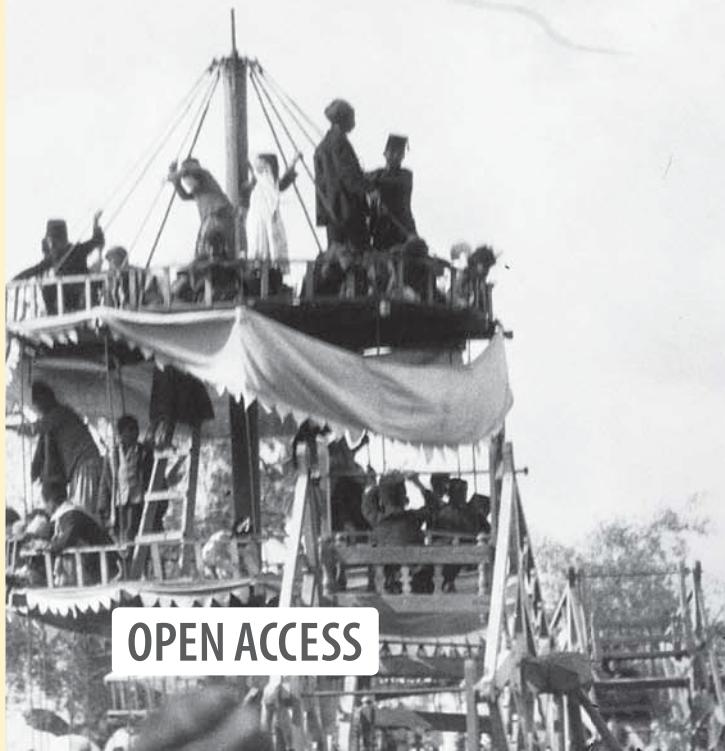


European Cultural Diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine, 1918–1948

Between Contention and Connection

Edited by Karène Sanchez Summerer · Sary Zananiri



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Introduction

Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri

GENESIS OF A PROJECT

At the height of the Arab Revolt against the colonial British Mandate in Palestine, in 1937, Arab Orthodox students founded an association in Bethlehem, which within months grew and transformed into the successful “League of Arab Students”. Its various activities (rhetoric, theatre, library, athletics, public events, journalism, arts and travel) were aimed at “fighting... urban and rural illiteracy, elevation of the cultural and ethical standards of the Arab student, establishing tight links between students in Palestine and in neighbouring Arab countries”.¹

The League of Arab Students published a number of articles in the local newspaper of the Christian Orthodox community, *Sawt al Shab* (*the voice of the people*; Bethlehem) before establishing its own magazine *Al Ghad* (*the Levant*). The magazine provides elements about the educational and social profile of the League’s members and the new social environments they inhabited outside the old cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem. From the group’s inception, its publications highlighted “culture” as a phenomenon to be actively described and discussed, as the achievement of “civilisation, progress, and reform”, borrowing specific terms from the *Nahda* (‘Arab Renaissance’) movement that arose

¹ *Al Ghad* Bethlehem 1, no. 2 (June 1938), 2.

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at the end of the nineteenth century. Until 1938 *Al Ghad*'s activities were also supported by some Jewish students, and by family members established abroad. The French consul in Jerusalem and the British authorities, however, suspected that the League was being directed by the Soviet Union.

Taking this newspaper as a point of departure, several questions arise on the powerful cultural practices which developed during the formative years of the Mandate. This book, and the collaborative project of which it is the tangible outcome, found its initial motivation in a series of questions, linked to the puzzle around the roles of cultural actors, agency, agendas, cooperation, domination and appropriation during the British Mandate, which emerged while working on language policy in Mandate Palestine.²

The first set of questions coincided with archival work on the YMCA and Vatican archives and the quest for their opinions on the Arab students' association encountered earlier in archives in Bethlehem. How did Arab Christians use cultural enterprises to define their place in the proto-national configuration in Palestine between 1920 and 1950? How did the European Arab Christian diaspora convey cultural concepts of modernity between Europe and Palestine? And what was the role of "culture" in European policies towards the Arab Christians of Palestine?

The second set of questions arose several months later during the first meeting, at Leiden University in September 2018, of the *Crossroads* research group.³ The workshop was dealing with the redefinition of the concept of cultural diplomacy applied to Palestine during the British Mandate period,⁴ envisaging it from the perspectives and methodologies of history, cultural studies and international relations. How did Arab Christian communities use European cultural agenda(s) in order to promote and safeguard their own national and communal affiliations and interests? What role did culture play in the policies of European agents (both governmental and non-governmental) regarding the Arabs of Palestine? What was the cultural and ideological framework that European representatives used when they promoted their cultural and linguistic practices in Palestine? And how did European representatives contribute to the initiation of or opposition to sectarianism in Palestine via cultural agendas?

To understand the contested role of culture during these formative years of the modern Middle East, the research group *CrossRoads* was interested in the cultural practices and ideas of both local communities and their

²Karène Sanchez Summerer, "Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies Among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine: Fear of Confusion or Powerful Tool?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies BJMES*, special issue coordinated by J. Tejel and B. White, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation" vol. 43, no. 2 (2016): 191–205.

³See <https://crossroadsproject.net>.

⁴"Workshop 'Cultural Diplomacy Revisited' Leiden University," <https://crossroadsproject.net/project/cultural-diplomacy-revisited/>.



Fig. 1 Frank Scholten, 1921–23, Untitled (Source Image courtesy of NINO; UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jaffa_01_0068—Education Bookstore, Jaffa)

communal and religious leaders (foreign and local), as well as their interactions with European cultural actors (both from a regional and global perspectives). It is intended to shed light on modes of interaction and influences, first between Arab Christians and other social groups in Palestine and European actors, but also between the local, regional and transnational spheres, instead of studying a mere aggregation of communal and institutional histories. Considering the polycentric processes for both Christian communities and the various ways in which Arab Christians located themselves in these broader cultural processes, the importance of these questions, after several months of field-work, crystallised in a conference. This volume is the result of these fruitful conversations and the many exchanges before and after the conference (Fig. 1).

THE POWER OF A CULTURAL PARADIGM FOR BRITISH MANDATE PALESTINE AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

The mandatory system was a pervasive form of colonialism⁵ that lasted only thirty years, but was formative for the proto-national Zionist and Palestinian milieus, and “in scholarly literature and in Palestinian popular imagination

⁵ Kimberley Katz, *A Young Palestinian's Diary, 1941–1945. The Life of Sami'Amr* (Austin: Texas University Press, 2009), 15.

the Mandate has acquired a colossal, if not mythical, impact on the moulding of modern Palestinian society and its destiny”.⁶ The period corresponded to cultural connections between Arab and non-Arab cultural and intellectual practices, as well as the mobility of cultural ideas,⁷ increasing literacy and the spread of news media (the latter started in the Young Turk period, and that flourished again after WWI).⁸ From an administrative point of view, one of the consequences was the separation of Palestine from Greater Syria, but the borders between the French and British Mandates remained fluid, albeit solidifying, during the Mandate, presenting a common cultural outlook. “Secular education, cafés, social clubs and recreational centres responded to the growth of middle-class tastes and sensibilities. The personal writings of the period reflected a changing sense of individualism”.⁹ Be that as it may, the Mandate was a special form of colonialism¹⁰ that challenged the indigenous Christian communities. The colonial creation of legal and political sectarian identities for Palestinian citizens transformed the status of Palestine’s Arab Christians from integral members of a multi-religious middle class into a legally defined religious “minority”.¹¹

The significance of class structures and their relationship to modernity also impacted Palestinian cultural dynamics. As shown recently by Sherene Seikaly, journals like *Iqtisadiyyat*, though economic in nature, were formative in developing cultural attitudes, particularly in relation to questions of production and consumption as they related to the Palestinian nationalist project. This can be seen, for example, in the projection of idealised family

⁶Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar, eds., *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2014), XXVII.

⁷Tamari, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem*; Nisa Ari, “Spiritual Capital and the Copy: Painting, Photography, and the Production of the Image in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine,” *Arab Studies Journal* 25, no. 2 (2017): 60–99.

⁸Andrea Stanton, “*This Is Jerusalem Calling*”: State Radio in Mandate Palestine (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013); Evelin Dierauff, *Translating Late Ottoman Modernity in Palestine: Debates on Ethno-Confessional Relations and Identity in the Arab Palestinian Newspaper Filasṭin (1911–1914)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020).

⁹Tamari, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem*, XXIX. In Jerusalem for example, the literary club in Mamilla street (p. 119), the Al Arab Café in Ein Kerem (p. 185) or the famous Jawariyye café (p. 133). On personal writings during the Mandate period and the changing sense of individualism, Katz, *A Young Palestinian’s Diary* and Sarah Irving, “Intellectual Networks, Language and Knowledge Under Colonialism: The Works of Stephan Stephan, Elias Haddad and Tawfiq Canaan in Palestine, 1909–1948” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2017).

¹⁰Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates* (London: Routledge, 2015); Katz, *A Young Palestinian’s Diary*.

¹¹Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011); Erik Freas, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Late Ottoman Palestine: Where Nationalism and Religion Intersect* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Anthony O’Mahony, ed., *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Studies in History, Religion and Politics* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).



Fig. 2 Frank Scholten, 1921–23, Untitled (*Source* Image courtesy of NINO; UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Weg_Jaffa-Jerusalem_02_0039—Maspero Freres, Jaffa-Jerusalem Road)

structures and gender roles.¹² The journal also addressed questions of culture through political identity, posing the *al-adib al-za'if*, the “false intellectuals” like poets and writers, against the *al-adib al-haqiqi*, the “true intellectuals” who were engaged with business and the economy.¹³ This shows the diversity of approaches to culture within Palestinian communities, but also the ways in which the ideals of a national culture were contested (Fig. 2).

The power of such publications was a significant factor in shaping a culture of national consciousness, though it was far from singular. The editors of *Iqtasadiyyat* even funded rebels during the Arab Revolt, though they never went so far as to feature articles about it within the journal.¹⁴ In this way, the press became a crucial terrain of power, and an important means of

¹²Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 37–38 and 56. A good example is the defining and popularisation of the *musrifā*, the spendthrift urban woman, as virtuous when consuming domestically produced goods or the *hasifa*, the frugal and productive women, who contribute to economic productivity, be it rural or urban.

¹³Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 37.

¹⁴Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 50.



Fig. 3 Frank Scholten, 1921–23, Untitled (*Source* Image courtesy of NINO; UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Porte_Entree_101-150_0011—Isa al Isa (founder and editor of the Newspaper Filestin) with son, Raja)

wielding it, drawing subtle linkages between culture and politics. This was by no means unique, many papers often run by Christians such as *Filastin* and *Al-Karmil*¹⁵ made use of culture for political ends. What this press ultimately engendered was the culturalisation of political tensions (Fig. 3).

Within the highly charged political context of the British Mandate, culture took on an even greater importance in asserting identity. The period saw an “enhancement of religion as a marker of national identity”.¹⁶ The Christian communities make for a specific lens through which to view the study of cultural diplomacy for several reasons. Firstly, there was the lack of Ottoman cultural investment in minorities, while the *millet* system imparted significant cultural autonomy.¹⁷ Arab Christians, as a result, were often targeted

¹⁵Dierauff, *Translating Late Ottoman Modernity in Palestine*.

¹⁶Salim Tamari, *Mountain Against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), XXVII; Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

¹⁷Valérie Assan, Bernard Heyberger, and Jacob Vogel, *Minorités en méditerranée au XIXe siècle. Identités, identifications, circulations* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2019).

as the main recipients of European cultural diplomacy. Secondly, the growth of Western school systems, mainly those of the French or Russians linked to missionaries, but also many others, were geared at least initially to specific Christian communities. Thirdly, the tendency to hail from urban, rather than rural, backgrounds meant that Christians were well placed to engage in cultural activities that were legibly modern, perhaps facilitated by the mercantile and professional networks that sustained the community. Finally, within the context of British policy during the Mandate, Jews and Muslims were directly addressed in British policy, while Christians had to invest in their community's development, somewhat more autonomously.

Contextualising the impacts of urban–rural divides, Palestinian scholarly production gives us a sense of the class dynamics in which Palestinians operated. Figures like the medical doctor and anthropologist Tawfiq Canaan saw rural Palestinian practices as under threat of vanishing with the rapid transformation of Palestine, and so documented disappearing folk history while carrying out his medical duties. These studies were published extensively in the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* and other outlets.¹⁸ This underlying assumption of Christians as intermediaries between Western institutes and broader Palestinian society has credence. However, the complexity of a research and documentation project such as Canaan's, which both preserves knowledge as part of a nationalist approach to heritage, but also remediates scholarship to international academic circles, undermines narratives of Christians as simply a conduit for indigenous knowledge. Instead we see a complex valorisation of such indigenous knowledge, the simultaneous distance that such social structures created and the ways in which networks of cultural diplomacy provided different modes of agency to different segments of Palestinian society in pursuing a common nationalist agenda.¹⁹

¹⁸For instance: *Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine* (1920), *Folklore of the Seasons in Palestine* (1923), *Light and Darkness in Palestine Folklore* (1931) *The Unwritten Laws Affecting the Arab Women of Palestine* (1931) to name but a few. At the same time, Canaan was also a scientific modernist who believed that folk practices should disappear in the face of “progress”. His life and its experiences as physician, ethnographer and political intellectual illustrate “the multifaceted predicament of upwardly mobile modernist professionals in late Ottoman and Mandate Jerusalem [...] torn between his commitment to modern laboratory medicine and hygiene, and his attachment to a peasant lifestyle”, Philippe Bourmaud, “A Son of the Country”, Dr. Tawfiq Canaan, Modernist Physician, and Palestinian Ethnographer,” in *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel*, eds. Mark Levine and Gershon Shafir (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), introduction.

¹⁹Howard Eissenstat, “Modernization, Imperial Nationalism, and the Ethnicization of Confessional Identity in the Late Ottoman Empire,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, eds. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest: CEU Press, 2015), 429–460; I. Khalidi, “Sports and Aspirations: Football in Palestine, 1900–1948,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 58 (2014): 74–88.

PRECEDENTS

The last decade has seen a rise in the number of studies on the Christians of the Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁰ For the inter-war period, and for Palestine, studies portrayed Christians via the sectarianism of the British Mandate authorities, Christian nationalism and the religious institutional history of Christians.²¹ The national, political and religious presence of European states in the “Holy Land” has been explored from national history perspectives²² while religious studies examined the history of local communities, mainly of Jerusalem.²³ More recently, studies on educational policies, language use and their impacts presented a more complex portrait of these communities from a religious and political perspective.²⁴ However, their

²⁰H. J. Sharkey, *Cultural Conversions: Unexpected Consequences of Christian Missions in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013); Anthony O’Mahony, *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Politics and Society in the Holy Land* (London: Melisende, 1999); O’Mahony, *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land*; Anthony O’Mahony, “Christianity and Jerusalem: Studies in Theology and Politics in the Modern Holy Land,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 5, no. 2 (2005): 82–102.

²¹Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*; Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine*; Roberto Mazza, *Jerusalem: From the Ottomans to the British* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2009); Freas, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Late Ottoman Palestine*.

²²Haim Goren, ‘Echt katholisch und gut deutsch’: Die deutschen Katholiken und Palästina, 1838–1910 (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag 2009); Dominique Trimbur, *Entre rayonnement et réciprocité. Contributions à l’histoire de la diplomatie culturelle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002); Inger Marie Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure: Anglican Mission, Women and Education in Palestine (1888–1948)* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Ran Aaronsohn and Dominique Trimbur, eds., *De Balfour à Ben Gourion, Les puissances européennes et la Palestine, 1917–1948* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2008); Nir Arielli, *Fascist Italy and the Middle East 1933–40* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²³Konstantinos Papastathis, “British Colonialism and Communal Politics: The Patriarchal Election Controversy and the Arab Orthodox Movement (1931–1939),” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 3 (2016): 259–284; Konstantinos Papastathis, “Arabic vs. Greek: The Linguistic Aspect of the Jerusalem Orthodox Church Controversy in Late Ottoman Times and the British Mandate,” in *Arabic and Its Alternatives: Religious Minorities and Their Languages in the Emerging Nation States of the Middle East (1920–1950)*, eds. Heleen Murrevan den Berg, Karène Sanchez Summerer, and Tijmen Baarda (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 261–286; Heleen Murrevan den Berg, *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twenty Centuries* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007).

²⁴Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure*; Karène Sanchez, “Le triptyque Langue/ Education/ Religion en Palestine ottomane et mandataire,” *Sociolinguistica* 25 (2011): 66–80; Sanchez Summerer, “Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies Among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine”; Karène Sanchez Summerer, “Preserving Catholics of the Holy Land or Integrating Them into the Palestine Nation? Catholic Communities, Language, Identity and Public Space in Jerusalem (1920–1950),” in *Modernity, Minority and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, eds. Heleen Murrevan den Berg and Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 121–151; Philippe Bourmaud and Karène Sanchez Summerer. “Missions/ Powers/ Arabization,” special issue *Social Sciences and Missions Brill* 32, 3–4 (2019); Heleen Murrevan den Berg, Karène Sanchez Summerer, and

overlapping cultural identities²⁵ and cultural dynamism, and their cultural networks within Europe (including Orthodox Russia and the Soviet Union)²⁶ have hardly been explored, apart from the seminal work of Sarah Irving on intellectual networks,²⁷ partly due to the inaccessibility of the local archives. Furthermore, with the exception of a handful of Orthodox personalities, the cultural nationalism of Arab Christians remains insufficiently studied.²⁸

Middle Eastern studies has only recently begun to adopt some of the critical apparatus of cultural studies, especially the new diplomatic history, which sought to widen the scope of investigation to include socio-cultural activities. A suite of research, which intensified in the 1990s, instead focused on the “hard” diplomatic apparatus and new histories of British, French and American interventions in interwar Syria and Lebanon from a diplomatic perspective, but these did not address Palestine.²⁹ Though approaches to cultural dynamics in the Levant, and particularly their relationship to European influence via diplomatic overtures, have increased,³⁰ most studies pick up the threads of a

Tijmen Baarda, *Arabic and Its Alternatives: Religious Minorities and Their Languages in the Emerging Nation States of the Middle East (1920–1950)* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

²⁵We will refer to the historically definition of P. Burke: “a system of shared meanings, attitudes and values, and the symbolic forms (performances, artifacts) in which they are expressed or embodied”, Peter Burke, *What Is Cultural History?*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2019), 11.

²⁶I. Mironenko-Marenkova and K. Vakh, “An Institution, Its People and Its Documents: The Russian Consulate in Jerusalem Through the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Empire, 1858–1914,” in *Ordinary Jerusalem 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City*, eds. Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), 200–222; Papastathis, “British Colonialism and Communal Politics”; Denis Vovchenko, “Creating Arab Nationalism? Russia and Greece in Ottoman Syria and Palestine (1840–1909),” *Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 6 (2013): 901–918.

²⁷Irving, “Intellectual Networks, Language and Knowledge Under Colonialism”; Sarah Irving, “A Young Man of Promise.’ Finding a Place for Stephen Hana Stephan in the History of Mandate Palestine,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (Spring 2018): 42–62; Dan Spencer Scoville, “The Agency of the Translator: Khalil Baydas’ Literary Translations” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2012).

