inaugurated in the capital in 1839 while Muḥammad 'Alī was still ruling *Bilād al-Shām* from Egypt. The Egyptian occupation of the region introduced significant changes in the political, societal, and economic fabric of the formerly Ottoman cities. Some of these changes persisted even after their retreat from Syria.<sup>7</sup> Most importantly for inter-confessional rela-

4 Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 114–115.

5 Quataert, "Clothing Laws," 412.

6 George Ramez Tomeh, "Landownership and Political Power in Damascus 1858–1958" (American University of Beirut, 2007), 20.

7 Khālid Banī Hānī, *Tārīkh Dimashq wa-'ulāmā'iha khilāl al-ḥukm al-Miṣrī, 1831–1840* (Damascus: Dār Ṣafāḥāt, 2007), 191; Bruce Alan Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 135.

tions, the Egyptian governor relied heavily on Christians in the administration, while the power of the Jews was reduced.<sup>8</sup> Their power was curtailed even further after the arrest or execution of some of the important members of their community during the infamous blood libel of 1840.<sup>9</sup> In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Jewish Fārḥī family had had the upper hand in its political battle with the Melkite Baḥrī family, and the former had obtained important posts in the financial administration.<sup>10</sup> Under Muḥammad ‘Alī, represented in Damascus by Sharīf Pasha, the Baḥrī family was favored, and Hanna Baḥrī was awarded the post of financial administrator.<sup>11</sup> The house of the mufti of Damascus was made into his residence.<sup>12</sup> The other members of the *majlis* were very critical of Hanna Baḥrī, who was publicly awarded medals; jokes were made to the effect that he was the actual leader of the country.<sup>13</sup> The fact that he was in charge of the collection of taxes furthered the resentment of the population against Melkites.<sup>14</sup>

The reliance of Muḥammad ‘Alī on Melkites can be understood as a result of the fact that he was supported politically by France, which assumed the role of protector of Uniate Christians. Jews could only count on the support of Austria and to a lesser extent England, which eventually allied with the Ottoman Empire against Muḥammad ‘Alī.<sup>15</sup> Favoring Melkites was a way for Muḥammad ‘Alī to gain further support from his main ally and to secure its eventual military intervention against the empire.<sup>16</sup> This Egyptian policy was represented spatially by the building of additional churches and the enlargement of existing ones.<sup>17</sup> This period was also marked by the inauguration of foreign consulates in Damascus, a change that radically altered the political landscape of the city.

8 Yitzhak Hofman, "The Administration under Egyptian Rule," in Moshe Ma'oz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 321.

9 For a description of the blood libel, see Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

10 Ibrāhīm ‘Awra, *Tārīkh wilāya Sulāyman Basha al-‘ādil yashtamilu ‘ala tārīkh Filastīn wa-Lubnān*, ed. al-Kuri Qustanṭīn al-Basha (Sayda: Matba‘āt Dār al-Mukkhāllīs, 1936), 90.

11 *Mudhakkirat tārīkhīyya ‘an hamlat Ibrāhīm Basha ‘ala Sūriya*, ed. Aḥmad Ghassān Sabanu (Damascus: Dār Qutayba, 1980), 59.

12 Banī Hānī, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 157.

13 *Mudhakkirat tārīkhīyya*, 59.

14 F.O. 78/1520, Brant-Bulwer, 30 August 1860; Hofman, "Administration," 321.

15 Frankel, *Damascus Affair*, 19.

16 *Ibid.*, 61.

17 Stefan Weber, *Damascus: Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation (1808–1918)* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 2:51–62.

While many Damascenes had initially supported the Egyptian occupation, it quickly became unpopular because of increased taxation, military conscription, and symbolic spatial actions in favor of the Christians and foreign powers and against the *‘ulamā’*.<sup>18</sup> The use of mosques and schools, the pride of Damascene society, as barracks for the soldiers or as biscuit factories are often described and remembered as a source of outrage against the Egyptian occupation.<sup>19</sup> Resentments fueled by Muḥammad ‘Alī’s rule were translated into bitterness towards Christians and especially Melkites.<sup>20</sup>

The position of Christians in Damascus thus changed during the Egyptian occupation as a result of the interference of foreign powers, the problem of Ottoman sovereignty, and the political role of Christian communities. All of these developments had important consequences on the way Christians acted and were perceived in the Tanzimat period, as well as on official policies towards them.

### *The Ottoman Tanzimat Period: Ambiguities of the Reforms*

The Ottomans recovered *Bilād al-Shām* from Muḥammad ‘Alī in 1841 principally as a result of the intervention of England. France did not intervene militarily on behalf of its ally. The Ottoman state continued the restructuring initiated by Muḥammad ‘Alī and introduced further reforms. The two main decrees that were drafted in the Tanzimat period were the Gülhane edict of 1839, which was applied to the recovered lands, and the Islahat Fermanı of 1856. The Gülhane edict promised the instauration of justice regarding the collection of taxes, conscription, and the execution of punishments. It guaranteed Ottoman subjects’ property, honor, and life, using the classic vocabulary of the circle of justice.<sup>21</sup> A central aspect of the Tanzimat reforms, which had important consequences

18 Banī Hānī, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 79, 80.

19 Weber, *Damascus*, 1:116.

20 Itzchak Weismann, “Law and Sufism on the Eve of Reform: The Views of Ibn ‘Abidin” in Itzchak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (eds.), *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 72.

21 See the decree in Jacob C. Hurewitz (ed.), *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975–1979), 1:269; The circle of justice is an Islamic political concept which shows causal relationships between a just government, the prosperity of its subjects, the financial resources of the state, and military power. It is basically the idea that good governance ensures the survival and strength of the state. On the history of this notion see L.T. Darling, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice From Mesopotamia to Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

for inter-confessional relations, was the emphasis on appearances and public space, designed to be tools of social and political change.

After the return of the Ottomans to Damascus in 1841, a *firman* was drafted for the protection of non-Muslims; this allowed them to wear whatever clothing they pleased and to ride on horseback without being molested. In the same year, some Christians were attacked in the city of Damascus and their white turbans—a color previously reserved for Muslims—were torn off their heads.<sup>22</sup> Policies fostering clothing equality were supposed to promote social and political equality. However, because such policies were lobbied for by foreign political powers, they tended to polarize religious groups. The fact that this *firman* was brought from Istanbul to the governor Necip Pasha by the British consul Mr. Wood indicates the extent of foreign involvement in clothing policies.<sup>23</sup>

The *Islahat Fermanı* of 1856 shows a radical change in the legitimization of power and in the political discourse on subjecthood. The decree of 1839 was addressed to all subjects of the empire. In contrast, the decree of 1856 was directed especially towards Christians. The sentence that is used repeatedly is: “All the Christians and other non-Muslims.”<sup>24</sup> This decree proclaims the equality of all subjects but it is clear that it was drafted primarily to reassure Christians of their rights and to maintain the ‘privileges’ allegedly awarded to their leadership by former sultans.<sup>25</sup> ‘Alī and Fū’ād Pasha composed this decree with the help of the French, British, and Austrian ambassadors.<sup>26</sup> It was also a strategic tool to counter the hostile intentions of European representatives present at the Paris Peace Conference of 1856.<sup>27</sup> The decree guaranteed that no one could be forced to convert or could be harassed because of religious beliefs.<sup>28</sup> Freedom of religion was presented mainly as a question of visibility. The decree awarded non-Muslims the rights to build churches and synagogues, to hold crosses in processions, to ring church bells, and to participate in the council, the political instrument of the Tanzimat. Discourses over religious

22 F.O. 78/447, Wood-Earl of Aberdeen, 20 November 1841.

23 F.O. 78/447, Wood-Necib Pasha, 13 November 1841.

24 Weber, *Damascus*, 1:316.

25 *Ibid.*, 1:316–318.

26 Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Later Tanzimat and the Ottoman Legacy in the Near Eastern Successor States,” in Camille Mansour and Leila Fawaz (eds.), *Transformed Landscapes: Essays on Palestine and the Middle East in Honor of Walid Khalidi* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2009), 69.

27 Ceasar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830–1861* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 729.

28 Hurewitz, *Middle East*, 1:316–318.

rights became associated with the increasing visibility and perceived economic and political success of the Christian population, represented spatially by the beautiful houses of the Christian elite and the luxurious decorations of the various churches of the neighborhood of Bab Tuma.<sup>29</sup>

This decree put an end to the specific status of non-Muslims in the empire but also enforced the loss of fiscal privileges of the *'ulamā'* and *ashrāf*, who were previously exempt from paying taxes.<sup>30</sup> It reminded the population that because taxes were collected equally from all subjects, everyone could be drafted into the army.<sup>31</sup> Previously, non-Muslims were required to pay a poll tax in lieu of army service. The conscription of non-Muslims was never put into practice. Indeed, the majority of Jews and Christians were not eager to send their sons to the army and the government was not enthusiastic to enroll them.<sup>32</sup>

Resentments towards the reform decrees, especially the *Islahat Fermani*, existed in many parts of the empire, including Damascus.<sup>33</sup> The decrees were resented mainly because they meant increased taxation, conscription, and they introduced changes in the social hierarchies. The French consul reported that the famous amir 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī criticized these reforms in his presence, describing them as contrary to religion.<sup>34</sup> All these laws were enacted in a period in which the intervention of foreign powers and their economic advantages caused resentment among the population.<sup>35</sup> Indeed the decree was drafted after the Crimean war, in which France, Britain, and the Ottoman Empire opposed Russia. The immediate cause of the Crimean war was the competing claims by France and Russia for the protection of the holy places and of Ottoman Christians. The war corresponds to the arrival of French and British armies in the vicinity of Istanbul, to their increasing involvement in internal affairs, and to the increasing debt of the empire.<sup>36</sup> It is described in the chronicles as marking an important turn in inter-confessional relations in the empire.

29 F.O. 78/1520, Brant-Bulwer, 30 August 1860.

30 Hurewitz, *Middle East*, 1:316–318.

31 *Ibid.*, 1:316–318.

32 *Aḥwāl al-naṣāra ba'd al-ḥarb al-qaram*, MS Catalogue Cheikho (Beirut: Saint Joseph University), 24, 25.

33 Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Politique des Consuls/Turquie/Damas, Outrey-Walewski, 19 March 1857 and 25 March 1856; Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 69.

34 Archives Etrangères (A.E.) Correspondance Politique des Consuls (CPC)/Turquie/Damas, Bullar-Walewski, 21 January 1857.

35 Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 68–69.

36 Butrus Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826–1876)* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2001), 113.

The author of *Aḥwāl al-naṣāra ba'd al-ḥarb al-qaram*, a contemporary Christian chronicle, explains that Damascene Muslims were against the sultan's involvement in this war. They expected that negative consequences would arise from it, such as increased conscription and taxation.<sup>37</sup> It would also impel the empire to make more concessions to European powers, especially those related to their protection of local Christians and their right of intervention in Ottoman affairs. The chronicler recalls that during the war the population was hostile to the Christians and insults became more common.<sup>38</sup> The British consul Mr. Wood corroborated this observation and reported seeing a circular that called for the expulsion of foreign consuls and for the execution of the French consul and the Melkite patriarch.<sup>39</sup> The drafting of a similar petition occurred in 1841 after the reconquest of Damascus by the sultan under the governorship of Necip Pasha.<sup>40</sup> It is not always clear who took the initiative of writing such petitions; they were usually signed by famous notables, who were subject to a certain level of pressure from the governors. Thus, these petitions do not necessarily represent the sentiments of the population. However, when their timing coincided with periods of publicly expressed resentment towards Christians, as was the case in 1841 and 1856, it can be assumed that they indicate a certain level of discontent towards Europeans.

The author of *Aḥwāl al-naṣāra ba'd al-ḥarb al-qaram* stated that the decree of 1856 aimed to put an end to this aggressiveness by forbidding insults and by awarding Christians administrative posts. He noted, however, that this was not enough to curb resentments regarding the Crimean war, as these remained strong.<sup>41</sup> Both the international context and the wording of the reforms led to bitterness towards Christians and foreign powers.

It should be noted that the Tanzimat reforms, dictated from Istanbul and enacted in the provinces, were not applied uniformly throughout the Ottoman lands. The Ottoman 'state' apparatus was composed of different levels and involved a variety of actors, including civilians; thus the border between 'state' and 'society' was somewhat blurred. Individuals at each of these different levels of the state, but especially at the city level, had an opportunity to shape the application of the Tanzimat. Each city, with its own set of political actors, therefore had a different experience of the Tanzimat period. Christian and Jewish communities in different regions of the empire also differed in number,

37 *Aḥwāl al-naṣāra*, 5, 29.

38 *Ibid.*, 5, 29.

39 F.O. 195/368, Wood-Stratford de Redcliffe, 13 July 1853.

40 F.O. 78/447, Wood-Reshid Pasha, 18 October 1841.

41 *Aḥwāl al-naṣāra*, 5, 29.

sect, and societal role. For this reason, it is crucial to consider local dynamics and interpersonal relations together with an exploration of the actual wording of the reforms in order to grasp the consequences of the reforms on inter-confessional relations.

## Consuls and Governors: Competition and Sovereignty

### *The Issue of Protection*

Beyond the structural factors described above, the politicization of religious identities was shaped on a daily basis through inter-personal relations, especially between the consuls and the governor. At the root of many conflicts between these two individuals lay a difference of interpretation of the Tanzimat.<sup>42</sup> The ambiguities in the formulation of the reforms, as well as in the right of intervention given to representatives of foreign powers, led to a deterioration of the relations between the consuls and the governor and contributed to the formation of a sectarian and polarized political landscape. Their numerous altercations had strong repercussions on the population because the consuls and the governors came to be seen as representatives of the different religious communities. Because of their dramatic aspect and visibility, political and diplomatic conflicts had the tendency to translate into animosities among the population.

The conflicts that arose often revolved around the issue of protection of local Christians and Jews. The British, French, Russian, and Austrian consuls were in constant competition to attract the loyalty of Damascene Christians; they attempted to do this by presenting themselves as the spokesperson of the Christians to the Ottoman government. They took advantage of minor conflicts to expand their influence by arguing that the honor of their country was at stake in each of those skirmishes, thus turning them into diplomatic issues.<sup>43</sup> Behind this competition lay a struggle for influence and economic advantage in the vast territories of the empire. Their interventions in the name of non-Muslims gave them a gateway into local politics and provided them with negotiating power with Istanbul.

42 See, for example, the conflict that took place between the father at the convent of Nazareth and the consul of France regarding the attribution of French protection to Ottoman Christians in A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Bourville-Villardel, 7 February 1848.

43 For example, a financial dispute between a Muslim and an Ottoman Christian named Mr. Maksoud became a diplomatic conflict after the intervention of the English consul Mr. Wood, in A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, 23 February 1842.

The protection statuses were based on different types of rationales. First, the consuls attributed protection to Ottoman subjects whom they employed. This protection was thus dependent on an individual's temporary situation. However, in this period another idea of protection was developed, this was based on the religious community to which one belonged rather than on one's employment status. To be sure, the claim that foreign powers were the protectors of local Christian and Jewish communities was not a new phenomenon, but it became a legal reality in the nineteenth century. The rights, previously vague and ambiguous, of France and Russia to protect, respectively, Uniates and Orthodox Christians and to administer the holy places were conceded officially.<sup>44</sup> However, the extent of that protection and its practical application remained a source of confusion. The various consuls, governors, and Christian Ottomans conceived the status of protégé in a very different manner, and their conception changed throughout the reform period.<sup>45</sup>

Initially the status of protégé was exclusively reserved for individuals working for the consulates. Those protégés, mostly dragomans and writers, were to be treated as foreigners and benefit from the same rights, including exemption from certain taxation and extra-territoriality. But the consuls abused this right and awarded it to individuals who did not work for them. In 1847, when the French consul was asked by the governor to list the protégés working for the consul, it became clear that this was an issue of potential conflict. The protégés knew how to use the consuls for their own benefit and behaved arrogantly. He also described the outcry that his creation of an official list of protégés had generated among the Damascene Christians.<sup>46</sup>

Some individuals benefiting from protégé status also took advantage of their position to engage in fraudulent financial activities.<sup>47</sup> Richard Edwards, a British traveler who visited Syria in this period, strongly criticized the abuses of the protection system and related the various intrigues he observed among the protégés.<sup>48</sup> He also described the financial aspect of the protection sys-

44 Orlando Figes, *The Crimean War: A History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 109.

45 In 1853, the French and British consuls had an altercation regarding the rights and obligations linked to the status of protégé, after a British protégé was taken into the French consulate, F.O. 195/368, Wood-Barbet de Jouy, 31 March 1853.

46 A.E. 166/PO/D20/3, Annex to de Bourville-Bourquency, 11 December 1847.

47 An example is that of Mr. Gedei, employed by the British consulate, who was charged with dishonest commercial activities, F.O. 195/368, Wood-Barbet de Jouy, 23 March 1853; Another example is the dragoman Mr. Misk who used his position to commit financial fraud, F.O. 195/601, Brant-Bulwer, 6 February 1860.

48 Richard Edwards, *La Syrie 1840–1862, histoire, politique, administration, population, religion*



tem and claimed that consular agents, having spent a great deal to attain their post, would try to regain their resources through the sale of protection statuses. In turn, protégés would rent their protection to individuals presented as their coworkers, family members, etc.<sup>49</sup> This accusation is corroborated by the British consul in 1860.<sup>50</sup> These practices delegitimized all foreign agents in the eyes of the population, who saw them as opportunists fleeing their responsibilities.<sup>51</sup> Dragomans also had a considerable amount of power, consuls relied solely on their testimony and translations to determine their actions in relation to the Ottoman governors. Dragomans could use this dependence to further their own interests, or to blackmail the Ottoman official and in this manner deliberately worsen the relationship of these two individuals.<sup>52</sup> Ottoman subjects who had acceded to foreign nationality could also become vice-consuls.<sup>53</sup>

Richard Wood, the British consul in 1846, recognized that abuses of protection were the cause of many conflicts with the governor.<sup>54</sup> The Ottoman governors resented the attribution of protection because it removed those individuals from their authority. In 1836 the British consul rationalized the protection by arguing that dragomans' subjection to Ottoman authorities would threaten their integrity and their service to the foreign consulates. He also recommended that the children of dragomans be awarded protection from birth rather than when they reached majority in order to ensure the loyalty of their parents.<sup>55</sup> But the protection status was abused to avoid punishment. Indeed, if a judiciary case involved a protégé, the trial would take place in the consulate rather than before the Ottoman authorities, and this would obviously favor the protégé rather than the Ottoman subject.<sup>56</sup> One of the abuses described by Richard Edwards was the practice of granting protection statuses temporarily to individuals who wanted to escape the law, or win a trial.<sup>57</sup>

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*et mœurs, évènements de 1860 d'après des actes officiels et des documents authentiques* (Paris: Amyot, 1862), 80.

49 Ibid., 77; F.O. 78/291, Farren-Cambell, 18 February 1836 and 28 February 1836.

50 F.O. 78/1520, Brant-Bulwer, 15 December 1860.

51 F.O. 195/226, Wood-Canning, 29 July 1844.

52 Edwards, *Syria*, 79.

53 F.O. 78/1520, Brant-Bulwer, 15 December 1860.

54 Foreign Office 195/226, Wood-Canning, 8 April 1846.

55 F.O. 78/291, Farren-Cambell, 28 February 1836.

56 Edwards, *Syria*, 78.

57 Ibid., 80.

The distinction between legal and religious protection was not defined clearly. It was also not clear to what extent Ottoman subjects enjoyed rights given to foreigners and if Ottoman courts could prosecute foreigners.<sup>58</sup> In 1847 the French consul, Mr. de Bourville, who had recently arrived in the city, argued that claims made by protégés who were trying to escape Ottoman jurisdiction was not justified by any law and that it was contrary to the Capitulations.<sup>59</sup>

The governors also saw the issue of protection as an impediment to the enactment of their fiscal reforms. The supposed exemption of foreign nationals from paying any kind of taxes, the excessive attribution of foreign protection to Ottoman subjects and especially rich merchants, frustrated governors and gave the protégés an unfair advantage. For example, in 1846 the governor 'Alī Pasha refused to recognize the British protection granted in 1841<sup>60</sup> to two Jewish merchants, the Harārī brothers, because the protection status could not be awarded without the sultan's authorization.<sup>61</sup> He demanded that they pay a tax on property—the so called *'virgo'*—instead of the individual *ferde* tax collected from Ottoman subjects.<sup>62</sup> During the Tanzimat, taxation was a very sensitive issue, as it came to be required of all subjects of the empire and was an indicator of loyalty to the modern state. Even the French consul in 1847 contested the rationality behind the exemption of taxes for all the protégés and declared that it would be better to apply this exemption solely to dragomans.<sup>63</sup> The issue of protection, but also conversion, was problematic as it challenged administrative categories and taxation practices and called into question the relation of the individual to the state.

The relation between Ottoman subjects who became protégés and the Ottoman state was complex. They were neither fully foreign nor fully Ottoman subjects and their relations to the different political actors and the local communities were changeable. This in-between position not only propelled them to the middle of the political scene but also caused tensions among different authorities who disagreed about how they should be treated. However, despite

58 Marie Carmen Smyrnelis, *Identités et Relations Sociales à Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2005), 85.

59 A.E. 166/PO/D20/3, Annex to de Bourville-Bourquency, 11 December 1847.

60 F.O. 78/447, Wood-Bidwell, 29 September 1841.

61 F.O. 195/226, Aly Pasha-Wood, 27 March 1846.

62 F.O. 195/226, Wood-Canning, 8 April 1846; F.O. 195/226; Translation of 'Alī Pasha's note to Mr. Wood, 21 March 1846.

63 A.E. 166/PO/D20/3, Annex to de Bourville-Bourquency, 11 December 1847.

of the fact that Christians and Jews were instrumentalized in this power struggle, they had a certain level of agency and could make the most of the situation to further their interests.

### *Spaces of Competition*

The issue of sovereignty and extra-territoriality has spatial dynamics. The protection provided by foreign powers challenged the individual's belonging to the community, the city, and the empire, as it offered them different forms to escape this relation, principally by attaching oneself to a new territory. By gaining a protected status, the individual partly extracted himself from the social fabric of the city and its internal hierarchies, while remaining engaged in certain aspects of the social and economic life. The attribution of protection was more than a legal status: it affected the nature of the public space by enacting administrative, political, economic, and social practices that questioned the sovereignty of the Ottoman state and the system of local hierarchies.

Public space became an important arena in which the struggle for sovereignty between consuls and governors materialized. Cases of Christian religious processions with foreign symbols and displays of foreign flags on churches have been described elsewhere as examples of the politicization of public space.<sup>64</sup> The public display of Christian religious identity, such as using crosses in processions, ringing church bells, enlarging churches, and emphasizing their outward decoration, contributed to the perception that Christians benefited economically and politically as a consequence of foreign intervention.<sup>65</sup> However, other more mundane spaces were also at the center of those conflicts. The marketplace, for example, was an important place of competition between religious groups. Their protégé status allowed some Christians and Jews to benefit from the Capitulations by enjoying lower customs tax rates (at the same level as foreign merchants, who were increasingly visible in Ottoman markets during this period).<sup>66</sup> Christians and Jews took advantage of those privileges to build fortunes through the commerce of grain, the sale of Euro-

64 Sibel Zandi-Sayek, "Orchestrating Difference, Performing Identity: Public Rituals in Nineteenth-Century Izmir," in Nezar AlSayyad (ed.), *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).

65 Anais Massot, "Modernization, Communal Space and Inter-confessional Conflicts in 19th century Damascus," *Syrian Studies Association Bulletin* 17, no. 2 (2012): 12–15.

66 Beinín, *Workers and Peasants*, 45–47; Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1985), 82.

pean textiles, tax farming<sup>67</sup> or by making loans with high interest rates (20–24 percent) to peasants and farmers.<sup>68</sup> Christians employed by the government had opportunities to enrich themselves.<sup>69</sup> In some commercial activities they rapidly gained the upper hand over the Muslim merchant class. At that time, many Christians were involved in the production of local textiles and benefited from advantages in this domain, in part because of their access to English yarn, which became necessary in order to produce textiles at affordable prices. This advantage created resentments among Muslim weavers who suffered more than their Christian counterparts from the introduction of European textiles in the nineteenth century.<sup>70</sup>

The economic competition led to increasing tension between Muslims and Christians; this culminated in violence during the massacre of 1860. The riot started in the marketplace of Bab al-Barid, which specialized in the sale of European clothing, mostly by Muslims.<sup>71</sup> The Christians who produced local textiles concentrated their workshops in the Christian neighborhood of Bab Tuma. It is significant that this neighborhood was described by the British consul in 1860 as a 'city in itself.'<sup>72</sup> During the violence of 1860, the looms of Christians were destroyed.<sup>73</sup> The various events of interpersonal violence involving Christians during the period from 1840 to 1860 often involved merchants or individuals working for them.<sup>74</sup> The marketplace was thus a place where resentments towards Christians and their foreign allies were fueled.

Political aspects intertwined with religious distinctions in this violence, as it targeted specific Christian communities affiliated with foreign powers. Bab Tuma, the neighborhood where Catholic institutions were located, was heavily affected.<sup>75</sup> Catholic missions, churches, and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate were primary targets of the 1860 riots, while the other churches were only

67 Beinin, *Workers and Peasants*, 45–47; Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 82. For tax farming activities, see F.O. 195/368, Wood-Clarendon, 22 April 1853.

68 F.O. 195/368, Wood-Canning, 28 January 1851.

69 F.O. 78/1520, Brant-Bulwer, 30 August 1860.

70 Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 71, 74.

71 Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 85.

72 F.O. 78/1520, Brant-Bulwer, 13 June 1860.

73 Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "The Impact of Europe on a Traditional Economy: The Case of Damascus, 1840–1870," in Jean Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Pierre Dumont (eds.), *Économie et Sociétés dans l'Empire Ottoman, fin du XVIIIe-début du XXe siècle: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 1er–5 Juillet 1980* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1983), 422; Beinin, *Workers and Peasants*, 49.

74 For example, see F.O. 78/447, Wood-Necib Pasha, 13 November 1841.

75 Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 100.

affected by the general fire in the neighborhood.<sup>76</sup> Mikhā'īl Mishāqah, an eye-witness of the events, related that the main aim of the 1860 revolts were the Franciscan and Lazarist monasteries situated in the Catholic part of Maḥalla al-Naṣāra.<sup>77</sup> He argued that this violence was a consequence of the arrogant behavior of the Christians of Damascus.<sup>78</sup> Another contemporary chronicler described the resentments of the population in this period as directed against the 'Franj' or Europeans.<sup>79</sup> This specific targeting of Catholic and Greek Orthodox institutions demonstrates the political aspect of the violence of 1860. The violence directed towards Catholic and Greek Orthodox places sought to target the influence of France and Russia. The British consulate, the main ally of the Ottoman Empire, was left untouched.<sup>80</sup>

Even though in certain areas of the city the politicization of religious identities created a tense atmosphere between religious groups, strong links of solidarity between Muslims and Christian continued to exist in certain neighborhoods, especially in the extra-mural Maydan. This area represented the local faction that often rebelled against the governor and the imposition of taxes and conscription. In this neighborhood, trade alliances in the booming commerce of grain were concluded across religious groups.<sup>81</sup> The grain trade made up a significant portion of Syrian exports. Many new opportunities for a vast number of Damascenes and peasants were created in this field.<sup>82</sup>

During the events of 1860, Christians of this neighborhood were not attacked by the crowd and were protected by the local leaders.<sup>83</sup> On various occasions, the inhabitants of Maydan displayed a strong neighborhood solidarity that cut across religious lines. For example, in 1857, during the controversy regarding the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, the Melkite inhabitants of Maydan—who supported the patriarch—were arrested after a fight with the opponents of the patriarch, many of whom were protégés or worked for the government.

76 Chantal Donzel-Verdeil, "Les Jésuites de Syrie (1830–1864): Une Mission auprès des Chrétiens d'Orient au début des Réformes Ottomanes" (PhD diss., University Paris IV Sorbonne, 2003), 166; Mikhā'īl Mishāqah, *Kitāb mashhad al-'ayan bi-ḥawādīth Sūriya wa-Lubnān*, ed. Milham Khālis 'Abduh and Andrawus Hanna Shakhshiri (Cairo, 1908), 248; Weber, *Damascus*, 2:53–61.

77 Mishāqah, *Kitāb mashhad al-'ayan*, 248.

78 *Ibid.*, 242.

79 *Aḥwāl al-naṣāra*, 22.

80 Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 85, 89.

81 Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 62.

82 *Ibid.*

83 F.O. 195/601, Brant-Russell, 16 July 1860; Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 85–89.

A delegation composed of Christians and Muslims from Maydan then came to demand the release of their neighbors and ultimately attacked the residences of the opponents of the patriarch.<sup>84</sup> Thus, the public sphere was not characterized by conflict in every area of Damascus. Although religious divisions were of political importance in the nineteenth century, one must keep in mind that in reality all groups were internally divided and that neighborhoods, as well as other societal units, remained strong bases of political solidarity.

### *The Issue of Sovereignty at the Heart of the Conflict*

As the adoption of the fez demonstrated, clothing was a tool of political and social transformation. However, ways of dressing also became an important point of contestation in political struggles between different authorities. The case of Melkites wearing religious hats illustrates this struggle over sovereignty. In 1842, following a previous attempt in the 1820s,<sup>85</sup> the Greek orthodox clergy managed to obtain a *firman* from the sultan forbidding Melkite priests from wearing skullcaps or black headdresses similar to theirs, as these symbolized their belonging to the clergy. The Melkite priests were thus forced to dress as common people.<sup>86</sup>

The French consul described the dilemma that he faced in this conflict. He considered this *firman* unfair and wished to prevent its application, but he was also conscious that the Capitulations only allowed him to protect Latin Catholics. The extension of this protection to Uniates was tolerated in this early period of the Tanzimat but only on an occasional basis. In order not to be forced to take off their hats, the Melkite priests refused to go out of their houses.<sup>87</sup> With the encouragement of the French consul some of them eventually went outside wearing the aforementioned hats.<sup>88</sup> The governor, Necip Pasha, arrested them immediately. He then summoned one of the priests and asked him if he was a subject of the Sublime Porte or of France. When the latter responded that he was a subject of the sultan, Necip Pacha replied that while Uniates used to be the loyal subjects of the Porte, this was no longer the case because they disobeyed his directives and preferred to address themselves to the consul to resolve their problems.<sup>89</sup>

84 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Outrey-Walewski, 19 March 1857.

85 Mikhā'il Mishāqah, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), 116.

86 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, 4 January 1842.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

89 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Sieur Sayour-Beaudin, 3 January 1842.

This example shows that clothing had become a locus of intra-Christian competition and was intertwined in questions of loyalty towards the Ottoman state. Conflicts between different Christian communities did not occur in a vacuum, but were inscribed in the general politics of the city, involving not only the Ottoman state but also different political factions from among the larger Muslim population.

Another case that illustrates problems of sovereignty caused by foreign intervention was the practice of sending petitions. The fact that some Ottoman subjects chose to address the consuls instead of the governors to file complaints or ask for favors was at the root of the tensions between those two parallel authorities. The petitions addressed to the consuls can be seen as challenges to Ottoman authority over its subjects and as part of a strategy by foreign powers to extend their jurisdiction in the empire by means of administrative practices.<sup>90</sup> In the nineteenth century, many social, residential, administrative, and visual practices were perceived as political statements and as ways of taking sides in the conflict of sovereignty between the Ottoman Empire and foreign powers.

In cases of interpersonal or intercommunal disputes, there were a variety of possible authorities that Ottoman subjects could appeal to. While this enlarged their political possibilities, the presence of various authorities could also impede the ability of the plaintiff to obtain rapid retribution, especially when those cases became symbolic struggles for sovereignty.

The relations between consuls and governors were not only influenced by relations between the Porte and foreign powers, but also depended on power strategies. Governors' actions were linked to factional struggles in the empire. The period of the Tanzimat was characterized by ideological and political conflicts in Istanbul. Those conflicts revolved around debates on internal and external policy-making. Those divergences of opinion coincided with political factions that emerged around two main institutions, the bureaucracy (the Porte) and the entourage of the Sultan (the Palace), which was linked to the military institution. Those two factions disagreed regarding the nature of the Ottoman state and the role of the sultan, especially after the Gülhane edict of 1839.<sup>91</sup> The balance of power tipped alternatively in favor of one or the other group during the period from 1830 to 1860, generating shifts in imperial policies.

The governors that were sent to Damascus often belonged to the faction of the Palace, as was the case with the aforementioned Necip Pasha. The French

90 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, 7 May 1841.

91 Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam*, 43, 44.

consul in 1858 accused the military leaders of being involved in inciting hostility to the privileges of Europeans in the empire.<sup>92</sup> They opposed certain reforms, especially those aimed at improving the situation of Christians and foreign consuls. Governors were ordered to solve issues arising between Christian sects in a rapid manner in order to avoid their evolution into diplomatic problems.<sup>93</sup> However, in many cases, they did not follow those directives and, for a variety of reasons, exacerbated conflicts. They also tended to avoid the application of imperial decrees and ministerial letters.<sup>94</sup> This political faction particularly resented the *firman* of 1856 because they saw it as a foreign imposition that was contrary to the interests of the Ottoman state, and because it represented the power of the bureaucrats.<sup>95</sup> They especially refrained from applying the reforms concerning public space, which could work as *faits accomplis* in the favor of foreign consuls and Christian communities.

Consular agents were also involved in power struggles. They were either appointed from abroad or selected from within the consulate's employees. In either case a fierce competition took place.<sup>96</sup> Once in power they pushed for the appointment of governors who would favor their interests and attempted to bring about their dismissal when they frustrated their goals. The accusation of mistreatment of Christians was an easy way to delegitimize governors. The competition for influence between consuls of European countries, especially between France and Britain, played an important role as well in their relation with the governors.<sup>97</sup>

Thus both governors and consular agents acted on the basis of various rationales, including consideration of international politics, factional struggles, and career enhancement. Those dynamics had the consequence of increasing

92 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Outrey-Walewski, 3 March 1858.

93 Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 52.

94 For example, Osman Pasha, the governor of Damascus in 1848, refused to apply the order he received from Istanbul to punish the Damascenes who had attacked the funeral procession of the former consul of France, Mr. Combes, while it was entering the city center, as it was considered as an offense to the population, A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Garnier-de Lhuys, 12 December 1848.

95 Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Sultan and the Bureaucracy: The Anti-Tanzimat Concepts of Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasa," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 3 (1990), 266.

96 Edwards, *Syria*, 76–77.

97 See, for example, the attempt by the British consul to get rid of Necip Pasha because of his good relation with the French consul and to replace him with 'Ali Pasha, who favored British and Austrian interests, A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, 7 May 1841.



societal tensions, and reinforcing divisions between communities, especially those concerning issues of visibility and public space.

## Conversion as a Case Study

### *Conversion to Islam and Apostasy*

The issue of conversions aptly demonstrates the difficult relations between governors and consuls as well as the problems of sovereignty triggered by the intervention of foreign consuls. Conversion, which was problematic, involved the symbolic and often physical crossing of religious and social borders. The decree of 1839 made it legal, and the punishment of apostasy by death was abolished in 1844. The abolishment of the death penalty for apostasy was promoted by foreign powers in 1843, after diplomatic problems arose in Istanbul when an Armenian who had converted to Islam, then returned to his previous religion and was sentenced to death for apostasy from Islam. This sentence created a profound diplomatic crisis.<sup>98</sup> Foreign powers intervened to prevent the application of this sentence, and that intervention created problems of sovereignty.<sup>99</sup> The decree of 1856 restated the legality of conversion.<sup>100</sup> It was clear, however, that the Ottoman Empire did not wish to allow for conversion from Islam.