²⁸N. Tadros Khalaf, *Les Mémoires de ‘Issa al-‘Issa. Journaliste et intellectuel palestinien (1878–1950)* (Paris: Karthala, 2009); Tamari, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem*; A. Abu-Ghazaleh, “Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine During the British Mandate,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, no. 3 (1973): 37–63; Papastathis, “Arabic vs. Greek.”

²⁹There have, however, been a number of more recent studies that have been critical of the “NGOisation” of Palestinian civil society that can be seen as having reference to contemporary modes of cultural diplomacy. Lama Arda and Subhabrata Bobby Banerjee, “Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood: The NGOization of Palestine.” *Business & Society*, 2019, 000765031987082. <https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/palestinian-civil-society-what-went-wrong/>.

³⁰Jennifer Dueck, *The Claims of Culture at Empire’s End: Syria and Lebanon Under French Rule* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Idir Ouahes, “Catholic Missionary Education in Early French Mandate Syria and Lebanon,” *Social Sciences and Missions* 30 (2017): 225–253; Idir Ouahes, *Syria and Lebanon at the Outset of the French Mandate: Workings of Cultural Imperialism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018).

“new communalism” encouraged by European diplomatic apparatuses, which included the Mandate states themselves in the Levant. Such studies on the Palestinian Mandate³¹ emphasised that these communities were minorities, somehow “stirred up” by European diplomatic apparatuses seeking to achieve realpolitik goals. They treated the communities’ interactions with European powers distinctly and with little reference to broader international networks.

The study of “soft power” in the contemporary period owes much to the Cold War, when culture offered a surrogate for damaged and blocked political dialogues,³² but practices aiming at promoting national cultures and languages abroad were in existence before then. Some historians have traced their origins back to the nineteenth century with the formation of nation states in Europe and the growth of ministries of foreign affairs. In this contested region, cultural diplomacy has played an unusually prominent role, due partially to the failure to ameliorate conditions at a political level. Akira Iriye, in his seminal study on cultural internationalism, argued that after WWI, international relations gained a cultural dimension, but without a comprehensive comparison of the dynamics in the region. Cultural diplomacy has been explored for other countries of the Middle East, but research on the contemporary history of cultural foreign policy remains scarce for the Levant.³³ None of the historical studies of institutions like the British Council and French cultural centres address how these organisations functioned alongside each other, their conceptions of culture, the goals they promoted or their impact. Recently, the idea of “national culture” being defined through an international context has been questioned,³⁴ as well as the role of language in education.³⁵ The field of “soft power” has grown to incorporate emotions

³¹ Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*; Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine*.

³² Charlotte Faucher, “Cultural Diplomacy and International Cultural Relations in the Twentieth-Century Europe,” *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 373–385; Giles Scott-Smith, Joes Segal, and Peter Romijn, *Divided Dreamworlds: The Cultural Cold War in East and West* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014); F. Caubet and L. Martin, *Histoire des relations culturelles dans le monde contemporain* (Paris: Colin, 2011).

³³ J. Gienow-Hecht and M. C. Donfried, *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy* (New York and London: Berghan, 2010); Willem Frijhoff and Karène Sanchez, eds., *Linguistic and Cultural Foreign Policies of the European States 18th–20th Centuries* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017); Sanchez Summerer, “Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies Among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine”; Sanchez Summerer, “Preserving Catholics of the Holy Land or Integrating Them into the Palestine Nation?”; Ouahes, “Catholic Missionary Education in Early French Mandate Syria and Lebanon”; Ouahes, *Syria and Lebanon at the Outset of the French Mandate*.

³⁴ Tamara van Kessel, *Foreign Cultural Policy in the Interbellum: The Italian Dante Alighieri Society and the British Council Contesting the Mediterranean* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

³⁵ Frijhoff, *Linguistic and Cultural Foreign Policies of the European States*; Sanchez Summerer, “Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies Among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine”; Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography*



Fig. 4 Frank Scholten, 1921–23, Untitled (*Source* Image courtesy of NINO; UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jaffa_01_0039—picnic, Jaffa)

and “sport diplomacy” for example. In addition, historians have approached cultural diplomacy not only through foreign policy analysis, but also through the cultural history of the field.³⁶ Within a transnational paradigm, scholars have paid attention to the role of religious orders, academics, and migrants in shaping soft power.³⁷ But most importantly, historiography has until recently largely omitted soft power policies produced by so called “peripherical” countries or regions. In the case of Mandate Palestine, Jewish and Zionist actors remain better known as far as cultural institutions where proto-national agenda are concerned (Fig. 4).³⁸

and Social history in British Mandate Palestine (1918–1948), OJ Series (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

³⁶Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c. 1750–1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

³⁷Sarah Curtis, “The Double Invisibility of Missionary Sisters,” *Journal of Women’s History* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2016): 134–143.

³⁸Liora Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism and Language Diversity in Palestine 1920–1948* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Michael D. Birnback, *Colonial Copyright Intellectual Property in Mandate Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbours: Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2016).

LOOKING AT CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN A PROTO-NATIONAL SETTING: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

This volume is not about cultural policies or about cultural life/ expressions/ activities themselves, nor about the cultural transfers which took place in Mandate Palestine, but about the agency of different actors within the cultural framework. We privileged a concept of “cultural diplomacy”, that includes “dialogue”, as we intended to trace the activities of states and institutions operationalising culture as a means to wield power and communicate ideologies, but also Arab associations and individuals as cultural diplomats themselves. We reflected on previous studies published by participants in this network on the role of language within the consideration of cultural entanglements in Mandate Palestine, and beyond, for religious minorities in the emerging nation states of the Middle East.³⁹ We indeed tested the concept of language at the heart of a form of cultural diplomacy, language endeavours being central to the interactions between Europeans and Arab Christians and the self-affirmation of Arab Christians, in which multilingualism played a major role. Within these cultural exchanges, the importance of language as both a tool and symbolic identity marker among these communities encouraged us to enquire further into the notion of a multilingual “Holy Land” from a cultural diplomacy angle, in another publication.⁴⁰

Cultural diplomacy was effective in Palestine, before WWII, in the sense that Europeans were aware of the effects of the cultural products they exported and Arab Christians were active in the process of meaning-making and cultural export themselves. The cultural diplomacy lens enriches the comprehension of cultural actors within the processes of cultural influence, underlining the multiplicity, heterogeneity and the “real” and the “desired” agency of the actors involved, both in practical and ideological terms. The flattening of the Palestinian cultural landscape and its actors, due partly to nostalgia and an idealisation of the pre-1948 Palestine as well as a more Zionist historiography, could lead to binary assumptions. On one side Palestinian elites, aristocracy, notables and a growing middle class and on the other, a mass of peasants and workers, whereas diversity was present within these groups. Against these considerations, this volume intends to address the multilayered agencies in the national and communal identification processes and the role of international and transnational cultural relations in the way Palestine was understood socially and politically during the British Mandate.

Cultural diplomacy allows us to overcome the dominant perspective of a unidirectional flow of influence from Europe to Palestine, and to appreciate

³⁹Sanchez Summerer, “Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies Among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine”; Sanchez Summerer, “Preserving Catholics of the Holy Land or Integrating Them into the Palestine Nation?”.

⁴⁰*A Multilingual Holy Land*, forthcoming publication for the *CrossRoads* research group.

the ways in which Palestinians were integrated into global circuits of culture and information in this period. During this period of investment by European states in culture for nationalist promotion abroad, and the appearance of new media, many circulations, connections and interactions took place between European countries and Arab Christian communities in Palestine.

Considering the porous nature of the boundaries between cultures, and the new understandings of social hierarchy these Arab Christians had, many actors shaped new cultural horizons. Civil society organisations were set up, and elite support played a role in the dissemination of cultural and scientific subjects. Different clubs brought together different types of Palestinians. These diverse actors operated at different scales: macro (state or supranational entities), micro (individuals) and meso (network and institutional) levels.⁴¹

Furthermore, the concept of cultural diplomacy is relevant because it illuminates another angle on the transformation of Arab Christian affiliations by exposing the mechanism of change via cultural agendas and initiatives. It shows how collective identities are transformed under the pressure of major socio-economic and political developments, cultural adaptation and transformation as a means of changing the boundaries of one's own identity and engaging with other collectives. Via the study of their intricate and nonlinear transformations and negotiations, it allows a far more nuanced view of the process of modernisation in the region and a challenge to the link between “Arab culture” and Arab nationalism.

Cultural diplomacy appears as a useful concept in deprovincialising the history of cultural influences between Arab Christians and European countries. It allows an essential correction to the dominant one-sided perspective on culture, highlighting how deeply European and Middle Eastern histories were intertwined, and showing the intersections and interactions of European culture with the “Arab Others” from an integral and comparative perspective.

The Arab students' association mentioned at the beginning of this introduction reveals the extent, scope and influence of the currently underestimated transregional networks of Arab Christians via their cultural associations, active beyond the borders of Mandate Palestine. These contacts and the “circulation” of Palestinian Christians indeed started well before 1948, as a long-term historical process, which impacted durably the identity-building process of Palestinians and the way the international community viewed Arabs. This more global approach recognises that a way of life often considered to be genuinely Western was deeply influenced by cultural encounters with the non-European world, as cultural influences were not unidirectional. The exposure to reading material, mainly from Cairo and Beirut,⁴² and to the debates and discussions of clubs and associations, was

⁴¹ Ouahes, *Syria and Lebanon at the Outset of the French Mandate*.

⁴² Katz, *A Young Palestinian's Diary*, 37.



Fig. 5 Frank Scholten, 1921–23, Untitled (*Source* Image courtesy of NINO; UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jaffa_09_0044—classroom, Jaffa)

transregional. This volume therefore tries to respond directly to a pressing conceptual challenge, by linking the study of the micro-scale level of everyday life to the macro-narratives of global change (Fig. 5).⁴³

In this volume we have also employed an interdisciplinary approach that centres culture, cutting across disciplines from history to cultural studies. The cultural studies framework is particularly useful to considering the mechanics of cultural diplomacy as it pertains to the production of culture. Resulting from our fruitful exchanges with David Clark, we adopted his model for framing the social and political importance of cultural diplomacy, and considered the four actors he lays out in the process of meaning-making in cultural diplomacy: policymakers; agents (both institutional and individual) who implement cultural diplomacy; cultural practitioners; and cultural consumers.⁴⁴ Considering the process of meaning-making for another volume resulting from *CrossRoads* research,⁴⁵ those actors involved in photographic

⁴³Jean-Claude Passeron and Jacques Revel, eds., *Penser par cas* (Paris: EHESS, 2005); John Paul Ghoobrial, “Seeing the World as a Microhistorian,” *Past and Present* 242, no. 14 (2019): 1–22; Jan de Vries, “Playing with Scales: The Global and the Micro, the Macro and the Nano,” *Past and Present* 242, no. 14 (2019): 23–36.

⁴⁴Clarke, “Theorising the Role of Cultural Products in Cultural Diplomacy,” 154.

⁴⁵Sanchez Summerer, *Imaging and Imagining Palestine*.

production, for example, are equally engaged as those who actively shaped the market by consuming photography:

Cultural consumption is, firstly, a complex process of meaning-making, in which the boundary between cultural ‘producers’ and ‘consumers’ is blurred; and, secondly, that in the realm of culture both production and consumption are intrinsically bound up with the articulation and negotiation of identity in a social context.⁴⁶

The framework of meaning-making adds considerable complexity to understanding the context of culture, and indeed cultural diplomacy, in the context of the British Mandate. By drawing a correlation between the production and consumption of culture, we can begin to understand the dynamism of transnational relationships between Palestine and the world. It also remaps such relations with the agency of Palestinians in mind, rather merely considering Palestinians to be passive recipients of Western modernity. This provides a framework for thinking about Palestinian cultural production from creative fields like art and literature to academic and scholarly endeavours and even as far as disciplines such as economics. The model of meaning-making becomes even more convoluted when we consider the porous line between the often-colonial ambitions of state and non-state agents of European cultural diplomacy and the ways in which Christian Palestinians made use of such networks.

Our approach tries to privilege dynamics of personal and institutional interactions, complemented via a comparative analysis of the cultural agenda of their Jewish and Muslim peers. We seek to make processes more visible, identifying archival gaps. Subaltern narratives emerge from some of the archives presented for the first time in this volume, belonging to the non-elite groups, and throwing new light on transformations in Palestinian society. These new aspects can be traced in the archives of associations, private collections, programmes of educational institutes, local/regional journals, pamphlets and books, church archives, governmental educational establishments and private cultural institutions, nuanced by the comparative analysis of British and Zionist archives.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

This volume is divided into three sections. From the outset, these divisions aim to undermine more orthodox views of cultural diplomacy as a unidirectional political force by actively engaging with the cultural arena. Given our approach, that aims to reconsider conceptual and practical definitions of cultural diplomacy, each of these three sections has a short introduction which

⁴⁶Clarke, “Theorising the Role of Cultural Products in Cultural Diplomacy,” 153.

defines some of the rationale for these divisions. Likewise, a conclusion sums up the issues outlined in the volume and the epilogue takes a macroscopic view, considering the growing influence of the United States during the British Mandate period and gesturing to the Cold War politics that were so formative on Palestinian politics and culture from 1948 to the First Intifada.

Part I “Turning the Tables? Arab Appropriation and Production of Cultural Diplomacy” deals specifically with the dynamics of Arab actors in proffering modes of cultural diplomacy. Specifically, the selected chapters engage with the novel ways in which Christian Palestinians responded to European cultural diplomacy. This section is designed to reiterate that cultural diplomacy was not a unidirectional phenomenon, but a circumstance in which Christian Palestinians held significant agency and were able to mould cultural diplomacy for their own ends. It was placed as the first section in order to highlight that Christian Arabs were not simply “recipients” of cultural diplomacy, but were indeed actively engaged with such international processes and arenas. This is a specific gap in current research that we specifically aim to address with this volume.

Sarah Irving opens the section with an introduction that reconsiders the way we conceive of cultural diplomacy. Her brief, but salient point that in 2015 five of the largest global economies were corporations, not nation states, opens up space for alternative visions of the practice of cultural diplomacy that elides typical assumptions of that field as a practice of states or supranational religious actors. Instead, she proposes a bottom up view that recognises the agency of Palestinian networks.

Focusing on the development of Greek Orthodox Clubs and networks, Norig Neveu’s chapter deals with the longest duration in the book. She considers the development of Orthodox cultural infrastructure in Palestine during the British Mandate, but also the implications of the Nakba, state formation and political collapse on the development of Orthodox networks in Jordan.

Likewise, Sadia Agsous takes on the role of Orthodoxy, this time in the literary sphere. She shows the formative ways in which modern Palestinian literature, fostered by a number of Arab Orthodox personalities, bolstered the Nahda narrative and the Arab nationalist movement. She traces the birth of the modern novel, Palestinian translation of Russian literature, the growth of newspapers and forums like the 1946 Palestinian Arab Book Fair.

Maria Chiara Rioli and Riccardo Castagnetti look at the work of musician and composer Agostino Lama, who was trained by the Franciscan Custodia in Jerusalem. The chapter details the ways in which Palestinians interacted with broader Catholic agendas in Palestine, but also centres Palestinian parishioners through the production of Arabic liturgical song. Rioli and Castagnetti also discuss the politicised links between the Franciscans and the Italian state under Fascism.

Shifting to rural communities, Charbel Nassif looks at the ways in which the Melkite Archbishop Gregorios Hajjar shrewdly managed the

Greek-Catholic community's interests. Hajjar carefully navigated intercommunal rivalries and the geopolitical nature of European cultural diplomacy to both secure French funding for Melkite schools and carve out a sphere of autonomy.

Finally, Maayan Hillel focuses on the rapid development of Haifa during the British Mandate. She traces the impacts of various Christian communities on the development of social and leisure activities, talking about the roles of the beach, theatres, sports and the growth of clubs and associations that were so much a part of the modern middle-class life of the city.

Part II “Showing and Telling: Cultural and Historical Entanglements Under the Mandate” deals with the production and dissemination of culture and knowledge as well as the ways in which Christian Palestinians were involved with institutional frameworks in the Mandate period. It complicates the idea of cultural diplomacy, by looking at the ways in which a number of actors utilised cultural institutions within the politicised cultural context of the Mandate. This section considers a set of cultural entanglements beyond communal structures and the ways in which Christian Palestinians contested, affected and were shaped by cultural production in Palestine. It specifically considers the products of cultural diplomacy—the forums in which culture and knowledge were produced—both in Palestine and abroad.

In his introduction to the second section Philippe Bourmaud addresses the ways in which cultural arenas formed politicised spaces that contested the historical narratives foundational to the plethora of national and proto-national agendas that make the period so rich for the contemporary historian. His analysis gestures towards an examination of power, anticipating some of the contents of Part III.

Sarah Irving’s paper looks at two Christian Palestinians, Na’im Makhoul and Stephan Hanna Stephan, who both worked in the Department of Antiquities. Through a comparative microhistorical analysis, her chapter cleverly considers the ways in which Palestinians made use of the colonial structures produced by European cultural diplomacy.

Archaeology is also tackled by Mathilde Sigalas, this time as a mode of cultural diplomacy from a Western perspective, contrasting the different national approaches of European states and the growth of US interest in the region. She shows the ways in which international cooperation in Palestinian archaeology became a space of great contestation and a highly politicised arena.

Nisa Ari’s chapter also looks at competition and contestation within the cultural sector. She focuses on the Zionist-run Levant Fair in Tel Aviv (1932) and the First National Arab Fair in Jerusalem (1933), each of which proffered nationalist visions through cultural production, but equally considers the networks that led to creation of both fairs and the audiences and networks to which they addressed their respective messages.

Part III “Influencing the Other: European Private and Governmental Actors” deals with European agents of cultural diplomacy. This section considers the role of European state and non-state actors in Palestine and their

attempts to affect Christian Palestinians. By examining the role of state and religious institutions, this section addresses questions of identity formation within various Christian communities through a series of case studies of both successful and unsuccessful cultural diplomacy. These studies navigate questions of intent, especially considering the colonial subtext of cultural diplomacy, but more importantly also points of convergence or disjunction.

As Heather Sharkey states in her introduction, the third section tells us “more about the history of Christians *in* Palestine than about the history of the Christians *of* Palestine”, in that it predominantly deals with attempts to build and wield influence through confessional networks. This section is perhaps a catalogue of colonial actors and actions, that gauges some of the various religious networks and the ways in which such influence was successful or not.

Looking at the ethnically Greek community of Jerusalem, Konstantinos Papastathis traces the development of the Greek Club in Jerusalem and the ways in which the Greek community positioned themselves socially in Jerusalem given the fraught relationship between the indigenous Arab Orthodox and the Greek-controlled Jerusalem Patriarchate. He shows that the community was strongly connected to the recently formed Greek state through both religious and secular networks, despite their close relations with their Arab coreligionists.

Russia’s Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society (IPPO), one of the key instruments of Russian cultural diplomacy in Palestine, is the central concern of Lora Gerd’s chapter. She traces the role of the IPPO in addressing the Arab Orthodox community, particularly in the arena of education and intervention into the conflicts between Palestinians and the Patriarchate. Tracing the evolution of the institution, she also shows the impacts of World War I and the Russian Revolution on the increasing marginalisation of the organisation as an instrument of Russian cultural diplomacy.

Barbara Haider-Wilson explores the transformation of Austrian relationships with Palestine from the Habsburg monarchy through the First Republic and into the authoritarian period. She shows the ways in which Austria utilised Catholic networks, its relationship with the Franciscan Custody, and the role of institutions like the Austrian Hospice in conjuring its imperial past as its power in the region faded.

Showing the shifting terrains of Italian cultural diplomacy, Roberto Mazza looks at the complicated and often contradictory nature of Italian approaches to Palestine, including relations to both Arabs and Jews, contrasting this within the significant shifts of the Italian state itself during the course of the interwar period.

Paolo Maggiolini tackles a “Catholic cultural diplomacy”, from the perspective of International Catholic networks around the Latin Patriarchate. He looks at the role of sometimes controversial Latin Patriarch Luigi Barlassina and the Foundation for the Protection of Latin Interests in Palestine. In doing so he shows the careful line that Catholic communities in Palestine trod against the politicised backdrop of the Mandate period.

The Swedish School in Jerusalem is Inger-Marie Okkenhaug's focus. She considers the school both as a symbol of Western modernity and of Nordic colonialism. She considers the specificities of Swedish approach to education and the inclusive nature of student enrolments which cut across both class and communal bounds, and how the pupils were taught by Arab teachers in Arabic.

Finally, Dominique Trimbur considers French cultural policy in Palestine with the establishment of the two Centres for French Culture in Jerusalem. He traces the ways in which the French addressed Arabs and how this differed from their mode of interaction with Jewish constituencies, as well as the impacts of the Arab Revolt on the proffering of French cultural diplomacy in Palestine specifically, but the Levant more generally.

In her conclusion, Tamara van Kessel considers the effectiveness of expanded definitions of cultural diplomacy, seeking to test the hypothesis laid out in the introduction. She contrasts developing theoretical frameworks for cultural diplomacy, while also comparing Palestine and Christian Palestinians to other Mediterranean society's experience of colonialism and cultural diplomacy.

Finally, Idir Ouahes in his epilogue to the volume, sets out a significantly broader field for considering questions of cultural diplomacy focusing on secular actors. Ouahes' epilogue deals with some of the latent tensions that would have considerable importance in the period after World War II, particularly the rise in US–Soviet tensions. More importantly he considers the impacts of such cultural diplomacy on Palestinians as well as Arabs from neighbouring states and the ways which they made use of such networks. He reminds us that the national identities so fundamental to this volume were in a formative stage as the boundaries imposed by the British and French became more entrenched in the three decades upon which this volume focuses.

SPEAKING TO THE SILENCES?

The cultural diplomacy paradigm operates strongly in the context of Palestinian mobility and transregional dynamics. The Middle East, like so much of the world, was undergoing a process of globalisation that affected the mobility of three categories in particular: people, objects and ideas.⁴⁷ This categorisation of mobility provides a useful framework for understanding cultural diplomacy in the context of Christian Palestinians. The movement of people was often accompanied by networks of trade that facilitated the

⁴⁷L. Kozma, A. Schayegh, and A. Wishnitzer, *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 6.

movement of objects, while ideological networks, be they religious or political, facilitated the movement of ideas alongside more mercantile pursuits. The significant movement of people also gave rise to new diasporas, both as part of the *Mahjar* (Arab diaspora emigrated from Ottoman-ruled Lebanon, Syria and Palestine at the turn of the twentieth century) as well as the displacements of the First World War period.⁴⁸

Palestinian Christians migrated overseas in increasingly large numbers to broaden their trading opportunities from the nineteenth century onwards. Trading outposts, for instance in the mother of pearl industry, ran as far afield as France, the Caribbean, Singapore and the Philippines.⁴⁹ The ways in which Palestinian Christian identity was mobilised in the marketing of mother of pearl devotional goods shows a nuanced understanding of the power of marketing the “holiness” of Palestinian cultural production abroad. The fact that such goods appear to have been produced in different styles and marketed to different confessional groupings overseas—from Orthodox focused goods in Kiev to Catholic goods in Manila and Paris⁵⁰—shows an awareness of transnational religious networks and a canny mercantile sense to making use of them.

While recent research has shown the formative role of Russia in shaping Palestinian literature,⁵¹ similar research on the visual arts is significantly lacking beyond Kamal Boullata’s seminal *Palestinian Art*, particularly on the shift from iconographic practices to modern painting.⁵² Likewise, the role of the Franciscan Custody has been explored from an Italian perspective,⁵³ but less so looking from a Palestinian perspective at the indigenous practices that arose from Catholic patronage. The influence of the British Arts and Crafts movements was formative,⁵⁴ particularly in the character of modern

⁴⁸ Anthony Gorman and Sossie Kasbarian, eds. *Diasporas of the Modern Middle East: Contextualising Community* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

⁴⁹ Jacob Norris, “Exporting the Holy Land: Artisans and Merchant Migrants in Ottoman-Era Bethlehem,” *Mashriq & Mahjar* 1, no. 2 (2013): 14–40.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Agsous in this volume and Dan Spencer Scoville, “The Agency of the Translator: Khalil Baydas’ Literary Translation” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2012).

⁵² Kamal Boullata, *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present* (London: Saqi, 2009).

⁵³ Daniel M. Madden, *Monuments to Glory: The Story of Antonio Barluzzi, Architect of the Holy Land* (Portland, OR: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1964).

⁵⁴ N. Hysler-Rubin, “Arts & Crafts and the Great City: Charles Robert Ashbee in Jerusalem,” *Planning Perspectives* 21, no. 4 (2006): 347–368.

Jerusalem, but the artists and artisans involved in the execution of much of the works produced by Charles Ashbee and the Pro-Jerusalem Society have been largely overlooked, though recent work on Ohanessian's role in developing Armenian Ceramics is beginning to remedy this.⁵⁵

While painting practices and pictorial traditions often take a central position⁵⁶ given canonical approaches to art, industries like weaving, glass blowing or Islamic calligraphy were significant and are also very understudied, sitting outside hegemonic ideas of what constitutes art. Another significant issue is understanding the connections between communalism and art in Palestine.⁵⁷

These insights confirm the value of an inquiry into a connected history and underline the importance of a holistic approach. In order to fully understand these links, we need to examine not only the strategies but also the contexts of production, as well as the interpersonal networks, within Palestine and outside, and the circulation of actors and products considered.

The coverage of this volume is neither comprehensive, nor final. Some Palestinians from the Americas or European countries re-established themselves in Palestine, challenging their predominantly middle-class communities of origin. Other came with political or religious delegations and at times stayed regularly but for shorter periods. Their circulations, connections and interactions with Palestine and with their European interlocutors will be the next aspect *CrossRoads* will look into (Fig. 6).⁵⁸

⁵⁵Sato Moughalian, *Feast of Ashes: The Life and Art of David Ohannessian* (Redwood City, CA: Redwood Press, 2019).

⁵⁶This is particularly evident in surveys of Christian art practices such as Nurith Kenaan-Kedar, *The Madonna of the Prickly Pear Cactus: Tradition and Innovation in 19th- and 20th-Century Christian Art in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2010).

⁵⁷Boullata, *Palestinian Art*, 63–64. Looking at the work of Muslim painter Daoud Zalatimo, for instance, it is clear that personal networks and his close association with the Jawhariyyeh brothers enabled him to spend extensive time in Nikola Saig's studio, before embarking on his own art career.

⁵⁸These transnational networks of cultural diplomacy will be explored in a *CrossRoads* forthcoming volume about the Greek Orthodox priest Nikola Khoury, who utilised Orthodox networks in the Balkans to exert diplomatic influence at the United Nations. Tourism also provides fertile territory for a *CrossRoads* forthcoming publication *New Industries in Ancient Lands* which considers the ways in which Palestinians and the colonial government marketed the historical and religious importance of the country abroad, as well as understanding the ways in which Palestine and its culture was perceived by visiting pilgrims and tourists.



Fig. 6 Frank Scholten, 1921–23, Album Choses interressantes I Appareil avec miroirs (Jericho) (Source Image courtesy of NINO; UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Palestine_Choses_Interessantes_01_013 Image courtesy of NINO)

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Turning the Tables? Arab Appropriation and Production of Cultural Diplomacy



Introduction Part I Indigenising Cultural Diplomacy?

Sarah Irving

Is cultural diplomacy a term that should only be applied to the activities of states or parastatal organisations? The chapters in this book would seem to suggest not. While some show culture being deployed by consulates or major church bodies in international machinations—that is, a fairly conventional view of the concept—many, especially those in this section, urge us to push our understanding of the idea further. This isn't just a matter of following the rationale of cultural diplomacy to its logical conclusion, but also a necessity if we want to use the concept meaningfully in colonial settings such as Mandate Palestine. How to understand a Palestinian presence in the world of cultural diplomacy while Arab Palestinians were denied an active role in the proto-national scene?

Michael Birnhack's work on copyright in Mandate Palestine throws colonial assumptions involved in much cultural diplomacy and policymaking into sharp relief: many local cultural forms did not fit into British concepts of the kind of culture which should be legally protected by copyright,¹ but while the British authorities discounted Arab knowledge, they had no compunction about consulting Zionist and Jewish organisations on their legislation, and moulded much of it around a Eurocentric concept of authorship which encompassed Jewish but not Arab writers and artists.² The main driver

¹ Michael D. Birnhack, *Colonial Copyright: Intellectual Property in Mandate Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 49.

² Ibid., 47–48, 98–105, 107, 109–111.

behind the introduction of copyright law was thus British, not Palestinian, interests,³ but the British authorities' interactions with different communities differed greatly according to colonial stereotypes of their creative lives.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines diplomacy as "the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad".⁴ How is that carried out? By negotiations; performances of military, economic or political power; ingratiation and the building of mutually beneficial relations; manoeuvring of friendships and enemies; underhand and clandestine methods such as bribery and blackmail. Cultural activities might fall into many of these categories, and none, or very few, of these criteria are confined to the state; even the classic Weberian pinpointing of the legitimate use of violence as the monopoly of the state is more an ideal type than a representation of reality. The fact that in 2015 five of the largest economies in the world were corporations, not nation states, highlights the extent to which few of the characteristics and practices of diplomacy are exclusively state preserves.⁵ Indeed in the present day, the fact that the Palestinians have never been recognised as having an independent state of their own, but entities with vague titles such as 'authority' are expected by the international community to carry out state-like functions, highlights the problems with a state focus in understanding diplomacy. One facet of the need to question is thus ethical: the extent to which colonised peoples and independence movements, for instance, are conceptually excluded from discussions of cultural diplomacy.

The second aspect draws on the empirical fact that state exercise of cultural diplomacy does not itself recognise clear state-society boundaries. The cases in which those on whom diplomatic effort is expended are not states themselves but groups within them are innumerable, be it attempts to sway the opinions of ethnic or religious groups in cases of rivalry, or cultural diplomacy as enacted by well-known organisations such as the British Council, Instituto Cervantes, Goethe-Institut or l'Institut français. In highlighting these, this essay thus draws on the kind of trends traced by Charlotte Faucher in her historiographical review of cultural diplomacy. While some schools of thought still draw sharp distinctions between the actions of state and non-state actors in cultural and other forms of diplomacy, an increasing volume of work see these relations as more complex and entangled,⁶ which demands that we consider a broader range of power dynamics—from the individual to community

³Ibid., 79–80, 92–94.

⁴'Diplomacy,' in *Oxford Reference*, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095719998>, accessed 12 May 2020.

⁵Pat Sweet, "Corporations Dominate World's Top 100 Economic Entities," *Accountancy Daily* 14 September 2016, <https://www.accountancydaily.co/corporations-dominate-worlds-top-100-economic-entities>, accessed May 2020.

⁶Charlotte Faucher, "Cultural Diplomacy and International Cultural Relations in Twentieth-Century Europe," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 374–376.

levels, organisations and parastatal institutions, and the state and supranational strata.

Are those at whom such diplomacy is aimed to be understood only as passive recipients? Or should we understand them rather as participants in a multidirectional encounter in which power and influence can go both ways? For centuries before the British imposed their mandatory rule on Palestine, European powers sought to burrow their way into the Ottoman Empire via its Christian and Jewish communities, but as historians of the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa have repeatedly shown, on the ground, those communities also found many ways to make the situation work for themselves. On the cultural plane, European ideas and styles were not adopted unchanged, but were rewritten, remodelled, adapted and contradicted according to local conditions, concepts and desires.⁷

The picture becomes even more complicated in a colonial setting such as Mandatory Palestine. Many of the territory's inhabitants, both Arab and Jewish, questioned the legitimacy of the ruling state, imperial Britain. The Yishuv certainly regarded itself as building a series of state institutions during the Mandate period; many Arabs wished that the leaders of their community would or could do the same. Zionist and sometimes Arab leaders attended and at times had official status at peace conferences or sittings of the League of Nations. The extent to which there is, therefore, a clear sense of who is involved, legitimately or otherwise, in diplomatic relations in this setting gets more and more blurred.

A definition of cultural diplomacy is hardly the hill on which this writer would choose to make her last stand. However, the more we delve into the interactions between colonial states and the different ethnic and religious communities in Mandate Palestine, the more it seems to make sense to understand cultural diplomacy as a route by which nation states and large-scale international institutions—France, Russia, arms of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches—sought to influence groups of Palestinians, but also by which those groups also tried to push back, extract greater financial or political support, or enhance their own standing within their fractured and changing political environment. No nation state offers funds, resources or support to people who are not its own citizens out of a sense of altruism, and where there are needs there is room for negotiation and leverage. There are also imbalances of power, granted, but to deny the agency and subversive abilities of the congregations and communities to which states and their diplomats proffered goods is both counterfactual and condescending.

In this section, then, we encounter examples such as Charbel Nassif's chapter on the politically militant Melkite bishop Gregorios Hajjar, who articulated his relations with France in ways which maximised French support for

⁷See, for instance, the range of examples in L. Kozma, C. Schayegh, and A. Wishnitzer, *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

his project to expand education for Melkite children across the Galilee. Hajjar may regularly have infuriated the British authorities with his Francophilia—rumoured to have extended to espionage—but that did not mean he was an unquestioning instrument of French policy in British-ruled Palestine. While the Paris government was deeply concerned to maintain the position of the French language in the Middle East, Hajjar was able to cite growing Anglo-Protestant, Italian and Russian influence in the region as a means to hasten the flow of French money.

As Sadia Agsous shows, that Russian Orthodox influence, which ceased abruptly with the October Revolution, was perhaps most enduring in its impacts on Palestinian literature. Highlighting the linguistic divides which define so much academic output, the cases of Palestinians who were educated by Russian missions and who even went to university first in Tsarist Russia and later the USSR are radically understudied. Agsous' chapter follows the likes of Spencer Scoville in illuminating the role of Russian-Arabic translation and Russian institutional support in Palestinian manifestations of the broader Arab Nahda.⁸ Agsous' account foregrounds the ways in which Russian literary ideas—particularly realism— influenced Palestinian authors such as Khalil Baydas and Iskander al-Khoury al-Beitjali, and how they then adopted these theories to convey socio-political messages (and not ones which would necessarily have been endorsed by their original sponsors) within their own societies.

Maria Chiara Rioli and Riccardo Castagnetti's chapter is the third focusing on solo or small groups of individuals whose biographies shed light on the interplay between benefactor and beneficiary in the Palestinian cultural sphere. While the orphans of the Franciscan choir in Jerusalem might sound like figures bereft of much agency or leverage, for those with talent and tenacity the training they received could be the start of long and successful careers. More broadly significant is the way in which the influence of local musicians in the Franciscan chapel led to Arabic being introduced into the sung services, Palestinians taking their own positions in major debates on musical style occurring within the Catholic church at large, and even a piece of music with clear political themes being linked to the Holy Sepulchre. Could there be a clearer indication of a Palestinian intention to use the methods of cultural diplomacy to make his own points to a highly political audience than the Prayer written by 'An Arab Palestinian'—the Holy Sepulchre organist Agostino Lama—for the UNSCOP delegation in 1947?

Norig Neveu and Maayan Hillel, on the other hand, both present us with images of how specific communities used the tools of cultural diplomacy to further their own aims. In Haifa, as Hillel outlines, members of the various

⁸See, e.g., Spencer Scoville, "Reconsidering *Nahdawi* Translation: Bringing Pushkin to Palestine," *The Translator* 21 (2015): 223–236.

Christian groups took the skills learned at missionary schools and used them not only to strengthen their economic and political positions but also to build internal cohesion and solidarity within the community itself. Neveu's chapter, meanwhile, traces the complex and intertwined ways in which the associations, charities and social clubs of Orthodox laity in both Palestine and Jordan operated on the cultural plane in the church's long-running disputes over control of ecclesiastical property and decision-making. Cultural diplomacy is shown as one of the means by which Orthodox congregations and lay organisations sought to negotiate with entities such as the Transjordanian state and the British Mandate authorities, deploying cultural capital to expand the space in which they could challenge the Greek-dominated religious authorities and make linguistic, educational and legal demands.

Between them, these chapters all highlight the ways in which Christian communities in Mandate Palestine, or individuals within them, adopted and adapted the methods and tools of cultural diplomacy to their own settings. Whether interacting with the British mandatory authorities and their colonial rule over Palestine, or with other European state and state-like powers, fields such as language, music, education and literature offered ways for Palestinians to negotiate with or push back against ostensibly more powerful entities. Indeed, in many cases culture was one of the only tools in the hands of ordinary people in their encounters with the imperial state, and theories of cultural diplomacy offer modern scholars a useful way of understanding the dynamics of these colonial encounters.

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Orthodox Clubs and Associations: Cultural, Educational and Religious Networks Between Palestine and Transjordan, 1925–1950

Norig Neveu

The aftermath of the First World War and the fall of the Ottoman Empire saw the creation of new states under mandates of the League of Nation. From 1920, Palestine and then Transjordan were placed under British Mandate. Meanwhile, new political ideals prevailed among local political representatives, including Arab nationalism. In 1922, Abdallah, son of Sharif Husayn of Mecca, one of the leaders of the Arab Revolt, and a strong supporter of the Arab nationalist project was appointed Emir of Transjordan.¹ The formation by Emir Abdullah of a Transjordanian government mainly composed of officials from Syria, Palestine and the Hijaz led to some hostility towards him from local notables, but the Emir quickly established his power based on the growing allegiance of some of the regional tribes.² On their side, British officials had two imperatives: ensuring the creation of a Transjordanian national sentiment without attracting the mistrust of the Transjordanian tribes. To do so, British representatives encouraged a social and political confessionalisation

¹M. C. Wilson, “The Hashemite, the Arab Revolt, and Arab Nationalism,” in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, eds. K. Rashid, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 204–224.

²M. C. Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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and established legal frameworks attributing a minority status to Christians.³ They also supported the development of British and American Protestant missions.⁴ At the same time, the Greek Orthodox Church was experiencing an intense financial crisis. For all these reasons, the interwar period appeared to Orthodox Arab notables as a pivotal period to establish local authority in Amman and Transjordan through the work of associations and their ties with the Orthodox laity in Palestine.