In most cases of conversion, the problems of apostasy were posed by converts to Islam who wished to return to their former religion.<sup>101</sup> Thus, the Ottoman Empire conceived a legal process in order to avoid the death penalty in those cases by proving the invalidity of the first conversion. This was done by arguing that the first conversion had not been completely voluntary. This process meant that diplomatic issues could be avoided and discussions regarding the legality of conversion from Islam could be circumvented.<sup>102</sup>

Such cases of conversions from Christianity or Judaism to Islam put the empire in an uneasy position, and contributed to what Selim Deringil calls the

98 See the description of the events in Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 67–11; Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam*, 12.

99 Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 38.

100 Selim Deringil, "There is no Compulsion in Religion: On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire: 1839–1856," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000), 556.

101 Those are the vast majority of the cases described by the French and British Foreign Office archives. Some of those cases will be described below.

102 Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 44.

“Imperial Headache.”<sup>103</sup> This type of conversion infuriated the original community to which the convert had belonged and called for the intervention of foreign consuls. A strictly regulated official legal process was put in place in order to ensure the voluntary nature of the conversion and to avoid further complications.<sup>104</sup> State officials were advised not to let the population know about those cases, in an effort to calm potential tensions.<sup>105</sup> These cases were to be referred to Istanbul directly, while in previous years the provincial government had dealt with them locally. This practice indicates that such cases were very sensitive for the empire and bureaucrats were clearly hoping to minimize the potentially conflictive consequences of these conversions.<sup>106</sup> Governors, however, sometimes made matters worse by publicizing them. The clergy was also aware of the sensitive nature of conversions. When Mr. Khalil, a Muslim, wanted to become Christian, the Greek Orthodox, Melkite, and Syrian Orthodox bishops refused to accept him into their church for fear of complications. He thus became Protestant.<sup>107</sup>

The French and British consuls of Damascus described at length various cases of conversion that were imbricated in political conflicts. For example, in 1850 a Greek Orthodox woman wanted to convert to Islam together with her son to follow the example of her husband. They went to see the judge, but when the boy was asked if this was what he wanted, he responded in the negative. After the case was made public, the woman was taken under the protection of the pasha but she was then kidnapped by a group of Greek Orthodox who took her to the Russian consulate. A diplomatic struggle erupted between the Russian consul and the pasha regarding the future of the child.<sup>108</sup> Because consulates were places beyond the jurisdiction of the Ottoman representatives, they often served as refuges or prisons in cases involving local Christian or Jewish individuals who ran into conflict with the Ottoman authorities.

In the various provinces of the empire, the conversion cases often involved women and children. Indeed, many women converted in order to divorce or

103 Ibid., 28–66.

104 Ibid., 44.

105 Ibid., 38, 62.

106 Ibid., 66; The British consul Mr. Timoni describes the case of three children, two Christians and one Jew, who converted to Islam but then reverted and were sent away to prevent any problems after they took refuge in the British consulate, F.O. 195/226, Timoni-Canning, 26 August 1846; Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 38, 49.

107 F.O. 195/601, Brant-Alison, 20 April 1858.

108 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Vallegue-de la Hitte, 21 May 1850.

to obtain guardianship over their children.<sup>109</sup> For instance, in 1846 a Melkite woman converted to Islam in order to divorce her husband and marry a Muslim man but then changed her mind. Sâlih Bey, the *kaymakam*, sent a letter to the British consul—who had been called to intervene by the Melkite vicar—stating that he would not prosecute her and knew of the discussions that took place in Istanbul two years before. However, when the case was brought to the council, Sâlih Bey publicly announced that this apostasy was punishable by death. A few days later, however, the woman miraculously escaped and Sâlih Bey forbade anyone to look for her. He also punished the man who had convinced her to convert. The British consul understood that Sâlih Bey had to publicly threaten the woman in order to satisfy the members of the council, especially two who were particularly ill-disposed towards Christians and foreign powers, but that in reality he wanted to get rid of the case as discreetly as possible.<sup>110</sup>

This example shows that the strength and authority of the governors had a determinant influence on the resolution of the cases of conversion, especially when it involved foreign representatives. The governors were concerned both about reinforcing their local legitimacy to prevent rebellion and about satisfying foreign representatives who could appeal to Istanbul to replace them. Unfortunately, strengthening their legitimacy in the eyes of the local population often required showing strong resistance to foreign powers' interference. They thus had to find a balance between those two objectives. Each governor struck this balance in a different manner. This dynamic explains the seemingly hypocritical speech often used by governors and the reasons they politicized some cases while treating others in a more discreet manner.

Children could also use conversion to escape their parents' authority; such was the case of a seventeen years old Melkite girl who, because of the ill treatment she received from her mother, decided to become Muslim in order to be emancipated.<sup>111</sup>

Conversion had strong spatial dynamics because it was a shift of loyalty to a different authority. For example, in 1847, a Catholic Latin called Antoine/Selim Madim, who had converted to Islam many years before and married a Muslim woman, passed away. He was taken to be buried in the Muslim cemetery when the dragoman of the French consul stopped the procession and affirmed that he had returned to his original faith and had to be buried in the Christian

109 Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 38, 58.

110 F.O. 195/226, Timoni-Canning, 2 December 1846.

111 A.E. Serie D/166PO/ D20/3, Beaudin-Baron de Bourquency, 14 April 1847.

cemetery. While the governor was being consulted on the subject, the dragoman buried him in secret in the Christian cemetery with the benediction of the priests of Terra Santa. A diplomatic conflict followed between the governor, Musa Safveti Pasha, who belonged to the faction of the Palace, and the consul of France; each claimed that the deceased was from their religion.<sup>112</sup> Safveti Pasha wrote to the French consul and accused him of acting in contradiction to the Capitulations. The latter denied this accusation and argued that there was no mention of this type of situation in the Capitulations.<sup>113</sup> The head priest of Terra Santa then wrote to certify that the man had reverted to Christianity and had wanted to divorce his wife. The governor disregarded this letter and asked for the dragoman to be punished for overstepping his authority. The following day the latter was attacked in the marketplace.<sup>114</sup> Clearly the politicization of converts could continue even after their deaths.

There was also a problem of inheritance behind this attempt to prove that the deceased had reverted. Since his family had remained Christian, they could not inherit from a Muslim. They could, therefore, have tried to prove his reversion in order to inherit from him and disinherit his wife. The brother of Antoine/Selim Madim, Elias Madim, was imprisoned by Safveti Pasha for entering the house of his brother and taking indemnities on his inheritance.<sup>115</sup> When Elias Madim was asked in court what his nationality was, he responded that he was a subject of the Porte and a protégé of the Terra Santa convent because this institution paid his share of the taxes. Upon this declaration, he was thrown into prison and kept there for seven days. Ultimately the wife of Antoine/Selim Madim was given her part of the inheritance and the rest was appropriated by the judge.<sup>116</sup>

Even if there was a question of inheritance in the case of Antoine/Selim Madim, the proactive intervention of the consul and the pasha demonstrates that the question went beyond a strictly financial issue. It showed the will to claim a soul, in a sort of spiritual competition that was in fact inherently political: tombs were visual and symbolic representations of communities. The burial of a man in a Muslim or Christian cemetery, located in different areas in the city, represented the superiority of one group over another, and

112 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Safveti Pacha-Bourville, 18 February 1847.

113 A.E. Serie D/166PO/D20/3, Toppel-Safveti, 23 February 1847.

114 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Bourville-Safveti Pacha, 27 February 1847.

115 A.E. Serie D/166PO/D20/3, Toppel-Baron de Bourquency, 3 February 1847.

116 A.E. Serie D/166PO/D20/3 Annex to Toppel-Baron de Bourquency, 3 February 1847, "Questions posées au nommé Elias Nadim, frère du défunt Antoine Nadim par Mr Baudin chancelier du consulat et ses réponses."

a political victory during a period in which conversion was a major subject of discussion and a basis for foreign involvement. In this politico-social context, conversion thus became a betrayal of one group and an allegiance to another authority.

Cemeteries were an important way to mark the presence of a community in a city, in addition to being a place of reunion and memory. It is significant that in 1854 the British consul petitioned the governor to demand the construction of a Protestant cemetery in the city for British and American subjects in order to anchor the community in the religious landscape of Damascus.<sup>117</sup>

### *Conversions between Christian Sects*

Similar cases of contested conversions also took place between Christian communities; these were even more complicated for the Ottoman Empire to handle.<sup>118</sup> These conversions were, like conversions between Islam and Christianity, also linked to issues of loyalty and foreign influence. Uniates were seen as betraying the Ottoman Empire because of their relation to France and the reign of Muḥammad 'Alī. Converts to Protestantism were seen as influenced by the British, while Orthodox were accused of connivance with Russia and the Greek revolts.<sup>119</sup> Conversions increased the prestige of the respective powers because the international battle for influence also took place on the grounds of faith. In intra-Christian polemics, the different communities accused each other of a lack of loyalty towards the empire, because of their alliance with foreign countries.<sup>120</sup> Loyalty and religious identity were thus strongly associated.

Conversion was also linked to a fiscal concerns. Indeed, converting to other Christian sects and seeking foreign protection could be a way to escape extreme taxation.<sup>121</sup> When a hundred Greek Orthodox from the village of Ḥāṣbiyya, an area populated by Christians and Druzes, converted to Protestantism in 1844, the Greek Orthodox bishop wrote a letter to the Patriarch of Damascus accusing the converts of having become English.<sup>122</sup> They were then attacked by members of the Greek Orthodox church, Maronites, and Druzes, who threat-

117 F.O. 78/1028, Wood-Earl of Clarendon, 1 February 1854.

118 Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 42.

119 Aḥwāl al-naṣāra, 20, 21; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 130–169.

120 Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 107.

121 A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Lewizy-Guizot, 6 March 1844, 8 December 1843, and 30 November 1843.

122 F.O. 195/226, Annex to Wood-Canning, 4 March 1844, "Translation of a memorial addressed by 100 Orthodox Greeks from Hasbeyā to Mr. Consul Wood."

ened them with death if they did not return to their former faith.<sup>123</sup> Their conversion not only called into question their relation to the Ottoman state but also their right to reside among their former coreligionists. They thus asked for the protection of the British consul in Damascus, Mr. Richard Wood. He first refused to offer protection, claiming that England did not wish to use religion in order to increase its influence. He even complained about the actions of missionaries, who behaved in a manner that was detrimental to the interests of England.<sup>124</sup> Apparently, British and American missionaries used to promise to pay the taxes of individuals who converted to Protestantism.<sup>125</sup> The question of financial responsibilities appears to be at the heart of many issues of conversion. Taxation was closely linked to communal belonging.

Mr. Wood seemed very reticent at first to get involved in this case, and wrote to the pasha refuting the accusations that his agents were the cause of this affair. He did not hesitate to state that this conversion was the consequence of the despair of the converts in the face of excessive taxation. He then reassured the pasha that whatever their religion, the inhabitants of Ḥaṣbiyya were not under British protection.<sup>126</sup>

However, as the case evolved and the Protestants were persecuted, they wrote insistent letters to the British consul, asking for his intervention.<sup>127</sup> The governor of Damascus, upon learning about this mass conversion, held an exceptional council in order to determine the best possible response to this affair. Some members of the council argued that if the Christians converted in order to escape their condition as subjects of the sultan by using foreign powers, then it was a legally reprehensible act of treason.<sup>128</sup> Eventually, the Protestants were expelled from their houses in Hasabiyya and while the British consul demanded the punishment of those involved, the Russian general consul in Beirut threatened to intervene if any action was undertaken to humiliate the Greek Orthodox of Hasabiyya.<sup>129</sup> In the end the pasha of Damascus

123 F.O. 195/226, "Deposition of Nicola Haslab, one of the professing Christians Protestants of Hasbeya to the British cancelleria," 27 June 1844.

124 A.E. CPC/ Turquie/Damas, Lewizey-Guizot, 24 March 1844.

125 Ibid.

126 F.O. 195/226, Wood-Canning, "Translation from a Letter from Wood to His excellency Ali Pasha," 29 May 1844.

127 F.O. 195/226, Annex to Wood-Canning, 4 March 1844, "Translation of a memorial"; F.O. 195/226, "Deposition of Nicola Haslab," 27 June 1844.

128 A.E. CPC/ Turquie/Damas, Lewizey-Guizot, 24 March 1844.

129 F.O. 195/226, Wood-Canning, 8 October 1844.

ceded to the pressure of the British consul who accused him of indifference and of not respecting the *firman* stating that Christians will not be persecuted in the empire.<sup>130</sup> However, Halil Pasha—the Kapudan Pasha<sup>131</sup>—and the Russian general consul in Beirut then reminded him that he should support the patriarch who alone was responsible for his community even if some of them converted.<sup>132</sup> Indeed, the Protestant church was not recognized in the Ottoman Empire until 1847.<sup>133</sup> Instead of punishing those who pressured the Protestants to return to their original faith, they told the pasha of Damascus that he should encourage them and facilitate their enterprise.<sup>134</sup>

These conflicts over conversion show the politicization of Christian communal identity, which became an additional space of confrontation between the Ottoman Empire and foreign powers. The different communities reacted strongly against those intra-Christian conversions. They saw them as a double treason that damaged the prestige of the church and increased the fiscal burden of the rest of the members of the community who still had to pay taxes for the converted person.<sup>135</sup>

### *Ambiguities of Subjecthood*

Based on the study of these cases of conversion, it can be observed that two different notions of subjecthood coexisted in this period, a perennial one based on the community as the basis of state-society relations and tied to the land, and another based on the individual, one that took into account his mobility, both physical and religious.

The conflict between these two notions of subjecthood took root in the reform decrees themselves. The reform decrees showed a desire to unite the population and gain the loyalty of the Ottoman subjects. This unity took two different directions. It was underlined both by a will to reinforce the unity of

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> The Kapudan Pasha is the grand admiral of the navy of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>132</sup> F.O. 195/226, Annex to Wood-Canning, 8 October 1844, "Letter of his Excellency Halil Pasha to his Excellency Aly Pasha"; F.O. 195/226, Basilios-Aly Pasha, 21 September 1844.

<sup>133</sup> F.O. 195/291, Wood-Lord Cowley, 8 January 1848.

<sup>134</sup> F.O. 195/226, Annex to Wood-Canning, 8 October 1844, "Letter of his Excellency Halil Pasha to his Excellency Aly Pasha"; F.O. 195/226, Basilios-Aly Pasha, 21 September 1844.

<sup>135</sup> Smyrnelis, *Une Société hors de Soi*, 71. Taxes were not reassessed often, and thus every year the village had to pay the same amount of taxes, regardless of changes in the number of inhabitants. The taxes on villages instituted by the Egyptians in Damascus had still not been reassessed in 1858, F.O. 198/13, "Report on the Finances of Damascus," 1858–1860.

the religious group, which can be called a policy of the *millet*, and the ideology of an all-inclusive Ottomanism. The two policies contradicted each other.<sup>136</sup> While Ottomanism was based on the direct relationship of the individual to the state, the policy of the *millet* reified the religious community as the basis of subjecthood. While individuals were legally allowed to change their religion, the decree of 1856 institutionalized the religious communities in terms of their hierarchy and organization.<sup>137</sup> The legalization of conversion challenged the authority of the patriarch and the local Christian clergy. Rebellion against the leadership of the church was facilitated by the rise of the Uniate churches. Individuals or groups could threaten to join the Uniate church or vice versa in order to achieve their goals.<sup>138</sup>

Nevertheless, in order to regulate the administration of religious groups, the decree of 1856 strengthened the patriarchs' and laity's authority over their community and harmonized their internal hierarchy. It attributed salaries to the clergy<sup>139</sup> and created boards composed of both clerical and lay elements in which government officials would have a say.<sup>140</sup> While giving religious leaders a stronger voice in cases of conversion, this policy also reduced their autonomy.<sup>141</sup>

The bureaucrats found themselves struggling in their attempt to create a social unity on ideological bases and both strategies of fostering unity were simultaneously employed. Those differing objectives may help explain in part the confusion that existed concerning the objectives of the reforms and the practical policies adopted during this period. The lack of clarity of the reforms thus led to a complex situation in which civil servants had difficulties in deciding how to act, who to punish, and whose authority to enforce. These confu-

136 Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 31, 38.

137 Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982), 15; Bernard Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens Du Proche-Orient: Au Temps de la Réforme Catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1994), 63–107.

138 For example, when the Melkite patriarch decided to replace the existing traditional calendar of Christians in the Middle East with the Gregorian calendar promoted by the Pope, part of the church categorically refused this reform for political or religious reasons. The Uniates in Damascus who refused to adopt the Gregorian calendar mandated by Rome threatened to join the Greek Orthodox church, A.E.C.P.C, Turquie/Damas, Lamartine-Comte Walewski, 2 October 1857.

139 Hurewitz, *Middle East*, 1:316–318.

140 Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 139.

141 See the decree of 1856 in Hurewitz, *Middle East*, 1:316–318; Smyrnelis, *Une Société hors de Soi*, 42.



sions and ambiguities also gave various actors more leeway to shape the manner in which the reforms were understood, applied, modified or resisted.

In conclusion, the Tanzimat period, characterized by imperial restructuring, foreign intervention, and internal rebellions, turned public space into both an instrument of social transformation and a stake in political struggles. From the Egyptian occupation onwards, the political, social, and economic role of Christians in Damascus was shaped by the structure of international relations, by the reform decrees, and by interactions on the local level between different power representatives. Ottoman societies were composed of a variety of actors who participated in the practice of political power and directed the ways in which the vaguely formulated and ambiguous reforms were applied locally. The consuls and the governors, representing two power institutions, were instrumental in determining the interpretation and enactment of the reforms. Their relationship was punctuated by struggles for sovereignty, especially concerning the issue of protection. The consuls and the governors functioned as two parallel authorities that competed for recognition and legitimacy through their involvement in local conflicts. In this context, specific places in the city became the locus of inter-confessional tensions, as the spatial dynamics of the events of 1860 indicate. Public displays such as sartorial customs and the built environment were also used by all parties to bolster their positions; daily practices thus contributed to the political polarization of religious groups. The case study of conversion demonstrates that in the context of the Tanzimat, faith became an issue of loyalty and sovereignty. Conversion developed into a political shift of allegiance. Spiritual competition was a continuation of international politics at the local level. The legal, political, and social difficulties arising from the cases of conversion point to the transitional nature of the Tanzimat period, during which the relations between the empire and its subjects were radically transformed. Because of the tensions between notions of individual and communal subjecthood in the reforms, relations between non-Muslims and the Ottoman state were unclear. This lack of clarity allowed for the involvement of a variety of actors speaking in the name of Ottoman Christians. While this involvement provided economic and political opportunities for some individuals, it led to a general deterioration of inter-confessional relations, and this had dire consequences for the Christians of Damascus.

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# *The King is Dead, Long Live the King!*

## Jewish Funerary Performances in the Iraqi Public Space

A. Schlaepfer\*

### Introduction

This article engages in an analysis of the two royal funerals that took place in 20th Iraq—that of King Fayṣal (1933) and King Ghāzī (1939)—and Jewish-Muslim interactions in the Iraqi urban space. The processions organized after their death by their subjects “of every creed” were numerous. Muslims, Jews and Christians alike repeatedly proceeded in the streets of Iraqi cities covered in black, beating their breast (men), moaning loudly (women) and covering their faces and chest with mud. Extensively commented on by officials and witnesses, these events offer a unique glance at the way Iraq’s numerous communities invested the public space and at how they interacted in it. For non-Muslim citizens such as the Jews, these occasions represented an opportunity to assert their desire to coexist with other communities, their struggle against sectarianism (*tāʿifiyya*), loyalty to the State, the king and the Iraqi Arab nation. By studying these ceremonies as *performances*—whereby participants show others what they are doing in order to influence their judgment—the paper aims at shedding light on the function of these ceremonies and the role played by Jews in the Iraqi public space. Fayṣal being more popular among Iraqi Jews than his son Ghāzī, one could expect the ceremonies organized by Jews in the memory of Fayṣal, to be more expressive of their grief than those organized in the memory of Ghāzī, but the following analysis will prove otherwise. Based on testimonies from internal and external actors alike (accounts by Iraqi Jewish witnesses, journalists, correspondence between teachers at the *Alliance israélite universelle* and the headquarter in Paris, British and American officials), the article intends to demonstrate that the Jews’ public expression of grief was not proportionate to the degree of sympathy they actually

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felt for their monarchs. By comparing the behavior of Iraqi Jewish participants to the ceremonies—such as street processions, public speeches, chants, physical and oral expressions of grief, as well as the media coverage—organized after Fayṣal's death and those that took place after Ghāzī's death, it will show that the performances of the Jewish mourners responded to the necessities of the socio-political context at the time of the kings' death, rather than that of grief.

### The Jewish Funerary Ritual as a *Performance*

According to Durkheim, the grief expressed during a particular ritual is eminently social and independent of the individual's affective state. The grief is a collective assertion that the individual consents to be part of rather than a spontaneous or personal expression of sadness.<sup>1</sup> Participants in a ritual thus deliberately play a role and act in a similar fashion as they would in a theatre play: Contrary to everyday life, they show spectators what they are doing in order to influence their judgement. Pursuing the analogy with acting, Turner defines the ritual as a *performance*, during which messages are communicated.<sup>2</sup> But the distinction between actors and spectators is less clear in a funeral: participants act and watch at the same time during a funerary ceremony, while it is not the case in a theatre play. In this sense, the funeral is closer to Bakhtin's reading of the medieval *carnivalesque*. Throughout the carnival, he argues, the participant who is both actor and spectator parodies and imitates real life with costumes, chants and dances. The process is similar with funerals: Mourners play a role as both actors and spectators in the ceremonies. Their motion, text and clothing are not pure fiction, they imitate real life in a caricature fashion. And by *playing* real life in a caricature, the carnival—like the funeral—temporarily suspends social order, and thus symbolically forces out boundaries of the everyday life. Rules are consequently overthrown, hierarchies reversed, and the structure turned over.<sup>3</sup> This liminal phase is a moment during which a breach is momentarily made possible between all social, ethnic or religious boundaries.<sup>4</sup> Participants reach a state of communion that transcends all these

1 Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. (London: Courier Dover Publications, 2012), 397–400.

2 Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, (New York: PAJ Publications, 1988), 72–98.

3 Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 7.

4 For the rites of passage and liminality, see Arnold van Gennep, *Les rites de passage: étude*

ordinary barriers and together they unite. Turner names this slippery moment of epiphany *communitas* or anti-structure.<sup>5</sup> For an Iraqi such as the Jews, the temporary absence of structure characteristic of the *communitas* represented an ideal opportunity for them to send an explicit message to others, as they could be as visible and as vocal as the other communities could be. Citizens are equal in mourning, one could say.

### The Funerary Ritual: Between Predictability and Malleability

In a Hobsbawmian reading of modern history, the repetitive nature of traditions is important, especially in a period of crisis when stability needs to be constantly reaffirmed, through established and regular public practices. Repeated traditions imply continuity with the past and thus give the impression that they remain unaltered over time.<sup>6</sup> The Middle East in the post-Ottoman era in particular was a period of great changes. The sharif Ḥusayn of Mekka (Fayṣal's father) had long aspired to obtain an Arab Kingdom or Caliphate, but had instead inherited the small Kingdom of Hejaz, and lost it almost immediately. His son 'Abdallah was appointed King of Jordan, while Fayṣal became King of Iraq, after a first and unsuccessful coronation in Syria. Needless to say, the Hashemite monarchies were desperately seeking homogeneity, stability and strength, precisely because the context indicated otherwise. Such traditions as royal funerals were therefore crucial for the monarchy to reassert its power, stability and control over its subjects.

Despite these efforts, however, many aspects obviously varied in practice, from one funeral to another. For instance, the sharif Ḥusayn of Mekka died in 1931 in Amman, and Fayṣal died in 1933 in Switzerland. Originally, both

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*système des rites*, (Paris: E. Nourry, 1909); Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).

5 Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94–97.

6 Traditions are a “set of practices, [...] of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values [...] by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1. See also the article in the same volume by David Cannadine, “The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the ‘Invention of Tradition’, c. 1820–1977”, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 105: “[...] in a period of change, conflict or crisis, it might be *deliberately unaltered* so as to give an impression of continuity, community and comfort, despite overwhelming contextual evidence to the contrary.”

their bodies were supposed to be taken to Jerusalem at some point. In the case of Ḥusayn, the body did arrive in Jerusalem by car where the procession met representatives of the Chief Rabbinate and of the Jewish Agency, as well as of various Muslim and Christian societies, at the Old City's Herod's Gate. The coffin was then carried into the Dome of the Rock and to the Mosque of Al-Aqṣa, and the burial eventually took place next to the Haram area. A small window was opened in the wall of the holy place in order to connect it symbolically to Ḥusayn's tomb. The British High Commissioner for Palestine asserted that "no untoward incident of any kind occurred during the funeral".<sup>7</sup> However, in the case of Fayṣal's body, a religious ceremony was also originally supposed to take place in Jerusalem on its way from Haifa to Baghdad, but the coffin was "taken direct to Baghdad by air",<sup>8</sup> in order to avoid potential political excitement, according to British officials,<sup>9</sup> because at the time of Fayṣal's death, interreligious tensions were much higher.

The difference shows how the socio-political context influences the way the ceremony is held. "Men resemble their time more than they do their fathers",<sup>10</sup> states the French historian Marc Bloch, quoting an Arab proverb. In other words, the funeral not only serves the purpose of a ritual as a pre-established and predictable set of movements, but also acts as a malleable, "elastic and dynamic"<sup>11</sup> product, in which a mosaic of elements interact and converge.<sup>12</sup> Parts of a funeral therefore follow the rule of predictability, while other parts vary according to a changing context and therefore follow the rule of malleability. Both similarities and dissimilarities signal a message; The former express the need for hegemony, while the latter—the focus of the present article—unveil the surrounding socio-political context.

7 "High Commissioner for Palestine, Jerusalem to colonial Office, 11 June 1931," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties, A Twentieth Century Documentary History*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 4, (Slough: Archive Editions, 1995), 428–431.

8 "Paraphrase telegram from High Commissioner for Palestine to Colonial Secretary, London, 11 September 1933," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 11, 777.

9 "Telegram from Foreign Office, London to Mr Murray, Rome, 9 September 1933," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 11, 776.

10 Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. (New York: Knopf, 2004), 27–29.

11 David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c. 1820–1977", 106.

12 Julia Kristeva, *Sēmeiōtikē: recherches pour une sémanalyse*, (Paris: Seuil, 1978), 146.



### The Jews and Their Monarchs

In August 1921, Fayṣal b. Ḥusayn, son of the Hashemite dynasty of the sharifs of Mekka, was enthroned King of Iraq. Twelve years later, in September 1933, he died of a heart attack in Interlaken (Switzerland). He was succeeded by his son Ghāzī, aged 21, who ruled over Iraq for six years, before he was killed in a car crash in April 1939. His son Fayṣal II succeeded him under the Regency of his uncle ‘Abd Al-Ilāh, until he became of age (he was then three years old). During the July 1958 Revolution, the monarchy was overthrown by the General ‘Abd Al-Karīm Qāsim, and all members of the royal family were killed, thus putting an end to the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq.

In the collective memory of Iraqi Jews, Fayṣal is most commonly remembered as a good sovereign, to which all sorts of benefits are attributed, such as promoting religious tolerance. In a speech he delivered a few weeks before his coronation during an official visit to the Jewish community in July 1921 he declared: “There is no such thing as a Jew, a Muslim, or a Christian. There is simply one thing called Iraq.”<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, Fayṣal’s death is seen as a turning point, after which the “golden age” came to an end. Ibrāhīm Al-Kabīr,<sup>14</sup> the Jewish accountant General of the Ministry of Finance, writes:

Faisal was succeeded by Crown Prince Ghasi who was proclaimed King of Iraq immediately after the death of his father. King Faisal was a genius with a great intellect, tremendous memory and deep and long sighted political acumen. His death created a vacuum which could never be filled and historians will record it as a turning point in the destinies of the Arab world and perhaps beyond it.<sup>15</sup>

Inversely, Ghāzī, known to be close to ultra-nationalistic circles and unsympathetic to the Jews, aroused fear and suspicion. Al-Kabīr continues:

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- 13 Philip Willard Ireland, *Iraq: A study in Political Development*, (London: J. Cape, 1937), 466.
- 14 Ibrāhīm Al-Kabīr (1885–1973) was born in Baghdad in 1885. After the Iraqi State was created, he was hired by the minister of Finance Sāsūn Ḥasqayl, and became Chief Accountant in 1926. He was known as *Abū al-‘umla* “father of currency” by his colleagues, because he was in charge of introducing an independent currency in Iraq. He is the author of an unpublished autobiographical pentalogy (1963–1970).
- 15 Ibrahim Al-Kabir, *My Governmental Life, or Story of a Dream*, 1964 (unpublished manuscript), 86–87.

Ghasi was a man of mediocre intelligence, immature judgement and foresight. He was weak, irresolute and soon fell under the influence of young army officers. He was very friendly with me and in conversation he called me “My brother Ibrahim”. I felt, however, I could not rely on the moral and material support I got from King Faisal in my dealing with unscrupulous ministers. My apprehensions were not unjustified and I expected that the shaky foundation of the State would soon be undermined.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Iṣḥāq Bar Moshe,<sup>17</sup> a young Baghdadi Jew, recalls memories from his childhood in an autobiographical trilogy. He reports a conversation he heard between two adults right after Fayṣal’s death in *Bayt Fī Baghdād*:

- Fayṣal loved the Jews and protected them.
- And nobody knows how it will be after him, with Ghāzī.
- They say he is the opposite of his father; that he tends not to like the Jews.
- Fayṣal knew the Jewish community notables and used to receive them.
- He is from the old generation; he did not have prejudices or passionate hostility towards the Jews.<sup>18</sup>

Robert Méfano, deputy director of the *Alliance israélite universelle* (AIU) school in Baghdad, describes the backroom atmosphere in the milieu of Jewish leaders and public figures when Fayṣal died. Emergency committees, meetings and gatherings were convened and strategies were elaborated:

Beside grief, Jews are anxious about their future, too. One could see that as soon as the news spread, Jews met in groups in order to speak about tomorrow, as [Fayṣal’s] heir is not known to be well-disposed towards Jews, as was his father. The young sovereign has always been the hope of extremist nationalists of the country.<sup>19</sup>

16 Ibid.

17 Iṣḥāq Bar Moshe (1927–2003) was born in Baghdad in a religious family. He studied at the Faculty of Law and left Iraq in 1950. His autobiographical trilogy (*Al-Khūrīj min Al-‘Irāq* (1975) *Bayt Fī Baghdād* (1983) *Ayyām Al-‘Irāq* (1988)) is an extremely rich account of the every day life of a Jewish family in the old Baghdad. He died in Israel in 2003.

18 Iṣḥāq Bar Moshe, *Bayt fī Baghdād*, Jerusalem, Manshūrāt Rābiṭat al-Jāmi‘iyyin al-Yahūd al-Nāziḥīn min al-‘Irāq, 1983, 227–229.

19 “Robert Méfano, Baghdad, 13 September 1933”, AIU Archives. “A la douleur de la perte du roi s’ajoutait l’anxiété de l’avenir. On pouvait voir, aussitôt la nouvelle répandue, des Juifs

Fayṣal was much popular and appreciated among Jews than was his son Ghāzī. But the question that rises at this point is the following: is the Jews' expression of grief to the death of their monarchs related to the degree of sympathy they felt for them? The following comparison between the two sets of ceremonies will bring elements of answer to this question through an analysis of the performances and their messages.

### Fayṣal's Death (1933)

Fayṣal I died of a heart attack in Bern (Interlaken) on 8 September, 1933. Before being sent back to Baghdad, his body followed a long itinerary, first from Switzerland to Brindisi in Italy. From there the body "was embarked on an Italian boat and towed alongside H.M.S. DESPATCH" to Palestine, in a coffin "conveyed on a horse-drawn carriage".<sup>20</sup> During the journey, the coffin was taken into pieces, as its dimensions were too big, for the room designed for that purpose. After the body had arrived in Haifa on 14 September, the coffin was "taken direct to Baghdad by air"<sup>21</sup> on 15 September.

In Baghdad, the news of his death spread early in the morning of 8 September 1933. Right after the afternoon prayer, processions of people were formed and representatives of every community started to proceed through the city "beating their breasts and wailing dirges", according to the American Consul General in Baghdad, Paul Knabenshue (1883–1942). "Members of guilds carried banners proclaiming their membership in a particular trade" and "black robed women on the house tops wept, wailed and moaned".<sup>22</sup> Another eyewitness, Gerald de Gaury, a British official and close friend of the Iraqi monarchs, gives a similar account on the general attitude of the crowd: "Long before the hour of arrival the streets were lined by inhabitants, the great majority crying without restraint." The women, according to him were also "covered in their usual

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se réunir en de colloques où il était question du lendemain, l'héritier ne jouissant pas de la même réputation de bienveillance à l'égard des Juifs. Ce souverain jeune a de tout temps été l'espoir des nationalistes extrémistes du pays." [Original spelling].

20 "Message and letter from Captain Drummond, HMS Despatch, 14 September 1933," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 11, 779.

21 "Paraphrase telegram from High Commissioner for Palestine to Colonial Secretary, London, 11 September 1933," 777.

22 "Mr P. Knabenshue, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, 19 September 1933," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 11, 793–794.

black veils and cloaks, lined the balconies and roof-edges, where they rocked and moaned and shrieked in unison and were but little less subdued than their men.”<sup>23</sup>

A mourning of seven days was declared, during which all shops closed, amusements banned, and flags were flown at half-mast. When the body arrived in Baghdad on 15 September accompanied by Fayṣal’s brother and officials, the body was placed on a gun-carriage, with “a large portrait of the late king, draped in black crepe, while the top of it was surmounted by about a dozen Iraqi flags on small flag staffs”. The procession passed across Maude Bridge, to the Royal Court, where more than five hundreds official guests were waiting to join the procession. All eventually arrived together at the royal tomb that had been built next to the Parliament House. After the booming of ninety-nine guns and prayers “the funeral of King Faisal I came to an end”.<sup>24</sup> All eye-witnesses, especially Westerners who were not used to these expressions of grief, insist on the fervor of the crowd. De Gaury writes: “When the whole people of a city or countryside are mourners, as was the case at the death of King Faisal and later at the death of King Ghazi, then the scene is to Europeans truly eccentric.”<sup>25</sup> At times, Knabenshue is also moved by the “outpouring of deep emotion” and deeply impressed by the “uncontrollable crowd” and “thousands of excited Arabs [...] bemoaning the untimely death of their king”.<sup>26</sup>

Robert Méfano, head of the AIU, sends a report to the headquarters in Paris on 13 September, in which he describes a specifically “Jewish procession” that took place on 10 September, i.e. two days after Fayṣal’s death was announced. It appears from the report that Méfano did not personally attend the ceremony, as he asked the Great Rabbi and President of the Jewish community Sāsūn Khaḍḍūrī,<sup>27</sup> leading organizer, to give him a precise account of the procession. According to his testimony, the procession started at 3 pm, with about 1000 people gathered in the schoolyard of the Midrash school.<sup>28</sup> All teachers wore

23 Gerald de Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad, The Tragedy of Iraq’s Monarchy*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008 (1961)), 91.