The Christian, Catholic and Protestant missionary movement had experienced a revival in the nineteenth century,⁵ a trend which played an important role in Middle Eastern societies, leading to the creation of schools, universities and hospitals. These institutions became the structures around which intellectual life and state administrations of the Ottoman Empire revolved.⁶ Yet it is most often from the perspective of the cultural diplomacy of the states to which these missions were attached, mainly France and Great Britain, that these missions have been viewed, without necessarily measuring their social impact in the Middle East.⁷ Most missionaries had to leave the Middle East or at least their missions during the First World War⁸ and the missionary strategies of the Churches thus changed during the interwar period, encouraging the role of Arab priests and teachers.⁹

In the aftermath of World War I, the intellectual life of the *nahda*¹⁰ was very vivid, especially in Palestine, with important Arabic literature production, journalistic activity and the development of cultural societies in the

³G. Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque. Les tribus chrétiennes de Madaba, Jordanie (XIX–XXe siècle)* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2004).

⁴L. Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

⁵U. Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (London: Cornell University Press, 2008); C. Verdeil, *La mission jésuite du Mont-Liban et de Syrie (1830–1864)* (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2011); H. J. Sharkey, *Cultural Conversions: Unexpected Consequences of Christian Missions in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013).

⁶P. Bourmaud, “Discipline et familiarisation à travers la médecine: une mission médicale à Gaza (1878–1914),” *Missions religieuses, missions médicales et “mission civilisatrice” (XIXe et XXe), Histoire, monde et cultures religieuses* 1, no. 21 (2012): 81–102; C. Verdeil, ed., *Missions chrétiennes en terre d’islam (xvii^e–xx^e siècles). Anthologie de textes missionnaires* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

⁷J. Bocquet, *Missionnaires français en terre d’islam, Damas 1860–1914* (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2005).

⁸R. Mazza, “Churches at War: The Impact of the First World War on the Christian Institution of Jerusalem, 1914–1920,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 2 (2009): 207–227.

⁹N. Neveu, “Between Uniatism and Arabism: Missionary Policies and Diplomatic Interest of the Melkites in Jordan During the Interwar Period,” *Social Sciences and Mission*, Special Issue: Missions, Powers and Arabization vol. 32, nos. 3–4 (2019): 361–392.

¹⁰L. Dakhli, *Une génération d’intellectuels arabes. Syrie et Liban (1908–1940)* (Paris: Karthala, 2009); L. Kozma, A. Schayegh, and A. Wishnitzer, *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

main cities. This cultural nationalism¹¹ was embodied by intellectuals some of whom were also very involved in the Orthodox laity movement. Movement intellectuals such as Hanā and ‘Isā al-‘Isā played a structuring role from the formative context of the late nineteenth century Palestine and Transjordan.¹² Through the Orthodox laity networks, these intellectuals were closely connected to their counterparts living in the Emirate of Transjordan.

This article approaches cultural diplomacy “from below”, separate from state actions,¹³ through the initiatives of the Orthodox clubs and laity from 1925 to 1970 in the Emirate of Transjordan (later the Kingdom of Jordan). Cultural diplomacy is commonly considered to be the exportation of elements considered as representative of a national culture but also as interactions with other countries in the cultural field.¹⁴ This article argues that in a context of the defence of Arab nationalism in a state under Mandate authority, the Orthodox laity played a pivotal role in promoting cultural, intellectual and political production and narratives. Cultural diplomacy will thus be approached at a regional level, through the circulation of people, funding and models and as a way to negotiate local sovereignty and political space, away from the influence of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Based on archival documents from British Mandate archives and interviews with current representatives of the Arab Orthodox associations in Transjordan,¹⁵ this paper proposes a connected history of the Orthodox associations in Transjordan and Palestine during the Mandate and after the settlement of Palestinian refugees in Transjordan. Recent research shows the crucial importance of charities and associations within civil society in the Middle East.¹⁶ In this respect, this paper considers the history of the Orthodox associations with regard to the question of how deeply social dynamics in Transjordan were intertwined with regional dynamics. What circulation and

¹¹A. Abu-Ghazaleh, “Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine During the British Mandate,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, no. 3 (1972): 37–63.

¹²N. Tadros Khalaf, *Les Mémoires de Issa al-‘Issa. Journaliste et intellectuel palestinien (1878–1950)* (Paris: Karthala, 2009).

¹³J.-M. Tobelem, *L’arme de la culture - Les stratégies de la diplomatie culturelle non gouvernementale* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007).

¹⁴P. M. Goff, “Cultural Diplomacy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A. F. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 419–435.

¹⁵Due to the difficult access to the archives of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and a lack of centralisation of the archives of Arab Orthodox associations in Jordan, I use in this article archival documents from Arab Orthodox associations which were published in Raouf Abu Jaber’s two-volume book and on the history of Orthodox associations from 1875 to 2015 in Jordan, R. S. AbuJaber, *Al-Nahda al-urthūduksiyya fi al-Raja’ al-Batriarkia al-Maqdissiyya, 1865–2015, Vol. 1–2* (Amman: National Press, 2016). I also use documents published in the annexes to the Memoirs of ‘Awda al-Qusūs edited by his descendants. From the 1950s, the associations published also many brochures and documentation for internal purpose. They represent precious sources for the documentation of the history of these institutions.

¹⁶L. Ruiz De Elvira, *Vers la fin du contrat social en Syrie. Association de bienfaisance et redéploiement de l’Etat (2000, 2011)* (Paris: IISMM-Karthala, 2019).

transfer of models occurred between Palestine and Transjordan? How did these associations shape the social space in the country and especially its capital and ensure the Orthodox laity a certain political and communal space?

ORTHODOX LAITY IN THE EMIRATE OF TRANSJORDAN: DEVELOPING DIPLOMATIC TIES IN A POLITICAL SPHERE IN RECONFIGURATION

The establishment of post-Ottoman states transformed the political and social role of missionaries. If the latter had been marginalised during the Ottoman period, their affinity with the Mandate powers encouraged the development of their institutions in the new states. Thus, as the Greek Orthodox patriarchate was facing a financial crisis and conflict between its higher clergy and laity, how did the latter use cultural diplomacy to address the Mandate authorities and the government of Transjordan? In Transjordan as in Palestine, the Orthodox Church asserted its local nature (*mahallî*).¹⁷ Its structures adapted to those of the state and the church fully subordinated itself to state legislation.¹⁸ In the Emirate of Transjordan, the political authorities endorsed the election of the Patriarch and approved the clerics appointed on the national territory. During the interwar period, the policies of the Transjordanian government and of the Mandate authorities toward the Greek Orthodox Church should be analysed considering the conflict between laity and higher clergy but also the question of the holy places of Jerusalem.¹⁹

Orthodox Laity During the Interwar Period: Regional Networks and Circulations

Until the second half of the nineteenth century, and the arrival of Latin missionaries, most of the Christians of Ottoman Transjordan were members of the Greek Orthodox Church. From this period onwards, a conflict over the question of arabisation opposed the Orthodox laity and lower Arab clergy to the Greek higher clergy. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and with the promulgation of the Ottoman constitution in 1908, Orthodox laity called for greater democratisation in the management of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and for gradual arabisation of the higher clergy. The Arab members of the church requested the abolition of the Ottoman rule of 1875, which gave to the Greek clerical hierarchy of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre almost exclusive prerogatives in the election of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. A committee of priests and Arab notables was established and called for the application of article 111 of the Constitution which encouraged

¹⁷ Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque*, 160.

¹⁸ T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963).

¹⁹ Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque*, 160; R. Abujaber, *Arab Christianity and Jerusalem* (London: Gilgamesh, 2012).

the establishment of a community council in each *qada'*.²⁰ The rejection of this project by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch led to sharper tensions, including a boycott of masses, demonstrations and petitions.²¹

After 1917, with the fall of the Russian Empire, the missionary efforts of the Imperial Orthodox Society stopped.²² A financial commission was convened to assess the situation of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and concluded its financial bankruptcy. As a result, some *waqf* property was sold and the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem placed under trusteeship.²³ After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, debates intensified. The demands of the laity and notables went from Arabisation of the hierarchy to the development of communal institutions in order to allow the schooling of Orthodox children away from Protestant and Catholic missionary schools. The Arabisation issue gradually became a central demand connected with the Arab nationalist struggle.²⁴ This movement spread from the urban centres of Palestine to Transjordan, led by well-known Arab nationalists engaged against Zionism such as Khalīl al-Sakākīnī and ‘Isā al-‘Isā (Robson, 2011).²⁵ In June 1923, during the sixth Palestinian Arab Congress, intellectuals involved in this Orthodox controversy, such as ‘Isā al-‘Isā and Ibrāhīm Shammās, presented a petition asking the congress to support the Orthodox struggle.²⁶

In this context, an Orthodox fraternity (*jama‘iyyat al-ikhbār al-urthūduksiyya*) was created with local committees in the parishes dealing with local matters. In 1923, the first Arab Orthodox Congress was organised in Haifa under the authority of Iskandir Kassāb and Ya‘qūb Farrāj, gathering delegates from all the Palestinian and Transjordanian local committees. The latter endorsed a number of decisions concerning the organisation of the church and the need to appoint an Arab metropolitan for Transjordan. The Palestinian local committees (27) were far more numerous than those from Transjordan (4).²⁷

²⁰D. Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine 1843–1914: Church and Politics in the Near East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 197.

²¹Chatelard, *Briser la mosaique*.

²²Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine*; E. Astafieva, “La Russie en Terre Sainte: le cas de la Société Impériale Orthodoxe de Palestine (1882–1917),” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 1 (2003): 41–68.

²³K. Papastathis, “Church Finances at the Colonial Age: The Orthodox Patriarcate of Jerusalem Under British Control, 1921–1925,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 5 (2013): 712–731.

²⁴Chatelard, *Briser la mosaique*; S. Khoury and N. Khoury, *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem* (Amman: Dar al-Shorouk, 2002).

²⁵L. Robson, “Communalism and Nationalism in the Mandate: The Greek Orthodox Controversy and the National Movement,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41, no. 1 (2011): 6–23; Chatelard, *Briser la mosaique*.

²⁶Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Palestine*, 81.

²⁷There were 4 local committees in Transjordan: Huṣn, al-Salt, al-Karak and Mādabā which sent the following representatives: Dakhl al-Mūsā, Sulaymān ‘Abdu (Huṣn), priests Ayyūb and Ibrāhīm (al-Salt), ‘Isā al-Madānāt, Jādallah al-Sanā’ and Salama al-Sharayha (al-Karak), Ya‘qūb Jamiān (Mādabā) (Khoury, *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*, 204).

The congress led to the constitution of an executive committee composed of seven Palestinians and three Transjordanians. The latter entered into an ongoing conflict with the successive Patriarchs.²⁸

The authorities of the British Mandate and of the Government of Transjordan were asked for mediation both by lay people and the Patriarchate. In a context of political and religious reconfiguration, the Arab laity used cultural diplomacy, through the development of its associative network as a powerful tool to extend its activity in Palestine and in Transjordan. The representatives of the British Mandate, who launched a progressive confessionalisation of the political sphere in the Emirate of Transjordan and Palestine, especially after the creation of the Supreme Muslim Council,²⁹ unsuccessfully attempted to interfere in this conflict. In 1926, the Beltram-Young commission of inquiry mandated by the British authorities recommended that members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher adopt the Palestinian nationality to limit foreign interference. Its conclusions encouraged lay people to establish educational and charitable associations.³⁰ Those recommendations were rejected by the Patriarchate as the conflict between laity settled into time with the organisation of several other congresses of Orthodox laity and notables in 1941 and 1958.

Thus, associations allowed the development of Orthodox cultural and educational activities in Palestine and Transjordan. Through these associations, lay people got involved in the political space and elaborated solidarity networks. In the Emirate of Transjordan, the Orthodox notables mainly concentrated on developing a communal space in the new capital, Amman, thanks to solidarity networks and cultural diplomacy.

Claims for Cultural and Educational Facilities in the New Capital

From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, Catholic and Protestant missions settled in the main cities of Ottoman Transjordan (al-Salt, al-Karak, Mādabā, ‘Ajlūn, etc.) through to the development of education and medical services. Latin missionaries accused the Greek Patriarchate of having abandoned their followers. However, these missionary policies competed with the initiatives of the Imperial Orthodox Society. The latter was founded in Russia in 1882. It opened many village schools and supported church construction on both sides of the Jordan River.³¹ Not recognised by Ottoman

²⁸ Khoury, *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*, 329–331.

²⁹ U. M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam Under the British Mandate for Palestine* (Leiden; New York; Copenhagen: Brill, 1987); First Name Added: Roza I. M. El-Eini, *Mandate Landscape: British Imperial Rule in Palestine, 1929–1948* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); N. Neveu, “Les politiques des lieux saints et la topographie sacrée dans le sud de la Jordanie, XIXe–XXe siècles” (PhD diss., Paris, EHESS, 2013).

³⁰ Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque*.

³¹ Astafieva, “La Russie en Terre Sainte.”

authorities and subject to hostility from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, the initiatives of the society were limited. During World War I, Ottoman authorities closed down all the schools and institutions of the Society, just like those of other missionary institutions.³²

From the 1890s onwards, the Orthodox Patriarchate tried to counter these various missionary advances by building or renovating churches and developing its school network.³³ In al-Karak, the school for girls was opened in 1898 and the church bell tower was renovated in 1911.³⁴ However, the financial crisis experienced by the Patriarchate after World War I stopped these activities. In addition, Orthodox schools were much less well-endowed than their missionary counterparts in terms of infrastructures, training staff and curriculum. The local teachers did not enjoy the same prestige and level of training as foreign missionaries.³⁵ Moreover, without a proper Greek Orthodox women's congregation, the development of schools for girls remained limited. In the 1920s, there were only 16 Greek Orthodox schools in Palestine and Transjordan with around 800 pupils.³⁶ Thus, many Orthodox in the region chose to send their children to missionary schools while struggling at the same time for the development of a quality Orthodox educational system. In addition, there were no Orthodox colleges or universities in the Greater Syria region, although few young Transjordanians completed high school before World War I.³⁷

Thus, in the aftermath of World War I, as Amman and the Emirate of Transjordan became a new missionary front, the Orthodox community found itself in a paradoxical situation: it was the biggest Christian community of the country but deprived of schools and churches in the capital of the new State. In 1922, Amman became the capital of the Emirate of Transjordan, whereas a year before it was not even one of the administrative centres created by the Mandate authority, in contrast to 'Ajlūn, al-Salṭ or al-Karak for instance. In the 1920s, religious infrastructures were lacking in Amman. The city became an outpost of missionary politics in the Emirate of Transjordan. The construction of much infrastructure followed the expansion of the city to the districts of Wast al-Balad, Jabal Amman, Jabal al-Lweibdeh and Jabal al-Ashrafiyya. From 1923, one of the first projects of Emir Abdallah was the construction of a mosque, on the ruins of the old Umayyad one. Then, under the authority of the Latin Patriarchate, a Latin church was built (1924) and

³²Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine*, 101–109, 134–135.

³³E. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge Middle East Studies, 1999), 43–44.

³⁴T. C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Irâde ve adliye, S., 25 2/9, December 2, 1911.

³⁵Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque*.

³⁶Khoury, *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*, 218.

³⁷Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine*, 153; Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque*, 164.

later a Melkite church (1931), in Jabal al-Lweibdeh. As Latin, Protestant and Melkite missions were sent all over the country, many health centres and hospitals opened, such as the Italian hospital (1926) and the hospital of the Church Missionary Society (1927). They were both located in Jabal al-Ashrafiyya.

The construction of Orthodox institutions only started in the late 1930s at the instigation of lay people who settled in Amman. They developed slowly due to funding limitations. Until the 1950s, most of the Orthodox families of Amman were sending their children to the school of the Church Missionary Society. Thus, members of prominent families developed a political network, especially with the representatives of the British Mandate in order to favour the development of a communal space within the capital but also to promote cultural activities. Thanks to this political network and to the cultural activities of their associations they ensured themselves a political role and visibility.

Orthodox Laity and the Mandate Representative: Creating Political Ties

From 1922 onwards, Amman became the administrative and economic centre of the country. The development of the city was carried out in parallel with the construction of the state. Unlike most cities, its expansion was not due to its economic functions but reflected the political circumstances of its creation.³⁸ During the interwar period, Amman and its region attracted migrants from Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq, but also internal migration from al-Salt and al-Karak. The main factor in this migration was Amman's status as seat of the government. According to Raouf Abujaber, around 400 Christians moved from al-Salt to Amman in the 1920s.³⁹ In this context, the Abujabers, a prominent family of traders from al-Salt and Yādūda, settled in Amman.⁴⁰ ‘Awda al-Qusūs who was a judge for the region of al-Karak, trained in the Greek Orthodox school of this city, settled in Amman in the 1920s because of his involvement in the political life of the Emirate. Both families were involved in the activities of the Orthodox laity and developed initiatives in Amman. The extension of the city from Wast al-Balad to the districts of Jabal Amman, Jabal al-Lweibdeh and Jabal al-Ashrafiyya went with the development of religious, cultural and political infrastructures. The competitive topographies which developed during the interwar period indicate the pivotal role of the new capital in terms of cultural diplomacy.

In the early 1920s, according to his diaries, John Philby, the High Commissioner of the British Mandate from 1921 to 1924, established privileged relationships with members of Christian prominent families, especially

³⁸E. Rogan, “The Making of a Capital: Amman 1918–1928,” in *Amman: Ville et Société*, eds. J. Hannoyer and S. Shami (Beirut: CERMOC, 1996), 89–107.

³⁹Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-‘arabiyya al-urthūduksiyya*.

⁴⁰R. S. Abujaber, *Pioneers over Jordan, The Frontier of Settlement in Transjordan, 1850–1914* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989).

Greek Orthodox ones. Thus, in both Transjordan and Palestine, Orthodoxy turned to representatives of the British Mandate, asking for support and the maintenance of Orthodox institutions.⁴¹ Some passages of John Philby's diaries point to what was perceived as a weakness of Emir Abdullah in his relationship with the Christians. In this context, many prominent Christian figures came to complain to John Philby about the situation of their community. For instance, on 19 July 1922, Sa'ad Abujaber and 'Isā al-Qa'wār, representatives of the Christian families of Yādūda⁴² visited the British official to complain about abuses committed against their land by a Bedouin tribe. John Philby points out:

My visitor declared that it is no use protesting to the Amir as in such matters they never got any change out of him and the government.⁴³

John Philby's role as mediator reflects the low representation of local notabilities in the government of Transjordan and their distance from certain circles of influence, mostly those of Syrian nationalists. Thus, in a context of political change in the framework of the new State, threatening their local influence, these notables sought the support of the representatives of the Mandate administration. On 21 July 1922, a similar interview was conducted between John Philby and 'Awda al-Qusūs, a prominent notable from the city of al-Karak and a politician well known for the publication of his Memoirs⁴⁴:

In the course of our conversation he criticized the methods of the governments and expressed great dissatisfaction on the part of most of Christian community against the way they were being treated and there is no doubt that there is a good deal of truth in his criticism. At the same time I pointed out to him that if the Christian community which was a minority wished to remain in Trans-Jordan it must realize the necessity of being on the most friendly terms with the Government and the Arabs around it.⁴⁵

'Awda al-Qusūs probably refers in this quotation to two conflicts that opposed members of two tribal alliances in al-Karak including Christian families between 1921 and 1922. His comments reflect his opposition to Emir Abdallah's measures to resolve these conflicts. John Philby was considered as a privileged mediator for the Orthodox Christian notables. He also benefited

⁴¹ Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Palestine*, 83.

⁴² Yādūda is a village located between Amman and al-Salt. It was established in the late nineteenth century by Christian families of al-Salt, mostly Orthodox.

⁴³ Saint Anthony's college, GB 165-0229 Philby Collection, 1/5/3/3 Transjordan Diary, Vols. 3 and 5, File 3 of 4 (vol. 5, pp. 149–208).

⁴⁴ 'Awda Slimān al-Qusūs al-Halasā, *Mudhakarāt wa 'awraq-hu* (Memoirs and papers), eds. Nāif Jūrj al-Qusūs al-Halasā and Ghassān Slāma al-Shawārb al-Halasā, 28.

⁴⁵ Saint Anthony's college, GB 165-0229, Philby Collection, 1/5/3/3 Transjordan Diary, Vols. 3 and 5, File 3 of 4, July 2, 1922.

from this role to structure an opposition to Emir Abdullah and against Syrian nationalists based on Transjordanian notables, including ‘Awda al-Qusūs.⁴⁶ In fact, since the early 1920s, missions were also used for political matters in order to limit the claims and influence of Arab nationalists close to the Transjordanian government such as members of the Independence Party, *Hizb al-Istiqlāl*.⁴⁷

John Philby's status must be analysed considering two characteristics of the TransJordanian political field in the early 1920s. First, the poor integration of local notables within the first Transjordanian governments would have led them to seek alternative spaces to impose their claims. Then, many Christians had actively participated in the Arab nationalist movement. The confessional issue was maybe mobilised by the Orthodox notables in a way to defend their interests and those of the social group they represented. These episodes thus attest to a reconfiguration of the political field, in favour of a territorialisation⁴⁸ and confessionalisation of political identities.⁴⁹ One aspect of the confessionalisation process was the creation of specific legal and juridical measures concerning Christians in Transjordan as the legal status of Christians in 1933. The stake for the Orthodox laity was to affirm its role within the political and social dynamics of the newly created state and ensure its community a communal space within the capital. The Orthodox community and its institutions were therefore characterised by their openness to Transjordanian society. It was involved in fields that went beyond the charitable or educational sectors.

THE ORTHODOX NOTABLES IN TRANSJORDAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAB ORTHODOX NAHDA ASSOCIATION

As mentioned above, after the First World War, the Greek Orthodox Church experienced an intense financial crisis. Due to financial limitations, the church could not develop many schools or build new churches in the Emirate of Transjordan. The Orthodox Church also could not counter the Protestant, Latin and Melkite missionary offensive. For all these reasons, the interwar

⁴⁶M. Abu Nowar, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Volume 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920–1929* (Oxford: Ithaca Press Oxford, 1989).

⁴⁷The party was banned in 1921 and its main leaders were sent to exile. B. Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan: The Street and the State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

⁴⁸The term territorialisation refers to the creation of new religious territories, real or symbolic (S. Andézian, “Introduction - Fondations des lieux de culte,” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 151 (September–October, 2010)). This process involves different stages of spatial anchoring: appropriation and delimitation of a given territory, construction of a building and formation of a community of the faithful, administrative redistribution, etc.

⁴⁹Neveu, “Les politiques des lieux saints.”

period appeared to Orthodox notables as a pivotal period to establish local authority in Amman and in the Emirate of Transjordan through associations and cultural diplomacy.

The Foundation of the Arab Orthodox Nahda Association: A Palestinian Connection?

In Palestine, the first forms of associations appeared in the late nineteenth century as charities and cooperatives. The Orthodox Philanthropic Foundation was founded in Jaffa in 1879 and encouraged the opening of several clubs and associations. There were three associations in Acre at the beginning of the twentieth century which activities focused on cultural publications and charitable projects. The Ottoman Constitution of 1908 recognised the right to establish associations and in 1908, the National Association for Cultural Promotion was created in Jaffa for the education of youth. The first Ottoman law legislating associations was enacted in 1909. Christian-Muslim associations developed with a clear political agenda (Arab rights, against Zionism), such as the al-Ahliyya association in Jaffa. In 1918, *al-nādī al-‘arabī* (the Arab Club) was also founded in Jerusalem. In addition, in Palestine, Orthodox intellectuals were deeply involved in the development of the press, such as the newspaper *Al-Karmil*, founded in 1908 by Najib Nassar, *Al-Dustur*, founded in 1910 by Khalil al-Sakākīnī, or *Falastin*, founded by ‘Isā al-‘Isā in 1910.⁵⁰ Matters such as Arab nationalism, the fight against Zionism or Orthodox controversies were discussed in these newspapers.

During the interwar period, the prominent families in the Mandate of Palestine and in Transjordan were closely connected through economic, cultural and political networks. In 1923, The Arab Orthodox Nahda Association was among the first associations to be funded in the Emirate of Transjordan. On April 19, 1928, the Organic Law for Transjordan was published. It represented a first draft of the constitution of the new State and augured greater State intervention in all matters.⁵¹ The Organic Law stressed the right of every Transjordanian to practise their religion “according to their traditions” (article 10) and of the different minorities to found private schools (article 14). One of the articles also concerned the right to found associations. The Arab Orthodox Nahda Association was officially recognised on 14 December 1929 with ‘Awda al-Qusūs as president and ’Amin Qa‘wār as vice president.

In the 1930s, associations such as al-Maqāṣid al-Hijaziyyah Association (1931) and the Circassian Ikhwan Association (1932) were created, followed by others such as the Jordanian Youth League and the Association of the Red Freedom in 1937 (more politically oriented) and the Women’s

⁵⁰Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Palestine*, 86–87.

⁵¹National Library of Jordan, Official Gazette, 188, 19 April 1928.

Social Solidarity Society, founded in 1944.⁵² As Seteney Shami states, “ethnic associations appeared as new arenas of interactions” to strengthen social cohesion.⁵³ The Orthodox associations aimed to encourage the creation of a communal space within the capital but also to promote political and cultural activities. These clubs had the same social function as in Palestine “to bond kinship groups” with a certain influence of “class and status networks”⁵⁴

Orthodox notables played a central role in supporting the creation of these associations. These families mainly came from al-Karak (the Qusūs family), al-Salt (the Abujaber family) and ‘Ajlūn/Irbid (the Qa‘wār family). ‘Awda al-Qusūs (1877–1943) was the first founder of the Arab Orthodox Nahda Association. During the Ottoman period, he was a judge in the *bidā’iyya* tribunal of al-Karak and then joined the General Council of the vilayet of Suriyya. After the creation of the Emirate, he was involved as a judge in several types of courts and tribal conflict regulations. He was a member of the National Party and from the late 1920s onwards held political office several times. His memoirs remain one of the richest sources of the social history of Transjordan. From the early 1920s, one of the very first preoccupations of ‘Awda al-Qusūs was the opening of an Orthodox school in Amman.⁵⁵

In order to develop its activity in the Emirate of Transjordan, the representatives of the future association had to gather the support of the representatives of the Transjordanian government through cultural activities. For instance, in a letter of 2 August 1921, the King’s Advisor thanks ‘Awda al-Qusūs for his effort in diffusing science and knowledge in the country. He mentions in particular the diffusion of the content of *Shams al-ma‘ārif*⁵⁶ and some knowledge about the so-called Oriental sciences.⁵⁷ This letter was sent before the creation of the association and indicates the role played by cultural activities organised by Arab Orthodox representatives in developing political and diplomatic ties with members of the government of Transjordan. If the letter remains quite vague on the content of the cultural and intellectual activities of the association it apparently refers to the promulgation of classical knowledge from the literate culture of the time in Palestine and Transjordan.

⁵²E. Harmsen, *Islam, Civil Society and Social Work: Muslim Voluntary Welfare Associations in Jordan Between Patronage and Empowerment* (Leiden and Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

⁵³S. Shami, “The Circassians of Amman: Historical Narratives, Urban Dwelling and the Construction of Identity,” in *Amman, ville et société*, eds. S. S. Hannoyer Jean and S. Shami (Beirut: CERMOC, 1996), 317.

⁵⁴S. Tamari, *Mountain Against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 43.

⁵⁵Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-‘arabiyya al-urthūduksiyya*, 150.

⁵⁶*Shams al-ma‘ārif* is a manuscript of the thirteenth century written by Ahmad al-al-Būnī, an Egyptian scholar. It is considered the most important textbook for Islamic esoteric spirituality.

⁵⁷A copy of the letter is published in Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-‘arabiyya al-urthūduksiyya*, 150.

The Orthodox Nahda Association was directly associated by its name with the movement launched by Khalil al-Sakakini and Yusuf and Isaa al-Isaa.⁵⁸ Indeed, the Palestinian and Transjordanian Orthodox community, led by significant figures such as Khalil al-Sakakini (1878–1953), increasingly shaped their struggle as a regional political movement. In 1913, Khalil al-Sakakini wrote a pamphlet entitled *al-nahda al-urthidukisiyya fi Filastin* (the Orthodox Renaissance in Palestine) in which he highlighted the quality of the Arab Orthodox movement.⁵⁹ However, during the 1920s and 1930s, the debate within the Orthodox laity in Transjordan mirrored that of their Palestinian counterparts. For al-Sakakini, communal identification and nationalism were not compatible. Other Palestinian intellectuals as Ya'qub Farraj, Isaa al-Isaa or Emil al-Ghuri considered their articulation as a way to give a pivotal role to the Orthodox movement within the political life of Palestine.⁶⁰ The strategy developed by the leader of the Arab Orthodox Nahda Association was part of the same political register.

From the 1920s, the first activities of the association consisted of organising debates in Amman about Zionism in Palestine, but also about nationalism. In his book on the history of the Arab Orthodox movement in Transjordan, Raouf Abujaber mentions the role of 'Awda al-Qusus during the 1929 riots and massacre in Palestine. He called for a boycott of products and trading relationships with Jewish merchants from Tel Aviv and promoted trading with the British. Al-Qusus was defending the development of a national trade based on Syrian and Palestinian merchants.⁶¹ The activities of the Arab Orthodox Nahda Association and its representatives were mainly focused on cultural and political issues. The government of Transjordan sought to promote Arab culture and knowledge, which became an important asset for Arab Orthodox associations in order to obtain backing for their activities and for the claims of their political representatives concerning political and communal issues. In the 1920s, the association grew in Amman thanks to the links its leaders established with representatives of the British Mandate and of the government of Transjordan. In Transjordan, it was different as in Palestine, "Unlike in Beirut, Damascus, and Cairo, where literary cafés served as a venue for intellectual debates and belonged to competing political groups, in Palestine during the Mandate, cultural and confessional clubs took over this role".⁶²

The second Orthodox conference took place in Jaffa in 1931 under the chairmanship of Isaa al-Isaa with 8 representatives of the Transjordanian

⁵⁸ Khalaf, *Les Mémoires de Issa al-Issa*.

⁵⁹ Robson, *Communalism and Nationalism in the Mandate*, 15.

⁶⁰ Robson, *Communalism and Nationalism in the Mandate*, 16.

⁶¹ Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-'arabiyya al-urthidukisiyya*, 150–151.

⁶² Tamari, *The Mountain Against the Sea*, 188.

committees of Irbid/‘Ajlūn, al-Karak, al-Salt, Madābā, ‘Ammān and Huṣn.⁶³ The conference was organised in a specific context, after the death of the Greek Orthodox patriarch Damanios which lead to a revival of the claims of the Arab Orthodox laity concerning the organisation of the church. They started to demand modern electoral and constitutional reforms and called for a boycott of the patriarchal elections.⁶⁴ A memorandum was sent by the Orthodox Arab executive committee to the government of Palestine in October 1931 requiring the implementation of the Bertram Young commission of 1926. A similar memorandum was sent to Emir Abdallah by the Orthodox representatives of Transjordan. The Emir answered this memorandum in a letter in which he stated his support for the claims of the Arab Orthodox and especially concerning the election of an Arab Patriarch.⁶⁵ Cultural diplomacy within the Emirate of Transjordan and at the regional scale allowed the Arab Orthodox to find political support that they could mobilise according to the circumstances and the nature of their claims. It also granted them a political presence they wished to embody with the creation of a communal space within the capital of the Emirate of Transjordan.

The Arab Orthodox Nahda Association: Creating a Communal Urban Presence

From the 1920s onwards, one of the Orthodox Nahda Association's main goals was to promote the religious activities of the Orthodox community and a communal space in Amman.⁶⁶ In 1932, the Orthodox Nahda Association decided to build a church in Amman, supported by private funding. In his book on the history of the Arab Orthodox movement in Jordan, Raouf Abujaber provides a copy of a decision of the board of the Arab Orthodox Nahda Association, noting that:

On Saturday, July 30, 1932, the Arab association gathered on the invitation of the board of directors and its administration and ordered the establishment of a church. It was decided by agreement to send the priest Sulaymān ‘Isā of the Orthodox community in Amman to the villages of Transjordan and Palestine in order to extend the aid and benevolence of all Orthodox philanthropists [...]⁶⁷

The project of building a church in Amman emerged independently from the authority of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate but with the support of the lower Arab clergy. The project for a church depended on private funding

⁶³The fourth and fifth Orthodox Congress took place in 1956 and in 1992.

⁶⁴Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Palestine*, 88.

⁶⁵Khoury, *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*, 250.

⁶⁶Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-‘arabiyya al-urthūduksiyya*.

⁶⁷Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-‘arabiyya al-urthūduksiyya*, 154.

from Palestinian and Transjordanian donations. Sulaymān ‘Isā was also in charge of entrusting these funds to the bank. In 1932, the board of the association also asked Mīkhā‘il Qa‘wār to look for a proper location in which to build the church in Amman, and it was decided that it should be located close to the neighbourhood of al-Ashrafiyya where the Italian hospital, the Latin church and the Hospital of the Church Missionary Society were already sited. The church was located in proximity to the *sayl*, the stream that crossed downtown Amman at this time. The land was registered under the name of the Association. It was bought from a Circassian family, as the Circassians were the first to resettle in Amman in the late nineteenth century.

The Greek Orthodox Church was thus characterised by a will to develop its communal space in the capital out of regional funding.⁶⁸ This territorialisation process reflects the reality of the communal borders which did not correspond to the national ones, but were marked by interconnections between members and representatives of Arab Orthodoxy. However, this first attempt to build a church was interrupted for economic reasons and the project remained one of the main preoccupations of the Association even though the first plans of the edifice had already been drawn. The association also planned to build a school on land adjacent to the church.

In 1943, Ḥanā al-Qusūs, physician, became the president of the association. He was also a prominent figure of the Arab Orthodox movement in Transjordan who was born in al-Karak in 1885.⁶⁹ That same year, in 1943, a branch of the association opened in Fuḥayṣ, a village located about 20 kilometres from Amman and populated by a majority of Orthodox. Moreover, members of the Association extended their ambition of building churches for their community to include Zarqa.⁷⁰ During this period, the Association continued its initial cultural activities yet also started to promote more sports and spread to other cities and villages of the country.

From the 1930s, Sa‘ad Abujaber increasingly took a prominent place within the Orthodox laity and associations, especially by involving himself in the project of constructing a Greek Orthodox church in Amman.⁷¹ He belonged to an influential family from al-Salṭ that established al-Yadūda in 1860 and whose activities had flourished in the early twentieth century through the development of agriculture and the grain trade in the Balqa

⁶⁸G. Chatelard, “The Constitution of Christian Communal Boundaries and Spheres in Jordan,” *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 476–502.

⁶⁹Hana al-Qusūs was a physician who had completed part of his studies at the preparatory school of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and then at French Faculty of Medicine of Beirut and Paris. After serving in the Ottoman army as a doctor, he became a member of the health department of the Emirate of Transjordan.

⁷⁰Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-‘arabiyya al-urthūduksiyya*, 163–164.

⁷¹Hana al-Qusūs and Raouf Abujaber, both entrepreneurs, replaced their relatives at the head of the Association. From the 1920s, notables from al-Salt, Irbid, al-Karak or Ma‘ān settled in Amman and contributed to its spatial expansion and its cultural and intellectual life.

region.⁷² The Abujaber family developed strong economic ties with Nablus since the nineteenth century. Thus, out of his economic and political connections, he could mobilise kinship networks with Palestine.

In 1947, Sa'ad Abujaber became responsible for the committee in charge of the construction of the church in Amman. The vice president was Khalil al-Madānāt. The construction work on the church began in 1947, thanks to a donation of 5000 pounds from the Orthodox Monastery of Jerusalem.⁷³ The edifice was inaugurated in 1948 and became a central space in the life of the community. Later, in addition to this church, the association also acquired a building to organise cultural activities, especially for young people and scouts. A third building was purchased for gatherings and parties.

The Orthodox notables played an important role in developing cultural institutions in the capital and the different cities and villages of the country. Due to the conflict between the laity and the Patriarchate much of this infrastructure (schools, churches and hospitals) were built thanks to private funding. Notables would fund a church, building, furniture or ceremonies and take care of their maintenance. The local committees under the supervision of the lay people are, until today, in charge of many churches in Jordan. Women played an important role within these committees with examples such as Hind al-Qa'wār, who is at the time of writing still in charge of the maintenance of al-'Abdalī church in Amman.

The Arab Orthodox Nahda Association contributed to developing a social and intellectual life in Transjordan and more broadly in the region. Its activities were rooted in political debates, including Arab nationalism, the struggle against Zionism, and eventually against communism. These institutions were meant to shape the religious but also cultural and political life of the community. In Amman, members of the Association faced difficulties in developing communal space and education. This case study therefore underlines the limits of cultural diplomacy at the local level. The political authorities were so constrained by their relationship with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem that they could not free the members of the association from the economic issues affecting the development of their activities in the country.

This political and social function developed with the arrival of Palestinian refugees in Jordan after the Nakba. These newcomers were already very involved in the community's social and organisational life within Palestine,⁷⁴ and they continued these activities in Transjordan. The case study of Amman reveals how lay people played a central role from 1920 onwards in the organisation and structure of the Orthodox community in Transjordan and Palestine.

⁷²Abujaber, *Pioneers over Jordan*.

⁷³Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-'arabiyya al-urthiduksiyya*, 164.

⁷⁴M. Mack, "Orthodox and Communist: A History of a Christian Community in Mandate Palestine and Israel," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 4 (2015): 1-17; D. Tsimhoni, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem During the Formative Years of the British Mandate in Palestine," *Asian and African Studies* 12, no. 1 (1978): 77-121.