24 “Mr P. Knabenshue, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, 19 September 1933,” 793–794.

25 Gerald de Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad*, 93.

26 “Mr P. Knabenshue, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, 19 September 1933,” 794.

27 Born in Baghdad in 1886, Sāsūn Khaḍḍūrī became Great Rabbi in 1928, and President of the Jewish community (*raʿīs al-ṭāʾifa*) in 1931. He occupied this position until his death in 1971 (except for a few years in the 1950s).

28 The Midrash Talmud Torah school opened in Baghdad in 1832–1833. In 1880, about 1000

black armbands and the Great Rabbi addressed two prayers; the first one to “the soul of the great king whose death has prematurely snatched him from his nation and its children”,<sup>29</sup> and the second to Ghāzī, his son, so that he finds the strength and wisdom to rule his subjects. Finally, the Great Rabbi delivered a speech that made all members of his audience cry.

At 3.30 pm, the group started to walk, headed by 2000 students, “a burning candle in hand”, followed by the Great Rabbi and other rabbis. After them came notables, Jews organized by quarter, and women wearing black “tcharchafs”. Soon, more than 1000 bare-chested men, “beating their chest with both hands on the rhythm of kettledrum”,<sup>30</sup> joined the procession from adjacent streets. The group was then divided into three parts, each scanning in turn an oration from the Jewish poet al-Baghdādī.<sup>31</sup> While one group was singing, the others were beating their breasts “according to the Arab custom”. According to the Great Rabbi, some 55,000 people<sup>32</sup> were chanting:

“O, people, make your tears flow  
 Ghazi’s father, the hard-working, is no more.  
 You disappeared from among us, our King,  
 You have left, leaving us in grief  
 The king of the Arabs is gone  
 Abandoning his cub  
 O dear Ghazi, our precious  
 In you, we put all our hopes, after him”

Members of the Jewish procession held banners with such inscriptions: “The Israelite community mourns your loss, O father of Ghazi”; “All our condolences go to you, O Ghazi, we will die for you”; “All our eyes cry”. When they arrived at the Royal Court, speeches were delivered. And according to Méfano, non-Jewish witnesses were so moved by these expressions of grief, that they “spon-

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pupils studied in the school, and in 1913, about 2700. The graduates from the Midrash Talmud Torah founded the *Zilkha Yeshiva* in 1840. For more on the Midrash school system and curricula, see the contribution to the present volume by Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah: “Jewish Education in Baghdad: Communal space vs. public space”.

29 “Robert Méfano, Baghdad, 13 September 1933”, AIU Archives.

30 Ibid.

31 Méfano mentions “the Jewish poet from Baghdad”. He most likely refers to the 11th century Arabic poet of Jewish origin Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī.

32 Local press reported 60,000.

taneously spoke”<sup>33</sup> publically and in good terms of the Iraqi Jews. Some moving “incidents” were reported, such as the story of a Muslim man who ran towards the Great Rabbi, in order to personally thank him in the name of the Muslims for the Jews’ expression of grief. Other Muslim members of the crowd climbed up a ladder and shouted that Jews and Muslims were brothers. The procession came to an end at around 10.30 pm. When the Jews left the Palace, it was dark and all lights were turned off. Thousands of people were chanting monotonous orations and beating their chest rhythmically, while women were moaning. Old men were marching next to the children, in a gloomy atmosphere. Police officers were said to have offered the old rabbis to drive them back home.

The succession of all these performances offered an “impressive” sight, according to the report. The witness Iṣḥāq Bar Moshe also expresses his astonishment, while giving a very similar account of the events:

I remember vividly King Fayṣal’s death. I remember that all men of our house went out in the streets to see the enormous funeral procession. One could read real grief on everyone’s face [...] The day the funeral procession took place, after his body was sent back from Switzerland, is unforgettable. I heard people from inside and outside the house asking God to have mercy upon the king, and spoke well of him. All men wore a special cap that the king used to wear and that they named after him, *fayṣalīyya*.<sup>34</sup>

Méfano concludes his report by stating that the procession and participation to the national mourning was successful in terms of recognition, contrary to the Christian community whose representatives were criticized for their “lack of effusiveness”. King Ghāzī is said to have been impressed by the Israelites and while the nationalist newspaper *Al-Ālam al-‘arabī* looked at this demonstration of grief with suspicion, other newspapers openly blamed the attitude of the nationalist newspaper, that was consequently asked to make up for its tactlessness, in a following issue. “In conclusion, according to H.E. the Great Rabbi, a great reversal took place in favor of the Jews”.<sup>35</sup>

Several pieces of evidence lead to the conclusion that the prevailing message of the *communitas* is one of religious harmony and solidarity. First, the similarity between the processions organized by Jews only, and those organized

33 “Robert Méfano, Baghdad, 13 September 1933”, AIU Archives. ‘s’ improvisèrent orateurs” [Original spelling].

34 Iṣḥāq Bar Moshe, *Bayt fī Baghdād*, 227–229.

35 “Robert Méfano, Baghdad, 13 September 1933”, AIU Archives.

by non-Jewish Iraqis is striking. The Jews' expressions of grief are modeled on that of the other ceremonies. Méfano stresses that the ceremony followed the "Arab custom", and Ibrāhim al-Kabīr writes that all processions followed "the old fashioned Arab style":<sup>36</sup> men beating their chest, women moaning and wearing black, the crying, the chanting and the scanning; everything in the Jewish ceremony echoes the other ceremonies. Second, their "spontaneity" and "effusiveness" is acknowledged by King Ghāzī himself. Third, non-Jewish Iraqis physically and orally engage in these performances of ecumenical nature. As the procession unfolds, non-Jewish mourners join: the cortege starts with 1000 people and ends with 55,000, or more. Similarly, non-Jews are said to be chanting with Jews, climbing the ladder to thank the Great Rabbi, and policemen are reported driving old and tired Jews back home. All these elements illustrate the complete—yet temporary—collapse of the ordinary social structure, and allow the anti-structure to emerge. This is characteristic of the liminal phase, when unordinary things become possible. The *carnavalesque* allows mourners to imitate real life in a caricature fashion—and in this case an ideal life, where interreligious harmony prevails.

The context surrounding Fayṣal's death was one of transition: independence had just been achieved (1932), and all hopes were at first entertained. But the massacre of hundreds of Assyrians in the northern part of Iraq in August 1933 by the army led to a general feeling of insecurity among non-Sunni communities. In the Iraqi press, Assyrians were depicted as a threat to the Iraqi national security and unity.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the worst threat for Jews was being accused of *ṭā'ifīyya*—sectarianism, and for not being enough engaged in interacting with other communities. In these performances and in the way they were reported by media coverage, emphasis had therefore to be placed precisely on this interaction; its spontaneity, solidarity, and intensity. And when Méfano compares the weak Christian performance to the "effusive" one organized by the Jews, when he reports the king's approval and the fact that the nationalist newspaper *Al-Ālam al-ʿarabī* has been ostracized because of its anti-Jewish position, he states that the effort was crowned with success. The community representative therefore tacitly acknowledges that the ritual has a very specific social function in a very specific political context. Following Marcel Mauss' interpretation of magic rituals, the ceremony can be said to have been truly *effective*.<sup>38</sup>

36 Ibrahim Al-Kabir, *My Governmental Life*, 86.

37 Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 76.

38 See for example: Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, "Introduction à l'analyse de quelques phénomènes religieux", *Mélange d'histoire des religions*, (Paris: F. Alcan, 1909), 15.

### King Ghāzī's Death (1939)

King Ghāzī died on April 3rd at 11.30 pm, following a car crash on his way from his private radio station to *Qaṣr Al-Zuhūr* (Royal Palace). According to the official report, "as he went over the conduit at high speed, the front wheels must have left the ground, so that, when he tried to bear to the left, he had no control. The car ran into a telegraph pole which cracked and fell forward, smashing his head".<sup>39</sup> The newspapers were suppressed the morning after, even though they were printed too early for the news to be published. The news started to spread anyways, and the suppression was accordingly received with suspicion by public opinion.<sup>40</sup> Rumours accusing the British of being responsible for the king's death consequently spread like wildfire. Later that day, three communiqués were issued; in the first one, the king's death was announced, the second one contained a medical report in response to the rumours, and the third one announced the accession to the throne of his son Fayṣal II and the appointment of Amir 'Abd Al-Ilāh as Regent.<sup>41</sup>

The king's body was immediately transported to the Royal Court, but the car was left untouched for days, in order to show evidence to the thousands of onlookers that it was an accident, and not a murder. Ibrāhīm Al-Kabīr visited the scene several days after it took place and writes:

39 Gerald de Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad*, 110.

40 "American Legation, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, Despatch No. 1275, with enclosures, 12 April and further communication," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 629.

41 Despite British insistence that Prince Zayd should be regent instead of 'Abd Al-Ilāh, the proposition was overruled by both the British chargé d'affaires based in Baghdad, Mr. Houstoun-Boswall and Nūrī Al-Sa'īd, who thought that Amir Zayd's wife was "ambitious, venal [...], susceptible to German influences and in touch with all sorts of untouchable circles in the Middle East". Right after the crash, Queen 'Aliyā' is said to have asked Dr. Sinderson, the king's personal physician, to give him a strong injection, while he was dying, insisting that he should name a Regent before he dies. She then said that he had murmured 'Abd Al-Ilāh, the Queen's brother. It was considered evidence by the council of ministers and the decision was approved by a joint session of Senate and Chamber of Deputies on 6 April. "Telegram from American Legation, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, 6 April 1939," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 607. "Mr Houston-Boswall, Baghdad to Foreign Office, London, 6 April 1939," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 608–609. Matthew Elliot, "The Death of King Ghazi: Iraqi Politics, Britain and Kuwait in 1939," *Contemporary British History*, 20 (3), 75.



His death was followed by rumors that he was the victim of a plot engineered by Nouri Al Said with British connivance. Many people were invited to visit the scene of the accident and with some colleagues I did the same and saw the badly damaged car resting against a tree a short distance from Qasr-al-Zehour. There could be no doubt about the accident, particularly when Ghazi was known to be a reckless driver and speed addict.<sup>42</sup>

While the body was being transported to the Royal Palace, groups of people already started to follow the coffin, with “mourners, wailing, beating their breast and tearing their hair in the intensity of their grief”.<sup>43</sup> According to Gerald de Gaury: “Ghazi was mourned by the emotional people of Baghdad with great intensity. From early morning processions of people weeping and beating their breasts passed through the main streets and the wail of women gave a macabre note to an unforgettable scene.”<sup>44</sup>

On 5 April, the official funeral took place. At 8 am, the procession left the Royal Court, heading to the mausoleum in A'dhamiyya, where King Fayṣal and King 'Alī were buried. They arrived there at 9 am. Prayers were recited in front of thousands of mourners, and a salute of ninety-nine guns was fired. According to Houstoun-Boswall, British chargé d'affaires based in Baghdad, the crowd was in “a fever of hysteria”. Iraqis who attended the procession were crying. Some women “abandoned themselves to hysterical grief”, “covering their heads and breasts with mud from the gutters”.<sup>45</sup> The *fātiḥa* was read and the body was interred. Similarly, the journalist who reported for *Iraq Times*, wrote that “the police had a formidable task to perform in maintaining order owing to the general feeling of hysteria prevailing among the populace”.<sup>46</sup> The American representative Knabenshue described the event as “impressive”,<sup>47</sup> and was surprised to see “soldiers and even policemen sobbing like children”.<sup>48</sup>

42 Ibrahim Al-Kabir, *My Governmental Life*, 101–102.

43 “Houstoun-Boswall/Halifax, Baghdad, 11 April 1939,” in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 617.

44 Gerald de Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad*, 111.

45 “Houstoun-Boswall/Halifax, Baghdad, 11 April 1939,” 618.

46 *Iraq Times*, 6 April, 1939, in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 639.

47 “Telegram from American Legation, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, 6 April 1939,” 607.

48 “Houstoun-Boswall/Halifax, Baghdad, 11 April 1939,” 617.

In a similar way to Fayṣal's funeral in 1933, members of the Jewish community throughout the country publicly expressed their sorrow, by organizing ceremonies in honor of their "beloved king".<sup>49</sup> Robert Méfano, now director of the Reemah Kadoorie Jewish school for girls (AIU) in Basra, sent a fully detailed description of the reaction of the school authorities to Paris. According to the report, the flag was immediately flown at half-mast. Within an hour of the announcement of the king's death, he asserted, all the pupils gathered in the schoolyard, in tears. Teachers ran to the local fabric store—which opened especially for this occasion—and sewed banners and armbands for the school's scouts. All girls wore their black overalls without the usual white collar. Rapidly, a procession led by two teachers dressed in black "from top to toe" started to proceed; one held a portrait of the king, the other an Iraqi flag. Two tall students held a black banner with the following inscription: "The mourning Alliance Israélite schools offer their condolences to Faiṣal II, to the Queen Mother and to the Hashimi family." 550 girls were followed by boy scouts with black armbands holding a banner with the inscription: "Our beloved King is dead, long live the King". When the group left the school, it was joined by members of the AIU Alumni Association and the Jewish Youth Association. The fanfare, covered by a black veil played a funeral march, while two groups of pupils sang, in turn. The first group sang: "Our beloved King is dead, we mourn for him from the bottom of our heart"; and the second group responded: "we mourn for him". Women moaned, and men beat their chests rhythmically, following the "Arab custom". Some people covered their faces with mud. Progressively, various members of the city's population also joined the procession including Jewish notables, and a dense crowd of non-Jews. The mourning crowd eventually reached the Governorate building, where a State representative officially thanked them for their condolences and greeted their spontaneity. Méfano insists on how emotional the scene was: "I could not describe to you how emotional the procession was. Those who saw them along the way could not hold back their tears."<sup>50</sup>

A memorial service organized by the AIU teachers took place at the school again, a few weeks later (23 April). The local authorities, the President of the Jewish community in Basra Sāsūn 'Ābid,<sup>51</sup> and numerous Jewish nota-

49 *Al-Thughūr*, Basra, April 1939 (exact date unknown), AIU Archives.

50 "Robert Méfano, Basra, to President of AIU Paris, 14 April 1939", AIU Archives. "Nous ne saurons vous décrire combien le cortège était émouvant. Le long du parcours ceux qui le voyaient passer ne pouvaient contenir leurs larmes." [Original spelling].

51 Born in Baghdad in 1898, Sāsūn 'Ābid settled in Basra after the First World War. Active

bles attended the ceremony. In his speech, the President of the community repeatedly declared the community's loyalty to its "Arab nation" (*li-ummatina al-'arabiyya*) and towards its "admired king" (*al-malik al-mu'azzam*). And he concluded with these three words: "God. The King. The Nation (*al-waṭan*)."<sup>52</sup> The service was followed by a speech delivered by a young pupil. In the words of the school's director, "every time she addressed the portrait of the late king, her heartrending voice would make all the people cry, without exception."<sup>53</sup> The ceremony ended with a funeral lament composed by one of the teacher, and sung by a group of twenty girls and twenty boy scouts. The ceremony is said to have "moved the Muslim element". *Al-Thughūr*, a newspaper known to be unsympathetic to the Jews, printed Sāsūn 'Ābid's speech word by word, and commented favorably on the ceremony.

The rules of predictability impose certain ritual similarities with Fayṣal's funeral, in terms of organization, media coverage and *efficacy*. The crying, the moaning, the beating, the black covering, and the "Arab custom" in general are said to have "moved" the Muslims, as well as the State representative and the national press, who acknowledge their efforts and sympathy. But the dissimilarities and malleability of the ceremony need to be explored, too. Two aspects in particular emerge from the comparison with the 1933 mourning ceremonies; the feeling of tragedy and the importance of pan-Arab nationalism.

First, the ceremony is organized "within an hour of the announcement", while it took the Baghdad school community two days to organize a Jewish procession when Fayṣal died in 1933. The report insists that the local fabric store was opened especially for the occasion, that some people covered parts of their body with mud, and that women wore black "from top to toe", which was not the case in 1933. The *carnivalesque*, here, serves to imitate real life, by highlighting its dark side—and not anymore its ideal one. For example, the girls wore their usual black overall during the funerary ceremony, but they just removed the white collar, so as to be totally dressed in black. And in Méfano's single report, the word "black" is used five times. Generally speaking, the Jewish

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in politics there, he was appointed President of the Jewish community in Basra (*ra'īs al-tā'ifa*). After the Second World War, he moved back to Baghdad and to Canada after the 1958 Revolution, where he died in 1990.

52 *Al-Thughūr*, Basra, April 1939 (exact date unknown), AIU Archives.

53 "Robert Méfano, Basra, 27 April 1939", AIU Archives. "Une jeune fille de l'école de Reemah Kaddourie a prononcé un discours. Chaque fois qu'elle s'adressait au portrait du défunt Roi, avec des accents déchirants, tous sans exception versait des larmes." [Original spelling].

response to Ghāzī's death is thus described as more committed and expressive of the grief provoked by the loss of their sovereign. His death is perceived as a tragedy and not—as was the case with Fayṣal in 1933—as a spontaneous and almost miraculous moment of epiphany between members of “every creed”.<sup>54</sup> The feeling of emergency is very salient in 1939 and the ceremonies organized by Jews in 1939 took a much more dramatic turn than in 1933.

Matthew Elliot concludes that Ghāzī was killed as “a result of a conspiracy between Nuri and Abdullah (and possible Aliya too) encouraged by appropriate hints from the British”.<sup>55</sup> To clarify the question whether the British were responsible or not for Ghāzī's death—it goes without saying—is far beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, it aims at assessing the impact of this context of conspiracy speculations, on the way the funerary ritual performed by the Jews. At the time of Ghāzī's death, Iraq was experiencing a period of unprecedented tension. The situation was characterized by a strong polarization, leading to the formation of two factions: the pro-Nūrī Al-Sa'īd on the one hand, who supported the British, and the pro-Ghāzī on the other hand, who advocated a *rap-prochement* with Germany. His car crash and the supposed British involvement in it contributed to increase the polarization and to intensify the animosity. The first clashes started very quickly after the announcement of the monarch's death. Typewritten pamphlets were distributed and speeches were delivered, in which the British were accused of murder. Houstoun-Boswall had to be personally escorted by the Criminal Investigation Department, and despite his numerous requests “to restore calm and to suppress the false rumours”,<sup>56</sup> the tension was at its peak. The car of another British official was attacked in Ramadi. Shops were closed and “streets patrolled by troops and armored cars”.<sup>57</sup> After the British Consul in Mosul tried to quieten the people by addressing them from his balcony, members of a mob forced their way inside the house, and one of them “hacked him down”<sup>58</sup> with a pickaxe. British reports insist that the German propaganda directed by the ambassador Fritz Grobba was indirectly responsible for the death of the consul in Mosul and for rumours accusing the British of having killed Ghāzī.<sup>59</sup> Some members of a secret society formed

54 “Mr P. Knabenshue, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, 19 September 1933,” 793.

55 Matthew Elliot, “The Death of King Ghazi: Iraqi Politics, Britain and Kuwait in 1939,” 76.

56 “Houstoun-Boswall/Halifax, Baghdad, 11 April 1939,” 618.

57 “Telegram from American Legation, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, 6 April 1939,” 607.

58 Matthew Elliot, “The Death of King Ghazi: Iraqi Politics, Britain and Kuwait in 1939,” 68.

59 “Telegram from American Legation, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, 18 April 1939,” in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 665.

by students and civilians were sentenced from three to fifteen years' imprisonment with a fine of ten dinars by court-martial for inciting to rebel against the State, and some were sentenced to fifteen lashes.<sup>60</sup> But the word had already spread: the rumour was said to have found an audience in Beirut and Damascus, broadcasted on German radio and reported in the Italian press.<sup>61</sup> The consequences of these accusations directly affected the Jews, who were often perceived as allies of the British. In Kirkuk for example, anti-Jewish demonstrations took place at the same time as those against the British.<sup>62</sup> So, were the rumours to intensify and were the Jewish leaders not to express full loyalty to their king, their sincere sadness and total dissociation from British supposed intrigues against the monarchy, unwanted consequences could be felt.

Second, Ghāzī had led a harsh pan-Arab campaign for legitimizing the occupation of Kuwait, mainly through his own radio broadcast.<sup>63</sup> And unlike his father who prioritized the Iraqi nature of the national identity at a time when the modern State of Iraq had to be built from scratch in accordance with the British, Ghāzī had turned his back on the colonial power and promoted pan-Arabism as a discursive tool against it. Pan-Arab terminology and references were accordingly unprecedentedly strong in the public space. In the Palestinian poet Akram Zu'aytar's speech delivered on a commemorative ceremony that took place on the final day of mourning (14 May) in Baghdad, references to Arabism were very strong. The word "Arab" was used seventeen times.<sup>64</sup> Mirroring this trend, the influence of the pan-Arab terminological repertoire is also prominent in the speech delivered by the President of the Jewish community in Basra. The term "Arab" was used six times—four times accompanied with the word "nation" (*al-umma al-'arabiyya*),<sup>65</sup> typical of the pan-Arab repertoire.

Here, the language used in the public space unveils a socio-political context heavily charged in favour of a pan-Arab and pro-German community of

60 "Extracts from the *Iraq Times*, 27 April 1939," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 667–669.

61 "British Embassy, Rome to Lord Halifax, FO, London, 5 April 1939," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 656–657.

62 "American Legation, Baghdad to Secretary of State, Washington, Despatch No. 1275, with enclosures, 12 April and further communication," 630.

63 Matthew Elliot, "The Death of King Ghazi: Iraqi Politics, Britain and Kuwait in 1939," 65–70.

64 "*Al Bilad* newspaper, 18 May 1939. Enclosure to report from Mr Houston-Boswall, Baghdad to Lord Halifax, London," in *Records of the Hashimite Dynasties*, ed. Alan de L. Rush, Vol. 12, 686–689.

65 *Al-Thughūr*, Basra, April 1939 (exact date unknown), AIU Archives.

discourse, that Jews needed to adopt fully and at all costs if they wanted to crown their efforts with success, as they did when Fayṣal died. This time, the message of religious pluralism and desire to coexist at peace with other communities was not enough for the Jews. Contrary to Fayṣal's death where emphasis was given to their will to interact with other communities, the attention was much more focused on loyalty towards the State, the king, and the Arab nation.

### Conclusion

In these times of mourning, the public space becomes a political arena for performance, where less influent elements of the society temporarily become visible by using the power of *communitas*. This paper has shown that in September 1933 as well as in April 1939, Iraqi Jews seized the opportunity to take over the public space, and send a performed message. The message varied according to the context: religious pluralism was the message at Fayṣal's death when struggle against sectarianism and promotion of Iraqi homogeneity prevailed, while loyalty to the Arab nation and king dominated the discourse in the 1939 ceremony, after Ghāzī's intense pan-Arab campaign in all arenas of the public space. From this difference, we can conclude that even though the Jewish mourners may have—or may have not—been affected by the loss of the monarchical figure, the way they acted in the public space does not indicate the degree of intensity of their emotions during the ceremonies. Rather, it provides with tools to understand the values or necessities of the State at the time of their taking place.

During a more recent funeral of a Hashemite monarch, that of King Ḥusayn of Jordan who died on 7 February 1999 in Amman, the *communitas* once more proved its function. The reporter insists that Ḥusayn's death gathered presidencies from all around the world, "to pay their last respects" to the king. Bill Clinton, George Bush, Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford, Hafez Al-Assad, Boris Yeltsin, Benjamin Netanyahu, Hosni Mubarak and many others, were present. Despite the obvious similarities with the other Hashemite ceremonies examined in this paper, the message of the *communitas* is very new and much more international. King Ḥusayn of Jordan's funeral is said to have greatly contributed to the advancement of the peace process in the Middle East. The journalist presents a man who managed to "balance the pressures of the Arab world" and he emotionally announces that the "secretary general of the Damascus-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine was able to shake the hand of President of Israel Ezer Weizman. The first time anything like

that has happened.”<sup>66</sup> In other words, the message is one of necessity for peace in the Middle East, between Israel and the Arab States.

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66 “King Hussein Funeral Service, C-SPAN, Washington, 8 February 1999,” <http://www.c-span.org/video/?120220-1/king-hussein-funeral-service> (Consulted on 31 March 2014).

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# Jerusalem between Segregation and Integration: Reading Urban Space through the Eyes of Justice Gad Frumkin

*Y. Wallach*

## Introduction

Jerusalem is seen as an archetypal example of a divided city, where extreme ethno-national polarization is deep rooted in a long history of segregation. In this chapter I challenge this perception by re-examining urban dynamics of late Ottoman and British Mandate Jerusalem, while questioning the manner in which urban segregation is theorized and understood.

In the past few decades, there has been a reinvigorated scholarly discussion of urban segregation, driven by the challenges of difference and diversity.<sup>1</sup> Entrenched segregation between different groups (defined by race, ethnicity, religion or class), or the “parallel lives” of different communities, living side by side with little contact, are seen to undermine the multicultural model of the late twentieth century. At the same time, mechanistic models of integration through urban mixing are increasingly challenged, and it is no longer accepted as evident that segregation is always undesirable. Nor is it obvious that everyday contact between different communities necessarily helps to engender greater understanding and dialogue. Scholars have been debating how to locate the discussion of urban encounter and segregation in the lived experience of the city. Writing on this topic suffers from the idealization of urban cosmopolitanism, on the one hand, or, conversely, describing segregation in overdetermined terms. To avoid this double pitfall, closer attention to the historical and spatial context is necessary, as well as close examination of socioeconomic realities. One suggestion, that I follow in this chapter, is to focus on life histories.<sup>2</sup> By

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- 1 This chapter forms part of ‘Conflict in Cities and the Contested State’ project, funded by the ESRC’s Large Grants Programme (RES-060-25-0015). For a comprehensive overview of the scholarly discussion of urban segregation, see Laura Vaughan and Sonia Arbaci, “The Challenges of Understanding Urban Segregation,” *Built Environment* 37 (June 2011): 128–138.
  - 2 G. Valentine, “Living with Difference: Reflections on Geographies of Encounter,” *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 3 (2008), 323.

focusing primarily on the specific viewpoint of an embodied subject, it is possible to explore the matrix of social relations as they are played out in urban space. Following individual urban histories also allows a consideration of different sites and places across the city and beyond, facilitating a multi-scalar approach that looks at a series of sites as well as the city as a whole. The spatial biographies of individuals are thus an effective way to test and challenge common assumptions on ethnic boundaries, their meaning and depth.

In fact, in the context of Palestine/Israel there is a growing interest in personal histories as a means of social and urban history. As elaborated by Rochelle Davis, memoirs and autobiographies have the potential to challenge official histories by bringing in the experience of the everyday.<sup>3</sup> Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar see autobiographies as a way to bring the voices of marginalized groups and aspects of their lives that have long been missing from the dominant political accounts of modern Palestine's troubled history.<sup>4</sup> Tamari and Nassar, in their work at the Institute of Jerusalem Studies, have been closely involved in the publication and study of fascinating autobiographical sources from lost diaries, memoirs, and photo albums.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter looks at urban segregation in late Ottoman and British Mandate Jerusalem primarily through the eyes of one individual—Justice Gad Frumkin. Born in 1887 in the Old City of Jerusalem to an influential Hassidic Ashkenazi publisher, Frumkin started his career as a Hebrew journalist. In 1908, attracted to the causes of Ottomanism and Zionism, he developed political ambitions to run for the Ottoman Parliament, and studied law in Istanbul. After the 1917 British occupation of Jerusalem he was appointed judge, as a result of the intervention of the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann, and was promoted almost immediately to the Supreme Court, where he served for nearly thirty years. He was the most senior Jew in an official position during the Mandate, and had close ties with the Arab elite; he was the only leading Zionist to have direct contact with the Mufti Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī in the 1920s. In the 1930s he was involved in negotiations with prominent Arab Palestinians for a bi-national regime in Palestine, but his efforts were rejected by the Jewish Agency. His illustrious career was terminated in 1948, when he was effectively

3 Issam Nassar and Salim Tamari (eds.), *Dirasāt fī l-tārīkh al-ijtima'i li-bilād al-Shām: qira'at fī l-siyar wa-siyar al-dhatiyya* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasāt al-Filasṭīniyya, 2007).

4 Ibid.

5 Among the publications of the Institute, see Issam Nassar and Salim Tamari (eds.), *Pilgrims, Lepers & Stuffed Cabbage: Essays on Jerusalem's Cultural History* (Jerusalem: Centre for Jerusalem Studies, 2005); Salim Tamari, *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

ousted from the Israeli Supreme Court. Frumkin was a member of the ruling establishment throughout most of his life. But as his career developed, his strong ties with Arab Palestinians were increasingly at odds with tendencies within the Jewish-Zionist *Yishuv* (society) in Palestine. Thus Frumkin inhabited a position that was simultaneously at the center and the margins; he called into question the definition of these categories as they are applied in Palestine/Israel.

The main source for this chapter is Frumkin's published memoir, *Derekh Shofet beyerushalayim* [The path of a judge in Jerusalem (Tel Aviv, 1954)].<sup>6</sup> The memoir is rich with anecdotes and observations of everyday life in late Ottoman and British Mandate Jerusalem. Frumkin is especially attentive to details of space, which makes him very useful for this discussion. He takes the trouble, for example, to describe the layout of the Ottoman Serai (governor offices), and the exact office arrangement in the Supreme Court during the Mandate. The memoir is hardly a new source: it has been used extensively by Israeli historians such as Ilan Pappé and Tom Segev, who study the late Ottoman and British Mandate period.<sup>7</sup> However, these historians relied on the memoir primarily to examine the political dynamics between Zionists and Arabs during the Mandate. They did not look at Frumkin himself, or use his writing to rethink boundaries and interactions between communities in Jerusalem. Frumkin was studied in depth only by the legal historian Nathan Brun, who focused on his dismissal from the Israeli Supreme Court.<sup>8</sup>

When considering the memoir, we should bear in mind that it was written in the early 1950s. An obvious concern is the reliability of Frumkin's descriptions of late Ottoman Jerusalem after many decades; and while one cannot accept his accounts literally, there is ample evidence to show that Frumkin drew heavily on his personal archive to write the book, and he did not rely solely on his memory. But a further concern is the ideological bias of the book. Written after his ousting from the Supreme Court, the memoir was undoubtedly designed to defend his legacy and his contribution to the Zionist project and to the establishment of Israel. In such a context, Frumkin was likely to downplay details that could compromise his Zionist credentials. In one example, he omitted his relations with a leading anti-Zionist Jewish member of the Ottoman

6 All translations are mine.

7 Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (London: Little Brown, 2000).

8 Nathan Brun, "ha-Kavod ha-Avud shel ha-Shofet ha-Elyon: Parashat 1 Minuyo shel ha-Shofet Frumkin le-Beyt ha-Mishpat ha-Elyon be-Yisrael," *Kathedra* 101–102 (1992): 151–190, 159–186.

Parliament, Emmanuel Carasso.<sup>9</sup> There is a felt tension between the author's desire to recount his own life story, and his wish to portray himself in a favorable light in the eyes of his Israeli readers. This ambivalence marks the memoir and makes it a fascinating source that often needs to be read against the grain. Especially interesting are Frumkin's descriptions of his close relations with the Arab Palestinian elite, or his Ottomanist disposition: these should be seen as understated, as he had little incentive to overstate aspects that could only detract from his image. Alongside the memoir, this chapter is based on Frumkin's earlier writings: his journalistic articles in the Hassidic *Habatselet* newspaper between 1905 and 1909; his letters and notes, kept in his personal archive (at the Central Zionist archives); his translation of the Ottoman codex, the *Majalla*; and his legal writings and court rulings, compiled and published in Hebrew.<sup>10</sup>

To provide an overall picture of the complexity of encounter and segregation in Jerusalem, I focus on a series of "micro" spaces, divided schematically to "residential spaces," "civic spaces," and "work spaces." However, this analytical categorization does not imply that these are not thought of as separate spaces; quite the contrary, commerce, labor, political activity, and social relations were interlinked and often occurred in the same environment.

### Residential Spaces: Segregation and Integration in the Old City

Jerusalem is typically described as a city that has always maintained a high level of residential segregation along ethnic and confessional lines. In European guide books and travel accounts from the early nineteenth century, one encounters the layout of Jerusalem arranged along four confessional quarters: Christian, Armenian, Jewish, and Muslim. The basic cross shape of the city, with two main streets cutting north-south and east-west, separating these four quarters, was the organizing principle through which Jerusalem was encountered, experienced, and understood by western visitors and scholars; this principle is still dominant in the historiography.<sup>11</sup>

9 Nathan Brun, *Shoftim u-mishpetanim be-Erets Yiśra'el: ben Kushta li-Yerushalayim*, 1900–1930 (Jerusalem: Magnes, Hebrew University, 2008).

10 Gad Frumkin, *Majalat aḥkam al-aṣliyya: kovets dine ha-tsedek* (Jerusalem: [s.n.], 1928); Gad Frumkin, *Pesakim nivharim shel Gad Frumkin shofet be-vet ha-mishpat ha-'elyon le-Erets-Yisra'el*, 1920–1948, ed. Shalom Kassan (Tel Aviv: Y. Ts'ets'ik, 1962).

11 Ruth Kark, *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarters, Neighborhoods, Villages, 1800–1948*, Israel Studies in Historical Geography (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2001).

This historical perception has ramifications for the present condition of the city. Influential mayor Teddy Kollek, who ran the city between 1965 and 1993 and orchestrated the “unification” of Jerusalem after the 1967 occupation of East Jerusalem, explained his philosophy in the following terms:

Within the Old City Walls there were [historically] separate quarters: the Christian quarter, the Armenian, Greek, Ethiopian ... Coptic, Jewish, Muslim, etc. The [quarters] maintained good relations between them, with ups and downs, for many centuries. We are continuing this tradition. Jerusalem is not a melting pot, we are not trying to make “Goulash” from everybody. It’s a mosaic of different cultures and civilisations living together in one city. We are interested in preserving this state of things and this will be the city’s character in the future.<sup>12</sup>

Kollek’s rhetoric celebrated age-old, voluntary segregation as a recipe for tolerance and cultural diversity. However, in practice Kollek’s policies were highly discriminatory: the construction of Jewish-only neighborhoods and the neglect of Palestinian neighborhoods under the pretense of “non intervention” left Palestinians without adequate planning and public services.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Kollek used the “mosaic” metaphor to justify the creation of a checker-board pattern of self-segregated Jewish neighborhoods and Arab “ghettos” locked between them. More recently, in the 2000s, Jerusalem’s “natural” polarization along ethno-national lines has been presented as a key reason for its inevitable political division between Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>14</sup>

The dominant notion of the four historical segregated quarters was challenged persuasively by Salim Tamari, who argued that such quarters did not exist in the local imaginary of the city before the late 1930s, and that the Old City was far more mixed in confessional terms. Tamari based his reading on the memoirs of Wasif Jawhariyya, a musician and a civil servant in the Jerusalem municipality, a Christian Arab who was born and raised within the supposed confines of the Muslim quarter during the late Ottoman rule.<sup>15</sup> Portraying an

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- 12 Jacob Malchin, “Interview with Teddy Kollek, 1984,” *Yahadut Hofshit* (September 2009), [www.free-judaism.org](http://www.free-judaism.org).
  - 13 Amir Cheshin, Bill Hutman, and Avi Melamed, *Separate and Unequal: The Inside Story of Israeli Rule in East Jerusalem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
  - 14 Yisrael Kimchi, “The Operational and Metropolitan Framework of Jerusalem,” in *Forty Years in Jerusalem 1967–2007*, ed. Ora Ahimeir and Yaacov Bar Siman Tov (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2008), 11–21.
  - 15 Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press/Interlink Publishing, 2013).

intricate picture of inter-communal links and relationships based on patronage, trade, business, and neighborly relations, Tamari argues that the image of Jerusalem as a segregated city divided into ethnic-denominational quarters, was a projection of western scholars and visitors that became reality when it was imposed on the city during the Mandate era. Locally, the city was perceived through neighborhoods or localities (*maḥallāt*) that were ethnically and religiously mixed.

How do Tamari's conclusions apply also to Jewish residential patterns in Jerusalem? The historiography has presented the Jewish quarter in the south-east area of the Old City as a centuries-old spatial-demographic reality.<sup>16</sup> And yet the term Jewish quarter (*ha-rova ha-yehudi*), almost never appears in local Hebrew sources before the twentieth century. Rather, we find the term "Street of the Jews" Reḥov Ha-Yehudim referring to a main street and its side streets, with dominant Jewish (Sephardic) presence since the fifteenth century.<sup>17</sup> This area was not, however, exclusively Jewish, nor did all Jews reside in this locality. In late Ottoman census documents<sup>18</sup> and in the Islamic court records<sup>19</sup> we find ample evidence of a Jewish presence in virtually all parts of the city. Ashkenazi Jews arriving in the city in large numbers from the middle of the nineteenth century chose to settle in the localities of al-Wad and Bab al-Hutta, in the north-east parts of the city, as noted in surveys of historical Jewish presence in the "Muslim quarter."<sup>20</sup> In memoirs of Jews such as Frumkin, David Yellin, and Yitzhaq Shiryon who resided in these areas, we find no indication that they perceived themselves as living outside the Jewish area of Jerusalem.<sup>21</sup> Nor is it

16 Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century: The Old City*, vol. 1 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984); Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century: Emergence of the New City*, vol. 2 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); Kark, *Jerusalem and Its Environs*.

17 This observation is based on a digital survey of the two most important Hebrew newspapers in Jerusalem, the Frumkin's *Habatsalet* (1870–1911) and Eliezer Ben Yehuda's *Tsvi* and *ha-Or* (1884–1915). Both newspapers are available electronically at <http://www.jpress.org.il/view-hebrew.asp> (accessed October 2014).

18 Adar Arnon, "Population Censuses in Jerusalem in the Later Ottoman Period," *Cathedra* 6 (December 1977): 95–107; Adar Arnon, "The Quarters of Jerusalem in the Ottoman Period," *Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 1 (1992): 1–65.

19 Amnon Cohen, Elisheva Simon-Pikali, and Eyal Ginio, *Yehudim be-Bet ha-Mishpat ha-Muslemi: Hevrah, Kalkalah ve-Irgun Kehilati bi-Yerushalayim ha-'Othmanit: ha-Me'ah ha-Tesha 'Esreh* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2003).

20 Shabtai Zecharia, *Batim ve-Mosadot Yehudim ba-Rova ha-Muslemi ba-Ir ha-Atika* (Jerusalem, 1985).

21 David Yellin, *Yerushalayim shel temol* (Jerusalem: ha-Ṿa'ad le-ḥotsa'at kitve David Yelin Hotsa'at R. Mas, 1972); Yizḥak Shiryon, *Zikhronot* (Jerusalem, 1943).

clear why the Ashkenazi and Sephardic communities, given their differences in ritual, language, and culture, should naturally reside in the same part of town.

Gad Frumkin was, in his own words, one of the “children of al-Wad”—a locality in the heart of the Old City that housed the Serai (government house) and the mufti’s house. Al-Wad was a predominantly Muslim area that had a large Jewish presence around the turn of the century; it was made up of Ashkenazim (mostly Hassidic) and North African Jews. According to 1905 census documents, Jews made up at least 45 percent of households.<sup>22</sup> The area was known in Hebrew as “Hebron Street,” as it housed a large number of Ashkenazi Jews who originally settled in Hebron before coming to Jerusalem. There were numerous synagogues and Jewish religious schools in the area. The Frumkins lived in a small compound with two little courtyards, the family print shop, and a small synagogue. The compound bordered on the mansion of the Jerusalem mufti from the Ḥusaynī nobility. The Ḥusaynīs were also Frumkin’s landlords, and they had good relations with Gad’s father, Yisrael Dov Frumkin. In the 1920s this fact facilitated the connection between Gad Frumkin and Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, the grand mufti and rising political leader of Arab Palestine.

In the memoirs we find detailed descriptions of the web of relations between Ashkenazim and Arabs. These relations focused on economic matters—commerce, work, and real estate; as well as civic and political matters. But connections with non-Jews were also a necessary feature of Jewish religious life, as Jews regularly relied on gentiles to perform certain forbidden tasks on Jewish festivals and on the Sabbath, such as making fire and turning lamps on and off. Thus we find in the memoirs the story of “der Bashitke,” Mūsā Bashītī, an Arab coal vendor, who used to buy the leavened bread (*chametz*) from the Ashkenazi communities during the Passover season. “Reb Moshe,” as he liked to refer to himself, spoke excellent Yiddish and Ladino, and used to finish his workday smoking a pipe in a Sephardic cafe in the “Street of the Jews”. The everyday reliance on gentiles for religious reasons meant that Jews had to reside in proximity to non-Jews, and an exclusive Jewish residential community was simply unthinkable. An account published in Frumkin’s newspaper, the *Habastelet*, on a visit to the Jewish neighborhood of Neveh Tsedek outside Jaffa, records the complications involved in living in an exclusive Jewish community through this somewhat humorous conversation between the reporter and a local Jew:

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22 Arnon, “Population Censuses in Jerusalem.”

“There is no neighborhood of gentiles nearby ... and what do you do on Sabbath and festivals?”

“Let us be thankful to the thieves ... it is a real miracle, that the thieves have made this place their favorite place.”

“Aha, so you catch the thieves and make them into ‘Sabbath gentiles’?”

“Why are you turning everything upside down? ... it’s more simple and straightforward. When the residents saw the situation [with the thieves], they petitioned the government to place a garrison here, and they—the gendarmes—they protect us from fire and also light the way for us when the need occurs.”<sup>23</sup>

An interesting gauge of the level of Ashkenazi-Arab interaction is the use of Arabic words and idioms in Yiddish. A 1930s study of “Palestinian Yiddish” spoken in Jerusalem and Safad found no less than 700 expressions, idioms, words, and terms borrowed from Arabic: from everyday greetings and obscenities to building trade terminology, weights and measurements, and agricultural terms.<sup>24</sup> In comparison, the study found only 35 expressions borrowed from Ladino, the language of Sephardic Jews, and these were limited to food and household objects. This suggests that Ashkenazim had closer interactions with Arabs than with Sephardim; and that the Ashkenazi-Arab encounters were frequent and diverse, encompassing aspects of business, politics, and administration, alongside everyday social life.

One way to track the interaction between the different communities is through movement in the city. The quotidian rhythms of urban life often receive little attention in discussions of segregation and polarization, which typically focus heavily on residential patterns, and therefore provide a more static understanding of urban space. When looking at historical periods, residential patterns are easier to research as they can be mapped with the aid of archival evidence such as census documents. In contrast, the daily routes of people through the city are by necessity ephemeral and difficult to reconstruct a century later. However, movement is key to the formation of the subjective experience of the city, and it necessarily involves chance encounters. The paths and roads used reflect, no doubt, wider social and political patterns; but they also leave room for accidental meetings. Interestingly, Frumkin chooses to introduce Jerusalem to his readers not through a static mapping of the city,

23 *Habatsalet* (27 April 1908).

24 Mordecai Kosover, *Arabic Elements in Palestinian Yiddish: The Old Ashkenazic Jewish Community in Palestine, its History and its Language* (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1966).



but rather through “walking tours,” following the footsteps of his errands and leisurely escapades as a child. Rather than bringing his readers to the iconic sites of the Old City, such as the Wailing Wall or the Holy Sepulchre, Frumkin describes small alleys, shops, and vendors; he pays most attention to Ashkenazi institutions and merchants, but is careful to describe other tradespeople and officials. One such description, of his errands to the Ottoman *mutassarif* (governor) offices, starts with the shop of a Sephardic Jew, before crossing the yard of Serai, through a crowd of Muslim villagers, bumping into the two Ashkenazi *mukhtars* (appointed representatives); ascending to the governor offices he encounters Turkish clerks and the head of the district’s Ottoman education, a local noble Arab; and all this is timed carefully with the arrival of the Ottoman pasha with his carriage, from his residence outside the city gates, through al-Wad Street to the Serai, so that the necessary form can be signed in time. This account demonstrates that the necessities of business, commerce or subsistence required everyone (from the pasha to humble villagers) to travel through the city, and in this process to inevitably encounter members of other communities and social classes.

At the same time this image of high level of residential “mixing” and frequent interaction should not create the impression that religious and ethnic identities did not matter. Nor is it my intention to portray late Ottoman Jerusalem as an idyll of multi-ethnic harmony. Such nostalgic portrayals exist, but Frumkin’s memoirs are not one of them. Frumkin himself maintains that the frequent encounters did not lead to mutual understanding: “Arab and Jewish courtyards were adjacent, and the children met and quarrelled with each other: these were two separate worlds lacking any mental or cultural proximity.”<sup>25</sup> From other accounts we also know of common street fights between Ashkenazi boys on the one hand, and Arab and Sephardic boys on the other.<sup>26</sup>

Frumkin’s descriptions of late Ottoman Jerusalem resonate with recent debates on urban multi-culturalism. While ethnic difference, inclusivity, and openness are celebrated (at least in rhetoric) in many global cities, there are also fears for community cohesion, and the danger of “living together separately,”<sup>27</sup> with communities leading “parallel lives” in the same city.<sup>28</sup> Some

25 Gad Frumkin, *Derekh Shofet Beyerushalaim* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1954), 323.

26 Jacob Yehoshua, *Hakhamim bi-Yerushalayim ha-yeshanah* (Jerusalem: R. Mas, 1968).

27 Michael Romann and Alex Weingrod, *Living Together Separately: Arabs and Jews in Contemporary Jerusalem* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Ghazi Falah, “Living Together Apart: Residential Segregation in Mixed Arab-Jewish Cities in Israel,” *Urban Studies* 33, no. 6 (1 June 1996): 823–857.

28 Ted Cante, Daljit Kaur, Mohammed Athar, Chris Dallison, Andy Wiggans, and Harris

scholars and policy makers are concerned about the detrimental effects of “voluntary segregation,”<sup>29</sup> others point out that physical proximity and “mixing” is no guarantee for mutual understanding or fruitful dialogue.<sup>30</sup> In my view, it is counter-productive to think of “segregation,” “integration,” and “inclusiveness” in absolute terms and as simple dichotomies. Rather, these terms refer to a spectrum of possibilities that are not always quantifiable and measurable and rely much on subjective perceptions. Furthermore, inter-communal interaction can take on many shapes; two communities can have strong commercial interactions with a minimal number of intermarriages, for example.

Frumkin relates that his more meaningful encounters with Arabs occurred not in the street but rather in domestic space. Frumkin's father had close relations with Arab elite families such as the al-ʿAlamīs, al-Ḥusaynīs, Qutb, and others. Frumkin's involvement in municipal and Jewish communal affairs, his dealing with the Serai as well as his commercial activities put him in contact with these families, and they were frequent visitors at Frumkin's house in al-Wad. His father's links with Arab scholars and public figures meant that Frumkin grew up to become more familiar with Arab Jerusalem than the average Ashkenazi boy. He also received private Arabic lessons at home, and spoke and understood Arabic well even before he departed for law studies in Istanbul.

In 1905 the family decided to move out of the Old City to a more convenient house closer to Jewish residential developments outside the walls. As Salim Tamari has observed, residential neighborhoods outside the walls were more segregated along ethnic and confessional lines than neighborhoods in the Old City.<sup>31</sup> Issues of landownership and investment, according to Tamari, were the prime reason for the segregated nature of extra-mural development. It is note-

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Joshua, *Review of Community Cohesion in Oldham: Challenging Local Communities to Change Oldham* (Coventry: Institute for Community Cohesion, 2006).

- 29 O. Valins, “Stubborn Identities and the Construction of Socio-Spatial Boundaries: Ultra-Orthodox Jews Living in Contemporary Britain,” *Transactions—Institute Of British Geographers* 28 (2003): 158–175.
- 30 I. Cole and B. Goodchild, “Social Mix and the ‘Balanced Community’ in British Housing Policy—A Tale of Two Epochs,” *GeoJournal* 51, no. 4 (2000): 351–360; John Clayton, “Everyday Geographies of Marginality and Encounter in the Multicultural City,” in *New Geographies of Race and Racism*, ed. Claire Dwyer and Caroline Bressey (Aldershot, UK/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008); A. Amin, “Ethnicity and the Multicultural City: Living with Diversity,” *Environment and Planning A* 34 (6) (2002): 959–980.
- 31 Philipp Misselwitz and Tim Rieniets (eds.), *City of Collision: Jerusalem and the Principles of Conflict Urbanism* (Basel/Boston: Birkhäuser, 2006).

worthy, however, that the Frumkins did not choose to settle in one of these Jewish-only neighborhoods, but rather chose Reḥov Haḥabashim (“Abyssinian Quarter”), a mixed area populated with wealthy Arabs, Jews, and Europeans. The quarter was popular with Jewish intellectual modernists, such as Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and David Yellin, as well as more recent Zionist immigrants. The area was the center of modern Jewish education in Jerusalem: it housed the arts and crafts school Bezalel, the German-sponsored school Lemel, and its teachers’ seminar, the Bnei Brith Library, and a commerce school.<sup>32</sup> The area teemed with young students and teachers, many of them from the Jewish colonies or new arrivals in Palestine, what is often referred to as “the New Yishuv.”

Frumkin, an 18-year-old Hassidic Jerusalemite, was not naturally close to these circles. However, through various chance encounters he found himself drawn to these “youth of the Abyssinians,” as he refers to them. He joined their discussions, and partook in their gymnastics, singing, dancing, and outdoor excursions, walking in the moonlight westwards to the fields at the outskirts of the city. Fascinated and attracted to the new milieu, Frumkin was moving away from the Hassidic modernist circles of his father towards Zionist notions of Jewish identity and the Jewish future of Palestine—this was manifest in his 1909 wedding to Hannah Eisenberg, the daughter of a citrus magnate from the Zionist colony Rehovot. In his memoirs he attributes his ideological transformation to the new surroundings of the Abyssinian quarter and the encounters they facilitated. During his wanderings in the “Latin quarter of Jerusalem,” as he describes the neighborhood, Frumkin established contacts with the Zionist leadership, and this took him later to the agricultural colonies, to Jaffa, and later to Istanbul and London as a representative of the Jewish “New Yishuv.” However, moving out of the city walls also allowed him to develop his ideas in another direction—that of integration in the local Arab environment and the Ottoman system. In the early twentieth century, Zionism, Ottomanism, and integration with the local Arab society did not seem to be contradictory options. New civic spaces, emerging in the late nineteenth century, were able to contain and support these different trajectories.

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32 Shabtai Zecharia, *Merkaz ha-Haskala ha-Yerushalmi* (Jerusalem: Sasar, 1996).

## New Civic Spaces

The question of civic and public space in Middle Eastern cities has long been contested in the historiography.<sup>33</sup> Some scholars, from Weber onwards, have argued that Islamic cities traditionally were characterized by an absence of civic spaces. In contrast with medieval European cities, Middle Eastern urban centers lacked municipal organization and autonomous guild-like socio-economic structures, and this manifested itself in their urban layout. Some scholars of Jerusalem who have followed this line of thinking, emphasized the lack of European styled civic spaces such as impressive city squares or monumental civic buildings in Jerusalem prior to the twentieth century; they saw this as symptomatic of the “primitive” character of Ottoman Jerusalem and Islamic cities in general.<sup>34</sup> In contrast with this approach, other scholars of Islamic cities have often stressed the importance of city markets, coffeehouses, bath-houses, the main mosque and its square, as archetypical social spaces of congregation and encounter. Others still have questioned the validity of a Eurocentric framework and terminology to study Middle Eastern cities.<sup>35</sup>

What has gone largely unnoticed in the scholarship on Jerusalem was the emergence of new civic spaces as part of a dramatic re-organization of the late Ottoman city. The development of Jerusalem in the late nineteenth century has been described in terms of growth and expansion, with the main story being the spread of the city beyond the city walls. This description characterizes scholars hostile to Ottoman legacy, such as Yehshua Ben-Aryeh, and also those more sympathetic, such as Alexander Schölch.<sup>36</sup> And yet the development of the city in the final decades of Ottoman rule involved more than simply expansion: it spelled a profound re-articulation of urban layout and civic identity, modeled on European notions of public space and civic institutions. The newly-founded municipality played a key role in this transformation. A municipal

33 For an overview see Nezar AlSayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991); Seteney Shami, *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2009).

34 Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century: The Old City*; Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century: Emergence of the New City*; David Kroyanker, *Adrikhalut bi-Yerushalayim: ha-beniyah ba-’Ir ha-’Atiqah* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1993).

35 AlSayyad, *Cities and Caliphs*.

36 Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2006).

hospital, an archaeological museum, a theater, a railway station, a municipal garden, and a privately-sponsored public library were among the new establishments opened during this period. The center of the city—politically and economically—shifted decidedly westwards, from the inner parts of the Old City and the Haram environs to the area of Jaffa Gate. This was the result of official initiatives, local private entrepreneurship, and European influence. Jaffa Gate emerged as the modern town center and boasted several post offices, banks, cafes, hotels, shops of imported goods and the main transport hub. Especially prominent were several photographers' studios whose huge trade signs can easily be seen in photographs of the area from this period. Young Frumkin had his picture taken in one of these studios, like other aspiring middle-class Jerusalemites (image 1). It was also the site of the new municipality offices, the rebuilt Ottoman barracks, and the town clock tower, erected in 1906. The new center developed on the seam line between the Old City and the new parts, connecting the two in an organic way. The commercial buildings that sprang up concealed the city walls, obscuring the difference between the "Old City" and Jerusalem's new parts. A continuum of public open space stretched from the inner parts of the Jaffa Gate, through the small plaza in front of the gate, alongside Jaffa Street and the Mamilla road, to the new municipal gardens further up the road. Clearly these developments reflected European notions of modern urbanity, and some western visitors, searching for the biblical city, were shocked and disappointed to arrive at the Jaffa Gate where Jerusalem seemed "as commonplace as a Parisian suburb."<sup>37</sup> Yet for Jerusalemites and the Ottoman authorities, the new town center was a showcase of the city's modernity and progress. This site facilitated frequent and diverse interaction between tourists and residents and between the different ethnic/religious groups. But furthermore, by providing an urban context to the new Ottoman framework, it also created the possibility of a shared identity that did not exist previously in the Old City, despite frequent and amicable interaction between different groups.

The urban re-organization of Jerusalem was predicated on the Tanzimat, Ottoman political and administrative reforms.<sup>38</sup> The new Ottoman citizenship law of 1869 promised equality to all citizens, regardless of their confessional identity. This was the administrative basis of new civic institutions such as Jerusalem's municipality (located outside the Jaffa Gate), which included Jews and Christians as city councilors. Similarly, the new clock tower, positioned

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37 Pierre Loti, *Jerusalem* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1915), 42.

38 Haim Gerber, *Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem, 1890–1914* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1985).



FIGURE 8.1 *Photographer: Garabed Krikorian. Gad Frumkin as a young man. Jerusalem (1905–1908?). Courtesy of the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.*

above the Jaffa Gate, reflected the new perception of universal time that appealed to all residents.<sup>39</sup> It differed from confessional ways of thinking and marking time, such as Islamic calls for prayer and the bells of Christian churches.

Gad Frumkin grew up in this transforming landscape; he watched these changes with great interest. After the family moved to the new part of the city, young Gad continued to work in his father's print shop in al-Wad, traveling daily by foot to and from the Old City. He recounts that there were two routes to walk from the Abyssinian area to al-Wad. The quiet and shorter route passed through the sparse settlement north of the Old City, alongside Jewish and Muslim houses, through vineyards and groves, and entered the city through the Damascus Gate. Frumkin recalls fondly the "fields of ripening wheat, the song of the birds chattering from the top of the olive trees" in the pastoral landscape north of the Damascus Gate.<sup>40</sup> The other route was busier and longer and took Frumkin through the hustle and bustle of Jaffa Street, past the municipal gardens, and the city center of Jaffa Gate; it was this route which was to shape Frumkin's life and outlook. The dramatic 1908 revolution, as experienced by Frumkin in the new city center of Jerusalem, had a determining impact on his future career.

In 1906 Frumkin became the managing editor of his father's newspaper, the *Habatselet*. He changed the character of the newspaper, introducing more news reports on events in Jerusalem, Palestine, and the Ottoman Empire. The *Habatselet* reported more on general developments in Jerusalem, not only those regarding the Jewish communities, but also international news, articles on science and exploration, and translated prose, for example articles by the French writer Jules Verne. With the outbreak of the 1908 "Young Turk" revolution, *Habatselet* was early to announce the dramatic reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution on a full page; it celebrated the new age of freedom and equality with special reports from Jerusalem and Jaffa. Soon afterwards the newspaper started to refer to the local Jews as "Ottoman Jews," rather than "subjects of the Sultan."

In Jerusalem, the revolution was marked and celebrated in a large event in the Jaffa Gate area: a procession from the Ottoman barracks inside the walls, through Jaffa Street to the municipal gardens outside the walls. Frumkin, who was keen to witness the event, arrived at the municipal gardens directly from

39 Yair Wallach, "The Governor and the Oud Player," in *The First Governor: Sir Ronald Storrs, Governor of Jerusalem 1918–1926*, ed. Nirit Shalev-Khalifa (Tel Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum, 2010), 76–87.

40 Frumkin, *Derekh Shofet Beyerushalaim*, 130.

the print press, in his work clothes. "Where are the celebrating Jews? Are they taking part in this celebration, are they voicing their opinions in public?" he asked himself.<sup>41</sup> He noticed the almost complete absence of Ashkenazi Jews, while the Sephardim, who were present in large numbers, "intermingled with the Arabs, and together they were more interested in cracking nuts, drinking lemonade and listening to the army band playing in the intervals between speeches than in the speeches themselves."<sup>42</sup> Frumkin came home around midnight and wrote an article on the demonstration; he concluded by calling on Jewish youth to study Arabic and Turkish, "so that they can follow the events and prepare themselves to become equal partners in the new system." The following day he discovered that his father (still the chief editor of the newspaper) had deleted these lines calling for Jewish integration in the non-Jewish environment. Y.D. Frumkin apparently believed that this call for integration went too far. The issue of studying languages other than Hebrew was extremely sensitive in the Ashkenazi community, and in conservative circles this idea was strongly resisted out of fear that they would lose control over the younger generation.<sup>43</sup> Gad Frumkin was outraged by his father's intervention, and confronted him at the newspaper offices in al-Wad. Their short and angry exchange ended with an irrevocable break between father and son, as Gad quit the room without asking permission. The father's small cluttered office in the closed confines of the al-Wad print shop appears in Frumkin's description as the complete opposite of the open space of exciting possibilities of the municipal gardens. While Y.D. Frumkin's attitudes were relatively liberal and open for an Ashkenazi Orthodox Jew, his horizons proved ultimately too limited and insular for his son. Young Frumkin decided to embark on his own separate way: first he contemplated establishing his own newspaper, then decided to travel to Istanbul to study law, in the hope of running for the Ottoman parliament. He left Palestine several months later against the wishes of his father, who actively tried to prevent him from doing so. The description of this formative break between an Orthodox father and a modern son challenges the perceived boundaries between Palestine's Orthodox Jewish community ("Old Yishuv") and the Zionist "New Yishuv." It appears that Y.D. Frumkin, albeit skeptical and critical of political Zionism, did not try to stop his son from associating with those in Zionist circles. He was willing to accept his marriage into a family of Zionist colonists, but would not allow him to preach in favor of active integra-

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41 Ibid., 146.

42 Ibid.

43 Menachem Friedman, *Hebrah bemashber legiytiymasyah: haYishuv hayashan ha'ashkenazy, 1900–1917* (Jerusalem: Bialik institute, 2001).



tion in Arab and Ottoman Palestine. And for Gad Frumkin, it would seem that the Arabic language promised political integration and modern citizenship.

Frumkin's association of Jerusalem's new civic spaces with public life and politics in modern Arabic is reminiscent of Habermassian terms, where the public sphere (defined in abstract, rather than urban terms) is a place for rational dialogue on the public good. Frumkin preached for participation in public life based on an exchange of ideas that would go beyond cross-ethnic practices of socializing around commerce and entertainment. Hence his disparaging comments on the crowd in the municipal gardens, who preferred to crack nuts and listen to the orchestra rather than pay attention to political speeches.<sup>44</sup> Yet, considering the performativity of practices of political participation, it is evident that the new possibilities of modernity within the Ottoman system did not demand necessarily an explicit articulation in political speeches. Rather, these possibilities were embodied in practices and woven into life through manifold physical and sensory experiences in these civic spaces. We find such experiences in memoirs of other Jerusalemites, such as the Arab Muslim soldier Iḥsān al-Turjīmān, the Arab Christian musician Waṣīf al-Jawhariyya, or the Jewish journalist Yaacov Yehoshua; these authors mention looking at the clock tower, reading news telegrams posted outside the Ottoman post offices, talking about politics with friends in a Jaffa Gate cafe, listening to the army band playing patriotic tunes in the municipal gardens, or purchasing western clothes in a shop of imported goods. All of these activities involved a continual redefinition and articulation of identity for local Jerusalemites. The Ottomanist vision, whether articulated in high modern Arabic language or not, allowed members of Jerusalem's diverse communities to come together and celebrate a common identity that was tied closely to the civic spaces of the city. This Ottoman vision lost its appeal during World War I as the campaign of harsh military repression alienated the city's population from the Ottoman regime.<sup>45</sup> In 1917, British occupying forces were welcomed by the overwhelming majority of the population. And yet this unanimity soon disappeared as British plans for Palestine became known. The British pledge to make Palestine into a "Jewish National Home" opened a rift between local Jews and the Muslim and Christian population, who increasingly defined themselves in national terms, as Arab Palestinians. The very same civic spaces that were used during the late Ottoman

44 The Habermassian framework of the public sphere as a site of rational exchange was thoroughly critiqued, and its usefulness in Middle Eastern contexts was also questioned. See Shami, *Publics, Politics and Participation*.

45 Tamari, *Year of the Locust*.

period for popular celebrations became battlegrounds between nascent ethno-national visions. In April 1920 the plaza in front of the Jaffa Gate became the site of the first violent anti-Zionist riot in the history of modern Palestine (the “Nabi Musa uprising” or “Easter riots”). This was only the beginning of a violent conflict that continued throughout the twentieth century and beyond.

### Work Spaces

Political developments during the British Mandate encouraged Arab Palestinians and Jews to see themselves in antagonistic terms, as competing ethno-national communities. The tendency towards residential segregation in Jerusalem intensified, with the construction of Jewish and Arab middle-class neighborhoods in the new parts of the city. Frumkin himself was one of the founders of Rehavia, a Jewish-only bourgeois neighborhood. His decision to move there from a mixed neighborhood dominated by the Arab elite can certainly be read as a statement in favor of Jewish-Zionist separatism. However this reading is too simplistic. Frumkin continued to come into daily contact with Arab circles, in his work as a judge in the courts. Through his professional role and social contacts, Frumkin remained committed to Jewish-Arab dialogue and integration, unlike most leading Zionist figures.

Discussions on segregation and integration in divided and polarized cities have treated issues of labor and trade, when compared with residential patterns, as largely secondary. Without a close analysis of the spaces of work and commercial encounters, one can easily fall into a trap of imagining these cities as sharply divided between zones of clear identity, with movement across the divide limited to a minimum. Such a picture can be misleading. In British Mandate Palestine, the labor market and commerce were an arena of competition and cooperation. As social historian Deborah Bernstein has shown, political leaderships on both sides attempted to restrict economic exchange between communities. The Zionist leadership championed Jewish labor and produce, while the Arab leadership promoted a boycott of the Jewish sector.<sup>46</sup> However, economic relations continued even in sites that were highly segregated, such as the Hebrew city Tel Aviv.<sup>47</sup> In Jerusalem, it seems, economic ties were

46 Deborah Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).

47 Deborah Bernstein, *Nashim ba-Shulayim: Migdar ve-Leumiyut be-Tel Aviv ha-Mandatorit* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 2008).

stronger than in other cities. Arabs and Jews used the same commercial center along Jaffa Street. Government offices were more mixed than other work environments: the Mandatory courts at the Russian Compound, in which Frumkin worked, were one example.

Frumkin became a judge in Jerusalem's county court in 1918. His appointment was secured through the intervention of Chaim Weizmann with the British authorities. Weizmann saw Frumkin as a natural candidate to be the Zionist representative in the court system. While Frumkin himself objected to being presented as the "Jewish judge," he was happy to receive a monthly salary from the Jewish Agency to complement his income from the courts.<sup>48</sup> Within less than two years, Frumkin was promoted to the Supreme Court (1920), where he served for 28 years to become the most senior judge. Frumkin was the only Jewish judge in the Supreme Court, alongside Arab Palestinians and British judges. He was, effectively, the highest-ranking Jew in an official position in the Palestine Mandate.

The courts were located in the Russian Compound, the large enclosure built by the Tsarist Empire in the 1850–1860s to accommodate Russian pilgrims to Jerusalem. The compound was taken over by the Ottoman authorities during the war and used for military and administrative offices, and the British found the large modern buildings similarly useful. The compound was located northwest of the Old City, between the commercial Jaffa Street and the prestigious street of European consulates, schools, and hospitals (later named by the British "Prophets Street"). In residential terms the area was mixed between local Jews, Muslims, Christians, and European residents. The courts were the site of frequent encounters of Jews, Arabs, and British officials. Translators, lawyers, litigants, prosecutors, witnesses, judges, police, journalists, and visitors mingled on a daily basis. The fact that Frumkin shared offices with Arab colleagues made him unique among prominent members of the Zionist elite. Few Zionist public figures came in direct daily contact with large numbers of Arab Palestinians; even fewer considered Arab Palestinians as their peers. Frumkin describes his own encounters in the 1930s in the following words:

I encounter Arabs every day. They are the majority of my "customers" in court, I come across them as friends ... finding myself—sometimes inadvertently, in conversation with Arab men of all factions coming to visit my friends the Arab judges in the office, and listening to the conversations of

48 Brun, "ha-Kavod ha-Avud shel ha-Shofet ha-Elyon: Parashat 1 Minuyo shel ha-Shofet Frumkin le-Beyt ha-Mishpat ha-Elyon be-Yisrael."

young Muslim and Christian clerks in the court, and students in the law school.<sup>49</sup>

Frumkin describes these frequent encounters as the background to his initiatives for dialogue with the Arab Palestinian leadership. Frumkin was close to the Zionist political leadership, but was highly critical of its dismissive attitudes towards the “Arab question.” Frumkin repeatedly warned against the repercussions of neglecting Jewish-Arab relations. His criticism was reminiscent of similar warnings made by leading Sephardic figures such as Yoseph Chelouche<sup>50</sup> and Eliyahu Elayashar,<sup>51</sup> who also had close professional and personal familiarity with Arab Palestinian society.

Frumkin’s comments can be read as an affirmation of the “contact hypothesis” which stipulates that the best way to promote social integration and reduce prejudice is to bring different social groups together in an everyday context. In the early 2000s scholars were celebrating the “thrown togetherness”<sup>52</sup> and cosmopolitanism of cities with high levels of diversity, arguing that everyday situations of encounter can do much to foster conviviality. Geographer Valentine Gail has questioned this optimism, showing that daily contact between different social groups alone is not sufficient to produce higher levels of respect or understanding.<sup>53</sup> Clearly it was not simply corridor conversations with his Arab colleagues that propelled Frumkin to adopt a critical approach to Zionist policies on the Arab question. His daily experience was embedded in his personal trajectory and life history. The connection between his family and elite Arab families; his command of the Arabic language and Islamic law; his childhood in a predominantly Muslim part of the Old City; his studies in Istanbul, alongside Arab students—all these experiences shaped Frumkin’s willingness to engage with Arab Palestinians and to be receptive to their ideas and thoughts. This engagement did not stop at small talk and instances of civility, but rather involved continuous professional activities of intellectual production in the Supreme Court.

The work of the court demanded that Frumkin and his colleagues maintain continual and daily professional conversation. In some cases, ethno-national identity appeared to have played a role in legalistic differences and disagree-

49 Frumkin, *Derekh Shofet Beyerushalaim*, 323.

50 Yosef Eliyahu Chelouche, *Parashat Hayay 1870–1930* (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2005).

51 Elie Eliachar, *Living with Jews* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983).

52 Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005).

53 G. Valentine, “Living with Difference: Reflections on Geographies of Encounter,” *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 3 (2008): 323–337.

ments between himself and the Arab judges.<sup>54</sup> And yet there is ample evidence of opposite examples, in which Frumkin and his colleagues collaborated closely. One such crucial case was the 1922 ruling by Frumkin and Justice ‘Alī Jārallāh to deny US citizens an extra-territorial status. Jārallāh and Frumkin, ruling against the opinion of the British judge, effectively terminated the Ottoman system of privileges (Capitulations) that allowed western nationals impunity from the local legal system.<sup>55</sup> Frumkin was personally close to Jārallāh, and recalls with nostalgia their walks home from the courts, down Prophets Street to Frumkin’s house in the Musrara neighborhood. The short walk lasted for long minutes as the two men stopped every few steps, engrossed in their discussions. “I used to call it ‘conversing our way home,’ rather than walking home,” he writes.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, Frumkin’s encounters did not end within the court premises, and developed into social relations and friendships. No doubt his earlier ties with the Arab elite, through his father’s involvement in publishing and local Jewish affairs, were the basis of these close relations. Various social and official functions brought Frumkin into contact with prominent members of the Arab elite, and he entertained his Arab colleagues for dinners at his home. His house was a meeting point for Arabs and Zionist officials.<sup>57</sup> He was the only Zionist figure to have direct personal contact with the grand mufti, Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, who emerged as the political leader of Arab Palestinians. Frumkin’s daughter’s wedding in the King David Hotel in 1936 was attended by a large number of distinguished Arab guests (image 2), including Aḥmad Samīḥ al-Khālīdī, educator and head of the Arab College, Justice Muṣṭafā l-Khālīdī (Supreme Court, later Jerusalem mayor 1938–1944); the mayor of Jerusalem Ḥusayn Fakhūrī l-Khālīdī; and Mūsā l-‘Alamī, crown prosecutor and private secretary to the high commissioner. This was only a month before the outbreak of the Great Arab Revolt (1936–1939) directed against pro-Zionist British policies in Palestine.

54 In 1942, Frumkin ruled against an appeal by the Ashkenazi community to recognize it as a separate religious community; he asserted instead that there is a single Jewish community in Palestine. His Arab colleague, Justice Francis Khayyat, argued that Jews make up several separate congregations. Supreme court 42/109, 1942, in Frumkin, *Pesakim nivharim shel Gad Frumkin shofet be-vet ha-mishpat ha-‘elyon le-Erets-Yisra’el, 1920–1948*.