MIGRATION AND REGIONAL CIRCULATION: EXPANDING THE ARAB ORTHODOX IMPRINT IN AMMAN

The role played by associations in promoting cultural activities and sports is still understudied for the case of Transjordan. Yet they constituted places of sociability and contact where political matters such as Arab nationalism were discussed and where special attention was dedicated to young people. Between 1948 and 1967, the West Bank and East Jerusalem were attached to the Kingdom of Jordan from 1946. Some of the notables of Palestine and Transjordan were thus placed under the same political authority, as the Palestinian struggle was central to the political life of the community. In the 1940s, the political life of the Kingdom faced major changes with the attainment of independence and the considerable increase in its population through the annexation of new territories and the arrival of thousands of Palestinian refugees. This political reconfiguration led to the affirmation of a discourse on the new national identity giving a privileged place to Jerusalem.⁷⁵ After the annexation of the West Bank and Jerusalem, the government of Jordan attached greater importance to Christian issues. Its statement in favour of the claims of the Orthodox Arab laity illustrates the tension between their effective cultural diplomacy and the political and diplomatic stakes embodied by the interests of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

The 1940s and the Change of Diplomatic Paradigm

From the 1950s, with the annexation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and its holy sites, the Hashemite monarchy's relations with the religious authorities and institutions in Jerusalem evolved significantly. During this decade, the Prime Minister officially stood for the Arabisation of the higher clergy and patriarchate within the framework of the Arab nationalist struggle. In this time, the Orthodox laity was strongly supported by the government of Jordan and developed its activities and presence within the country. The Orthodox laity continued to approach the Hashemite authorities with a view to gaining support for their claim. The Orthodox laity became strongly politicised from the Fourth Orthodox Congress of 1956 onwards, as they received the support of Arab nationalists and left-wing parties. The Jordanian government, headed by Sulaymān Nābulsī, supported the Arabisation of the Orthodox patriarchate as part of the Arab national cause.⁷⁶

January 1957 and the election of Patriarch Benedictos represented a turn within the diplomatic relations of the Jordanian State with the Greek

⁷⁵K. Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem: Holy Places and National Spaces* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

⁷⁶Tsimhoni, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem," 38–39.

Orthodox Patriarchate and laity. In 1957, the Jordanian Parliament approved a new patriarchal settlement that granted most of the claims of the lay people. The settlement was revised in 1958 after the new patriarch proposed another settlement which was approved the same year. While it acceded less to the demands of Palestinian and Transjordanian laity, it was still accepted as it endorsed many of their claims. This regulation, which is still in force today, established the formation of executive boards in all parishes, and the election of a council of lay people to participate in the management of the Patriarchate's affairs alongside the hierarchy. Concerning the higher clergy, the settlement ratified the ordination within three years of two Arab metropolitans for Jordan and the adoption of Jordanian nationality by all members of the synod. From this period onwards, members were required to speak Arabic.⁷⁷ The first Jordanian metropolitan was ordained in 1960.

Jordanian lay people considered this settlement as a first step, after which more of their claims would be taken into account. In the absence of new developments, they remained dissatisfied with this regulation. Indeed, its implementation does impose changes but with relative effectiveness in terms of power dynamics within the Church. Tensions with the Patriarchate therefore persist to this day and explain the importance of associations of lay people in Jordan. The latter were greatly reinforced in the 1950s by the arrival of Palestinian nationalist figures who were widely involved in the development of sports and cultural associations in Palestine.

The 1950s and 1960s revealed both the impact of the powerful cultural diplomacy of the Orthodox laity who succeeded in gaining agreement to some of their claims especially concerning the organisation of their Church and relations with the higher clergy. This period also revealed the limits of this endeavour since the Hashemite rulers were careful not to alienate the Greek Orthodox upper hierarchy in a context in which it claimed sovereignty over the holy sites of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.⁷⁸ The Hashemites therefore took on the role of mediator between the laity and the higher clergy and were concerned about preserving good diplomatic relations with each side. Relations with the Patriarchate were strengthened from the late 1950s onwards thanks to the Patriarch's support for the monarchy during the attempted coups against King Hussein in the 1950s.⁷⁹ In addition, the entry into the Jordanian government of several prominent political figures as representatives of Jerusalem, such as Ya'qūb Farrāj, gave the Orthodox laity a new political and diplomatic centrality as their new associations flourished in Amman in the 1950s.

⁷⁷ Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque*.

⁷⁸ Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem*.

⁷⁹ Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan*, 280; D. Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank Since 1948* (London: Praeger, 1993), 42.

From Sunday School to the Educational Association

In 1948, the Nakba and the creation of the State of Israel led to the departure of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees and the arrival of thousands of them in Jordan. In 1949, the West Bank of the River Jordan, which would be formally annexed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1950, was the main host territory with an estimated 280,000 refugees, followed by the Gaza Strip, then administered by Egypt (200,000), Lebanon (97,000), and Syria (75,000).⁸⁰ From 1948 to 1967, with Jordan annexing West Bank and East Jerusalem, local churches faced important internal changes—as well as the administrative ones—as they had to welcome new members and provide them with humanitarian support.

During an interview in January 2015, Michel Ewaisse, engineer and current member of the Orthodox Association, stated:

This is the association [the Orthodox Nahda Association] that built the first church in the city centre. [...] After the Nakba and the creation of the State of Israel, it played an important role in welcoming Palestinian refugees and providing them with help (clothing, food, etc.).⁸¹

Many notables maintained relations with the territories they had to leave. At this time, families such as the Farrāj and the Ḥanāniyya were important leaders and representatives of the Palestinian national movement, very involved in the Orthodox laity movement. Ya‘qūb Farrāj, for instance, was an eminent political figure, member of the National Defense Party, who had been appointed vice-mayor of Jerusalem in the 1930s and 1940s. The dispersion of these families over the region after the Nakba did not lead to the disappearance of the Orthodox movement and claims. Moreover, some of these Palestinian communal and political leaders settled in Jordan and were involved in politics as representatives of Jerusalem and the West Bank in parliament, such as Anasṭās Ḥanāniyya who became Minister of Finance in the 1950s.

The arrival in Jordan of Palestinian members of the Orthodox associations was a turning point in the life of the community there. During the 1950s, the Orthodox associations developed further. Palestinian notables brought to Jordan new associative models they had already developed in Palestine. Thanks to their expertise and networks they opened new cultural association and clubs, mainly in Amman.

Father Qunṣṭanṭīn Qarmash, the current priest of the ‘Abdalī parish in Amman played a considerable role in this new dynamic. He was born in

⁸⁰J. Al Husseini, “The Arab States and the Refugee Issue: A Retrospective View,” in *Israel and the Palestinian Refugees vol. 189*, eds. E. Benvenisti, C. Gans, and S. Hanafi (Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer, 2007), 253–263.

⁸¹Interview with Michel Ewaisse, January 25, 2015, Amman.

1927 in Beit Jala and went to school in Bethlehem. During an interview, he mentioned arriving in Jordan in 1948 to find very limited religious education being provided by Russian clerics in the refugee camps of Jordan.⁸² As mentioned above, until the 1950s, there was no Orthodox school in Amman. Qarmash played a major role in developing the catechism and Sunday schools in the capital. The creation of a school in Amman had been a constant demand of the representatives of the Association and especially ‘Awda al-Qusūs since the 1920s.⁸³ According to Raouf Abujaber, during the 1930s, the Arab Orthodox Nahda Association opened a school in Amman which could accommodate around 50 boys and girls.⁸⁴

The opening of an orthodox school in the 1950s was a gradual process that also benefited from the dynamic of this first school but also from Sunday classes provided by Qunṣṭanṭīn Qarmash and his wife after Sunday masses. They organised these classes in a room located close to the church of the neighbourhood of al-Ashrafiyya in Amman. According to Zakī Nūrsī, entrepreneur and a former member of the Arab Orthodox Nahda Association, the idea of developing a Sunday school came from one of his relatives.⁸⁵ The latter had been inspired by the policies developed by the Copts of Egypt during the Coptic renewal.⁸⁶ In Egypt, in the nineteenth century, the concept of Sunday schools was introduced by evangelical missions and became a key-stone of the Coptic revival movement. One of the goals of the Sunday school was to strengthen the theological formation of the children, and some of them were encouraged to continue their studies in Lebanon (Balamand) or in Greece. Aside from educational concerns, training local students was considered to be a way to encourage the constitution of a local Arab clergy. The constitution of these Sunday schools is currently considered to have been the first step of developing an Orthodox educational policy in Jordan.

In 1953, the “Orthodox Sunday Schools Society” did not succeed to officially register. After different attempts in the 1950s, “The Orthodox Educational Society” (*jamā‘iyat al-thaqāfa wa al-taqīm al-urthūduksiyya*) was registered on 7 January 1958. Its first president was Fu’ad Q. Yaghnam. The society gathered notables and lower clergy representatives as Qunṣṭanṭīn Qarmash. After F. Yaghnam, the other directors included businessmen and political figures as Fu’ad Farrāj,⁸⁷ who were able to mobilise

⁸² Interview with Qunṣṭanṭīn Qarmash, January 12, 2015, Amman.

⁸³ Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-‘arabiyya al-urthūduksiyya*, 149

⁸⁴ Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-‘arabiyya al-urthūduksiyya*, 156.

⁸⁵ Interview with Zakī Nūrsī, January 16, 2015, Amman.

⁸⁶ P. Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers and Education in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

⁸⁷ Fu’ad Farrāj and his family fled to Jordan in 1948. After studying engineering in Egypt, he became president of the Association of Engineers and Minister in the government of Wasfi al-Tal. He became president of the Orthodox Educational Society in 1990.

their social capital and institutional support to overcome the inadequacies of the Patriarchate in educational and social matters. This association quickly opened an Orthodox secondary school in Amman, which became a popular institution and produced its own textbooks outside the control of the Patriarchate. Then, it developed educational institutions as kindergarten and schools in the neighbourhoods of al-Ashrafiyya and al-Shmaisānī. However, until the 1970s, the school was never really able to compete with the De La Salle School for boys and the CMS School for girls which opened in the 1950s and during the interwar period, and that benefited from their connection with equivalent institutions in Palestine.

In this context, the arrival of members of the Palestinian elite, involved in the political life of the country, drove new dynamics in Jordan. They used their economic, kinship and political ties with Palestine to encourage the development of clubs and associations but also had to rely on prominent members of the Greek Orthodox community in Jordan.

SPORTING AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS: FAMILY NETWORKS AND KNOW-HOW

During the interwar period, many clubs promoting sports and culture developed in Palestine.⁸⁸ Before 1948, there were some 65 athletic clubs in Palestine; about 55 of them were members of the Arab Palestine Sports Federation (APSF).⁸⁹ Many youth associations and clubs had also sprung up in the country. The development of these structures was closely related to the building of resistance to Zionism and British policies. They were spaces of socio-political mobilisation contributing to the nation-building process.⁹⁰ The Orthodox clubs opened in the main cities of Palestine and during the 1940s, a Union of the Orthodox Clubs was created in Palestine, bringing together representatives of the clubs of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Ramallah and Acre. Ḥanā Salāma was elected president of this union during this period.

Many of the Palestinian families which settled in Amman after 1948 came from Jaffa and had been involved in the cultural associations and local committees there. Once settled in Amman, they used these ties to develop communal cultural and sporting activities. In 1952, the Orthodox community received the help of the leader of the Orthodox Club of Jaffa to open a club in Amman under the initiative of Ḥalīm S. Sabā, Bāsil ‘Anāb, George Khunūf and Nicolā Abū Khidr. They were supported locally by Yūsuf al-‘Ashar

⁸⁸I. Khalidi, “Sports and Aspirations: Football in Palestine, 1900–1948,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 58 (2014): 74–88.

⁸⁹I. Khalidi, “Body and Ideology Early Athletics in Palestine (1900–1948),” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 27 (2006): 44–58.

⁹⁰D. Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska, “State, Sport and Resistance: A Case of Palestinian Sports Clubs in the West Bank,” *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Online First (March 2019).

and Raouf Abujaber who were both already very involved in the different Orthodox associations in the Kingdom of Jordan.⁹¹

Fawzi Shnoudeh, the former director of the Orthodox club in Amman, mentioned during an interview that the first premises of the club were located in Jabal Amman “where the YMCA is today”.⁹² The development of ties between the Greek Orthodox and Protestant missions was encouraged by representatives of the British Mandate since the 1920s. The Orthodox Club was one of the first structures to encourage sports for young people including, tennis and basketball. Women played a fundamental role in the club by leading committees to support activities for children and organise competitions and training sessions. The Orthodox club quickly became a social space for the elite of Amman and a space where political issues could be debated. The membership grew over the years and the executive committee bought land in Abdoun while the development of this neighbourhood was still in its early stages. The new club was inaugurated in 1972. Today, it counts around 2700 member families or around 11,000 individual members, mostly Orthodox Christian and coming from the economic and political elite of Amman’s society. The location of the club and its shifts mirror the changing habits of these social groups.

CONCLUSION

The Orthodox case study indicates the need to consider cultural diplomacy from an entangled perspective, at a regional scale. First, the cultural diplomacy developed by the Orthodox laity in Jordan addressed the different layers of religious and political authorities it wanted to affect and influence: from the Mandate authorities to the government of (Trans)Jordan and the Greek Orthodox higher clergy and Patriarchate. For this reason, this cultural diplomacy was polymorphic by definition, as it has to address different interlocutors and goals. The hoped-for results were at some point to guarantee a communal space at a local and regional scale but also to favour social cohesion and nationalist projects. This cultural diplomacy was closely related to the self-definition of the Orthodox presence and action in the region. The latter was characterised by an inclusion within both the local society and political debates but also by specific demands for a communal space and activities. In this respect, members of prominent families shaped the cultural life of the country through the development of different kinds of institutions: clubs, schools, associations, etc.

Moving to Amman and settling there was an important precondition to obtaining social and political status, especially during the first years of the

⁹¹I. I. Habash, *Orthodox club, Al-kitâb al-dhababi, Masîrat al-nâdi al-urthûduksiyya, 1952–2002* (Amman: National Press, 2005), 12–13.

⁹²Interview with Fawzi Shnoudeh, January 26, 2015, Amman.

Mandate, as few Transjordanians were involved in the government. For this reason, the activities of the Arab Orthodox Nahda Association focused first on the capital. This reflects the importance of local actors in shaping a social and cultural life in the main cities of Palestine and Transjordan during the interwar period. Cultural diplomacy cannot be considered out of a connected approach of the Orthodox laity of Palestine and Transjordan. Ideas, books and journals were circulating in the region but also funding and political statements. Thanks to these ties and solidarity networks, the Orthodox laity managed to impose itself as an essential interlocutor of the (Trans)Jordanian State. Then, the Mandate witnessed the assertion of a strong Orthodox laity in (Trans)Jordan, concerned about its independence from the Patriarchate. Thanks to cultural diplomacy, this Orthodox laity accessed a political space that guaranteed them a prominent place even after 1948 when the Jordanian State developed stronger diplomatic relations with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate due to its claim on the holy sites of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

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The Making Stage of the Modern Palestinian Arabic Novel in the Experiences of the *udabā'* Khalīl Baydas (1874–1949) and Iskandar al-Khūri al-BeitJāli (1890–1973)

Sadia Agsous

A CULTURAL LIFE BEFORE ITS DESTRUCTION

It is quite common nowadays to read articles or gaze at photographs representing a vibrant Palestinian cultural life before the destruction of historical Palestine in 1948 referred to as *Nakba* (Arabic for “Catastrophe”). In her documentary *Looking for Zion*,¹ the Israeli filmmaker Tamara Erde includes the photo studio of Karimeh Abbud (1896–1955), the first female photographer in Palestine and the wider region, who signed her work as a “Lady-Photographer”. A native of Nazareth, as early as the 1920s Abbud captured families, mostly women and children, weddings and ceremonies in places such as Haifa, Nazareth and Bethlehem, and archaeological sites.² Her name and work stand out alongside those of other photographers such as Fadil Saba (1901–1988) of Nazareth, Khalīl Raad (1891–1948) of Jerusalem and Issa Sawabini and Daoud Sabonji of Jaffa, names considered to be those of the

¹Erde, Tamara. *Looking for Zion*. Film by Katuh Studio and 13 Productions. http://www.film-documentaire.fr/4DACTION/w_fiche_film/52690_1.

²Ahmed Mrowat, “Karimeh Abbud: Early Woman Photographer (1896–1955),” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 31 (2007): 72–78.

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founders of local photography.³ The first cinema, The Oracle, was inaugurated in Jerusalem in 1908 by Egyptians,⁴ and music as well as theatre had their own spaces. It is well known that in 1935 Umm Kulthum attracted audiences from all corners of Palestine for her historical concert at the al-Hamra (Alhambra) Theatre in Jaffa.⁵ The Al-Hamra also hosted famous Arab singers such as Farid el-Atrash and Leila Mourad.⁶ The Apollo and the Nabil were the scenes of other types of cultural evenings (cinema, theatre, music...).⁷ Between 1945 and 1948, Jaffa was under the administration of Yusuf Haykal (1907–1989), a leading intellectual who tried to perpetuate this Palestinian space within a framework of modernisation planning and competition with the recently established Jewish city of Tel Aviv.

The Palestinian oral cultural repertoire (music, dance, poetry) was rich and the establishment of an Arabic Radio programme became an important tool for its diffusion and modernisation. This was the role undertaken by the Palestine Broadcasting Service⁸ and its Arabic programming, *Iza'at al Quds*, established in 1936 by the Mandate authorities and reflecting the cultural side of a large space which went beyond Palestine: “Palestine was clearly an important passageway for musicians travelling between Egypt and the Levant; they held concerts in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and other Palestinian cities and influenced musicians in those regions.”⁹ The memoirs of Wasif Jawhariyyeh (1897–1973), a native of Jerusalem, provide us with a vibrant account of the city of Jerusalem as it underwent a process of modernisation,¹⁰ as well as

³Noa Sadka, *Photographic Truth is a Natural Truth—A Chronicle of a Photography Department* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2018), 364. (In Hebrew).

⁴Mohammed Omar Jahjooh and Omar Ismail, *The Palestinians’ Cinema: History...and Identity* (Ramallah: Tibaq Publishing, 2018), 188.

⁵Oum Kulthum visited Palestine in 1931 and 1935 and performed in Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem.

⁶With its printing houses, theatres, cinemas, radio and press, Egypt was an important modern Arab cultural centre. The city was a hub for Arab intellectuals, including Palestinians, creating Egyptian influence in the region and in Palestine particularly in the field of music and cinema.

⁷Itmar Radai, *Palestinians in Jerusalem and Jaffa, 1948* (London: Routledge, 2016), 224.

⁸Jerusalem Calling (1936–1948) was the name of the English-language programmes broadcast by the British Mandate Authority’s Palestine Broadcasting Service. It also broadcast in Arabic and Hebrew (Kol Yerushalayim). The Arabic programme was headed by the poet Ibrahim Tuqan (1905–1941).

⁹Souhail Khoury, “Palestinian Music, Blending Levantine Sounds and the Power of Poetry,” <https://www.paljourneys.org/en/timeline/highlight/10526/palestinian-music>.

¹⁰The modernity mentioned by Salim Tamari relates to the city of Jerusalem at the end of its Ottoman period from a spatial and cultural point of view. In his memoirs, the musician Wasif Jawhariyyeh reports the expansion of Jerusalem outside the walls of the old city and into districts such as Musrara, Mascobiyeh, Talbieh, Katamon and Bakaa, where families such as Baydas and Sakakini lived in modern houses. These neighborhoods were also crossed by a railway and modern roads. As for the modernisation of Arabic music, Tamari explains that “Jawhariyyeh’s observations provide us with an original and unique source on the modernization of Arabic music in Bilad al-Sham and the influence of such great innovators as Sheikh Yusif al-Minalawi and Sayyid Darwish on provincial capitals like Jerusalem. In his musical notes, written before the end

of his own musical practice. Western music, particularly classical music, was introduced with the missionary schools and religious institutions. Among its Palestinians pioneers were Augustin Lama (1901–1988), born in Ramleh to a family from Bethlehem, and his students Salvador Arnita (1914–1984), a native of Jerusalem and the last music director of the YMCA, and Yousef Khasho (1927–1996), who was born in Jerusalem and at a very young age played the organ for the Choir of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Thanks to the radio station, important musicians like Yahya al-Libabidi (1900–1941), who ran the Arabic music division of Radio Palestine, Rawhi al-Khammash (1923–1998), Mohamed Ghazi (1922–1979), Yahya al-Saudi (1905–1965) and Riad al-Bandak (1924–1992) became well known.

Theatre was also part of this cultural ferment and was performed in Haifa's Orthodox, Catholic and Islamic Clubs as well as those of other cities in Palestine.¹¹ Plays were performed in cafés and clubs; the most renowned figures in this field are the Saliba brothers, Jameel Habib Bahry, the Nasri brothers, and Jameel al-Jawzi. This theatrical vibe was described by the Palestinian writer Emile Habiby (1922–1996) with a take on the cultural movement between Palestine and the rest of the region:

(...) There were the El-Juze brothers, who I remember very well. Some of the theatres also used to use the clubs for a base, such as the Orthodox Club in Haifa and the Moslem Youth Club in Jaffa (...) We brought singers over from Lebanon too, and writers and poets from Iraq. The Radio Broadcasting service played an important role. During Ramadan evenings there were suitable broadcasts on the radio, and the Palestinian community here used to bring artists from different Arab countries to celebrate Ramadan evenings, in cinemas and cafes.¹²

LITERATURE, NAHDA AND RUSSIAN SCHOOLS IN PALESTINE

Literature and translations were also important activities during the British Mandate in Palestine (repealed on 15 May 1948). In the year 1946, two years prior to the *Nakba*, the newspaper *Falastin* celebrated the first Palestinian Arab book fair with the title “The Palestinian Arab Book Fair: worthy efforts for our cultural *Nahda*”. This exhibition was the outcome of efforts by the Arab Cultural Committee under the leadership of Abdel Hamid Yacine

of the war in 1918, Jawhariyyeh devised a notation procedure to convert the Arabic-Ottoman quarter-note system for the 'oud into the Western system of musical notations” (Salim Tamari, “Jerusalem’s Ottoman Modernity: The Times and Lives of Wasif Jawhariyyeh,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 9 [2000]: 500).

¹¹Marie Elias, “Palestinian Theater, the Bumpy History of a Maturing Art,” <https://www.pal-journeys.org/en/timeline/highlight/10520/palestinian-theater>.

¹²Sihem Daoud, “Interview with Emil Habibi,” *Contemporary Theater Review* 3, part 2 (1995): 103–112.

(1908–1975), a writer and educator born in al-Lydd (Lod) and one of the directors of the Arabic radio programme *Iza'at al Quds*; Nicolas Ryadéh (1907–2006), a historian who was one of the founders of the Orthodox Club in Acre in 1929; and Ishaq Musa al-Husayni (1904–1990), the General Secretary of the Arab Cultural Committee in Palestine,¹³ best known for his 1943 novel *Memoirs of a Hen* (مذكرات دجاجة). *Falastin* proudly displayed the names of the authors and intellectuals who had given meaning to this Palestinian culture in its existing state:

What is remarkable about this exhibition is that Khalil Baydas' forty-four books, three manuscripts and the printed remnants, represented the largest number of books produced by a single author. Then comes Professor Ahmad Sameh al-Khalidi with twenty books, followed by Mr. Khalil Sakakini with eleven (...) If we cannot neglect Dr. Tawfiq Kanan's works, we are attracted by its linguistic and content diversity. about forty books and letters were exhibited, some of which are written in Arabic, French and English and covers popular literature and medicine.¹⁴

Falastin used the term *Nahda* to reflect the local cultural renaissance which began at the end of the nineteenth century. To position this Arab renaissance in its larger Arab temporality, *Nahda* refers to the Arab project of cultural and political modernity set between the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is also a period in which new aesthetic directions emerged. As Tarek el-Ariss puts it, “Arab models of nationalism and secularism as well as Islamic revival are attributed to Nahda thought and institutions such as linguistic reform and the practice of translation; the emergence of new literary genres such as the novel; the periodical press, journalism, and new publishing industry (...).”¹⁵

As far as the Palestinian situation is concerned, the period of the Palestinian *Nahda* is situated chronologically at the end of the broader Arab *Nahda*, i.e. the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. In this respect, it fits with what Rashid Khalidi describes as “The shift from the Arab/Ottoman to Palestinian Arab-Identity”¹⁶ and highlights the emergence of Palestinian national consciousness in opposition to the Ottomans, the British and the Zionist project in Palestine. Culture has clearly played a key position, but one has to question whether it was achieved by

¹³Launched in 1945, the Arab Cultural Committee in Palestine organised cultural events in major cities of Palestine in connection with different cultural Arab centres. Ilan Pappe, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: The Husaynis 1700–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 400.

¹⁴*Falastin* vol. XXX, nos. 180-6435 (10.10.46). (In Arabic).

¹⁵Tarek El-Ariss, *The Arab Renaissance: A Bilingual Anthology of the Nahda* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America; Bilingual edition, 2018), xvi.

¹⁶Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: the construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 8.

copying the European colonial cultural model, or in the perspective of a cultural construction that goes hand in hand with national formation. The factors outlined above suggest that both elements should be considered.

Hanna Abu Hanna stresses a correlation between the establishment of European Christian missionary schools, particularly the Russian ones aimed at the Greek orthodox communities, and the process of the Arab cultural and literary *Nahda*.¹⁷ Indeed, several ʻūdabā attended these Russian institutions, including Elia Zakka, the founder of the newspaper *al-Nafeer* and its weekly supplement in Hebrew *Hashofar*¹⁸; Mikhail Naimy (1889–1988), the Lebanese Arab Nahda leader in the *Mahjar* and a founding member of *al-Rabitah al-Qalamiyah*¹⁹; Nasib Arida (1887–1946), the *Mahjar* poet from Syria, along with his countryman Abd al-Massih Haddad (1888–1963); and Emile Touma (1919–1985), the Palestinian communist leader. This is precisely where the experiences of Khalil Baydas and Iskandar al-Khūrī al-Beit-Jālī are relevant. They both lead us to the Russian educational enterprise in Palestine (1882–1914) along with the Arab-Palestinian *Nahda* movement.

The Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society (IOPS) was founded in 1882 and by 1914 had built 114 schools attended by 10,000 students, girls and boys alike. The Russians made a strategic decision to focus most of their activities outside the main urban centres of Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa,²⁰ a decision which was motivated by the need to avoid tension with the Greek Patriarchate. The founder of the IOPS, Vassili Nikolaievitch Khitrovo, wrote in December 1882: “We will open a school, if possible - some distance away from the Patriarchate that could interfere if we are close to them. If we locate far away, they will pay less attention to us and that way we can move from north to south.”²¹ This explains why the first Russian school was established in al-Mujaydil, outside Nazareth. By the time the IOPS closed in 1914, they had built some 19 educational institutions in the Galilee. Arabic language and culture, along with Palestinian culture and history were part of the curriculum. This was due to a number of considerations, including the contribution of Russian specialists such as Ignati Kratchkovski (1883–1951) and the indigenous Arabic output initiated by the Nahda pioneers led by intellectuals

¹⁷Hanna Abu Hanna, *The Pioneers of the Nahda in Palestine (the Graduates of the Russian Schools) 1862–1914* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2005), 193 (in Arabic); Hanna Abu Hanna, *The Russian Seminar in Nazareth (1886–1914) and the Cultural Revival in Palestine* (Nazareth: Ministry of Education and Culture, Israel, 1994), 159. (In Arabic).

¹⁸Samir Toubassy, *My Nakba: A Palestinian’s Odyssey of Love and Hope* (Ithaca, NY: Olive Branch Press, 2019), 256.

¹⁹The Pen League was the first Arab literary society based in North America (New York), established in 1920 by Michail Naimy, Khalil Jibran, Nassib Arrida and Abdu al-Masih Haddad.

²⁰Omar Mehameed, *Chapters on the History of Russian—Palestinian Society’s Schools in Palestine (1882–1814)* (Taibeh: Marqaz Ihia al-tourath al-Arabi, 1988), 188. (In Arabic).

²¹Hanna Abu Hanna, *The Russian Seminar in Nazareth (1886–1914) and the Cultural Revival in Palestine* (Nazareth: Ministry of Education and Culture, Israel, 1994), 23. (In Arabic).

such as Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883), Nassif al-Yaziji (1800–1870), Francis Marrache (1836–1873), Jurji Zaydan (1861–1914) and Jamal ad-Din al-Afghâni (1839–1897).²² To make up for the lack of Arabic teachers and to attract more local families, the IOPS opened two training seminaries, one for men in 1889 in Nazareth and the second for women in 1890 in Beit Jala.²³

As to the Palestinian *Nahda*, the genesis of the Arabic Palestinian press is the work of many of the attendees of these Russian schools. The private Palestinian Arabic press was established in the immediate aftermath of the Young Turks' revolution in 1908. More than 30 newspapers appeared in 1908 in the Sanjaks of Jerusalem, Nablus and Acre,²⁴ creating a new dynamic which promoted a unifying Arab nationalism at a time when this region was already undergoing administrative and confessional change.²⁵ The most important among these journals were *al-Quds* (Jerusalem), *al-Carmel* (after Mount Carmel), *al-Nafir* (The Clarion) and *al-nafa'is al-'asriyyah* (The Modern Treasures) and later, in 1911, the leading political newspaper *Falastin* (Palestine). Moreover, the press continued to develop under the British Mandate during which 220 Arabic-language titles came into being between 1919 and 1948, such as *Hayfa* (Haifa, 1920), *al-Jazeera* (The Island, 1924), *Tarmouk* (1924) in Haifa; *al-Kifah* (The Arab Struggle, 1935) in Jaffa; *Lisan al-Arab* (The Language of the Arabs, 1921), *al-Sabah* (The Morning, 1921), *Mir'aat al-Sharq* (The Mirror of the East, 1919) in Jerusalem and *al-Ittihad* (The Union), an organ of the Communist Party.²⁶ Khalil Baydas established *an-nafa'is Al-Asriyyah* in which he, along with Iskandar al-Khûrî al-BeitJâlî, published translations of Russian literature and shared their love for it, particularly in the form of the trend towards literary realism which impacted their aesthetic literary orientation.

KHALIL BAYDAS AND THE FOUNDATION OF NORMS OF THE PALESTINIAN NOVEL

“The true, ingenious and skilled novelist is the one who lives, writes and dies for art” Khalil Baydas, *Masârih Al-Adhân*, 1924. The intellectual achievements of Khalil Baydas as an *adîb* are in line with the classic *nahdawi*

²²Abu Hanna, *The Pioneers of the Nahda in Palestine*, 193; Mehameed, *Chapters on History of Russian -Palestinian Society's Schools in Palestine*, 188.

²³The Russians also had ambitions to open a university in Syria, but the First World War put an end to this enterprise. Mujaydil was the first school in 1882. Mehameed, *Chapters on History of Russian-Palestinian Society's schools in Palestine*, 188.

²⁴Emanuel Beska, “Yusuf al-‘Isa: A Founder of Modern Journalism in Palestine,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 74 (2018): 7–13.

²⁵Jihane Sfeir-Khayat, “Historiographie palestinienne. La construction d'une identité nationale,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 60, no. 1 (2005): 35–52.

²⁶Mustafa Kabha and Dan Caspi, *The Palestinian Arab In/Outsiders Media and Conflict in Israel* (London-Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2011), 246.

meaning of the word, that is to say “a person of extensive learning, culture, and refinement who is versed in one or more branches of *adab* and who serves as a model of good behaviour”.²⁷ It is equally significant to underline that in the colonial context of the nineteenth century the *adīb* is also someone who commits himself to the national anti-colonial struggle.

Khalīl Baydas was the founder of one of the most important cultural and literary magazines in the Arab East, *An-Nafā’is - An-Nafā’is Al-Assriyyah*, which should also be viewed as a guide to the political and historical context of the period. This journal belongs to the field of cultural studies, but also constitutes a major source of information on the period (the end of the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the British Mandate) and particularly on the sociological composition of Palestinian society, especially the Christian and Muslim elites and their collaboration with other Arab cultural centres. It also reveals the contribution made by Palestinians to the reform of the Arabic language in order to ensure its general use in schools. *An-Nafā’is Al-Assriyyah* also reflects the influence of the nascent Palestinian nationalism, publishing stories which illustrated the political experiences of its founder, Khalīl Baydas. In 1920, he was arrested and sent to Akka prison after his speech at the Nabi Musa Festival, where he addressed a crowd of Christians and Muslims in a highly politicised manner, arguing against the Balfour Declaration made by the British in 1917, which promised the Zionist Movement a homeland and the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. *Hadith Sujūn* (*Letters from Prisons*) confirms the strong link between national and cultural construction:

It was the 4th day of Nissan (April), the day of the arrival of Hebron’s procession to Jerusalem to celebrate the Prophet Musa’s day, which is the great historical celebration of the Muslims in Palestine, in which Christians participate, especially in recent years, and which is dominated by patriotic spirit and has made the factors of separation between religions disappear.²⁸

Baydas was born in 1874 in Nazareth, home to a large Christian community during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He attended the Russian Orthodox school and seminary where he mastered the Russian and Arabic languages and literatures, later becoming director of several Russian schools in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. This experience allowed him to immerse himself in the cultural life of Beirut, Damascus and Cairo. In 1911, Baydas moved to Jerusalem to take up the role as a representative of Nazareth in the mixed council of the Palestinian Orthodox community; he also changed the name of his journal to *An-Nafā’is Al-Assriyyah* at this time. His life in

²⁷Marlē Hammon, *A Dictionary of Arabic Literary Terms and Devices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 172.

²⁸Khalīl Baydas, “Hadith al-Sujūn” (*An-Nafā’is Al-Assriyyah*) *An-Nafā’is*, July 10, 1920, Year 7, Part 18, Jerusalem. (In Arabic).

Palestine ended tragically in 1948, when he escaped the terror of Haganah groups in the Jerusalem's Baqaa area but died the following year in Beirut.

Khalil Baydas wrote and published novels, short stories, dictionaries, historical books on Arabs and on the Russian Tsars, articles on education, literature and politics and textbooks for Arabic learners.²⁹ More importantly he also translated Russian literature.³⁰ Indeed, Palestine was an important centre for Arabic literary translation and this is strongly linked to the establishment of European missions from the nineteenth century onwards. It is particularly in the field of Arab-Russian literary translation that the Palestinians stand out.³¹ Unfortunately, many of Baydas' books were, according to the Israeli jargon, "lost" or "abandoned"³² in 1948. His most significant surviving achievement was therefore the establishment of *An-Nafā'is Al-Assriyyah*,³³ the newspaper which is central to envisaging the debates that were necessary in the framework of Palestinian national construction. It also articulated social issues according to the target of the readers, be they Christian or Muslim. But more importantly for literary research, this newspaper allows us to trace literary texts and writers lost during the 1948 *Nakba*.³⁴ It is reasonable to assume that *An-Nafā'is Al-Assriyyah* was modelled after *al-Hilal*, a cultural journal established in Cairo in 1892 by Jurji Zaydan (1861–1914), in the sense that it served as a tool of education (family, religious and ethical), a space for translations, but also as a platform for publishing literary texts. Baydas published his first and only novel, *al-Warith* (*The Heir*) in his journal. The novel was published in its full version in 2011 as part of a project entitled A Series to Revive Palestinian Literary Heritage by Digital Publishing and Electronic Distribution, based in Ramallah, Palestine.

²⁹ Ahmed Omar Shahin, *Khalil Baydas 1874–1949* (Nablus: al-Jamiyah al-Ilmiyah al-Falastiniyah, 1996), 27. (In Arabic).

³⁰ Khalil Baydas has been extensively studied from the translation perspective by Spencer Dan Scoville. Scoville, Spencer, "The Agency of the Translator: Khalil Baydas' Literary Translations" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2012).

³¹ Hussam Al-Khatib, *Palestinian Translating Activity from the Renaissance to the 20th Century* (Beirut: Makaz al-Arabia Lidiressat wa al-Nashr, 1995), 262. (In Arabic).

³² During my research work at the National library of Jerusalem, I came across books with the sign "AP" which stands for "Abandoned property". These are the archives of Palestinians who fled the Haganah troops and were never able to retrieve their homes and property. They were added to the collection of the National Library of Israel and never returned to their original owners (Amit Gish, "Salvage or Plunder? Israel's 'Collection' of Private Palestinian Libraries in West Jerusalem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XL, no. 4 [Summer 2011]: 6–23).

³³ *An-Nafā'is* allows scholars in cultural studies to keep track of several literary texts and writers lost during the 1948 *Nakba*.

³⁴ In his essay شخصيات من الناصرة (Figures from Nazareth), Ahmed Marwat brings to light important intellectual and religious figures of the city. Among them are female personalities such as the great researcher of Arabic culture Kalthoum Nasr Oudeh (1892–1965), the journalist and radio host Asma Toubi (1905–1983), and Mai Mary Elias Zyadeh (1886–1941), the writer and poetess known for organising a weekly literary salon in Cairo that brought together the greatest cultural figures residing in the city.

Al-Wārith was first partly published in 1919 in *An-Nafā'is Al-Assriyyah*. The novel is set on the eve of the First World War, but the events and characters are not centred on Palestine. Aziz al-Halabi, the main character, belongs to a Syrian family who settled in Egypt after the Damascus massacres of Christians in 1860. This information is disclosed quite early in the text and locates its main characters within a Christian identity. Aziz is the adopted son of his paternal uncle, Nuaaman al-Halabi, a successful merchant, which makes him his only heir. The main storyline is centred on Aziz's desire to emancipate himself from his social group and his family. Instead of marrying within his community, Aziz falls in love with Esther, a well-known Jewish dancer in Cairo, who increasingly demands large sums of money to pay for her lifestyle. She is supported by her aunt, Rachel, and other members of the Jewish community (who form the second main set of characters) to put pressure on Aziz in order to spend his uncle's money. The novel ends happily with Aziz marrying and loving Najla, a woman from his community, and becoming his uncle's heir. Although written in Baydas' beautiful Arabic rhetorical style, this novel is of limited aesthetic interest and more significantly, his address of Jewish characters is consistent with a mainstream anti-Semitism that identifies Jews with greed. Aziz is presented as a victim of a "Jewish plot". There is a multitude of Jewish characters helping Esther to extort money from Aziz. First comes the paternal Aunt Rachel, who is portrayed as the architect of the Machiavellian plan for the robbery. The latter calls on her friend Nathan whom she introduces as "from our community who defends all the interests of the people of Israel," Other characters who lend money, such as Aramia, Ashia and Rahab, are also involved. The novel's Christian characters are presented as honest and angelic, while the Jews are portrayed as diabolical. Salma Jayyusi rightly notes that the novel "offered a pejorative, Shylock-like view of Jews, depicting them as insatiably greedy for money and ready to commit any act of cruelty to obtain it".³⁵ It is central to underline and expose this anti-Semitic orientation of this novel written within an Egyptian context, whereas BeitJālī's novel and those I mention below are rooted in this Palestinian geography and do not in any way subscribe to the plain anti-Semitism that is characteristic of *Al-Wārith*.