55 *Ibid.*, 32–57.

56 Frumkin, *Derekh Shofet Beyerushalaim*, 241.

57 See the meeting between Chaim Arlozorov, head of the political department in the Jewish Agency, with supreme justices Khayyat, Khalidi, and Jarrallah, 16 February 1932. Arlozorov, *Yoman Yerushalayim*, available online: [http://benyehuda.org/arlosoroff/jj\\_feb1932.html](http://benyehuda.org/arlosoroff/jj_feb1932.html) (February 2014).



FIGURE 8.2 *Photographer: Tzvi Oron 10 March 1936. "The Frumkin-Broida wedding", King David Hotel, Jerusalem. Left: Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, (head of the Arab College); Third from left, Daniel Auster, (deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, General Zionists party); Fifth from left, Justice Mustafa al-Khalidi (Palestine Supreme Court Judge, Jerusalem mayor 1938–1944); Third from right: Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi (Mayor of Jerusalem 1934–1937); Second from right: Musa al-Alami (Crown prosecutor and private secretary to the High Commissioner). Central Zionist Archives, NZO/636156. Curtsey of the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.*

These professional and social encounters were formative for Frumkin's political outlook; the special environment of the court, as a mixed work space, and the close and daily engagements with his Arab colleagues, propelled him to embark on a political initiative. In the early 1930s, against the background of growing tensions between Arabs and Zionists, Frumkin held a series of talks with Mūsā l-'Alamī, state prosecutor, an advisor to the high commissioner. Al-'Alamī, a Cambridge graduate and a member of the Arab aristocracy, was close to the leading Ḥusaynī family. Frumkin held al-'Alamī in high regard, and was impressed by his professional and unbiased attitudes in the court. The two discussed a bi-national framework that could accommodate the national desires of Arabs and Jews. Significantly, their discussions included not only the issues of immigration and legislative institutions, but also emphasized cultural and economic integration, and called for language classes in Arabic and Hebrew, and open labor markets in both sectors. These principles stood against official Zionist policies of cultural and economic isolation. In 1936, after the outbreak of the general Arab strike, Frumkin embarked on a peace initiative in

which he enlisted to his cause four other leading Zionist figures from Jewish industry, agriculture, and the academic world. In meetings with al-‘Alamī, they developed a detailed work plan to stop the escalating conflict. This was probably the most serious attempt of this kind during the British Mandate. Loyal to the Zionist leadership, Frumkin informed the Jewish Agency executive on the initiative, and allowed the negotiations to be taken over by Moshe Shertok (Sharet), head of the political department. As Gershon Shafir has argued, the model of “capitalist bi-nationalism” advocated by Frumkin’s group ran against the model of national and economic segregation championed by the Labor Settlement Movement.<sup>58</sup> The dominant Zionist labor party rejected the agreement, objecting strongly to restrictions on immigration and to the opening-up of labor markets. Shertok was left with no choice but to effectively terminate the negotiations.<sup>59</sup> Soon afterwards, Frumkin’s confidant, Mūsā l-‘Alamī, joined the preparations for an Arab armed revolt and negotiated the supply of arms from the Italian fascist regime.<sup>60</sup> Frumkin himself remained loyal to the Zionist leadership, but decided to refrain from further political intervention, as he realized that his efforts did not reflect the wishes of the Jewish Agency. This extraordinary episode, which became known as the “initiative of the five,” remains understudied today.<sup>61</sup>

The Supreme Court served as a common work environment of intellectual labor, where Arabs and Jews met each other as peers. While in many ways it was exceptional in British Mandate Palestine, the experience of a shared work and trade environment was certainly not exceptional, especially in Jerusalem. Labor and commerce served as prime reasons for bringing people together till

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- 58 G. Shafir, “Capitalist Bi-nationalism in Mandatory Palestine,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 4 (2011): 611–633.
- 59 Yizhak Herzog, “Contacts between the Jewish Agency and the Palestinians, the Arab Side: 1936–1938,” in *Arabs and Jews during the British Mandate: A New Approach to Historical Research*, ed. Ilan Pappé (Giv’at-Haviva: Peace Study Centre, 1995), 11–42.
- 60 Nir Arielli, “Italian Involvement in the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–1939,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (2008): 187–204.
- 61 The scholarship on bi-nationalist ideas in the Zionist Yishuv has largely focused on the Brith Shalom, a group of European immigrant intellectuals with limited experience and knowledge of Palestine. Frumkin’s initiative is mentioned in this context, although Frumkin was careful to distance himself from Brith Shalom in his autobiography. On this issue see Susan Rolef, *The Bi-National Idea in Palestine during Mandatory Times* ([Haifa]: Shikmona Publishing Co., 1970); Avraham Sela, “Sihot ve-Maga’im beyn Manhigim Aravim Falastininim le-veyn Manhigim Tsonim 1933–1939,” *Ha-Mizrach Ha-Hadash* 22–23 (1972–1973): 401–423, 1–21; Joseph Heller, *Mi-Berit shalom le-Ihud: Yehudah Layb Magnes yehama’avaḳ li-medinah du-le’umit* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2003).

the very end of the British Mandate. The new market for fruit and vegetables, Mahne Yehuda, located at the heart of Jewish neighborhoods was co-owned by an Arab villager from Silwan, and depended almost entirely on produce from nearby Arab villages sold by women villagers.<sup>62</sup> Arab traders continued to come to the market until the end of November 1947, when the civil war broke out.<sup>63</sup> Despite attempts from the two national leaderships to minimize economic contact between the two sides, economic relations persisted and in Jerusalem they were probably stronger than in other places. While residential patterns clearly moved in the direction of segregation, commerce and labor continued to bring Arabs and Jews together and create sites of encounter throughout the city. However, it is noteworthy that the strong everyday trade and commerce relations did not acquire a political dimension similar to Frumkin's initiative. Only in rare cases did Arab-Jewish social and economic ties translate into joint political action. In most cases, they proved insufficient against violent extremism. For example, the Mahne Yehuda market, a site of common and daily Arab-Jewish interaction, was also a stronghold for the extreme Zionist militias—the Irgun and Stern Gang.<sup>64</sup> These militias frequently targeted Arab civilians and were involved in planting bombs in Arab markets and cafes. All this strengthens Valentine Gail's caution regarding the political potential of daily contact between different groups.

With the escalation of hostilities in 1946–1948, the courts' area, the Russian Compound, became a fortified zone, to which a special pass was required. Arab-Jewish tensions ran high even inside the protected area of the courts, and some Jewish solicitors refused to attend hearings in fear of being attacked. Frumkin, who received death threats signed by a militant Arab group, traveled to the court directly by car and would have his driver waiting for him outside, in case of any eventuality. How different was this environment from the early 1920s walks of Frumkin and Judge Jārallāh down Prophets Street to their houses in the mixed neighborhood of the Abyssinians and Musrara. The space for random interaction and chance encounters through movement in the city was closing down, leading to the partition of the city into two parts in 1948.

62 N. Shrem, *Shuk ha-Bazar Mahne Yehuda 1929* (Jerusalem: Zionist Library, 2009).

63 Dan Michaeli, *"Native" of Jerusalem in Health and Defence systems* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defence, 2006).

64 Shrem, *Shuk ha-Bazar Mahne Yehuda 1929*.



### Conclusion: Urban Encounters, Urban Movement

Through the eyes of one remarkable resident, Justice Gad Frumkin, this chapter challenges the perception of Jerusalem as an age-old segregated city of ethnic enclaves. His detailed accounts of the Ashkenazi community in the al-Wad area contradict the dominant paradigm of the four confessional quarters. In contrast to the common image of Jerusalem as a “mosaic city,” in which confessional groups resided in segregated enclaves, it is clear that residential patterns of late Ottoman Jerusalem involved high levels of mixing, while the development of the new city led to greater segregation, especially during the late Mandate period. Yet in order to assess the dynamics of encounter in urban space, one has to move away from the focus on residential patterns and a static understanding of the city. I examined civic spaces and workplaces as sites of encounter that did not conform to a territorial parceling of the city into “Arab” and “Jewish” parts. Civic spaces such as the municipal gardens, which emerged in the late nineteenth century, presented new places of interaction that were closely related to an inclusive Ottoman identity. These spaces allowed Jews and Christians to think of themselves as equal members of an Ottoman political community alongside Muslim citizens. These abstract notions were embodied in events such as celebrations, concerts, and political demonstrations that took place in the late Ottoman town center. With the demise of the Ottoman empire and the establishment of the British Mandate, these civic spaces lost their common appeal, as the political horizons they represented no longer existed.

Spaces of commerce and work are also key to an understanding of Arab-Jewish interaction. Frumkin's own work place, the Mandatory courts in the Russian Compound, provided one example of a shared work environment in which members of different groups met daily and cooperated. Frumkin's negotiations with Arab colleagues over a bi-national framework prove that sustained interaction can open up political possibilities. The courts were unusual in that they provided a shared arena for intellectual discussion, and yet work relations between Arabs and Jews were commonplace in Jerusalem, as we know from other accounts and places, such as the Mahne Yehuda fruit and vegetable market.

An investigation of the dynamics of sharing space must take into account the different social relationships and dynamics existing in the same space, and the diverse uses of space. The Frumkin's house in the Old City, for example, housed not only the family but also a small synagogue and the Frumkin's print shop. The family's social relations with their neighbors and landlords, the Ḥusaynī family, extended into political issues and business dealings. Socio-

spatial networks of different scales joined in creating the different meanings of space.

No less important is the question of movement in analyzing cross-ethnic encounters. Discussions of urban polarization often neglect patterns of flow through the city. Urban movement is transitory and ephemeral, and yet it plays an important part in the daily reproduction of the urban experience. These movements inevitably bring together people from different groups, thus creating a far more complex picture than simple dichotomies. Movement through the city is rarely random, but is rather predicated on a set of conditions—from urban layout to economic opportunities and political rights. Within this given framework, motion can nonetheless create new possibilities in space and society: it can open new routes, both literally and metaphorically.

Movement through the city plays a key role in Frumkin's description of Jerusalem; it was chance encounters that shaped his perception of the city and of himself. As his memoirs illustrate, it was impossible to walk through the Old City without encountering members of other ethnic groups and this illustrates how reductive it is to perceive the city as a flat and static mosaic. After moving to Reḥov Haḥabashim ("Abyssinian Quarter"), outside the walls, repeated encounters with young Jewish students increased Frumkin's fascination with Zionism, while his daily walks through the modern city center attracted him to the possibilities of the Ottoman system. Frumkin's walks with the Arab judge, Jārallāh, down Prophets Street are perhaps the best symbol of the everyday possibilities of ethnic diversity in work and residential areas, and stand in sharp contrast to the segregated and fortified city of the late 1940s.

As I argue in this chapter, close urban proximity, and frequent and amicable contacts between different groups, do not necessarily lead to social integration or joint political alliances. Frumkin's case proves that places and conditions of proximity can facilitate political dialogue. Nevertheless, contact and familiarity in themselves are not sufficient: in Frumkin's case, his entire life trajectory and social position as a member of the Jerusalem elite was no less significant to the formation of his political horizons.

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**PART 4**

*Transnationalism*







# Refugee Camps and the Spatialization of Assyrian Nationalism in Iraq

*L. Robson*

## Introduction

During the interwar period, Iraq became home to a number of Assyrian communities who had been displaced by Ottoman massacres and the exigencies of World War I. The refugee camps created to house them soon became spaces where international organizations operated as state-like actors, determining the layout of the physical space, running local bureaucracies, and distributing goods and services. At the same time, the experiences of these refugee communities provided a foundation for diaspora groups to create nationalist and separatist political narratives for international distribution. The transnational nature of Assyrian and Armenian refugee communities, combined with the semi-permanent nature of their camp dwellings and their dependence on external entities for their maintenance, lent these spaces a sense of separation from the emerging urban and rural landscapes of the new Iraqi state. This essay examines how such camps contributed to minoritizing not only communities but *spaces*, and helped to further strands of Iraqi and Arab nationalism that were coming to view minorities as an entry point for western intervention.

The particulars of the refugee regime, as embodied especially clearly in the example of the Ba'quba refugee camp in Iraq, set the stage for a permanent role for refugee camps in the mandate states of the interwar Middle East. They were conceived not just as institutions for immediate humanitarian relief but as places for the preservation and continuance of Armenian and Assyrian "national" identities while the refugees waited for the emergence of a sovereign state. In the absence of any practical movement towards sovereign nationhood for Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, or Palestine, the British government and the League of Nations presented such refugee camps as visible evidence of the League's and the mandate powers' theoretical commitment to principles of national sovereignty.

## Nationalism and Humanitarianism

The refugee regime in postwar Iraq emerged out of two longer-term trends: western mission interest in Assyrian communities that dated to the nineteenth century, and its extension in the form of massive aid campaigns in Britain, France, and the United States, spearheaded by missionary and church groups during the course of World War I. The construction of Assyrian identity as specifically national, rather than religious, communal, or ethnic, owed much to the machinations of western missionary intervention and interest in the region prior to the war. Its furthering in the context of the postwar refugee crisis in part reflected the mission origins of refugee aid and the nature of the international campaign to raise money and awareness for the plight of displaced ex-Ottoman Christians.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the European powers—particularly Britain, France, and Russia—began to develop the idea of serving as “protectors” of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, as a mode of intervening in the failing Ottoman state as well as appealing to a growing evangelical interest in eastern Christians in their respective domestic spheres. Many of these relationships were formalized in the set of treaties, collectively known as the “Capitulations,” established between the weakened Ottoman state and the rising European empires.<sup>1</sup> In a number of cases, external European interest in the political benefits of alliances with these communities overlapped with an increased missionary presence interested in establishing a western Christian presence in what was increasingly called and understood as the “Holy Land.” The nineteenth-century rise in biblical archaeology and mass evangelical tourism, particularly in Britain and the United States, led mission orga-

1 For detailed discussions of this system of “protections,” see Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982); Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Youssef Courbage and Phillipe Fargues, *Chrétiens et juifs dans l’Islam arabe et turc* (Paris: Fayard, 1992); and Xavier de Planhol, *Minorités en Islam: géographie politique et sociale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997), as well as descriptions in broader histories of the empire like Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Halil Inalcik et al. (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Fadil Bayat, *al-Dawla al-‘Uthmaniyya fi l-majal al-‘Arabi: dirasa tārīkhīyya fi l-awḍā’ al-idariyya fi daw’ al-wathā’iq wa-l-masādir al-‘Uthmaniyya ḥaşran* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Waḥda al-‘Arabiyya, 2007); and Caroline Finkel, *Osman’s Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1923* (New York: Perseus, 2005).

nizations to begin to establish outposts across the Ottoman sphere, particularly in the Levant. Since proselytizing to Muslims constituted a crime in the Ottoman Empire, and the small Jewish communities who were sometimes a target of mission efforts remained largely unresponsive, missionaries often turned their attention to local Christian communities, who they believed would benefit from western-style education and exposure to the practices of western Christianity.<sup>2</sup> This three-way association between local Christian communities, western missions, and the machinery of European diplomacy went a long way in shaping the fate of these communities through the twentieth century.

The small Assyrian Christian communities of the nineteenth-century Hakkari region (encompassing parts of modern-day northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, and eastern Turkey) became targets of this western Christian attention in an especially intensive way. Like other indigenous Christian communities in the Middle East, throughout the nineteenth century the Assyrians had been objects of interest for British and American Protestant missions; unlike most of these other Christian communities, the Assyrians also interested archaeologists. The rising European missionary presence in the Hakkari region coincided with a number of archeological excavations of the ancient ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, and especially with the discovery of the Nimrud palace of Ashurnasirpal II in 1848. Missionaries drew on these recent discoveries of pre-Islamic Assyrian greatness to promote the idea of this branch of eastern Christians as direct descendants of this ancient empire. “The present Assyrian,” one missionary wrote in 1929, “does represent the ancient Assyrian stock, the subject of Sargon and Sennacherib ... The writer has known men who claimed to be able to trace their own lineal descent from King Nebuchadnezzar.”<sup>3</sup> As historical sociologist Sami Zubaida notes, this “constructed Assyrian identity could then

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- 2 On this history of western Christian missionary activity in the Middle East, see especially Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Heleen Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Mehmet Ali Dogan and Heather J. Sharkey (eds.), *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011); and Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).
- 3 W. Wigram, *The Assyrians and their Neighbors* (London: Bell Press, 1929): 178–179; also cited in Madawi al-Rasheed, *Iraqi Assyrian Christians in London: The Construction of Ethnicity* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 42.

draw on two sources of favourable associations: ancient national ancestry and a Christianity which forged linked with the dominant European powers.”<sup>4</sup> It was during the late nineteenth century that western missionaries began to popularize the word “Assyrian,” previously only one of a number of possible designations for these Christians and not the most prominent, as a mode of identifying the present-day community with the ancient empires. Originally, this idea may have been suggested by local assistants to the excavations like the Assyrian activist Hormuzd Rassam; certainly it buttressed community ambitions for local autonomy, as well as romantic missionary imaginings of an untouched “original” Christian community.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, even before World War I, the beginnings of a re-categorization of Assyrian identity from communal and ethnic to national were already underway. The centralization of Ottoman authority in the final years of the empire, as the Ottoman state tried to take firmer hold of its borderlands, also assisted this process, as Assyrian leaders sought to defend their longstanding autonomy in Hakkari and resisted closer surveillance and incorporation into the Ottoman sphere.<sup>6</sup> In this fight, many Assyrian leaders saw their association with western missionaries and archeologists as potentially beneficial to their cause, and began to adopt a mission-derived language of national independence for their own purposes.<sup>7</sup> The missionary presence also created new venues for the dis-

4 Sami Zubaida, “Contested Nations: Iraq and the Assyrians,” *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 3 (2000): 373.

5 J. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992),

5. Until the early twentieth century, the Assyrians generally referred to themselves as *nestoryaye*, the Nestorian millet, an Ottoman designation that had no national or ethnic overtones. Protestant missionaries were especially anxious to erase the designation “Nestorian” from the community they had decided to champion, as it referred to a “heretical” theology. For the dual Assyrian/missionary making of this new version of Assyrian nationalism, see particularly Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “Chaldeans and Assyrians: The Church of the East in the Ottoman Period,” in Erica Hunter (ed.), *The Christian Heritage of Iraq* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 157–161.

6 On this point, see especially Michel Chevalier, *Les montagnards chrétiens du Hakkari et du Kurdistan septentrional* (Paris: Département de Géographie de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne), and Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “Light from the East (1948–1954) and the De-Territorialization of the Assyrian Church in the East,” in Wim Hofstee and Arie van der Kooij (eds.), *Religion Beyond its Private Role in Modern Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 115–134.

7 For detailed accounts of the Assyrian encounter with western missions, see particularly John Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East: Encounters with Western Christian Missions, Archeologists, and Colonial Powers* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), and Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England*.

semination of this new national identity, as mission schools became important educational institutions for Assyrians and the printing press allowed for the publication and distribution of both religious and secular material in modern Aramaic.<sup>8</sup>

As the war approached and the Ottoman government broadly began to view its Christian subjects as potential threats to the state, the Assyrian relationship with the beleaguered Ottoman administration began to erupt into violence.<sup>9</sup> The increasingly hostile encounters between Assyrian Christians and a Muslim Turkish dominated Ottoman government gave Assyrian supporters in the West further reason to describe the community as a religiously persecuted “nation.” In 1915 and 1916, when Armenians and Assyrians were being massacred in the eastern reaches of the Ottoman Empire, western groups like the American organization Near East Relief called for donations not only to relieve the suffering of those Armenian and Assyrian populations dispossessed and persecuted in the war, but also to save their existence as civilized Christian “nations” facing the wrath of a benighted, barbaric Muslim rage.<sup>10</sup> This kind of rhetoric predicated international aid on the premise that donors were not only rescuing individual victims but also preventing the disappearance of national bodies, thus casting the idea of a postwar assimilation into the new states of Syria and Iraq as a kind of national and even racial annihilation. This rhetoric of aid, and its dissemination through church and diaspora networks, helped to legitimize and reinforce the creation of the Assyrian refugee camp as a space for the expression of a specific form of national statelessness.

This narrative of Assyrian Christian nationhood and civilization versus Turkish Muslim barbarism represented an especially prominent trope in the reams

8 Murre-van den Berg, “Chaldeans and Assyrians,” 158.

9 A number of recent scholarly works advocate labeling this violence an “Assyrian genocide” to be acknowledged alongside the Armenian genocide. On this point and on the numbers of Assyrians deported and massacred, see especially David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protection: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia During World War I* (London: Gorgias Press, 2006); Hannibal Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Sudan* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), and idem, “The Assyrian Genocide: A Tale of Oblivion and Denial,” in Rene Lemarchand (ed.), *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Cathie Carmichael, *Genocide Before the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and Sébastien de Courtois, *Le génocide oublié: chrétiens d’orient, les derniers araméens* (Paris: Ellipses, 2002).

10 On this point see especially Keith Watenpugh, “The League of Nations’ Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927,” *American Historical Review* 115, no. 5 (2010): 1315–1339.

of petitions sent from Assyrian diaspora communities to the British government and the various representatives at the Paris peace conference. The Assyrian National Associations of America, based in New York and with branches throughout New England, advocated for an independent Assyrian state to be carved out of Kurdistan and Mesopotamia on precisely these grounds:

... the centuries have proved that the Turks are incapable of reform, and the Arabs are not accustomed to any form of government. The history of Turkish Government and its cruel deeds are known to the world; fertile lands lie sterile under the dead hand of the Turk, whereas Assyrians in their country are successful in every branch; they are an intelligent, industrious and prolific race. Assyrians have lived under centuries of cruelty and persecution. Their faithfulness to their nationality and religion have saved them from extermination.<sup>11</sup>

This focus on racial extermination provided a useful counterpoint to the idea of Assyrian absorption into a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state such as those being proposed in Palestine and Iraq. Many of these petitions laid out lengthy descriptions of an ancient Assyrian Christian nation in danger of total eradication without western intervention and recreation as a sovereign or semi-sovereign space.

For Assyrian diaspora communities in the West, this rhetoric of ancient Christian nationhood was especially powerful because it represented a crucial mode of assimilation. By accepting and promoting ideas of Turkish Muslim barbarism set beside Assyrian and Armenian national and religious commitment, they could claim a space in “Western civilization” that would make absorption into the United States, France, England, and Australia (among others) an easier task. In some cases, particularly in the United States, this claim to Christian nationhood could make it possible to claim the legal category of “white” and its corresponding legal and political privileges.<sup>12</sup> These diaspora conversations, which promoted a vision of minority nationalisms invented in the context of late nineteenth-century missionary activity, lent legitimacy to the maintenance of Assyrian refugee camps as separate national spaces in the postwar context.

11 Executive Committee, Assyrian National Associations of America, memo on “The New Assyria,” 29 March 1919, National Archives Kew Foreign Office (henceforth FO) 608/274.

12 See Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

## Ba'quba

The first Armenian/Assyrian refugee camp in Iraq, set up in the northern village of Ba'quba, became a space within which these longstanding tropes were explicitly rendered into a new physical and spatial reality. Set up to house Armenian and Assyrian communities who had found themselves engaged in a military campaign against Russia in the final stages of the war, it became a physical manifestation of British ethnographic categorizations and of British and League commitment to the principles of national sovereignty, and served as one of the initial examples of how refugee camps could themselves begin to operate as political spaces independent of the states in which they were located.

At Urmia in the spring of 1918, a group of Assyrians originally from the Hakkari region, along with a small and mostly local Armenian force, were engaging in battle against the Ottomans (and, sporadically, against local Kurdish tribes as well). That June, a British force sent from Hamadan landed in Urmia and informed the holdouts of the British military advance to Sarin Qal'aa. The remaining Assyrians and Armenians evacuated Urmia under British protection and left for Hamadan, where the British formally incorporated the Armenian soldiers into the British army and charged them with the task of moving and protecting the refugees. Anticipating the declaration of British control over what would become Iraq, British officials marched the Assyrian and Armenian communities several hundred miles to the village of Ba'quba, just north of Baghdad, where a camp was under construction to serve as a temporary solution to the refugees' homelessness.

At this juncture the British hold on Mesopotamia, and the nature of its future governance, was still very uncertain. There was considerable resistance to the imposition of British rule across Iraq, and already several anti-colonial societies encompassing both Sunnī and Shī'ī leaders had sprung up in the cities to organize the anti-British campaign. Though founders of the nascent League of Nations were in discussions with the British over the precise nature of its rule over Iraq and the nature of the proposed "mandate" system, it had no formal mechanisms yet in place to provide oversight or suggest policy. Indeed, these mechanisms remained weak throughout the mandate period; as Peter Sluglett has recently put it, "The framers of the mandate system thought they were improving on colonialism, but given the fact that they all had 'conventional' colonial empires of their own, and given the poverty of the regulatory machinery, the outcome was not all that different from the colonized countries."<sup>13</sup> At

13 Peter Sluglett, "An Improvement on Colonialism? The 'A' Mandates and Their Legacy in the

any rate, the nature of mandate rule in Iraq did not really solidify for another several years, until after a widespread revolt in 1920 forced the reformulation of the mandate for Mesopotamia into the Kingdom of Iraq via the 1922 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty and initiated a partial devolution of power into Iraqi hands.<sup>14</sup> The creation of the Ba'quba camp was therefore very much under local control and dictated initially by the British officials on the ground, in cooperation with a refugee Assyrian military leadership with whom the British had established a relationship.

The inhabitants of Ba'quba now included 24,579 Assyrian refugees, nearly all originally from Hakkari, along with 14,612 Armenians from Van, Mosul, and Urmia. The British officials in charge made decisions about the camp's administration without much contact or input from London and none at all from Geneva. They viewed the camp as having three central purposes: first, to house refugee populations on a temporary basis with a view towards repatriation; second, to promote, record, and "preserve" what they understood as the national

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Middle East," *International Affairs* 90, no. 2, (2014), 425. The question of the degree to which the mandate system represented a genuinely new form of government versus a repackaged European imperialism has received extensive notice. In general, scholars of the Middle East have viewed it as little more than a fig leaf for the continuation of earlier forms of British and French imperial rule; for some examples, see particularly Nadine Méouchy and Peter Sluglett (eds.), *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987); Daniel Neep, *Occupying Syria under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space, and State Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*; Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011); Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Daniel Silverfarb, *Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1929–1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Historians viewing the League from a European perspective have sometimes had a slightly different view of the nature of the mandate system; see, for example, Susan Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32, no. 4 (2006), 560–582, which assigns a bit more importance to the distinction between colonial and mandate governments.

- 14 On the creation of the modern state of Iraq, the widespread revolt of 1920, and the reformulation of the mandate into the Hashemite monarchy, see particularly Reeva Simon and Eleanor Tejirian, *The Creation of Iraq, 1914–1921* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).



cultures of the Armenians and Assyrians; and third, to create an orderly “modern” space distinct from the geographical location and therefore essentially mobile. All three of these premises became models for understanding refugees and the place of camps in the new international order. Although Ba‘quba did not last long, it provided a model on which the British and the League based their understanding of the postwar refugee problem and the range of possible solutions into the interwar period, as the conceptual framework for an international refugee regime was solidified, standardized, and incorporated into international legal and political structures.

The basic premise of the camp at Ba‘quba was that it represented a temporary solution and that the refugees were preparing for repatriation and resettlement. The refugees themselves were passionately in favor of an eventual repatriation to Hakkari and Urmia, as was demonstrated by any number of lobbying efforts and a failed attempt by the Assyrian leader Agha Petros to take a group back into Hakkari in 1920. Dr. J.M. Yonan and Pepa Mirza, both members of the Assyrian National Committee based in Urmia during the war, appealed to the British Legation in Tehran for assistance in resettling the Assyrians back into Urmia on the basis of their military assistance to the British and the refusal of the Persian government to offer assistance. “These are the conditions and these are the sacrifices,” they wrote,

and we therefore pray the Allies and most especially Great Britain 1. To return our people to Urumia [sic] 2. To grant our people protection without which is would be impossible to reside in Urumia. We would especially beg that protection be granted and guaranteed to the members of the Central National Committee who had been very active in the arrangements of National affairs and therefore have incurred the special enmity [sic] of Turks and Kurds and Persians who are pro Turkish.<sup>15</sup>

Another Assyrian statement of political goals, sent from a committee to the British headquarters in Baghdad with a view towards having it read at the peace talks, requested “re-establishment in own country under British protection,” clarifying that this meant the region of “Kurdistan up to line of Jezireh-Seri-Bash-Kala and Persian territory between Lake Urmi and Turkish frontier,” and “Government recognition of Patriarch Marshimmun as head of nation,” accom-

15 J.M. Yonan and Pera Mirza, memo on “The Assyrian People and their Relations with the Allies in the Present War,” Dec. 1918, FO 608/274.

panied by an assurance that “if granted these things hope to live peaceably with Kurds under British protection.”<sup>16</sup>

Such demands did not indicate a national determination to acquire Assyrian nation-state sovereignty but rather a desire to return to the relatively autonomous political position the Assyrians had enjoyed in the late Ottoman period, in the same geographical space. Even the redoubtable Surma Khamman, sister of the late patriarch and enthusiastic advocate for Assyrian affairs in London, despite her practiced promotion of Assyrian national identity to sympathetic British officialdom, proposed that membership in an independent Kurdistan might represent a viable future for the Assyrians: “Should prefer British protection and mandate for Hakkiari district, but recognize this impossible. If Kurdistan independent could live there in Hakkiari in old homes with Kurds, supposing armament provided for self-protection. Much prefer this alternative [to repatriation to Persia or Turkish territory].”<sup>17</sup>

British advocates for Assyrian nationhood, though, constructed this enthusiasm for return as an expression of national commitment, and began to prepare for mass refugee resettlement as part of a creation of autonomous Assyrian and Armenian nation-states—this despite the fact that already the idea of autonomous Assyrian and Armenian states had clearly been rejected as a governing principle of a postwar order. As a London official minuted in 1919, “The new Mesopotamia will give the Assyrians their real desiderata (i) security and (ii) union in a single state (though this state will of course not be a national Assyrian state, but Arab-Kurdish-Syriac).”<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the fiction of a future sovereign nation-state governed refugee camp administration and planning. It also began to produce the narrative that statelessness was not merely a condition of lack of citizenship, but rather a condition of citizenship in a state that did not actually exist as a political entity. Refugee statelessness, therefore, emerged as a concept that applied to Assyrians and Armenians but not to Turkish or Kurdish displaced populations, and camps like Ba‘quba were presented as a solution specifically designated for “national” populations in a condition of temporary limbo while their states were being created. Consequently, while the British and French taking over their new mandated territories in Iraq and Syria pursued tactics of sedentarization and local resettlement for displaced Kurdish, Yedizi, and Arab populations in the borderlands,<sup>19</sup> they grouped Armenians and Assyrians in “refugee camps” (itself a relatively new concept) that

16 Memo from Political Bureau Baghdad to London, 11 March 1919, FO 608/274.

17 Surma Khassan to Matran, 5 May 1920, T 1/12603.

18 Minute on Political Bureau Baghdad memo, 11 March 1919, FO 608/274.

19 On this, see especially Seda Altug, “Sectarianism in the Syrian Jazira: Community, Land

had the specific and explicitly stated purpose of acting as a waystation on the path to sovereign statehood and expressed a nationalized political landscape.

This aspect of the camp did not emerge immediately, as there were many casualties of the long trek from Hamadan to Ba'quba and many who did survive the journey were in poor health upon their arrival. Initially, conditions at the camp were chaotic and unsanitary; one British army officer working there reported a stream of destitute arrivals and more than eighty deaths daily in the early days of the camp. But as time went on and it became clear that the camp was at least a semi-permanent institution, in the absence of any viable possibility of immediate repatriation, the British officers in charge of the camp began to organize its population to reflect and prepare for a future in which both Armenians and Assyrians would have their own nation-states.

A memorandum on the camp reported an initial process of separating refugees by ethnicity into defined national spaces: "For the first month or so the people were all mixed up, Armenians and Assyrians together. But as they became more settled, a census was held, and the people arranged throughout the sections according to their tribal divisions and affiliations."<sup>20</sup> The British camp administrators also set up committees to deal with "questions of national customs and religious duties,"<sup>21</sup> which they considered central to the preservation of Armenian and Assyrian national character until the communities could be reconstituted in a "homeland." To that end, daily life in the camp included instruction in Armenian and Syriac for the children, classes in traditional Armenian lace-making and sewing for the women, and the careful recording of Armenian and Assyrian customs.

The conception of the camp as a space for the preservation of the "race" became central to the stated principles of the British officers in charge. H.H. Austin, the camp commandant, recorded that this idea had to be conveyed and enforced to the refugees themselves:

The proportion of deaths among newly-born infants at one time became so high, particularly with the Assyrians, that I pointed out to Mar Shimun there seemed, in the opinion of my medical officers, to be good reason for believing that mothers were in the habit of purposely overlying their

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and Violence in the Memories of World War I and the French Mandate (1915–1939)" (PhD thesis, Utrecht University 2011), and Nelida Fuccaro, *The Other Kurds: Yazidis in Colonial Iraq* (London: Tauris, 1999).

20 Memoranda, 6; also quoted in Jo Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity, and Intervention* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 168.

21 Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 168.

babies shortly after birth ... I begged him to appeal to mothers to do everything in their power and to take full advantage of the facilities afforded by our maternity wards, to rear up their infants. The nation was already so reduced in numbers by their sufferings during the war that it was simply *race suicide* if this high death rate amongst babies was allowed to continue. In response to my request the Patriarch issued a proclamation to all mothers, and expectant ones, exhorting them for the sake of the future welfare of the nation to give every care to newly-born children.<sup>22</sup> [Emphasis added]

Such language indicated the degree to which British and American administrators were engaged in constructing particular kinds of narratives about the camps as national spaces and about the refugees as survivors of an attempted holocaust, and needed the assistance of Assyrian and Armenian collaborators to broadcast these messages to the refugees themselves. As Dudley Northcote, one of the British officials in charge of the Armenian sections of the camp, noted in a letter home,

If you are an ordinary regimental officer in a British regiment, it is astonishing how little opportunity you have of getting to know anything about the natives of Messpot [sic], because of course all your work is with your own men, but now it is part of my job to *study* 1300 Armenian men, women and children.<sup>23</sup> [Emphasis added.]

He added in a different context how utterly dependent he was on his “head-man,” who had spent some of his early years in the United States and could speak English “after a fashion.”<sup>24</sup>

Under British authority, the camp became a disciplined and self-contained space in which access to Arab and Kurdish Iraq was restricted and government and social organization was entirely internal. The military officers in charge of its administration imagined it as a carefully organized, mapped-out institution:

The whole camp which covers roughly an area of one square mile has been divided into three areas: ‘A,’ ‘B,’ and ‘C’ respectively. Each of these areas are subdivided into sections, varying from 11 to 13 in number in each

22 H.H. Austin, *The Ba‘qubah Refugee Camp: An Account of Work on Behalf of the Persecuted Assyrian Christians* (London: Faith House, 1920), 42.

23 Letter to “Mamma,” 3 Dec. 1918, Northcote papers (henceforth NP), British Library.

24 Northcote to “Papa,” 11 Dec. 1918, NP.

area. Over each area there was a British officer, and each section had a British officer looking after it assisted by 3 or 4 British soldiers.<sup>25</sup>

Another observer praised the way the “tribal census” had made a mapping out of the ethnic territory of the camp:

As a result of the “General Post,” the Armenians were all located in ‘A’ area; whilst ‘B,’ and ‘C’ were occupied by Assyrians, who were arranged throughout the sections in accordance with their tribal divisions and affiliations. The supply, and other questions of administration and discipline were greatly simplified in consequence.<sup>26</sup>

The Assyrian and Armenian children in the orphanage section of the camp were kept mainly separate: “The large cook-house and bathing-sheds were common to both Armenian and Assyrian children; but they worked at lessons and played apart—each nationality having its own school tents, and giant-strides, horizontal and parallel bars, swings, see-saws, etc.”<sup>27</sup>

Camp schools also revolved around this idea of maintaining collective racial and ethnic memory. Levon Shahoian, who was eleven years old at the time of his sojourn in Ba‘quba, recalled the schooling as little more than a process of recollection: “For days at end our sole curriculum was repeating out own names and family names. We had to stand up and repeat our, as well as our father’s and mother’s name, the names of our siblings, and the city or village from where we had been exiled.”<sup>28</sup> Armenian nationalist history and language, along with English lessons taught by a group of American missionaries, constituted the remainder of the curriculum.

Employment was entirely controlled by the British military, which put the men in the camps to work distributing supplies and building roads, drains, and other infrastructure. Some of these jobs were outside the camp, but they were assigned and paid through the British army and did not involve significant contact with the Kurdish and Arab populations in the surrounding area. Such contact as did occur was often hostile, with sentries firing on Arabs approaching the camp in an attempt to “prevent Arab thieves getting into one part or another of the camp at night, and stealing animals and private property of

25 Memoranda, cited in Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 158.

26 Austin, *The Ba‘qubah Refugee Camp*, 20.

27 *Ibid.*, 24.

28 Levon Shahoian, *On the Banks of the Tigris* (London: Taderon Press, 2012), 50.

the refugees and others.”<sup>29</sup> During the initial stages of the camp’s setup, small groups of Assyrians had put up outposts for themselves and their livestock outside the camp, but as tensions rose between the refugees and the local Arab and Kurdish populations they were ordered to return to the camps, “where they were less likely to be molested at night by Arab thieves.”<sup>30</sup> Much of the evidence points to considerable resentment on the part of local Arab and Kurdish populations over the British, Assyrian, and Armenian appropriation of property and aggressive defense of the camp.

The idea of repatriation and resettlement thus dominated the physical setup of the Ba‘quba camp as well as its daily administration and the relationship of Armenian and Assyrian refugees with the surrounding areas. Through 1919, officials like Dudley Northcote declared that the repatriation of the refugees had been delayed only because of the difficulties of crossing hostile Kurdish-held territory on the way to Hakkari, Urmia, or Erevan. As the terms of the peace accord became clearer in 1920, the situation of the refugees became muddier; many of the British administrators running the camp were unwilling to drop the idea of repatriation, even as its impossibility became abundantly evident. F. Cunliffe-Owen, Director of Repatriation in the Ba‘quba camp, told the British government as much in 1920:

My conclusions are therefore:—Either (i) Continue the present mode of living with hopes of and efforts for repatriation. In this case the community cannot be self-supporting ... Or (ii) Accept the idea that repatriation is not within the range or practical politics as yet and settle the community in zones which must be found and where the people would have to resume their customary avocations. This could of course entail an initial outlay and would be largely experimental in strange surroundings. I myself recommend the first course.<sup>31</sup>

Such conversations were also governed by increasing concern in London about the costs of the camps and the French mandate government’s refusal to provide financial assistance.

When in August of 1920 the British authorities finally made the decision to close Ba‘quba, citing the danger posed by the Arab uprisings around Iraq, the fate of the refugees depended on their ethnicity. Initially, they were moved en

<sup>29</sup> Austin, *The Ba‘qubah Refugee Camp*, 57.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> Cunliffe-Owen, Memorandum regarding administration of Refugee Camp at Ba‘qubah, 1920, T 1/12603.

masse north to Nahr Umar, where they were again divided into Armenian and Assyrian quarters with separate administrations. As many Armenians hopefully awaited the creation of an independent Armenian state as proposed in the Treaty of Sèvres, the British government and the League of Nations simultaneously proposed other resettlement alternatives for the Armenians. One proposal had Armenian refugees placed on an agricultural colony in Kirkuk; others suggested similar rural settlement plans in Syria. Neither of these plans proved acceptable to the refugees themselves, who categorically refused to cooperate, and the British decided simply to evacuate all the camp's inhabitants with a small sum of money to find other accommodation. When this policy was implemented in the fall of 1921, most of Ba'quba's Armenian residents were transported to Transcaucasia, as the closest possible option to repatriation in the now-defunct Armenian nation-state, while the Assyrians in Ba'quba camp, on the other hand, were mainly moved to another refugee camp at Mindan, outside Mosul.

The refugee camps and the subsequent settlements had thus created a rural landscape in which Assyrians constituted a markedly separate political and geographical entity, supported by an external power and placed within restrictive circumstances. This alteration of the rural landscape to create a defined, limited, and fragmented space for Assyrian minority communities was supported by the Iraqi government, who paid part of the costs of the agricultural settlement plan through tax relief and, in some cases, financing of agricultural projects, infrastructure, and housing. Despite this funding, the Iraqi government and emerging Iraqi and Arab nationalist movements came to view these communities with suspicion, as foreign elements representing a potential threat to the sovereignty of the state. This overlaying of the category of "minority" on what was essentially an imported refugee community dependent on outside sponsors had long-term and broadly negative consequences for Iraq's other Christian communities, who did not have the same spatial or political distance from the Iraqi state.<sup>32</sup>

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32 On the construction of a more unified "Church of the East" encompassing both Chaldean and Assyrian branches in various historical periods, see especially Murre-van den Berg, "Chaldeans and Assyrians." Because of their origins as refugees and the enclosed nature of the camps, this particular Assyrian community had relatively little contact during the immediate postwar period with other eastern Christian groups in Iraq; the fact that their primary political relationships were with the British isolated them in a different way from other religious and ethnic "minorities" in Iraq.

### Pointing the Way to a Broader Refugee Regime

Although mass migration of displaced peoples had of course characterized wartime prior to the twentieth century, World War I marked the beginning of an international approach to refugees that defined them first and foremost as stateless and thus a responsibility on the international state system. The Assyrian and Armenian refugee camp that arose under British supervision at Ba'quba predated the emergence of a comprehensive refugee regime under the authority of the new League of Nations, and the nature of the relief arrangements in these early camps and settlements served to shape emerging international refugee policy.

The beginnings of an international refugee regime did not come until 1921, some years after private relief organizations as well as various Allied governments had engaged in the creation of refugee camps across the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman empire. Its first formal iteration was the appointment by the League of a "General Commissioner for the Russian Refugees," at the suggestion of a group of humanitarian agencies including the International Red Cross. The slot was filled by the redoubtable Fridtjof Nansen, who was charged with the task of either finding ways to repatriate refugees to Russia or finding employment for them in their new homes. When, the following year, a new Soviet decree stripped the refugees of their citizenship, Nansen turned his attention to the possibilities of formal legal asylum elsewhere. This development followed on the heels of the collapse of the short-lived Republic of Armenia, which created another wave of Armenian refugees fleeing their territory's incorporation into Turkey or the Soviet state and rendering the idea of "repatriation" impossible for Armenian refugees holed up in camps in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq. Nansen's creation of the Nansen Passport system, at its core, represented an attempt to deal with the loss of the repatriation solution for these Russian and Armenian refugees.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, despite the expansion of eligibility for the Nansen passport to "Any person of Assyrian or Assyro-Chaldean origin" in 1928,<sup>34</sup> the League and its associated refugee institutions were already beginning to differentiate between cases like the Russian refugees, for whom emigration, asylum, and eventual assimilation into a new home country were considered desirable, and distinct "national minorities" like the Armenians and Assyrians, for whom

33 On the Nansen Passport, see Watenpaugh, "The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors."

34 "Arrangement of 30 June 1928 Concerning the Extension to Other Categories of Refugees of Certain Measures taken in Favour of Russian and Armenian Refugees," LNTS, 89, p. 63.



some sort of eventual sovereign space was envisioned and who were being held in enclosed, potentially mobile camps specifically for this purpose. Such distinctions were even clearer in the cases of refugees who were not recognized as political entities at all. During the course of an investigation of non-affiliated refugees in need of the League's assistance, private groups pointed out any number of small groups of refugees across Europe:

150 Assyrians and a small number of Montenegrin refugees in France, 19,000 Assyro-Chaldeans in the Caucasus and Greece, 9,000 Ruthenes in Austria and Czechoslovakia, 100,000 refugees in central Europe, including 10,000 former Hungarians in Austria, France, and Romania, 16,000 Jews in Romania, and 150 Turks in Greece who had been 'Friends of the Allies.'<sup>35</sup>

The ensuing discussion in the Council included the observation that "the mere fact that certain classes of persons are without the protection of any national Government is not sufficient to make them refugees,"<sup>36</sup> and it was decided that only the Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldeans, and Turks—all of whom claimed identities that had already been constituted as part of a recognized refugee national group—would be eligible for League assistance.

In the context of the Middle East, then, the premise that the communal and national identities of Armenian and Assyrian refugees represented the primary reason for international intervention on their behalf—intervention that other refugees, not recognized as "minority" national entities, did not merit—had been constructed and disseminated to both the refugees themselves and an international funding audience through the institutionalization of postwar refugee camps like Ba'quba. Further, the camps created a *de facto* situation of a moveable, compact, ethnically homogenous "homeland," one which the League considered could be moved and recreated as a sovereign or semi-sovereign political space when the opportunity opened up.

Ironically, this role—to maintain a nationality until such time as its claims could be realized—rendered refugee camps and settlements, originally conceived in the context of the crisis of war, a permanent part of the new geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. Refugee camps emerged as spaces not only for humanitarian intervention but also for a display of national sovereignty. As such, they demonstrated the League's commitment to the nation-state system, even when the League's members could not see their way clear to the creation

35 Skran, *Refugees in Interwar Europe*, 114–115.

36 Cited in Skran, *Refugees in Interwar Europe*, 115.

of an Armenian or Assyrian state that would require intensive western military and financial assistance to remain viable. The maintenance of refugee camps and settlements as quasi-sovereign spaces (possible only because their host nations were under colonial domination) was intended as a public display of the League's ideological orientation towards national sovereignty.

### Conclusions

The refugee camp at Ba'quba was constituted under a British leadership that assumed Armenian and Assyrian *national* identity as a primary organizing principle, both in terms of governing approaches and physical space. The spatial dimensions of this refugee experience shaped the concept of the ethnic minority in the new Iraqi state, first by creating camps where ethnic nationalisms could be emphasized, reified, and even invented, and then by moving these dependent refugee communities under British protection to relatively enclosed and homogenous spaces that would become permanent features of the new nation. Under this model, minorities were not just identifiable ethnic, linguistic, or religious communities; they were also constituencies whose negotiations with the Iraqi state necessarily involved a third, imperial, power. Assyrians and Armenians were thus constituted as a threat to the concept of Iraqi sovereignty and to Arab national unity. This postwar understanding of what minorities meant to the new states and their national movements now began to extend to other ethnic and religious communities who had not historically had this relationship with outside powers, who were not refugees, and who were Arabized to a much greater degree.

Even more centrally, refugee camps themselves now became a new kind of political space, designed to represent the concept of national identity and demonstrate the international order's commitment to universal national sovereignty. In the absence of any political will to create Armenian or Assyrian states, refugee camps nevertheless could operate as a public demonstration of the League's maintenance and promotion of the principle of sovereignty for various ethno-nationalisms. In imagining the refugee camp as an enclave for specifically national minorities, the British and the League created a new geopolitical institution that would eventually become a primary feature of the twentieth-century Middle Eastern political landscape.

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# The League of Nations, A-Mandates and Minority Rights during the Mandate Period in Iraq (1920–1932)\*

*H. Müller-Sommerfeld*

For the new state of Iraq, created after the political end of the Ottoman Empire, 1920 meant the beginning of a “shared history”<sup>1</sup> with the League of Nations (LoN) and Great Britain. From its twelve years of mandate administration until 1932 I deal with two issues in this essay.<sup>2</sup> The first is the different political languages concerning A-Mandates. While the LoN conceived of them as territorial international administration, most Iraqis saw them rather as “colonial rule.” The second issue, which I cover in the larger part of the paper, comprises the system of minority protection under the international law of the LoN and its perception in Iraq. In Geneva, it was understood and handled as a legal protection shield for encroachments of nationalist majorities against minorities, but at the same time it was closely linked to the conception of a unitary nation-state, in which minorities should not be entitled to form a state within a state. Iraqi minorities themselves perceived and used these minority rights in different ways, as the contrasting cases of Iraqi Jews and Assyrian Christians show. From the many other minorities in Iraq I consider just these two using new materials from the archive, notably that for Assyrian Christians, of the LoN in the Library of the United Nations Office Geneva (UNOGL).

In this essay I aim to consider the independent role of the LoN in the history of Iraq, and the Middle East, which to date is overshadowed by the

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- 1 Frederick Cooper and Ann L. Stoler, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann L. Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–58.
- 2 Based on my unpublished post-doctoral research on politics and religion during the monarchy in Iraq.

mandatory power of Great Britain, and France respectively. It seems that the last two moments in the process of *silencing the past*, described by the Haitian anthropologist and historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot, namely, “the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*)” and “the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)” (emphasis in the original), were very effective till this day.<sup>3</sup>

### A-Mandates: Different Political Languages

The LoN came into political existence after World War I as a result of the negotiations between the victorious powers at the Peace conference in Paris from 1919 to 1920.<sup>4</sup> As the first global inter-governmental organization it set high political goals, as the preamble of the act establishing it, the Covenant from 1919 already reveals:

to promote international co-operation, to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another.

Beside this overall idealistic shift in international politics, US president Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921) further imposed in Paris the foundation of mandates as an administrative form against colonial rule and territorial annexations.<sup>5</sup>

3 *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 6th ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 26. The first two moments are “fact creation (the making of *sources*)” and “fact assembly (the making of *archives*).”

4 At present the best review essay of the vast academic research on the LoN are Susan Pedersen, “Back to the League of Nations,” *American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (2007): 1091–1117. On chronology, the people involved, and the activities of the LoN, cf. Martyn Housden, *The League of Nations and the Organization of Peace* (London: Pearson, 2012).

5 At present, we do not have an updated and in depth examination of the origin and complicated elaboration process of mandates at the Paris Conference. Further research should consider the inter-governmental negotiations from 1917 to 1919, the role of non-governmental pressure groups such as the League of Nations Union, and the strong support of the Labour

Their legal skeleton formed Article 22 of the Covenant of the LoN, which compared to its other articles, is quite long and solemn in tone. Pursuant to this article, mandates were based on the principle “of well-being and development” of the “backward people.” This “sacred trust of civilisation”<sup>6</sup> was conferred to the Mandatory Powers, but remained under the international control and supervision of the LoN “until such time as they [the indigenous peoples] are able to stand alone.”<sup>7</sup> In their conceptual framework mandates were thus foremost a form of international administration as political and economic trusteeships,<sup>8</sup> a task for government modernization and development aid, and not a “late form of colonialism,”<sup>9</sup> as it is widely accepted in research studies on Iraq and the Middle East. The mandate system, termed by the LoN as “a new conception in international law and a novel experiment in colonial

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Party. Despite its publication date, the most authoritative study about the mandates is still the comprehensive monograph of the renowned political scientist Quincy Wright, *Mandates under the League of Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930 [repr. 1968]). The most recent history emphasizing the African mandates is the two-volume account of Michael Callahan, *Mandates and Empire* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1999 [repr. 2008] and *A Sacred Trust: The League of Nations and Africa*, 2004); in “idem”, “Mandated Territories are not Colonies: Britain, France, and Africa in the 1930s,” in *Imperialism on Trial: International Oversight of Colonial Rule in Historical Perspective*, ed. R.M. Douglas, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 1–20. See Susan Pedersen’s new study: *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

- 6 The French version of article 22 uses “une mission sacrée de civilisation,” which from this very beginning shows that the French and British governments had different interpretations of the mandate system and later, in practice, they did not alter from their original perceptions.
- 7 The total of 11 mandates were later differentiated as A-, B- and C-categories. A-Mandates were Iraq, Palestine/Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon (former Ottoman provinces); B-Mandates were Ruanda-Urundi, Tanganyika, Cameroon, Togoland (largely former German territories); and C-Mandates were German New-Guinea, Nauru, South Pacific and South-West Africa (to be administered as integral portions of the territories of mandatory powers).
- 8 Carsten Stahn, *The Law and Practice of International Territorial Administration: Versailles to Iraq and Beyond*, Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 73–91; Antony Anghie, “Colonialism and the Birth of International Institutions: Sovereignty, Economy, and the Mandate System of the League of Nations,” *International Law and Politics* 34 (2002): 513–633.
- 9 Nadine Méouchy and Peter Sluglett (ed.), *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives*, Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia 93 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2004), 2. The British and French have largely overshadowed the autonomous presence of the LoN in the Near East. The independent political role of Geneva has been almost forgotten.



policy,"<sup>10</sup> in this region prevented the territorial annexation and introduction of colonial rule after 1918. The policy of "no-annexation" was a guiding principle of US president Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference concerning the former territories of the Ottoman Empire, as he formulated in article 12 of his famous "Fourteen Points" statement before the US Congress in January 1918. Even if Article 22 of the Covenant of the LoN results from a highly complicated editorial process, we must recall that the British Labour Party and the League of Nations Union (Robert Cecil) were deeply involved behind the scenes. For the Labour Party, the anti-colonial orientation of the mandate system as an international form of government was a main political topic on their agenda.<sup>11</sup> The A-Mandates in the Middle East were thus a historical seam in colonial history, and one must remember that Labour government announced the termination of the British mandates in this region: Ramsay MacDonald in Iraq (1924 resp. 1929) and Clement Attlee in Palestine (1947). As an international form of administration on behalf of the LoN, A-Mandates were an aid to state development in the Middle East, and thus an obstacle to the installment of colonial rule over the conquered territories. They forced the governments of Great Britain and France to join the new world order of political self-determination and decolonization after 1918, even if London and Paris did so half-heartedly and each in their own way. There is presently little well-founded research on the functioning of the mandate regime in Iraq in practice over the twelve years. Investigations on the economic aspects would throw new light and thus bring about a rethinking of the mandates. They were precursors of decolonization and set up the more comprehensive developments that followed after the end of World War II. It seems, however, that the label "colonial past" in the Middle East fits more ideologically, since it confirms the dominant political opinion of

10 LoN, *Ten Years of World-Cooperation* (Geneva: League of Nations, 1930), 330.

11 Henry R. Winkler, "The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain 1914–1919," *Rutgers University Studies in History* 7 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 1952, [repr. 1967]); in "idem", "The Development of the League of Nations Idea in Great Britain 1914–1919," *The Journal of Modern History* 20, no. 2 (1948): 95–112. This article, which is more than sixty years old, proves that thorough research on the elaboration of the Mandate system at the Paris Peace Conference is needed, especially as complex correlations were never analyzed in depth. Somehow, this topic escapes research and historiography. Helen McCarthy did not include Mandates in her dissertation which is published under the title *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c. 1918–45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011). Stephen Howe, in his in-depth and recommended study *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918–1964* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), omits a wider consideration of the Mandates.

imperial exploitation through the “West,” dividing “properly” the good and bad actors. Even if the B- and C-Mandates did not directly effect colonial rule, the mandate system generally required that colonial powers discuss and rethink the character and legitimacy of that rule.<sup>12</sup>

The trusteeship-conception of the mandates never spread widely in Iraq, and not only because of its complete novelty. It was probably due to the fact that British forces militarily conquered the three Ottoman provinces of Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul from 1914 to 1918. In 1920, the status of military occupation was transformed, in Europe, into the mandatory regime, which at this time only existed in the form of Article 22 of the Covenant of the LoN, and had yet to be worked out in Geneva. The de facto beginning of the mandate regime in Iraq was delayed by the de jure Ottoman status of the territory. This came to end after the signing of the Lausanne Treaty in July 1923 and the recognition of the border line between Turkey and Iraq in December 1925, when Turkey renounced her territorial rights over the province of Mosul, which is discussed below.

Another important factor for the non-acceptance, misunderstandings, and extraordinary aversion for the term “Mandate” in Iraq—it was generally omitted from official documents—was the widespread international doctrine of national political self-determination before the end of World War I. In January 1918 US President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed this formula as one of his famous 14 points for the new world order.<sup>13</sup> For a great part of the Middle Eastern population, though not the whole, this promise nourished strong hopes for political independence. But they obtained instead the constitutionally sophisticated mandates; even politicians did not know exactly what they were or should be. Given the British and French status as conquerors in the Middle East, the possibility that the mandates would be equated with the well-known colonial rule was therefore quite likely. Political propaganda was probably also at work: in 1919 Vladimir I. Lenin, head of government of the Russian SFSR (1917–1924), termed the mandates a “fig-leaf” for colonialism.<sup>14</sup> Sir Percy

12 Susan Pedersen, “The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32, no. 4 (2006): 560–582.

13 As recently shown, this brilliant formula was found by Vladimir I. Lenin. The communists in Russia dealt with it extensively long before Wilson and other politicians in western states addressed it. The latter adopted this political slogan because of its great popularity and widespread appeal in the eastern countries of Europe. Jörg Fisch, *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker. Die Domestizierung einer Illusion* (Munich: Beck, 2010), 151–154.

14 Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East, 22 November 1919: “And when they talk of handing out mandates for colonies, we

Cox, the first British High Commissioner for Iraq (1920–1923), assumed that this colonial understanding of mandates was due to a bad translation of the term mandate into Arabic, or incorrect renderings in the Arabic press, after the mandate idea became known in Paris.<sup>15</sup> Nationalistic circles in Iraq, a great number of Iraqi politicians, as well as the Muslim population and its religious scholars, all remained unenthusiastic about the mandate right up until its end in 1932. For most of them, Great Britain was a political sovereign, first of an infidel Christian government and second, a mandatory power with limited political authority. Thus, the political language of most Iraqi politicians, the population, and the LoN were divided by a deep gulf that was never crossed, rather it remained a permanent gap in what should have been common ground.

### System of Minority Protection of the League of Nations

In the development of minority rights under international law, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919–1920 represented a historic climax.<sup>16</sup> In those heydays of nationalism minority rights were considered a necessary legal protection against the political and cultural majorities that were created by the new political borders in central and eastern Europe. The new nation-states created after the disintegration of the defeated multinational and multi-religious Prussian, Austrian-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires in World War I thus had to sign treaties or make declarations with special provisions for the protection of minorities.<sup>17</sup> For them, these were a necessary part of becoming a member of the LoN, and this meant their international recognition.

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know very well that it means handing out mandates for spoliation and plunder-handing out to an insignificant section of the world's population the right to exploit the majority of the population of the globe." Lenin, *Collected Works*, trans. George Hanna (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965), 30:151–162.

15 *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*, vol. 2 (1927 [repr. Teddington, 2006]), 87–88.

16 From the vast legal literature, cf. Péter Kovács, *The Protection of Minorities under the Auspices of the League of Nations*, in *The Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law*, ed. Dinah Shelton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 325–344; Li-ann Thio, *Managing Babel: The International Legal Protection of Minorities in the Twentieth Century*, *International Studies in Human Rights* 81 (Leiden: Nijhoff, 2005), 27–98.

17 In total, fifteen agreements of this type were concluded in Paris on the “model” of the Minorities Treaty between the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Poland, signed at Versailles, on 28 June 1919. Other treaties were for example: Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria, 10 September 1919 (Part III Section v Arts. 62–69); Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria,

The LoN developed the first and to date the only system of minority protection under international law. It brought together the forerunners of religious and national protection rights into the triadic concept of “racial, religious, and linguistic protection.”<sup>18</sup> It was based on the principle of equality before the law and pledged for minorities the same civil and political rights the majorities had, and conferred them additional special cultural and religious rights such as the freedom of religion and worship; self-administration and self-organization, including the right to own charitable organizations, social institutions, schools, etc.; and the right to use minority languages in schools and the public domain.

Two aspects were essentially new for this advanced system of minority protection, which should be understood as well as legal positive discrimination. First, its placement “under the guarantee of the LoN,”<sup>19</sup> which before was vested into the Great Powers and often gave them the opportunity to interfere in the internal constitution of other states. “Under the guarantee of the LoN” meant that the legal provisions could not be modified without consent from Geneva, that any member of the Council of the LoN was entitled to call attention to any infraction or even a danger of infraction of minority rights, that the Council may thereupon take such action as it deems appropriate. The second aspect consisted in granting a special right for minorities to submit petitions with grievances to the LoN, if they considered that their rights were violated by their governments.<sup>20</sup>

This protection of racial, religious, and linguistic minorities under international law was also central to A-Mandates. In Iraq, it was implemented with the

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27 November 1919 (Part III Section IV. Arts 49–57), Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Hungary, 4 June 1920 (Part III Section VI Arts 54–60); Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers with Turkey, 24 July 1923 (Part I Section III Arts 37–45). Cf. Carole Fink, *The Minorities Question at the Peace Conference, in The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 Years*, ed. Manfred Boemeke, Publications of the German Historical Institute (Washington: German Historical Institute, 1998), 249–274.

18 All relevant documents from 1920 to 1930 are compiled in LoN, *Protection of Linguistic, Racial or Religious Minorities by the League of Nations. Resolutions and Extracts from the Minutes of the Council, Resolutions and Reports adopted by the Assembly, relating to the Procedure to be followed in questions Concerning the Protection of Minorities*, C.8.M.5.1931.I, Geneva<sup>2</sup> 1931.

19 The legal basis was Article 12 of the Polish Treaty of 1919, which was identical in all minority agreements.

20 Martin Scheuermann, *Minderheitenschutz contra Konfliktverhütung? Die Minderheitenpolitik des Völkerbundes in den zwanziger Jahren*, Materialien und Studien zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung 6 (Marburg/Lahn: Herder Institute, 2000).

legal system under constitutional law<sup>21</sup> and again confirmed by the Iraqi Declaration of Guarantees to the Council of the LoN from May 1932, to which I refer later.

For the officially recognized Iraqi religious minorities these minority rights, which grew out of western European politics and thought, did not bring about any radical change on the ground. They did not abolish, but continued their Ottoman *millet*-system, last amended by the reform edict of the Sublime Porte in February 1856 (*hatt-i hümayun*). This pertains especially to the maintenance of their self-organization and administration and their own religious jurisdiction and courts, which were anachronistic when compared to the otherwise modern judicial system introduced in Iraq. It seems as if the LoN and Great Britain were not as brave as Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) and his government in Turkey in the 1920s, when they radically abolished the traditional religious infrastructure of minorities, even though other problems were created in this process.<sup>22</sup>

However, Iraqi minorities perceived the minority protection under international law very differently. The leaders of the Jewish community rejected them entirely, on the grounds of their identification as Arabs, and therefore already an integral part of the new Iraqi state and society; for this reason the Jews refused any special treatment. By contrast, for the religious and ethnic minorities who had not been officially recognized, the special protection rights offered a historic chance for their societal and communal transition into the new political age. This was particularly true for Assyrian Christians, Baha'is, and Kurds, all of whom made extensive use of them.

### *Iraqi Jews*

The history of Iraqi Jewry and the minority rights of the LoN can be told quickly. A month after the British military conquest of Mosul, in November 1918, fifty-eight prominent Baghdadi Jews came as political-economic representatives of the three mostly urban communities of Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra, and peti-

21 Article 3 of the Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and Iraq, signed at Bagdad, 10 October 1922 (Cmd. 2370 Treaty Series No. 17 [1925]); Articles 6, 12, 13, 16, 18, 69, 73, 75, 78, 79, 80, 112 in the Constitution of 1925.

22 The most serious result was that the recognized religious minorities lost their status as legal entities. Their leaders could no longer operate as official representatives of their communities to address their needs and interests to the government on a legal basis. They were not able to conduct their own businesses, for example, to sell properties. Thus, their dependence on state authorities was increased and reached a critical point when the appointment of a new chief rabbi or patriarch was needed.

tioned the British Acting Civil Commissioner Arnold T. Wilson (1918–1920). They asked for the preservation of the “free opportunity for economic and educational development”; these they believed to be the main pillars that would guarantee their history and communal life in the country. The petitioners asked for British citizenship, since they mistrusted the ruling political and administrative abilities of local politicians and inhabitants. But their main concern with such a local government was its “very strong theocratical character due to the dominance of religious feelings which are unreconcilable with the idea of giving to alien confessions any sort of privilege or rights.”<sup>23</sup> Therefore, at the end of 1918 Jewish representatives voted in the referendum for direct British administration.<sup>24</sup> Later, the mandate regime fulfilled their expectation in part, since it meant a dual governmental organization: a British administration and Arab government, with King Fayṣal I as its head (1921–1933). Nevertheless, Iraqi Jews remained loyal citizens, they identified themselves with the new body politic, and their representatives worked closely with the government. This attitude was not only because of strategic reasons, which minorities must always bear in mind, but also because of their identification and self-understanding as part of the Arabic culture and history of the country.<sup>25</sup>

Essentially, the communal aim of Iraqi Jewry after 1920 was integration and not segregation from the new social and political fabric. Although their doubts about Arab political rule never changed fundamentally, their representatives continued to oppose steps to obtain recognition as a national minority. In view of the termination of the mandate regime in 1932, the far-sighted statesman Sasun Hisqail (1860–1932), member of the Iraqi delegation to Geneva, once more emphasized before the LoN that Iraqi Jews consider themselves as Iraqis and therefore do not need special minority rights.<sup>26</sup> It should be mentioned that at this time several international Jewish organizations, such as the Joint

23 “The Jews of Baghdad Petition for British Citizenship at the End of World War I,” published in *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 256–258.

24 L/P&S/10/755, Self Determination in ‘Iraq, English Text, Febr. 1919/Arabic Text, May 1919, 24.26/ Decl. No. 13 (5)-Baghdad; Decl. No. 14 (3)-Musul, in *Iraq Administration Reports 1914–1932*, vol. 3, ed. Robert L. Jarman (Slough: Archive Editions, 1992), 26.28. 61.67.

25 Orit Bashkin, *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 1–57.

26 AIR 23/806, Secret Report. Appendix A The Jews of Iraq, 9th July 1934, in *Records of Iraq, 1914–1966*, vol. 7, ed. Alan de L. Rush and Jane Priestland (Slough: Archive Editions, 2001), 630. S. Hisqail was a member of the Ottoman parliament (1908–1918), minister of finance in Iraq (1920–1925), and Baghdad deputy to the parliament.

Foreign Committee,<sup>27</sup> the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and the American Jewish Committee refrained from intervening on behalf of Iraqi Jews at the international level and respected the rejection by Iraqi Jews of minority rights.<sup>28</sup> Concerning the years after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, there were no traces of this reluctance.

### *Assyrian Christians*<sup>29</sup>

In the broad spectrum of oriental Christianity, Assyrian Christians represent a singular ecclesiastical tradition because of their dyophysite Christology, which distinguishes them from other oriental Christians. With a history dating back more than 1,500 years, this ancient Syriac-tradition was widespread from Mesopotamia to India. At its height, the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, as it is known today, numbered several million. After the Mongol invasions and devastations in the Middle East, the Church of the East never regained its previous greatness. Its members retreated to mountainous areas in northern Mesopotamia, northwest Iran, and southeastern Turkey, where they merged into a tribal confederation. Under this status, Assyrian Christians entered the new political order of nation-states after World War I. For them, minority protection rights became, over the years, an important argument in their long struggle against their communal integration into the Iraqi state and society. The main aim for the patriarchal family and most of the tribes, especially for the leading Tiyari and Tkhuma from the Hakkari region (so-called “mountaineers”), today in Turkey, was to preserve their traditional tribal identity, organization, and religious-political order with the Catholicos as spiritual and temporal leader. Assyrian Christians fought a fierce battle on the national and international levels; this lasted until 1948, when Catholicos Mar Shimun Eshai (1908–1975) finally advised his flock in Iraq to integrate as loyal citizens.<sup>30</sup>

Even though the issue of minority rights for Assyrian Christians reached its climax after the period considered here, the events between 1920 and 1932 cannot be easily summarized, as in the case of Iraqi Jews, because archival

27 UNOGL, LoN Archives, s345/No. 2/28–33, Iraq Minorities: The Joint Foreign Committee was a merger of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and Anglo-Jewish Association and addressed foreign matters.

28 American Jewish Committee, “Meeting of the Executive Committee,” 14 February 1932, Rights of Minorities in Iraq, available online: [www.ajcarchives.org](http://www.ajcarchives.org), accessed January 2014.

29 For the sake of historical accuracy I use this term, though the term “Assyrians” is more widespread in the literature.

30 Letter to Mar Khnanisho, 9 August 1948, in *Light from the East Published by the Patriarchal Council, Inc. of the Church of the East. A Collection of 27 Issues from 1948 to 1954*, 1.1 (1948), 7.

and other newly published sources compel us to examine other perspectives than those usually presented in the official historiography of Assyrian Christians.

After 1920 Assyrian Christians in Iraq were in quite a different situation than that of Iraqi Jews, not just because of their tribal constitution and tough, almost militant identity. After the barbarities of the Ottomans and Kurds at the beginning of World War I, most Assyrian Christians fled from southeast Turkey (Hakkari) to northwest Iran, since Christians were generally considered traitors in Turkey. Furthermore, because of moving battle fronts after the end of 1917 and their unsuccessful rebellion against the Turks, most Assyrian Christians ended up trekking southward to the British occupied zone in Mesopotamia.<sup>31</sup> Starvation and cold on these long dramatic flights of approximately 47,000 persons<sup>32</sup> caused several thousand deaths and further decimated the ancient Apostolic Church of the East (ACE), even beyond the traumatic massacres at the hands of the Ottomans and Kurds during and following 1915.<sup>33</sup>

The vast majority of Assyrian Christians in Iraq were thus refugees, with the exception of smaller tribes in the Barwari region (in the Dohuk governorate, Mosul province), who had lived there from ancient times. Until 1921 they found shelter in the British camps in Ba'quba near Baghdad and afterwards in Mandan, east of Mosul.<sup>34</sup> From the outset, their primary aim was to return to their mountain homes, which were now in Turkish and Iranian territory, but various schemes on their account proved unsuccessful, as the Turkish and Iranian governments rejected the refugee policy.

31 See the eyewitness account in *An Assyrian Odyssey Covering the Journey of Kasha Yacoub Yawvre and his Wife Mourassa from Urmia to the Court of Queen Victoria 1879–1881 and The Exodus of Assyrians from their Ancestral Home 1918*, comp. and annot. by Youel A. Baaba (Alamo: Youel A. Baaba Library, 2000), 81–132. See also Joel E. Werda, *The Flickering Light of Asia, or the Assyrian Nation and Church* (Chicago, 1924 [repr. 1990, 2011]), 60 ff.; Mohammad Gh. Majd, *Persia in World War I and its Conquest by Great Britain* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003), 209–218, 243–250.

32 Unofficial figure in *L'Asie Française* 174 (Oct. 1918–Jan. 1919), 158.

33 Hannibal Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Sudan* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), 237–276; Sébastien de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide: Eastern Christians, the Last Arameans*, trans. Vincent Aurora (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2004).

34 In October 1919 they numbered 24,579 persons. (Office of the Civil Commissioner, "Memoranda on the Armenian and Assyrian Refugees at present in Camp Ba'qūba Mesopotamia," Baghdad 1919). For a detailed presentation see also Herbert H. Austin, *The Baqubah Refugee Camp: An Account of Work on Behalf of the Persecuted Assyrian Christians* (London, 1920 [repr. 2006]).



Beside these external dire straits, Assyrian Christians were also internally weakened, due to leadership rivalries at the ecclesiastical and the secular/political level. They were unsettled until the mid-1920s. In May 1920 the sick Catholicos Mar Shimun Paulus died in Ba'quba and Mar Shimun Eshai, who was 12 at the time, was consecrated one month later as his successor. This triggered the vehement protest of the Mar Abimalek Timotheos from Trichur/India (1878–1945), who felt he should be involved as a high ranking ecclesiastical figure.<sup>35</sup> The conflict was solved when Mar Abimelek Timotheos was named as regent of Mar Shimun Eshai until his coming of age. At the secular/political level, General Agha Petros (1880–1932) was a main actor in the battle for the political cause of the Assyrian Christians, who sought autonomy, and failing that, a semi-independent status in the corner of the three countries of Iraq, Turkey, and Iran.<sup>36</sup> In addition, several Assyrian Christians from around the world petitioned the relevant politicians, beginning at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919–1920 and continuing until the Conference of Lausanne in 1922–1923.<sup>37</sup>

Lady Surma (1883–1975), aunt of the new Catholicos, was a crucial longtime player in charge of the secular/political affairs of the ACE.<sup>38</sup> Allied with her brother David d'Mar Shimun (1889–1974), father of Mar Shimun Eshai and commander of the Assyrian Levies, she fought unwaveringly to secure the ancient religious-political identity and order of the ACE in the new world of nation states; for most Assyrian Christians, living under Arab rule was unimaginable. When faced with the reduction of the mandate regime in Iraq from twenty to four years in April 1923,<sup>39</sup> they were deeply upset. Lady Surma reported to

35 The official version presents Theodore d' Mar Shimun, *The History of the Patriarchal Succession of the D'Mar Shimun Family* (Mar Shimun Foundation 2008), 97–101. Related to the protest of Mar Timotheos Abimalek see Mar Aprem Mookan, *The History of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Twentieth Century with Special reference to the Syrian Literature in Kerala* (Kottayam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 2003), 138–142.

36 He worked together with the British government in London, with Sir Percy Cox in Iraq, and with the French and Turkish government. The biography and role of Agha Petros in the history of the ACE still remain to be written.

37 Joseph Yacoub, *La Question Assyro-Chaldéenne, les Puissances Européennes et la Société des Nations (1908–1938)* (Lyon: University of Lyon II, 1984), 1:91–126, 135–181.

38 For a rather hagiographic presentation, see Claire Weibel Yacoub, *Surma l'Assyro-chaldéenne (1883–1975) dans la tourmente de Mésopotamie*, *Peuples et cultures de l'Orient* (Paris: Harmattan, 2007).

39 The Treaty of Alliance with Iraq of October 1922 stirred up fierce debates in Great Britain, e.g., in the House of Commons on 20 February 1923 (HC, Deb 20 Febr. 1923, vol. 161 cc2399–2471, also available online Hansard 1803–2005 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/>, accessed February 2014). As a result, the new British-Iraqi Protocol of the 30th

William A. Wigram (1872–1953), former head of the mission of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Assyrian Christians and a longstanding supporter of the ACE, about their petition to Sir Henry Dobbs, the British High Commissioner for Iraq (1923–1928). She summarized their situation and claims as follows:

In July 3rd (os) we had a meeting here in Bebaydi of the Assyrian chiefs and Bishops, to discuss their future, in case, that British did leave 'Iraq after 4 years. To go under Turkey again is out of the question with them all; as to their relations with Arab Governments, they are willing (as long the British Government remains in 'Iraq, and are allied with them) to work with and be in harmony with them; but all their doings to go through British officials. The Assyrians are very unwilling to put themselves direct under Arab Government.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the known anti-Arab/Islamic feelings and identity of the leading Assyrian Christians, their claim for political autonomy was based on three pillars. The first was the British “promise” of political support for an “Assyrian homeland” (a promise which remained unproven and unconfirmed despite British archival investigations), on the basis of their alliance with Great Britain in World War I.<sup>41</sup> Despite this conflict, the British government was an indirect supporter of the ACE through the Assyrian levies. This military unit offered the only stable source of income for Assyrian Christians in Iraq. The second pillar of their anti-Arab position was their awareness of the inter-church aid of the Archbishop of Canterbury and other Anglican clerics, which Lady Surma established anew with her visit to London in 1920, though their Catholicos had denounced it in the 1910s. Later, when the patriarchal family realized that they would not receive any support in their political aims from the British, the minority rights of the LoN became the third pillar. Mar Shimun Eshai in

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of April, 1923 was concluded; this reduced the Mandate term to four years (Cmd. 2120, London 1924).

40 AIR 23/449, “The Residency Baghdad 4th August 1923 to Lady Surma Mar Shimun,” in *Minorities in the Middle East: Christian Minorities 1838–1967. Assyrian Communities in the Levant and Iraq, Part I, 1880–1938*, vol. 7, ed. Bejtullah D. Destani (Slough: Archive Editions, 2007), 208.

41 This later became the British “betrayal,” very firmly pronounced in *The Assyrian Tragedy* (Annemasse: Granchamp, 1934 [repr. 2010]) and Yusuf Malik, *The British Betrayal of the Assyrians* (Chicago: Assyrian National Federation, 1935). The British side presents John Fisher, “Man on the Spot: Captain George Gracey and British Policy towards the Assyrians, 1917–45,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 2 (2008): 215–235.

particular used these rights as a last straw and weapon to achieve his goal of maintaining his position as Catholicos (religious and temporal head of the ACE).

A crucial date for the history of Assyrian Christians in Iraq was the recognition of the border line between Turkey and Iraq in December 1925. This decision nullified their hopes of recovering their former homes in Hakkari, since this region remained part of Turkey and its government categorically refused to resettle any Assyrian Christians on Turkish soil.<sup>42</sup>

Before turning to events after December 1925, let us look first at the inquiry of the frontier commission of the LoN in Mosul at the beginning of 1925, as this inquiry was important in several respects. Turkey and Great Britain quarreled about the location of the border between Turkey and Iraq from the end of 1918. Ankara insisted that Mosul province be a legal part of Turkey and thus that the southern line of the province be the border to Iraq. London believed that because the territory had already been conquered the northern line of the province should be its border. As expected, their bilateral negotiations failed, and the Mosul dispute was brought before the LoN. What followed was one of the LoN's most prominent successful arbitration cases in its history—for Great Britain and Iraq, but not for Turkey.<sup>43</sup> The inquiry of the frontier commission in Iraq in 1925 was part of this mediation procedure in Geneva, but it was also a further touchstone for the LoN's system of minority protection in the Middle East. Though to date it has not been explored deeply,<sup>44</sup> we can say that it was a multi-dimensional clash of political and cultural differences—a dialogue of the deaf and mute, between the “civilized world” and “backward people.”

In application of the principle of political self-determination and minority protection, the frontier commission of the LoN had a threefold task. First, to

42 John Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East: Encounters with Western Christian Missions, Archaeologists, and Colonial Powers*, Studies in Christian Mission 26 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), 175–185.

43 From current research studies, see Aryo Makko, “Arbitrator in a World of Wars. The League of Nations and the Mosul Dispute, 1924–1925,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 21, no. 4 (2010): 631–649; Sarah Shields, “Mosul, the Ottoman Legacy and the League of Nations,” *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 3, no. 2 (2009): 217–230; Stephen J. Stillwell, *Anglo-Turkish Relations in the Interwar Era*, Studies in British History 73 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2003), 67–120; Mesut Özcan, “Border Concept and Turkey-Iraq Border,” *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies* 13 (2002): 41–85. See also Joseph Yacoub, *La Question*, 2:245–273.

44 Péter Kovács, “Paul Teleki et le règlement de l’affaire de Mossoul dans la Société des Nations,” *Miskolc Journal of International Law* 1, no. 2 (2004): 156–187; István Klinghammer and Gábor Gercsák, “Der ungarische Geograph Pál Teleki als Mitglied der Mossul-Kommission,” *Cartographica Helvetica* 19 (1999): 17–25.

hear the three parties in conflict: the governments of Turkey, Great Britain, and Iraq; second, to collect data and information about the conflict; and third, to determine the wishes of the population directly concerned, on the question of whether the province of Mosul should be part of Turkey or Iraq. Its members were the Swedish diplomat and head of the commission Carl Einar af Wirsén (1879–1946), the geographer and former prime minister of Hungary Pál Teleki (1879–1941), and the Belgian officer Albert Paulis (1875–1933). They spent almost three months from January to March 1925 in Iraq in the company of British, Iraqi, and Turkish advisors. But since their main commitment was to the principles of impartiality and the formation of independent opinions, they were eager to demonstrate their independence, and especially feared the domination and influence of British officials, which were well known in Geneva. On this ground, the LoN troika planned, for example, to go alone and in secret to the destinations in the more rural areas of the Mosul region. After intense discussions they heeded British advice and used military escorts. Despite difficult odds the officials from Geneva managed to consult a large part of the population in the province of Mosul; and determined at the end that a majority favored political affiliation to the Iraqi state.

The hearing of tribal leaders (*maliks*) and chiefs of the Assyrian Christians<sup>45</sup> took place on 7 February 1925. A few days later they submitted a petition to the troika asking for a direct LoN mandate for their homelands, and failing that, a British protectorate. If their territories were to come under Turkish or Iraqi sovereignty, nothing would remain for them but emigration.<sup>46</sup> We cannot ignore the fact that Assyrian Christians clearly expressed their unwillingness to live under Arab-Iraqi or Turkish governance. This aspect, and not persistent persecution or “Islamic oppression” as their historiography would have us believe, should be seen as the main characteristic of their history in these years.

In its final report, the frontier commission considered a variety of solutions for the disputed territory. Without the presence of the mandatory power it would be better for Mosul province to belong to Turkey, since Turkey’s political situation was more stable than that of Iraq. The partition of the Mosul

45 The commission estimated their total number around 25,000. Of these, 5,000 were from Persia, 14,000 were in the Mosul province, and 6,000 were from the Hakkari region. LoN, C.400.M.147.1925.VII, Question de la frontière entre la Turquie et l’Irak. Rapport présenté au Conseil par la Commission constituée en vertu de la résolution du 30 septembre 1924/Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq. Report submitted to the Council by the Commission instituted by the Council Resolution of September 30th, 1924, 16th July 1925, 5–90, here 82.

46 UNOGL, LoN Archives, S14/D19, Assyriens.

province on racial considerations was not recommended because the population was ethnically intermingled.<sup>47</sup> Finally, they favored the “Brussels” line; that is, if this was to be the final border and the province of Mosul was to belong to Iraq, then the prolongation of the mandate of the LoN—actually lasting until 1927—would be indispensable, at least for twenty-five years. The commission advised that special regard should be paid to the establishment of a Kurdish administration, that a representative of the LoN should be appointed to smooth out complaints and grievances of the minorities on the ground, and special measures should be taken for these minorities, such as assurances of religious freedom and the establishment of their own schools. Assyrian Christians should have a certain local autonomy with its own officials. Eventually, in the process of its practical implementation, most of these recommendations were skipped.

After further tough negotiations in Geneva, on 16 December 1925 the “Brussels” line was ultimately declared as the border between Iraq and Turkey. The British efforts to recover the Hakkari region for the Assyrian Christians were unsuccessful; they were now unequivocally under Turkish sovereignty. On this basis and according to the wishes expressed before the frontier commission, the leaders of the Assyrian Christians petitioned Sir Henry Dobbs on 14 February 1926. Since this petition, written in English and modern Syriac, is mostly unknown, I quote a long passage:

But on the 17th December 1925 we learned that the League of Nations declared Mosul for Iraq under the British Mandate with its temporary boundary, and that our land was to remain in the Turkish Territories,<sup>48</sup> [so by learning this] our hopes were frustrated. While this is fact, now our mind is not changed and our requests are the same first one which has been submitted to your Excellency, i.e. either our small lands under the British Mandate, to be returned at any possible way, if not, we beg to immigrate us to any of the British Colonies were [where] the climate and water would suit us, and [where] we would be relieved from our

47 LoN, C.400.M.147.1925.VII, Question, 87.

48 This refutes J. Joseph's assertion that the decision of the LoN was not communicated to the Assyrian Christians, most probably because it was suppressed by the mandatory government (*Modern Assyrians*, 185). It would be interesting to know how Assyrian Christians in Iraq indeed learned just one (!) day after the official decision in Geneva. Joseph further states, incorrectly: “Not aware that their settlement claims had been forfeited, the Assyrians looked naively forward to the day when their wrongs would be righted ...” In what follows here, we do not see any naiveté.

anxieties, miseries and dark future; because in Iraq we cannot live in any way. As our request is simple and we are a very small nation (or family), we trust that the British Government will take a kind action, and we shall be granted one of the two humble requests. We believe that our request will be heard and will receive a favourable [sic] reply.<sup>49</sup>

The main signatories of the petition were David d' Mar Shimun, Lady Surma, and twenty other tribes, which I quote in their original English spelling:

1. Mar Yosip Metropolitan of Shamsdinan, Tergawar & Margawar; 2. Mar Zaya Serguis, Bishop of Jeloo, Baz and Beekon; 3. Lower Tiary; 4. Upper Tiary; 5. Thkoomar; 6. Jeloo; 7. Baz; 8. Deiz; 9. Gawar; 10. Shamsdinan; 11. Barwar;<sup>50</sup> 12. Marbisho & Eil; 13. Ttal; 14. AlBas, 15; Sarra-Mamidayee; 16. Timarydvan; 17. Noodez; 18. Leivon; 19. Guiramoon; 20. Barmayee d'Urmarr.

This petition reached Geneva, but in April 1926 the file was noted "no action."<sup>51</sup> Lack of available documentation makes it impossible for us to reconstruct the reaction of the unsuccessful petitioners. Apparently, no signs of protest followed.

Despite this will to emigrate, in 1926 the mandatory and Iraqi administration began to settle the Assyrian Christians in the northern part of Mosul province, close to Turkey. At the end of 1928, H.A. Foweraker, British Assyrian Settlement officer, reports about their situation:

The Assyrians have now grown accustomed to their situation in 'Iraq. Their relations with the officials of the 'Iraq Government are good and a number recently petitioned the Mosul liwa authorities stating that they wished in future to deal directly with the local officials without interference from their Patriarch, the Mar Shimun. Poverty no longer exists among them and through their thrift and the large pay derived from their employment in the Levies, they have become man for man more prosperous than their Kurdish, Yazidi, and Christian neighbours [sic]. The

49 UNOGL, LoN Archives, R610/11/50818/25888, *Délimitation de la frontière entre la Turquie et l'Irak*.

50 Those mentioned are Hassan Eshoo, Shamasha Salim, Yonan Hormizd, Syamoo Tooma, but not their chief, Mar Yalda Yawallaha, of whom we will hear in 1932.

51 UNOGL, LoN Archives, R610/11/50818/25888, *Délimitation de la frontière entre la Turquie et l'Irak*.

fears of the Patriarchal Party are, however, being justified. As the Assyrians grow in prosperity and establish themselves in scattered villages, they are showing themselves more and more inclined to throw off the yoke of the Patriarchal authority, and Lady Surma is keeping the young Patriarch, Mar Shimun so jealously to her apron strings that he is losing prestige and touch with his peoples.<sup>52</sup>

Beside these internal leadership conflicts, which can be gathered also from other external sources, the almost treacherous tranquility described here did not last very long. It ended with the new Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and Iraq of 30 June 1930, which was concluded in preparation for the termination of the mandate regime in Iraq in October 1932. But at the end of 1929, after the British and other supporters of the Assyrian Christians learned that this treaty did not contain clauses for minority protection, a storm broke out in London. Captain Anthony H. Rassam (1883–?), son of the well-known archaeologist Hormuzd Rassam (1826–1910), went to northern Iraq to collect fresh information on the ground. After his return, in June 1930, he founded the Iraq Minorities (Non-Moslem) Rescue Committee,<sup>53</sup> and in September 1930 sent a voluminous petition of over eighty pages to Geneva, to which the previously mentioned Arnold T. Wilson made substantial contributions.<sup>54</sup>

Besides this short-lived committee of A. Rassam,<sup>55</sup> we must mention two other important and well-established groups that advocated on behalf of Assyrian Christians. The first, founded in 1925, is the British Assyrians and Iraq Chris-

52 FO 731/13027, Intelligence Report No. 25, 5 December 1928, para. 537, in *Records of Iraq 1914–1966*, vol. 5, ed. Alan de L. Rush (Slough: Archive Editions, 2001), 309.

53 The members of the committee were William Ch. Emhardt, Secretary of the Ecclesiastical and Racial Relations Commission of the Episcopal Church of America and of the Assyrian Relief Committee, George F. Gracey, Francis N. Heazell, W.B. Lane, Archibald H. Sayce, William A. Wigram, the Assyriologist David S. Margoliouth, Herbert W. Ward, Hugh Seymour Hall (treasurer), and E. Hollands (secretary). Initially, the committee was supported in part by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but he later distanced himself from A. Rassam.

54 UNOGL, LoN Archives, R2317/6A/22528/655 Jacket 4+5, Iraq. Situation of Assyrian Christians in Iraq.

55 After some further letters to Geneva and three appeals for donations (dated 31 January 1931, 17 August 1931, and 31 October 1931), it seems that he refrained from further relief actions. Only the last appeal was published by Nelida Fuccaro, "An Appeal from The Iraq (non-Muslim) Minorities Rescue Committee, 1931," in *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook for History*, ed. Camron M. Amin et al., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 240–243.

tians Committee<sup>56</sup> and the second is the Iraq Committee<sup>57</sup> of the League of Nations Union (LNU). Given the lack of research about their (common?) activities and overlapping memberships, at present no accurate conclusions are possible. Most probably, the Iraq Committee of the LNU came into existence during their collective efforts to safeguard minority rights in Iraq in the time after the termination of the mandate. The outstanding classical scholar Sir Gilbert Murray (1866–1957), chairman of the LNU, was deeply involved in this matter. In May 1931 he sent a draft declaration with suggestions for minority protection in Iraq, but unexpectedly refrained from pursuing his proposals just one month later.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, his intervention succeeded: in May 1932 the Iraqi government was constrained to give a Declaration of guarantees before the Council of the LoN.<sup>59</sup> It was the most comprehensive declaration ever given to Geneva: Nine of a total of sixteen articles concern issues of minorities (freedom of religion, cultural autonomy, etc.).

Mar Shimun Eshai and his supporters were alarmed by the upcoming termination of the mandate regime in Iraq. The political outlook to remain in Iraq without British protection opened a new round in their irreconcilable battle against the Iraqi government and their societal integration into the Iraqi state and society. After internal consultations, Mar Shimun Eshai sent petitions on 20 and 23 October 1931 to Geneva, in which he stated that it was impossible for them to live in Iraq without British protection. As before, in February 1926, he asked for the resettlement of Assyrian Christians outside Iraq, this time in a European country.<sup>60</sup> However, again Mar Shimun Eshai's

56 By Leo S. Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies (1924–1929), the befriended Henry S. Lunn (1859–1939), Methodist reverend, editor of the *Review of the Churches* and a forgotten transnational ecumenical figure. Its president was Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury (1903–1928).

57 In the 1930s their members were Sir Gilbert Murray (president), Reginald M. Banks (House of Commons), Lord Willoughby H. Dickinson (British liberal parliamentarian and one of the founding leaders of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches), Reverend Alan Don (as representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury), Martin (editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*), J. Gilbert Browne (brigadier of the Assyrian Levies in Irak (1925–1933)), Frederick Lugard (member of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the LoN), the aforementioned George F. Gracey, David S. Margoliouth, Ronald S. Stafford (former Administrative Inspector in Mosul), William A. Wigram, and Arnold T. Wilson.

58 UNOGL, LoN Archives, R2315/6A/21103/655, Mandate over Iraq. Cessation of the Mandate. Correspondence with various individuals and associations, 50.70–78.

59 LoN Official Journal, July (1932), 1347–1350 (A.17.1932.VII).

60 UNOGL, LoN Archives, R2318 Jacket6/6A/22528/655, Situation of Assyrian Christians in



efforts were unsuccessful. In growing despair before October 1932 the patriarchal family, the Assyrian levies, and other tribal leaders reversed the migration plan of October 1931 and resorted to pressuring the British Mandate administration to grant their request for a homogenous “national” settlement. The Assyrian levies started a mutiny and announced that the termination of their military service for Great Britain would begin on 1 July 1932. Simultaneously, a “national” petition of 17 June 1932 was sent to Sir Francis Humphrys, British High Commissioner for Iraq (1929–1932). It comprised nine demands, including the official recognition of Assyrian Christians in Iraq as a “millet” (a separate nation), and not merely a racial or religious minority; the restitution of their former territories in the Hakkari region or, if this was not possible, the allocation of an autonomous territory in the Amadiya district (close to the Turkish border) with the recognition of Mar Shimun Eshai as temporal leader; financial compensation for lost church properties; political representation in the Iraqi House of Deputies; and the establishment of schools and a hospital.<sup>61</sup>

In this crucial historical moment the faction opposed to Mar Shimun, usually silenced in the official historiography, also gained momentum. Mar Yalda Yawallaha of Barwari (1890–1950) and his supporters sent a counter-petition to the Iraqi government, and this was transmitted to the LoN. This small group of dissenters asked that the demands of Mar Shimun Eshai and his followers should not be considered, since they were aimed at “his own benefit and those of his relatives and friends” and this group asked that they be “permitted to live in peace and tranquility under the Iraqi flag.”<sup>62</sup> The commitment of the small tribe of Barwari Assyrian Christians to the Iraqi state and their resistance to the course of action of the patriarchal family and leading tribes can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that they had been settled in Iraq for a long time and had long considered it their homeland.

Neither the demands of Mar Shimun Eshai nor those of Mar Yalda Yawallaha of Barwari were fulfilled. Iraq gained full sovereignty on 3 October 1932 and became a member of the LoN. For Assyrian Christians this was the fulfillment of their political nightmare, i.e., Arab-Islamic rule without British protection.

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Iraq, 5–6. The petition of 20 October 1931 (FO 371/16033) is published in *Records of Iraq 1914–1966*, vol. 6, ed. Alan de L. Rush (Slough: Archive Editions, 2001), 572.

61 It is published in *Iraq Administration Reports 1914–1932*, vol. 10, ed. Robert L. Jarman (Slough: Archive Editions, 1992), 475–476.

62 UNOGL, LoN Archives, R2318 Jacket6/6A/22528/655, C.P.M. 1298, Situation of Assyrian Christians in Iraq, 143–144.

Their exasperation was enormous. Mar Shimun Eshai began a flood of petitions to the LoN; he resorted to the “sacred minorities’ guarantees,” as he called them once in a letter to Geneva (4 August 1933). At this point, the situation on the ground changed completely. Iraqi Kurdish armed forces attacked the rebellious tribes of Assyrian Christians, which began a collective move to the French mandated territory. The suppression of the rebellion got out of control and ended in a civilian massacre. After these traumatic events, for Assyrian Christians a life in “peace and tranquility” was no longer within the realm of possibility, rather a new protracted and exhausting stage of their concrete de-territorialization<sup>63</sup> began; this did not end until their resettlement in Syria was brought to an end in 1937.

In conclusion, this brief presentation of the LoN, A-Mandates, and the system of minority protection under international law reveals in Iraq a shared history. The political hopes for the national sovereignty of large parts of the Iraqi population hindered the wider understanding of A-Mandates as international administration and political trusteeship on behalf of the LoN against a much more familiar formula of British colonial rule. This uneasy situation, somehow “lost in translation” (P. Cox), did not find a political common ground during the twelve years of the mandate. The shared history of the LoN and Iraq was based rather on asymmetric entanglements, as the encounter of the frontier commission in 1925 and the mandatory declaration of guarantees of May 1932 show.

The system of minority protection under the guarantee of the LoN reveals further gaps in common ground. Iraqi Jews rejected it completely, while Assyrian Christians and their British advocacy groups used minority rights extensively for the preservation of their historical religious-political church organization in the new world order of nation-states. This history of the Assyrian Christians offers a unique example of the achilles heel of the system of minority protection of the LoN in limiting state sovereignty, and also generally in its entire history of minority protection. Even if the case of the tiny community of Assyrian Christians in Iraq is singular, it shows clearly, that without the LoN things would certainly have taken another course, as would their resettlement to Syria under the direct responsibility of the Council of the LoN. Thus,

63 That is to say, preparing the ideological de-territorialization in 1948, when Mar Shimun Eshai officially renounced his temporal powers over the ACE. See Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “Light from the East (1948–1954) and the de-territorialization of the Assyrian Church in the East,” in *Religion beyond its Private Role in Modern Society*, ed. Wim K. Hofstee and Arie van der Kooij, *International Studies in Religion and Society* 20 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2013), 115–134.

focusing on the LoN as an independent actor leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the history of Assyrian Christians of Iraq. This may be true of the broader Middle East, but this remains to be revealed.

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## “Soundtracks of Jerusalem”: YouTube, North African Rappers, and the Fantasies of Resistance

A. Boum

Known derogatively to students as AWACS,<sup>1</sup> a group of idle security officers stood in the corners and alleys leading to different buildings of Cadi Ayyad University Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences in Marrakesh. The students, dressed in Palestinian scarves known as *kufiya*, gathered, walked, and stood in lines celebrating the international Day of Jerusalem (*yawm al-Quds*); they were unfazed by the security guards' watchful gaze.<sup>2</sup> They sang poems commemorating the Islamic identity of the city, carried Palestinian flags and banners of its symbols, and pasted flyers of the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque over campus walls.

Since independence the Moroccan government has kept a close surveillance on university campuses, which presented political threats to its survival. Political life inside university campuses was managed by the Union Nationale des Étudiants du Maroc (UNEM) through its chapters in cities such as Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakesh, and Fès. Since its establishment in 1956, the activities of UNEM “closely paralleled those of outside political forces opposed to the regime.”<sup>3</sup> UNEM sided with leftist secular political forces opposed to the monarchy until the early 1980s when its leadership started to be dominated by students affiliated with Islamic movements. The rise of Islamic political ideologies as a political alternative to less popular Marxist ideas, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, became obvious through the students' affiliations within the UNEM and its branches in different Moroccan campuses. Despite the fact that all ideological camps, with a few exceptions, within the UNEM support the Palestinian cause including the question of Jerusalem, the Islamic

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- 1 AWACS, which stands for the mobile long range radar surveillance and air defense control, is used by students to refer to security officers on campuses.
  - 2 Al-Quds is the Arabic name of Jerusalem; it is known in Hebrew as Yerushalayim. Throughout the paper I use the word Jerusalem to refer to the city without any ideological connotations.
  - 3 Clement Moore and Arlie Hochschild, “Student Unions in North African Politics,” *Daedalus* 97, no. 1 (1968), 29.



discourse of Palestine began to replace the Marxist revolutionary discourse of independence and the right of self-determination.

On the Day of Jerusalem the majority of Moroccan university campuses are decorated with the red, black, and white colors of the Palestinian flag as a way of expressing the self-identification of Moroccan universities with Palestinian students and joining in their struggle for Jerusalem. Their political manifestations have also served as a critique of the political attitudes of Arab leaders toward the city. Recently, however, UNEM lost a significant part of its political power as a result of decades of internal ideological fights among its Marxist, Leninist, pan-Arab, and Islamic factions. The ideological fights have also weakened the organization and mirror the fractured national political system and fragile political parties that provided leadership for these students.

Nevertheless, the question of Palestine and Jerusalem has remained one of the few issues of agreement within the weakened national student body. As I walked around the covered alleyways, flags, books, leaflets, and songs about Jerusalem and the struggle for Palestinian independence dominated each display stand. I was, however, struck by a number of CDs of the Palestinian rap group DAM on one of the stands. Before I started leafing through a collection of books, brochures, and leaflets, Samir, an undergraduate student, noted:

You can have one. They are free. All thanks to YouTube. If we do not download them and circulate them, nobody will listen to them even though they are available online. You known ... DAM is the best hip hop group to ever sing for Palestine and Jerusalem. I do not like rap music or hip hop but DAM for me is like Mahmoud Darwish. Unlike the fantasy of resistance of these new Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian rappers DAM like Darwish are real voices of resistance. DAM is both online and offline. [North African rappers'] only place of resistance is in the world of YouTube where few people who have the means and time to visit are aware of their existence.<sup>4</sup>

Samir, a member of the banned Justice and Charity Movement, later informed me that online political activism is a form of escapism from reality and that online hip hop is useless without offline political engagement. He argues that North African students and youth have escaped to the Internet instead of challenging regimes of power through direct political participation in and outside university campuses.

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4 Samir, engineering student, interviewed in October 2012.

I like what the Internet did to the regimes across the Arab world. It exposed their political lies as well cultural and social hypocrisies. We knew that our internal cuisine smells very bad, but before the Internet very few were bothered by the smell. They were rarely exposed to it. Now we could take our laundry and expose it to the outside world to see. They cannot ignore [it] anymore. But is this enough ... I think it is not ... Without direct, on-street challenge, the Makhzan has nothing to fear, after all how many people have time to surf or [can] afford to be wired to the Internet.<sup>5</sup>

In the last decades, the Internet, and especially YouTube, has served as a setting for Middle Eastern hip hop artists and North African rappers to voice their political, cultural, and social grievances over the question of Jerusalem. YouTube has partially allowed rural and urban North African youth to go beyond the limited spaces allowed by state-regulated media and political parties' newspapers. Youth and hip hop artists appropriate existing media images and historical narratives of Jerusalem, re-contextualize them, and produce new narratives of the city through a syncretic collage<sup>6</sup> and political pastiche.<sup>7</sup> By using YouTube, young North African rappers capitalize on the technique of sampling and juxtaposing images, speeches, and historical documentation of Israeli and Arab state media and recycle them into new texts with new meanings. This allows Palestinian and other Arab youth to "float in cyberspace" through a "virtual mobility" that challenges state discourses.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, these musical scripts of resistance against state regimes of power lack practical and real civil and political engagement and the potential of a "threatening" political contestation on the ground.

Unlike previous studies on Palestinian music and songs of resistance,<sup>9</sup> I focus largely on an emerging generation of North African hip hop artists and their use of cyberspace, and especially YouTube, to express their political definitions and cultural attitudes about Jerusalem and the conflicting narratives of its ownership. I highlight a corpus of North African hip hop songs on YouTube

5 Samir, engineering student, interviewed in October 2012.

6 Katherine Hoffman, *Collage: Critical Views* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989).

7 Joanna Demers, "Sampling as Lineage in Hip-Hop" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2002).

8 Miriyam Aouragh, "Confined Offline, Traversing Online Palestinian Mobility through the Prism of the Internet," *Mobilities* 6, no. 3 (2011), 391–392.

9 Moslih Kanaaneh, Stig-Magnus Thorsén, Heather Bursheh, and David McDonald, *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance since 1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

by rappers such as Mouad Belghouat known as 'El Haqed,' Lotfi Belamri nicknamed 'Lotfi Double Kanon,' the Keeb brothers, and Mohammed El Guitoni also named 'Guito'N.' I argue that despite the political beliefs held by many North African hip hop artists and university youth, YouTube allows them to expose the political weakness of Arab governments; North African hip hop YouTube scripts of Jerusalem are carnivals of resistance that fetishize Jerusalem without a real threat to the agency of the Israeli or North African states and their entrenched official discourse about the city. It is a fact that Arab hip hop networks of cyber-resistance have allowed youth to create through YouTube new landscapes of contention over Jerusalem and interpretations of past histories of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Using Frank's concept of hip advertising as resistance, I argue that although rappers contend that they are creating radical countercultural movements, they are in fact caught up in a virtual conformist world dominated by advertisement and consumer capitalism. As part of an emerging youth subculture, Samir and other students contend that Jerusalem hip hop is a harmless form of cultural dissent. There is a feeling of paradox between expressions of resistance on YouTube and the objectives of emerging youth countercultures. In this context, North African hip hop songs about Jerusalem become spectacles in the sense that YouTube turns their presumed discourse of resistance into a context of social disengagement and political alienation. They are distracted from openly and directly engaging reality as they are drawn into the interactive and sometimes self-promotional spectacle of YouTube.<sup>10</sup>

### Jerusalem in Modern Islamic Politics

Jerusalem is by far the most visible and significant subject of contention not only in Palestinian-Israeli political debates, but also in Jewish and Muslim literary representations: in bank notes,<sup>11</sup> poems,<sup>12</sup> songs,<sup>13</sup> European travelo-

10 There are few studies that look at states and the use of social media in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The work of Rebecca Stein and Miriyam Aouragh deserves special mention, see Rebecca Stein, "StateTube: Anthropological Reflections on Social media and the Israeli State," *Anthropological Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (2012): 893–916; Miriyam Aouragh, *Palestine Online: Transnationalism, the Internet and Construction of Identity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

11 Michael Bonine, "Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock: Banknotes of Piety, Politics and National Identity," *IBNS Journal* 48, no. 4 (2009): 27–42.

12 For example, Mahmoud Darwish, "Fil al-Quds."

13 David McDonald, *My Voice is my Weapon: Music, Nationalism and the Poetics of Pales-*

gues,<sup>14</sup> photography,<sup>15</sup> and the literary works of Israeli and Arab scholars.<sup>16</sup> The diverse and often conflicting Jewish and Muslim religious loyalties to Jerusalem have served as the base for attachment to the place and its religious sites. Rashid Khalidi writes,

Most importantly, central though Jerusalem is to the Palestinians and to their self-image, it is also central to the self-image of their Israeli adversaries. For both, it is important today as a space, and historically, over time, as an anchor for modern identity. Yet the Israelis control Jerusalem, and are able to expropriate, excavate, label, and describe antiquities there as they please.<sup>17</sup>

This competition and struggle over religious narratives of Jerusalem, its holy sites, and their historical meanings have captured Arab and Muslim populations in and outside Israel/Palestine especially after the 1967 war. In the Arab world, a wider gap began to take shape between states and youth over what members of younger generations see as their uncontested and humiliating

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*tinian Resistance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013). Also see Moslih Kanaaneh, Stig-Magnus Thorsén, Heather Bursheh, and David McDonald, *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance since 1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Joachim Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine: Archaeological, Written and Comparative Sources* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002); Nasser Al-Tae, "Voices of Peace and the Legacy of Reconciliation: Popular Music, Nationalism, and the Quest for Peace in the Middle East," *Popular Music* 21, no. 1 (2002): 41–61.

- 14 Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Jerusalem Travel Literature as Historical Source and the Cultural Phenomenon," in Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Moshe Davis (eds.), *Jerusalem in the Mind of the Western World, 1800–1948* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Press, 1997), 25–46; Jean-Luc Nardone, *La représentation de Jérusalem et de la terre sainte dans les récits de pèlerins européens au XVI siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2007); Marie-Christine Gomez-Geraud, *Le crépuscule du grand voyage: les récits des pèlerins à Jérusalem (1458–1612)* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1999).
- 15 Emmie Donadio, "Seeing is Believing: Auguste Salzmann and the Photographic Representation of Jerusalem," in Tamar Meyer and Suleiman Mourad (eds.), *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 140–154; Issam Nassar, *Photographing Jerusalem: The Image of the City in Nineteenth Century Photography* (Boulder, CO: East European Monograph, 1997).
- 16 Ahmad Harb, "The Image of Jerusalem in Modern Palestinian Literature: A Preliminary Study," *International Journal for Literary Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008): 2–22; Meyer and Mourad (eds.), *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*.
- 17 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: the Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 18.

political subjugation to Israeli policies. Mahdi El Mandjra writes that Arab leaders have forsaken the real battle over Jerusalem and instead use it as a "springboard for other ends."<sup>18</sup> While Arab youth take to the street to denounce what they see as the linguistic, religious, and urban "Judaization"<sup>19</sup> of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and show their support for its Palestinian residents, El Mandjra argues that Arab leaders are more concerned with maintaining their traditional power; Arab leaders have succumbed to what he calls "the overpowering force of linguistic terrorism,"<sup>20</sup> which negatively reinterprets Islam as a force of destruction and silences Muslim and Christian rights over Jerusalem.<sup>21</sup>

In 1975, during the fourth Islamic Conference of foreign ministers held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, King Hassan II (1961–1999) called for the establishment of the al-Quds Committee as a separate unit within the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). He became its president until his death in July 1999 when he was replaced by his son Mohammed VI. Twenty years after 1975, the Islamic Fund for Jerusalem (Bayt Mal al-Quds) was established to raise funds for the conservation of the Islamic character of the old city of Jerusalem. The donations have been used mostly to help residents of East Jerusalem and support public institutions including al-Haram al-Sharif and al-Quds University.<sup>22</sup> In his political approach to the question of Jerusalem, Hassan II argued that Muslims should demand only Muslim sites such as al-Aqsa Mosque and not the Western Wall.<sup>23</sup> In 1979, in clear opposition to Hassan II's initiative, Ayatollah Khomeini, who had major disagreements with Hassan II over his support and reception of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, called for an annual commemoration of Jerusalem on the last Friday of the

18 Mahdi El Mandjra, *Humiliation à l'ère du mega-impérialisme* (Casablanca: Najah El Jadida, 2003), 83.

19 Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Nadia Abu El Haj, "Translating Truths: Nationalism, the Practice of Archeology and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem," *American Ethnologist* 25, no. 2 (1998): 166–188; Thomas Aowde, "The Moroccan Quarter: A History of the Present," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 7 (Winter 2007): 1–16.

20 El Mandjra, *Humiliation à l'ère du mega-impérialisme*.

21 El Mandjra, *Humiliation à l'ère du mega-impérialisme*, 91. Also see Mahdi El Mandjra, *Al Quds, symbole et mémoire* (Marrakesh: Éditions Walili, 1996).

22 Yitzhak Reiter, *Jerusalem and its Role in Islamic Solidarity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 139.

23 Moshe Ma'oz, *Muslim Attitudes to Jews and Israel: The Ambivalence of Rejection, Antagonism, Tolerance and Cooperation* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 17.

month of Ramadan.<sup>24</sup> The event gained great momentum each year and has been celebrated all over the world, especially in the last decades, in which rallies in support of Palestinians took place worldwide, even in western capitals such London and Washington, DC. These protests denounced Zionism and Israeli policies toward Palestinians in general and Jerusalem in particular.<sup>25</sup>

Beyond these official political celebrations of and contentions over the status of Jerusalem and its Islamic character, the Arab and Israeli political struggle over control of the historical narrative and memory of Jerusalem has also been fought through songs, poetry, literature, and material culture. Recently, Israeli, Palestinian, and Middle Eastern youth have turned to rap music and hip hop to enact and reinforce their cultural and religious views of the city through sonic forms of resistance. This movement started first on campus universities where the liberation of Palestine and Jerusalem has always been a central point in the political agenda of the various chapters of North African students unions.<sup>26</sup> These movements were also connected to the cultural and musical productions of Jerusalem and Palestine; productions that allowed the songs and poems of Nizār Qabbānī,<sup>27</sup> Umm Kulthūm, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, Nihād Wadī‘ Ḥaddād (known as Fayrūz), Mahmoud Darwish, Aṣṣala Naṣrī,<sup>28</sup> and Julia Boutros<sup>29</sup> to dominate the soundscapes of North African university campuses.

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- 24 Christiane Gruber, “Jerusalem in the Visual Propaganda of Post-Revolutionary Iran,” in Meyer and Mourad (eds.), *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*, 168–197. Also see Behrouz Souresrafi, *Khomeini and Israel* (England: i Researchers Inc., 1988).
- 25 It should be noted that following the Six-Day War in June 1967, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel declared Yom Yerushalayim/Jerusalem Day a religious holiday to commemorate the reunification of East and West Jerusalem under Israeli control.
- 26 Aomar Boum, “Youth, Political Activism and the Festivalization of Hip-Hop Music in Morocco,” in Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Daniel Zisenwine (eds.), *Contemporary Morocco: State, Politics and Society under Mohammed VI* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 161–177.
- 27 Nizar Qabani, “al-Quds,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uso8NvkaMlg>, accessed 15 April 2015.
- 28 Aṣṣala Naṣrī, “Ya oula al-qiblatayn,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFz4QPZaXg>, accessed 15 April 2015.
- 29 Julia Boutros, “win al-malayin, al-sha’b al-‘arabi win,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdIeSUEuovo>, accessed 15 April 2015.

### Jerusalem: Musical and Poetic Battlefields

Even before the June 1967 Six-Day War changed the geographic map of Palestine/Israel and led to Israeli control of East and West Jerusalem, a different battlefield of songs and music between Arab and Jewish composers and singers had already dominated Middle Eastern musical landscapes. Produced during the 1960s, the historical songs of "Yerushalayim shel zahav" [Jerusalem the golden] by Naomi Shemer<sup>30</sup> and "Zahrat al-madā'in" [The flower of cities] of Fayrūz reflected the artistic and sonic wars over Jewish and Muslim rights to the sacred city. These songs symbolized the lyrics of contestation and division between Muslim/Arab and Jewish/Israeli parties vying for ownership of the city.

"Yerushalayim shel zahav" was produced in the days leading to the 1967 war. Teddy Kollek, the mayor of West Jerusalem, commissioned Shemer to compose the song quickly, by 14 May, for listeners of the 1967 Israel Song Festival. Three weeks later Israel launched a series of air strikes against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan and took control of all of Jerusalem on 7 June 1967, and the song became part of the national folklore and an anthem of victory. In the eyes of Dan Almagor, "Yerushalayim shel zahav" changed the history of the Middle East:

The song was played constantly on the radio throughout this period (before the 1967 War). Had it not been for the song, it's doubtful that there would have been such readiness to change and conquer the city. This was before Gush Emunim and messianism. This song has extraordinary historic import. Paratroopers at the Western Wall didn't pray. They sang the song.<sup>31</sup>

"Yerushalayim shel zahav" came to symbolize a moment in Israeli memory and collective identity to the extent that it became a state-sponsored song. In fact, in 1968 Uri Avnery, a member of the Knesset, proposed that the song be the national anthem instead of "Hatikvah" [The hope]. Avnery saw "Hatikvah" as a song that did not speak for the Arab and Christian classes of Israel. Avnery stated:

30 "Jerusalem of Gold,' Israel Festival Song, Strikes Gold," *Billboard*, 21 October 1967, 44.

31 Michal Palti, "Song of Peace and Song of War: From 'Jerusalem of Gold' to 'Darkenu,' Israeli Songs become Symbols, and Teach us about their Times," *Ha'aretz*, 15 April 2002. Available online: <http://www.haaretz.com/culture/books/song-of-peace-song-of-war-1.47653>.

My position then was essentially a protest against “Hatikvah.” I wanted to propose an alternative song that had a chance of being accepted. I still think that “Hatikvah” is appropriate neither for the Hebrew population nor the Arab public in Israel. It is a song about the yearning for Zion, about homesick longing, and it doesn’t deal with life in this country. “Hatikvah” also separates Jews from the rest of the citizens of Israel.<sup>32</sup>

Despite this debate about the song and its meanings for different members of Israeli society, it managed to capture the soul of Israelis during the 1960s and express their hope and pride.

“Yerushalayim shel zahav” became a symbol of Jewish identity and hope to such an extent that Steven Spielberg ended his film *Schindler’s List* with the song as survivors of the Holocaust lined up outside the Walls of Jerusalem.<sup>33</sup> Despite this celebration of the song among many sections of Israeli society, many Palestinian citizens of Israel argue that the song is more an artistic expression of Jewish narratives and Zionist ideology than the possibility of a Jewish-Muslim coexistence within the city. Azmi Bishara, the former leader of the Balad Party in the Knesset, contends that the song celebrates a collective “Israeli and Zionist wall” between Jews and Arabs.<sup>34</sup> This is a view reflected also in some Palestinian hip hop songs that protest what they see as Israeli musical violence toward Arabs and Israeli artistic silence over the Islamic heritage of the city. Joseph Massad also highlights this Zionist focus of the song and juxtaposes it to Fayrūz’s “Zahrāt al-madā’in.” In her song, Fayrūz stresses the religious and historical diversity of the city:

It is for you that I pray O city of prayer.  
 It is for you O with beautiful building, O flower of the cities.  
 O Jerusalem O Jerusalem O Jerusalem O city of the prayer I pray.  
 Our eyes are set out to you everyday.  
 They walk through the porticos of the temples.  
 Embrace the old churches.  
 And wipe the sadness away from the mosques.

Despite the introductory stanza of “Zahrāt al-madā’in,” which highlights the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic character of the city, Fayrūz and the Raḥbānī

32 Ibid.

33 Many Israelis objected to this use of the song at the end of the movie and a new music replaced “Jerusalem the Gold” in the Hebrew version of *Schindler’s List*.

34 Lawrence Joffe, “Soundtrack to the State,” *Jewish Quarterly* 195 (2004): 19–24.



brothers (Maṣṣūr and ‘Aṣṣī) emphasized the Christian and Islamic history of the city in their composition of the song.<sup>35</sup> If “Yerushalayim shel zahav” symbolized the Jewish claim over the city, Arab listeners adopted “Zahrat al-madā’in”; in the larger sonic battles over Jerusalem, “Zahrat al-madā’in” is still one of the most celebrated songs in the Arab world.

Fayrūz and the Raḥbānīs built on the tradition of Arab nationalist artists and their songs for Jerusalem and Palestine in the 1960s. This tradition began mostly in Egypt with Umm Kulthūm and Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. Umm Kulthūm and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb sang for an Arab ideological and military fight against Zionism and a “military march” toward Palestine. Their voices reflected the general support of Gamal Abdel Nasser and his anti-Western and anti-Zionist stand. In her songs “Filiṣṭīn” and “Rāji‘un,” Umm Kulthūm sings about the rifle and celebrates an Arab optimism about Nasser’s leadership and hope for a recapture of the city. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb stresses the urgency of taking over the western part of the city and highlights its Christian and Muslim connections more than its Jewish character. In his famous song on Palestine, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb seems to be calling on Nasser to take back Arab lands lost to the Israelis in 1948. He laments the long Israeli occupation; Islamic imageries of jihad dominate the song as ‘Abd al-Wahhāb reminds Arabs to take their swords out of their shields in historical references to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyubī’s capture of Jerusalem. In addition, these Egyptian songs strongly advocate the urgent need to protect the churches and mosques of the old city. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb also sings of Jesus of Nazareth as a martyr crying over the fate of the city as he encounters the Prophet Muḥammad; in this way he indirectly highlights the Jewish-Christian divide over Jesus.

However, with the Palestinian/Arab Nakba of 1967, Umm Kulthūm and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb songs were muted in sonic Arab landscapes as Fayrūz’s “Zahrat al-madā’in” became an Arab folkloric hit. In Morocco, local songs about Palestine and Jerusalem were largely produced through musical groups that dominated the national scene in the 1970s. These included the Larsad group’s song “Anti lana”<sup>36</sup> [You belong to us], al-Siham group’s song “Fin al-haqiqa”<sup>37</sup> [Where is the

35 Joseph Massad, “Liberating Songs: Palestine Put to Music,” in Rebecca Stein and Ted Swedenburg (eds.), *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 175–201. Christopher Stone, “Fayruz, the Raḥbani Brothers, Jerusalem, and the Leba-stinian Song,” in Meyer and Mourad (eds.), *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*, 198–204.

36 Larsad, “Anti Lana,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECmMTv2coXI>.

37 Essiham, “Fin al-Haqiqa,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3KPRbr3MSk>, accessed 15 April 2015.

truth], Jil Jilala's song "Ya 'Arabi ya Muslim" [O Arab O Muslim],<sup>38</sup> and Nass El-Ghiwane's "al-Quds."<sup>39</sup> The musical narratives of these songs were dominated by the themes of pan-Arabism and the Islamic dimension of the city, as well as the Christian character and history of the city.<sup>40</sup> Zionism was critiqued as a danger to Christian and Muslim symbols of the city. The pan-Arab and Islamic dimensions of these songs guaranteed their circulation on Morocco's public radio and television channels as well as their distribution on cassette tapes without government censorship. These groups echoed the messages of Fayrūz and Egyptian singers.

### Online Sharing, Contestation, and Hip Hop Artists

In her work on the use of the Internet in Palestinian camps and the state of Palestinian cybercultural networks and activity, Laleh Khalili contends that the "Internet's ability to undermine the sovereignty of nation-states and forge new political and national identities is underutilized."<sup>41</sup> Cyberspace has allowed Arab youth and Palestinian refugees to stay tuned to what happens daily in Jerusalem and other Palestinian communities inside the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>42</sup> In her work on Palestinian Internet usage, Aouragh uses what she calls Palestinian online mobility to describe Palestinian utilization of Internet technology in reaction to Israel's offline military checkpoints.<sup>43</sup> The de-territorialized and decentralized Internet space theoretically empowers many Palestinian and Middle Eastern communities to engage in new social, cultural, and political discussions through open access websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and allows dissenting communities to bypass a state's technical obstacles to unlimited sharing of video online. For example, for many Mid-

38 Jil Jilala, "Ya 'arbi ya muslim," YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITQF6Ahoyik>, accessed 15 April 2015.

39 Nass El Ghiwane, "Ya Qods," YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWTqcMzJCno>, accessed 15 April 2015.

40 Mohamed Dernouny and Boujemâa Zoulef, "La naissance d'un chant protestataire: le groupe marocain Nass El Ghiwane," *Peuples Méditerranéens* 12 (July–September 1980): 3–31.

41 Laleh Khalili, "Virtual Nation: Palestinian Cyberculture in Lebanese Camps," in Stein and Swedenburg (eds.), *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture*, 144.

42 Miriyam Aouragh, "Confined Offline, Traversing Online Palestinian Mobility through the Prism of the Internet," *Mobilities* 6, no. 3 (2011): 375–397.

43 *Ibid.*, 377.

dle Eastern youth, the usefulness of YouTube is its "simple, integrated interface within which users could upload, publish, and view streaming videos without high levels of technical knowledge ... YouTube set no limits on the number of videos users could upload, offered basic community functions such as the opportunity to link to other users as friends."<sup>44</sup> For North African youth YouTube provides a new platform for data sharing as users provide information to which a large and diverse audience have open daily access with few or no restrictions. YouTube is therefore a challenge to traditional state media because of its capacity as a broadcast medium, archival storage, and a social network.<sup>45</sup>

Technologically savvy young North Africans have been empowered by YouTube to produce their own news and dispatch it to millions of viewers. On many occasions, the traditional state ministries of information of North African countries have been challenged by these emerging voices of dissidence and they have, at times, been humiliated by the counter hegemonic discourse and political strategies of these new dissidents. For instance on 8 July 2007, Mounir Aguezney a young Moroccan from Targuist, a poor town from the northern province of al-Hoceima, was dubbed "Targuist Sniper" when he used his camera to capture instances of gendarmerie bribery.<sup>46</sup> Targuist Sniper is an example of a generation of young citizen journalists motivated to embarrass the symbols of the authoritarian state in virtual landscapes by providing evidence, in this case, of how widespread bribery is among the security services. Despite the relative freedom of expression that the Internet grants these rebels, the state occasionally intervenes to discipline potential trailblazers who could be ordinary citizens, journalists, and rappers.

The songs of Mouad Belghouat, aka "El Haqed," have translated the grievances of Moroccan youth and especially the February 20 Movement. Since 2011 El Haqed has been arrested three times by the Moroccan police over songs critical of the monarchy, the state police, and state symbols. For instance, the prosecution claimed that the rapper broke the law by insulting state figures in a video posted on YouTube titled "Klab al-dawla" [State dogs], which features an assemblage of photos of the king and his advisors.<sup>47</sup> The song was produced

44 Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 1.

45 Ibid.; Jonathan Zittrain, *The Future of the Internet and How to Stop it* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

46 Al-Qarra TV, Le "Sniper de Targuist" révèle son identité, YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IMy7iay4xw>, accessed 15 April 2015.

47 El Haqed, "Klab al-dawla," YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAYz7R5xmvk>, accessed 15 April 2015.

in 2008 and performed by El Haqed on multiple occasions and places before he was arrested. El Haqed refused to be silenced by these legal cases and imprisonment and continued to draw attention to his songs on the national and international level. Describing his music as “prison rap” (*rap mhabsi*), he noted in an opinion published in Al-Jazeera titled “My journey to rap, politics and prison”:

[Prison rap] expresses reality and sings about freedom, breaking down the borders and chains. We need to understand the power of prison rap in the context of most rappers being little more than marionettes, wholesale puppets of power. You can count the number of truly political rappers on one hand. And yet, the small number makes our music that much more powerful. The intellectual and cultural prison only made our music more powerful. The state still doesn't get that.<sup>48</sup>

In this context of dual struggle over social media, Middle Eastern youth including hip hop artists managed to attract attention in the saturated public spheres of the Internet by gaining visibility through online discussions of issues such as education, political representation, migration, drugs, and unemployment, among other topics. Equally important, rappers have managed to circumvent the laws and restrictive platforms of communication and journalism in North African states.<sup>49</sup> However, at times, these states have outmaneuvered these rebellious youth by coopting some rappers and through the “balkanization” of revolutionary rap and hip hop rebel youth. For example, if we map rappers' politics in Morocco we can identify a number of artists who became close to political parties or state agencies while creating a false consciousness of state contestation. As the majority of hip hop singers rap for the state in state-organized and funded festivals such as Mawazine,<sup>50</sup> the few who dared to cross the imposed sacred limits and redlines risk ending up in prison for insulting state officials. In Tunisia, the rapper Alaa Yacoubi (alias “Weld El 15”) also faced a similar legal case after producing a song “Boulicia kleb” [Police are dogs] in

48 El Haqed, “My Journey to rap, politics and prison.” Al Jazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/10/my-journey-rap-politics-prison-201410671050228296.html>, accessed 15 April 2015.

49 Mark LeVine has looked at some of the issues involving the creation of a new musical hybridity, see “The New Hybridities of Arab Musical Intifadas,” *Jadaliyya* (2011). Also see Mark LeVine, *Heavy Metal Islam: Rock, Resistance and the Struggle for the Soul of Islam* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008).

50 Aomar Boum, “Festivalizing Descent in Morocco,” *Middle East Report* 263 (2012): 22–25.

which he denounced police brutality. In the meantime, North African states are looking for ways to manage, control, and police the Internet and thereby muzzle the growing opposition of a large population of unemployed and disenfranchised youth.

While Moroccan youth lead North Africa in terms of Internet use and connectivity, North Africa's youth are increasingly connected to social media and virtual worlds and spend more of their time in cybercafés or connected to personal computers than socializing with their peers. The Moroccan hip hop group H-Kayne captures this phenomenon in their album "Jil Jdid" [New generation], which highlights the overuse and addiction of Moroccan and North African youth to cyberspace. The YouTube video shows a teenager transported into the emergency room after spending a sleepless night chatting and surfing the net.<sup>51</sup> The song emphasizes issues that arise from cyber marriage and dating, pornography, and musical piracy:

New Generation  
 Addicted to the Web and the dot com  
 New generation  
 Oh Generation: what's up with you?  
 New generation  
 Addicted to Youth of the web and the dot com  
 Slash chat rooms Slash MSN  
 +++  
 Do you have webcam  
 Generation Bill Gates  
 Generation Addicted to Facebook  
 Culture of MSN  
 Generation of WIFI, YouTube and nice cars  
 +++  
 Generation computer and plasma TV  
 Our parents are perplexed  
 Hooked youth to the computer  
 No need for hard labor  
 Help us find a job  
 We are tired of being unemployed  
 +++

51 H-Kayne, "Jil Jdid," YouTube video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaMov67\\_r24](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaMov67_r24), accessed 15 April 2015.

Everyone is standing idle in neighborhoods  
 Living in the world of the Internet  
 Because reality is virtual  
 I rather stay in cybercafé  
 Than stay idle in neighborhood streets.

This song highlights the extent to which cybercafés and personal computers have replaced cafés or neighborhood corners as places of social and political interactions. Before cybercafés dominated the streets of North African cities, neighborhoods (singular *lhouma* and *zanqa*) served as spaces where unemployed youth contested the failures of states to improve their economic and social conditions and spent their idle time leaning against neighborhood walls or watching television in cafés.<sup>52</sup>

In this shifting cultural environment where cyber-connectivity has changed social relations, youth have found refuge in the virtual world where they decry the attitude of Arab governments toward the Palestinian issue. Studies of North African attitudes toward the Palestinian question have generally ignored political discourse about Palestine in music. Jerusalem has been at the center of this musical tradition of political activism. Widely circulated, Nass al-Ghiwane, Jil-Jilala, and Essiham produced and performed many songs on *al-Quds* (Jerusalem) in which they highlight a sense of religious conflict and resistance. These songs emphasize the same sense of sadness that the Lebanese singer Fayrüz demonstrated in her famous song about Jerusalem “Zahrat al-madā’in.” Unlike Fayrüz, however, these popular groups stressed the Islamic dimension of Jerusalem and ignored its Christian and Jewish aspects. Their focus was on the lost peace and the danger of Zionism as a colonial movement. However, despite their despair, the songs always end with a sense of hope. For instance Essiham’s “al-Quds” ends as follows:

We came back to you, al-Quds  
 In an Islamic march  
 The old days will come back

52 Boum, “Youth, Political Activism and the Festivalization,” in Maddy-Weitzman and Zisenwine (eds.), *Contemporary Morocco*. For rap songs that reflect this culture of neighborhoods see, Moroccan rapper Don Bigg’s “Wald zanqa,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdP4zvUkkKk>; Moroccan rap group H-Kayne’s “F-L’Houma” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMVIYJHdvLo>; and Moroccan rapper’s Muslim’s “Harb lhwam,” YouTube video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\\_ZH-VRMMsl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_ZH-VRMMsl).

And you will be free and Arab  
 Jerusalem is for us God  
 The house is for us God  
 We will pray in Jerusalem

In the late 1990s, young North African artists turned to hip hop to produce songs that highlighted the economic situation in Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinian political disunity, and Islamic yearning for Jerusalem. These songs were indirectly yet strongly connected to the political musical productions of Nass al-Ghiwane, Jil-Jilala, and Essiham, to the extent that Moroccan rappers reproduced phrases from their songs in their hip hop lyrics. Rappers from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco linked Palestinian political struggles in Gaza and the West Bank to Jerusalem. The Algerian Lotfi Belmri alias “Lotfi Double Canon,”<sup>53</sup> the Tunisian Mohamed El Guitoni alias “Guito’n,” the Tunisian Hamada Ben Amor alias “El Général,”<sup>54</sup> the Moroccan “Keeb Brothers” (Abdelkrim and Ilyas Kib),<sup>55</sup> the Moroccan Mouad Belghouat alias “El Haqed,”<sup>56</sup> and the Moroccan al-Imbrator<sup>57</sup> produced songs that describe the popular political views of young North Africans on the subject of Jerusalem. For instance, in his song “Hnaya lawlin” [We are first], El Haqed mocks the official political discourse on Jerusalem and Palestine:

We are first  
 We recognized the independence of America  
 Meanwhile nobody recognized us  
 Now they recognized Israel  
 Even as the President of Bayt Mal al-Quds  
 Is Amir al-Mu’minin [a reference to King Mohammed VI]  
 Think hard and try to understand  
 In contradictions we have a record of achievements

53 Lotfi Double Kanon, “Palestine,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxcQzwGannk>, accessed 15 April 2015.

54 El General & Guito’n, “Direction Palestine,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1m701wEXnc>, accessed 15 April 2015.

55 Keeb brothers, “Gaza Holocaust,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UaGO6RjBio>, accessed 15 April 2015.

56 El Haqed, “hnaya huma lawlin,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqnAu7tQDgc>, accessed 15 April 2015.

57 Al-imbrator, “For Palestine,” YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cks2AoU5qTY>, accessed 15 April 2015.

In these lines, El Haqed underscores the negative feelings that young North Africans express toward the way Arab governments have handled the issue of Jerusalem. Similar rap lyrics highlight the failure of post-independence North African leaders to regain ownership of Jerusalem and protect its Islamic heritage.

### The “Fantasy of Resistance” and North African Rappers

In many songs, North African rappers claim that, unlike Arab leaders, their rap lyrics represent a critical way to engage what they call “Israel’s occupation of Muslim lands,” even as Arab leaders abandon their “religious obligation to Jerusalem.” Jerusalem is usually mentioned either implicitly or explicitly by these artists who echo the central place of the holy city in the political beliefs of North African youth. Jerusalem is not only celebrated through references to Fayrūz, Julia Boutros, but also Qur’anic verses and other Islamic historical events, particularly Jerusalem’s capture by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyubī. Lyrics are largely framed around Islamic interpretive registers in which Jews and Muslims are thought to be fighting a religious war over historical rights and memories sacred to Jerusalem. In his song on Palestine, Lotfi Double Kanon begins with a quote from an unnamed Islamic orator speaking about the importance of Jerusalem. The quote reads:

Jerusalem’s future is clear  
 Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine, Arab, Muslims, Sky, and the earth  
 We will not acknowledge Jewish occupiers  
 On the sacred land  
 They should be expelled  
 Resistance will not be defeated

After this sample, the rapper proceeds to narrate a historical story of an existential conflict between Jews and Muslims that starts with the Balfour Declaration and continues in the present where:

Jews are fighting Islam  
 +++  
 Jerusalem in their hands  
 Muslims are silent  
 +++  
 Do not waste your time



The Qur'an has already said it  
 Jews won't be happy until we follow their religion

+++

Jews are gaining time  
 To continue their settlement  
 From the eastern bank to the western one  
 They wish to take this land by force

+++

Al-Aqsa mosque the first qibla  
 Where the Prophet prayed with the prophets behind him  
 Now Jews have encircled it with wires  
 They love to own it  
 The only left is the Wailing Wall  
 Palestinians are still waiting for Arabs  
 To take the swords of Salah al-Din  
 We invade them as he did  
 What is taken with force is gained through force

One of the dominant features of North African hip hop productions about Jerusalem is the use of musical and image borrowing, or the use of samples. Sampling allows the rappers to politically legitimize and historically frame their voices through the inclusion of Islamic references and other historical events. The Islamic dimension of the lyrics is supported by a set of appropriated images using the technique of political mashups, which usually involves putting together different sources and material to create a new political narrative.<sup>58</sup> Like African American rap lyrics, North African hip hop songs of Jerusalem are full of “history, political critique, innuendo, sarcasm and wit.”<sup>59</sup> YouTube permits these rappers to add another dimension of sampling to their songs through the incorporation of pre-recorded sounds as well as images in the sonic narrative of the artistic product. In the *Conquest of Cool*, Frank argues:

[T]aking for granted that youth signifiers are appropriated, produced, and even invented by the entertainment industry, recent writers argue that resistance arises from the ways in which these signifiers are consumed by the young, used in ways that are divergent or contradictory to their

58 Bingchun Meng, “From Steamed Bun to Grass Mud Horse: E Gao as Alternative Political Discourse on the Chinese Internet,” *Global Media and Communication* 7, no. 1 (2011): 33–51.

59 Joanna Demers, “Sampling the 1970s in Hip-hop,” *Popular Music* 22, no. 1 (2003), 41.

manufacturer's oppressive intent. Whatever form prefabricated youth cultures are given by their mass-culture originators ultimately doesn't matter: they are quickly taken apart and reassembled by alienated young people in startling novel subcultures. As with the counterculture, it is *transgression* itself, the never-ending race to violate norms, that is the key to resistance.<sup>60</sup>

In the relative absence of social and political spaces where North African youth can express their opinions as members of the public sphere without fear of prison, YouTube provides a venue for these artists to express themselves through digital remixing,<sup>61</sup> music videos, and reused footage<sup>62</sup> with limited state censorship. At the center of youth's contestation is the artistic appropriation of images and sounds taken from their original context and transformed—repurposed and denatured—with the aim of parodying the initial story and message. For example, the voices of Shimon Perez or Arab leaders are included in the context of a Palestinian child calling for economic help or mourning a dead relative. This remixing of past and present texts and images transforms the meanings of original texts and allows the young rapper to exercise a counter symbolic violence through the radical modification of the text. Accordingly, the “reciprocal archive that is YouTube, in which every video uploaded can be downloaded for a remix, has resulted in a remarkable number of videos which often, though not always, engage in a critical dialog with mainstream media.”<sup>63</sup> Through collage, remixing, and mashups, North African hip hop artists produce a new text that theoretically challenges both Arab leaders and Israeli politicians. However, this contestation remains largely an online form of erasure and has yet to lead to any radical transformation of the offline narrative.

Equally important, North African hip hop artists rely on overdubbing to mute Israeli soundtracks and doctor their voices to create a new dialogue and therefore reinstate an Islamic memory of Jerusalem online. Through this approach, these artists participate in a cultural resistance that transforms mov-

60 Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 17.

61 Eli Horwatt, “A Taxonomy of Digital Video Remixing: Contemporary Found Footage Practice on the Internet,” in Iain Robert Smith (ed.), *Cultural Borrowings: Appropriation, Re-working, Transformation*, 76–91 (Scope: An Online Journal of Film and Television Studies, 2009).

62 Sérgio Dias Barnco, “Music Videos and Reused Footage,” in Smith, *Cultural Borrowings*, 111–121.

63 Eli Horwatt, “A Taxonomy of Digital Video Remixing,” in Smith, *Cultural Borrowings*, 76.

ing images and footage "into a malleable databank ... of archival interventions [which] reveal and subvert historical engineering by appropriating the very weapons of ideological control, revising them to reflect the traumatic and repressive realities of their creation."<sup>64</sup> The semiotic manipulation of the image or the sound enables the rapper to participate in an "online" urban transformation of Jerusalem critical of the "offline" Israeli Judaization of its Islamic sites. In response to what the rapper sees as the "Israeli theft of Palestinian land," rap lyrics are largely based on a similar concept of violence and countercultural resistance, which consciously take official texts and denature them as a way to mock their narrative and void it of any historical legitimacy.

However, while North African hip hop YouTubers claim that their postings incarnate real social relations, Guy Debord would argue that they are phony moments of dissent as well as a refutation of social life itself. Youth escape into YouTube platforms gives them the "semiotic privilege"<sup>65</sup> to critique the state and its approach to Jerusalem. Al Imbrator, a young rapper from Casablanca, reflects this feeling in a song titled "For Palestine"; it was made in 2009:

For Palestine tears fall  
 In the middle of destruction, siege and poverty  
 Night is long and life is bitter  
 They killed Arafat, Cheikh Yassine and Mohammed al-Dora  
 Still free, still with strong will  
 Still see children holding rocks and do not fear death  
 Martyr here, bombing there and People shout "Allah Akbar"  
 +++++  
 Arabs for their interests forsaken you  
 If you see us quiet it is not our fault  
 Our rulers have forgotten Islam  
 As long as night lasts, the light of dawn will rise.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the rappers' belief that their lyrics are means of resistance and Islamic dissent, many university students argue that their online dissent is a fantasy activism, which "may do more harm than good by focusing attention away from

64 Ibid., 86.

65 Hal Foster, *Recordings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1985), 173.

66 Al-imbrator13, "shoufa b3ida/For Palestine." Online: <http://al-imbrator13.skyrock.com>, accessed 15 April 2015.

the hard work of actually engaging in ‘real-life’ politics.”<sup>67</sup> In this context, hip hop songs could be deceptive forms of contestation and Debordian spectacles.<sup>68</sup>

Largely based on cultural jamming, which stitches pieces from existing pictures and videos and makes a collage of still and moving images as well as music, the Jerusalem hip hop YouTube video is a virtual form of countercultural memory whose objective is to challenge the official Israeli ownership of Jerusalem and its sites. By relying on mashups and cultural jamming, North African rappers are victims of Slavoj Žižek’s plague of virtual fantasies,<sup>69</sup> where the fantasy is a “mirage, it is not hiding something, it is freestanding, self-sufficient, and certain in its presence ... Fantasy is that which bridges a subject and the lost object which the subject is constituted by, his primordial cut. The subject, a linguistically produced subject, is entirely ‘phantasmatic.’”<sup>70</sup> Apart from the violence that rappers exercise on official state images, texts, and sounds of Palestine and Jerusalem, their dissent rarely undermines offline official discourse and political positions about Jerusalem; therefore, it is limited in its potential to produce change. In their desire to challenge hegemonic discourses of Jerusalem and “liberate” the holy sites of the city through their songs, these rappers ironically and unconsciously reproduce the system and maintain youth conformity and obedience to state political structures. Like hip counterculture in the 1960s, the Jerusalem North African hip hop YouTube video could potentially drive a new youth culture of online escapism just like hip consumerism drove the wheels of capitalist consumption in the United States.

## Conclusions

In the last decade, hip hop has emerged as a cultural youth movement throughout North African societies. Young artists have used it to express their views about social, political, and economic issues in their respective societies. They have also utilized YouTube musical videos of their songs to denounce broader Islamic and Arab issues, including the position of Israel and that of Arab gov-

67 Sandra Smeltzer and Douglas Keddy, “Won’t You Be My (Political) Friend? The Changing Face(boo) of Socio-Political Contestation in Malaysia,” *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 30, nos. 3–4 (2010), 428.

68 Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983).

69 Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997).

70 Mickey Vallee, “The Media Contingencies of Generation Mashup: A Žižekian Critique,” *Popular Music and Society* 36, no. 1 (2013): 76–97.

ernments toward the question of Jerusalem. Their rap lyrics are a Debordian *détournement* of the official state discourse; they deconstruct its underlying and uncontested official truth through parody and satire. Through mashups and critical lyrics North African rappers have been able to gain virtual independence and fame as fans continue to comment on their songs and YouTube video postings. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that these songs and their producers on YouTube and other forms of social media will transform the political discourse on Jerusalem. Computer literacy and accessibility in North Africa is still limited despite growing access to cybercafés and ownership of personal computers. Most rappers also speak to a specific category of the population and do not have an influence on a large number of users.

Rappers are not only well-informed of the realities of Middle Eastern politics, but they are also aware of its historical details and complexities. However, the use of mashups as forms of contestation of official discourses of Jerusalem do not explain the historical dynamics of the conflict, the future of the city, and the possibilities at the disposal of its Jewish, Muslim, and Christian contestants. Accordingly, North African rap songs of Jerusalem are cultural spectacles that reinforce past historical events and present political realities. They engage in a re-editing of sounds and images and bricolage of new texts of parody and mockery usually forgotten once we turn off our computer and watch televised news reports about the daily realities of urban and economic violence by Palestinians and Israelis in the sacred city of Jerusalem.

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