Realism as a genre is highlighted by the description by Baydas of the geographical and cosmopolitan context of Egypt, a country where he lived for several years. It is quite logical that Baydas chose a realist style of literature, as he was a translator of Russian realist authors. This realist tendency is very characteristic of early twentieth century Palestinian prose. Let's assume 1920 as a starting period of the Palestinian novel.³⁶ Apart from Baydas and Iskandar al-Khūrī al-BeitJālī's novels, two other novels are known to have

³⁵ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 14.

³⁶ Abu Hanna, *The Russian Seminar in Nazareth*, 159; Adel Usta, *Readings in the Palestinian novellas* (Ramallah: Ministry of Education, 2011), 188. (In Arabic).

been published in 1920.³⁷ One, *Riwayat Miflib al-Ghassani, aw Safha min safhat al-Harb al-Alamiya al-Oula* (The story of Miflah al-Ghassani or a chapter from World War I) is by Najib Nassar (1865–1948), the founder of the newspaper *al-Carmel*.³⁸ It was first published in his newspaper and it bears an autofiction form. The main character, a writer from a Christian background, is a deserter who resisted the mandatory conscription ordered by the Ottomans during the First World War. It is noteworthy that Nassar himself went into hiding during this period after opposing Turkey's entry into the war alongside Germany. The other novel, *Dhulm al-Walidayn (Injustice to Parents)*, was written by Yohana Khalil Thikrat, the founder of *Bethlehem* magazine³⁹ and was published in 1920 in *Bethlehem*⁴⁰ and in 1921 in *An-Nafā'is Al-Assriyyah*. Unfortunately, no copies have yet been recovered to allow a stylistic study.⁴¹ Interestingly, Hanna Abu Hanna's research in the Israeli archives led to the discovery of a manuscript novel written by Khalaf Sabbagh, one of the directors of the Russian school in Maaloul.⁴² Titled *Ghadat al-Nassira*, it describes the events of World War I in Nazareth, again with the Christian community as its central theme.

There was therefore, at a time which marks the beginning of the British Mandate in Palestine, an enthusiasm for fictional writing, particularly literary realism, by authors from the Christian community, especially the Orthodox one. Three novels out of four examine Palestine and its major cities during WWI. Baydas here may not seem like the first person to publish a novel, or a novel about the reality of Palestine, but he is certainly the one who sought to give direction to this new style of writing. In 1924, the final year of publication of *An-Nafā'is Al-Assriyyah*, Baydas tried to set out the foundations of the modern Palestinian novel, particularly in relation to the European novel and its translation into Arabic:

It is obvious that the genre of novels in the West is full of good attributes. Ahead of us by many stages in this field, the West has contributed hundreds of thousands of skilled novelists who are undisputed masters of this genre. By translating them or imitating their style, we can provide our literature with treasure and beauty, and our writers with style, knowledge and art. (Khalil Baydas, 1924)⁴³

³⁷ Abu Hanna, *The Russian Seminar in Nazareth*, 159.

³⁸ Thanks to Hana Abu Hanna work, a copy of this novel was recovered from the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem and published in 1981.

³⁹ Established in 1919 as a monthly magazine by Yohana Khalil Thikrat and 'Issa al-Khoury Bandak, *Bethlehem* published articles on culture, history and education. The magazine was discontinued in 1921.

⁴⁰ Hamdi Sakkut, *The Arabic Novel: Bibliography and Critical Introduction, 1865–1995* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 4014.

⁴¹ Abu Hanna, *The Russian Seminar in Nazareth*, 159.

⁴² The school was built in 1905 by the IOPS, <https://zochrot.org/ar/booklet/53051>.

⁴³ Allen, *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography*, 75.

Furthermore, Baydas' text, "The Art of the Novel," provides guidelines for novelists. The two major elements he espouses are the need to nourish general culture and to be attentive to the people and their concerns so as to be able to address them. However, it appears in the same text that these guidelines and Baydas's writings are the outcome of a literary syncretism imported from European culture. Indeed, Baydas takes as a model the writers of the Enlightenment (Molière, Racine, Corneille), Romanticism (Hugo, Chateaubriand) and Realism (Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky). Why not then approach Baydas as the figure who laid the foundation for the future generation of Palestinian novelist? We see the need to move the date of the creation of realist Palestinian literature earlier than the post-*Nakba* period to the first decades of the twentieth century. This was a parallel literary realism with which Iskandar al-Khūrī al-BeitJālī experimented in his 1920 novel *Life After Death*.

ISKANDAR AL-KHŪRĪ AND PALESTINIAN LITERARY REALISM

Iskandar al-Khūrī al-BeitJālī is particularly entwined with the development of the short story as a genre in Palestine.⁴⁴ He was born in Ein Karem near Jerusalem in 1890 to an orthodox family from Beit Jala, where he attended primary school. He learnt French at the Salesian school in Bethlehem and later studied Arabic language and literature at the Russian Seminary boarding school in Nazareth. He taught Russian and French at the Beit Jala Seminary. Although he was well versed in literature, Iskandar al-Khūrī studied law and became a magistrate in 1927 for the cities of Safad, Tiberias, Nazareth, Akka, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. He also worked as the head of the Court of Appeal in Jerusalem until he retired in 1945. After the *Nakba*, he fled from Jerusalem to Beit Jala and lived there until his death in 1973. Meanwhile, he worked as a legal adviser to the Red Cross in Bethlehem and Hebron and acted as an inspector for UNRWA's schools.

Most of al-Khūrī's works were published after 1920. They include poetry, short stories, novels and translations from Russian and French. Iskandar al-Khūrī excelled in shaping the local Palestinian literary fabric and the fabric of its novel. Although his novels and short stories bear different names for their main characters, he clearly borrowed from his personal experience to write his literature, as we can see from his novella *Catherine* (1912) and his novel *Life After Death* (1920).

From the very beginning, al-Khūrī was involved in literary realism, and this is probably due to the influence of the Russian literary realism with which he was familiar from translating such works. In the introduction to his novel *Life After death*, al-Khūrī—writes:

it is a historical and social novel to the Arab reader. It is about the great war and the impact of a dying ruler who forced young Syrian men to enrol in the army

⁴⁴Abu Hanna, *The Russian Seminar in Nazareth*, 159.

and executed the ones who didn't obey. It is about the bloody battles between the Allied powers, Axis powers, the peace treaty of the Dardanelles, up to the entry of Allenby into Jerusalem. It is also about the impact of the war on families, women and the destruction of social and family structures.⁴⁵

The novel is set in the old city of Jerusalem with characters who are mainly Christians. It starts with Najib, the main character, writing a farewell letter to his young wife, Adelle, in which he informs her of his decision to volunteer to the Ottoman army during WWI, despite having previously been in hiding after receiving his conscription orders because he didn't want to leave his wife to starve. Najib had enjoyed a comfortable life which allowed him to write articles for Arabic newspapers in Egypt and Syria. The First World War has put an end to this and driven him into poverty, but he is going to fight for *al-Watan* (the homeland) and later Adelle will think that he died during the war. On his way to join the Ottoman troops, he is arrested by the police and taken to the front. However, the idea of *al-Watan* becomes realistic when we discover that Najib is in fact an important leader of the opposition to the Ottomans. After bloody battles, the novel ends happily when Najib recovers his identity and home, retrieves his wife, and resumes his old Jerusalemitic life without the Ottomans.

The novel's details about the reality of Palestine during this period bring confusion to the genre of the text itself. It could be regarded as a historical autobiography that corresponds to the life of the author, as al-Khūri deserted the Ottoman army and went into hiding in his native village. In any case, it is certain that the novel provides knowledge about the life of the Christian community in Jerusalem and its surroundings, and the life of conscripts in the region. It includes chapters about the 1915 Gallipoli campaign as well as about the Arab struggle against the Ottomans, which is referred to in the novel by characters who actually played roles in the Great Arab Revolt of 1916. In the words of Adel Usta, there is a synergy between the influence of Russian literary realism which gives life to the political-historical reality of this region:

what is striking about the novel *Life after death* is the influence of international literature, such as Russian, French and English, on its author who read Pushkin, Leon Tolstoy and William Shakespeare. In his introduction, Iskandar al-Khūri mentioned these names and the novel is filled with wretched characters who remind us of the French writer Victor Hugo's *Misérables*. And al-Khūri did not throw away the literal tradition, as much as he wanted to write about the reality which also celebrates the wretched. And that was the Arab reality under Turkish rule in its last decade.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Iskandar al-Khūri al-BeitJāli, *Life After Death* (Jerusalem: Al-Raqamia, 2018) with an introduction by the author.

⁴⁶ Iskandar al-Khūri al-BeitJāli, *Life After Death* (Jerusalem: Al-Raqamia, 2018), with an introduction by Adel Usta.

Al-Khūrī excelled in the art of the novella.⁴⁷ The short story *Catherine* was first published in 1912 in a collection titled *Haqā'iq wa 'Ibar* (*Facts and Lessons*) and then in 1913 was republished in *An-Nafā'is Al-Assriyyah*. Catherine, the main character, belongs to a Catholic family, was educated by the Sisters of St Joseph Church, and mastered French. She falls in love with Najib,⁴⁸ a man from an Orthodox family, a writer and poet who has studied in Beirut. However, the leaders of the two churches place obstacles in the way of their love, ordering that each must marry within their community. In the end, Najib manages to bribe a priest and is able to marry his beloved.

In another short story, *al-Shahādah fi-l-qarn al-'ishrīn* (*Testimony in the Twentieth Century*), published in 1912 in *An-Nafā'is Al-Assriyyah*, Iskandar al-Khūrī al-BeitJālī also brings the Russian context to Palestine. A Russian prince travels to Syria in order to urge parents in the villages to send their children to Russia to study. This suggestion is not widely followed, and is in fact only fulfilled by Salma's family who decide to send her abroad. To romanticise the story, Salma falls in love with the prince's son and agrees to marry him. In this case, however, it is her family who objects, and Salma decides to commit suicide instead of marrying her cousin. The two short stories describe the reality of Palestine in its Christian form, but it is presented from the point of view of the modernisation of the family and from the influence of the Russians. In these texts, there is strong rhetoric for a construction of the modern Palestinian family. By exposing the corruption of the regional church, al-Khūrī brings to light the willingness of the youth of the broader Sham region (the Levant) to free itself from religious restrictions.

CONCLUSION

The elements outlined above highlight the extent to which the *Nahda* combined with the Russian educational enterprise in Palestine to generate a vibrant Arab-Palestinian cultural life during the British Mandate. It is above all a question of the influence of several Christian personalities, particularly from the Orthodox tradition, in the making of what is recognised as Palestinian literature. Understanding this allows us to comprehend the setting of the Palestinian novel and novellas written, in the case of Baydas and al-Khūrī, with the influence of the translation of the Russian literature. I argue that the birth of this literary genre, the novel, was at the crossroads of the influence of Romanticism and above all of European literary realism, although al-Khūrī tends towards realism and Baydas towards Romanticism, but with a local aspect based on the Arabic language and cultural traditions. This can be observed in Khalil Baydas' willingness to produce works for teaching the Arabic language but also a dictionary. Baydas appears not

⁴⁷Abu Hanna, *The Russian Seminar in Nazareth*, 159.

⁴⁸Najib in this novella is not the same autobiographical character as in *Life After Death*.

so much as the first writer to have published a novel in Palestine, but as the guide to this new literary genre distinguished by realism. In this way, it is quite legitimate to consider Baydas as the driving force behind this trend, which is very present in Palestinian literature in general. Furthermore, by adopting a literary realism, the genesis of the Palestinian novel has been embedded in a link between history and fiction and in an intertwined circulation between literature and social sciences. There is yet a very long path to investigate the culture of Palestine before its historical destruction in 1948. One of the most important guides in this effort is *An-Nafā'is Al-Assriyyah* (1908–1914, 1919–1923), which is, in a way, the literary archive of this period.

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Sound Power: Musical Diplomacy Within the Franciscan Custody in Mandate Jerusalem

Maria Chiara Rioli and Riccardo Castagnetti

Music contributes to the construction of a sense of identity through the direct experience and contact of the body, time and sociability, shaping imaginative cultural narratives.¹ Control over all these levels was, and partly remains, crucial for the Catholic Church as an educational agency. Combining historical and musicological methodologies, this chapter explores the musical activity pursued by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land,²

¹Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 124.

²The Franciscan presence in the region was due to the will of Francis himself, who attributed particular importance to the vast province of the Holy Land since the first general Chapter of the Franciscan order in 1217. It followed, with the reconquest of Jerusalem by the crusaders, that

Although the research for this chapter was conducted in close collaboration, Maria Chiara Rioli is the author of pages 79–93 and 97–99 and Riccardo Castagnetti of pages 93–97. The authors are deeply grateful to Fra Narcyz Klimas and Fra Sergey Loktionov, archivists of the Franciscan Custody historical archives, for their assistance in navigating the records, to Agostino Lama's sons Youssef and Patrick for sharing various manuscript scores of their father, as well as to Marion Blocquet, Vincent Lemire, Julie Sibony, and Olivier Tourny for their support in the archival enquiry.

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providing insights into the *schola cantorum* of the Custody's headquarter in the St Saviour's convent in Jerusalem, and the role played by its orphan cantors, before moving to the analysis of some of the "political" compositions of Agostino Lama, one of the most significant Palestinian musicians of the twentieth century. In doing so, we add to the literature of the so-called "acoustic turn", which opened a variety of research paths by combining the methodology of musicology and international relations.³ This was linked to three other emerging strands: international concerns in musicology, the aesthetic turn in international relations, and the cultural turn in international history.

In this growing and stimulating landscape of studies on the relations between politics, culture and music in the modern and contemporary ages,⁴ most scholars have devoted attention to the Euro-American area, particularly during the Cold War. Although the Middle East remains quite peripheral to

the Franciscans established themselves in the Holy City (1230). In 1342, two papal bulls issued by Clement VI (*Nuper charissimae* and *Gratias agimus*) laid the groundwork for the juridical recognition of what would become the Custody of the Holy Land. In the following centuries, the Franciscans were assigned particular privileges regarding the safeguarding of the Holy Places, caring for pilgrims, and pastoral and educational work; they also took on an increasing role in relations with foreign powers. In 1746, the internal organisation of the Custody was laid down by Benedict XIV with the apostolic letter *In supremo militantis Ecclesiae*, establishing a structure that would remain in force until the revision of the statutes undertaken during the twentieth century. On the Custody of the Holy Land in the contemporary period, see Paolo Pieraccini, *Cattolici di Terra Santa (1333–2000)* (Florence: Pagnini e Martinelli, 2003); Giuseppe Buffon, *Les Franciscains en Terre Sainte (1869–1889): Religion et politique; une recherche institutionnelle* (Paris: Cerf; Editions franciscaines, 2005); Andrea Giovannelli, *La Santa Sede e la Palestina. La Custodia di Terra Santa tra la fine dell'impero ottomano e la guerra dei sei giorni* (Rome: Studium, 2000).

³See the introduction to Frédéric Ramel and Cécile Prévost-Thomas, eds., *International Relations, Music and Diplomacy: Sounds and Voices on the International Stage* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1–16.

⁴In the extensive bibliography, see Edward W. Said, *Musical Elaborations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Fosler-Lussier, *Music Divided: Bartók's Legacy in Cold War Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Fosler-Lussier, "Music Pushed, Music Pulled: Cultural Diplomacy, Globalization, and Imperialism," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 1 (2012): 53–64; Robert Adlington, ed., *Sound Commitments: Avant-Garde Music and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, ed., *Music and International History in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2015); Ronald Radano and Tejumola Olaniyan, eds., *Audible Empire: Music, Global Politics, Critique* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Deborah Pacini Hernandez, Hector Fernandez L'Hoeste, and Eric Zolov, eds., *Rockin' Las Américas: The Global Politics of Rock in Latin/o America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004). For a long-term approach, see Rebekah Ahrendt, Mark Ferraguto, and Damien Mahiet, eds., *Music and Diplomacy from the Early Modern Era to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Andrew H. Weaver, "The Materiality of Musical Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe: Representation and Negotiation in Andreas Rauch's *Currus triumphalis musicus* (1648)," *Journal of Musicology* 35, no. 4 (2018): 460–497. For some theoretical reflections, see David Clarke, "Theorising the Role of Cultural Products in Cultural Diplomacy from a Cultural Studies Perspective," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 22, no. 2 (2016): 1–17.

the discipline, some works have attempted to fill this gap.⁵ Looking at the Israeli–Palestinian context, numerous musicological studies have focused on the links between Palestinian music, nationalism and resistance against Israel after 1948 and especially after 1967,⁶ on Palestinian music in Israel,⁷ and on the musical divisions between, but also the experiences of joint collaboration by, Israeli and Palestinian musicians after the collapse of the Oslo agreements in the 1990s and the outbreak of the Second Intifada.⁸

With the exception of the figure of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, whose cultural and musical relevance has been investigated by Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar⁹ (although Jawhariyyeh's scores remain unpublished), the works on Robert Lachmann's "Oriental Music" archive,¹⁰ some studies on Jewish music in

⁵In more general terms, not only referred to music, see Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, "What Are We Searching for? Culture, Diplomacy, Agents and the State," in *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, eds. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (New York: Berghan, 2010), 3.

⁶David A. McDonald, *My Voice Is My Weapon: Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2013); McDonald, "Performing Palestine: Resisting the Occupation and Reviving Jerusalem's Social and Cultural Identity through Music and the Arts," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 25 (2015): 5–18; Moslih Kanaaneh, Stig-Magnus Thorsen, Heather Bursheh, and David A. McDonald, eds., *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance Since 1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); and the digital project by David McDonald on "Music, Folklore, and Nationalism Among Palestinian Refugees in Amman, Jordan (2003–2005)," <http://eviada.webhost.iu.edu/Scripts/collection.cfm?mc=7&cctID=65>. Accessed 23 July 2020.

⁷Dalia Cohen and Ruth Katz, *Palestinian Arab Music: A Maqam Tradition in Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Amatzia Bar-Yosef, "Traditional Rural Style Under a Process of Change: The Singing Style of the Hadday, Palestinian Folk Poet-Singers," *Asian Music* 29, no. 2 (1998): 57–82.

⁸Ruth F. Davis, "Music in the Mirror of Multiple Nationalisms: Sound Archives and Ideology in Israel and Palestine," in *The Cambridge History of World Music*, ed. Philip V. Bohlman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 498–521; Benjamin Brinner, *Playing Across a Divide: Israeli–Palestinian Musical Encounters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Daniel Barenboim and Michael Naumann, *The Sound of Utopia: From the West–Eastern Divan Orchestra to the Barenboim–Said Academy* (Leipzig: Seemann Henschel, 2018); Nasser Al-Taee, "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; Nili Belkind, "Music in Conflict: Palestine, Israel and the Politics of Aesthetic Production" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014); Issa Boulos, "The Past and the Current in the Palestinian Music Scene: A Personal Perspective," in *Diwan: A Forum of the Arts, Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, MI, March 30–April 2, 2006* (Dearborn: Arab American National Museum, 2007), 16–33.

⁹Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar, eds., *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948*, trans. Nada Elzeer, foreword Rachel Beckles Willson (Northampton: Olive Tree Press, 2014); Salim Tamari, "Wasif Jawhariyyeh, Popular Music, and Early Modernity in Jerusalem," in *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture*, eds. Rebecca L. Stein and Ted Swedner (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 27–50.

¹⁰In 1935 the German Jewish ethnomusicologist Robert Lachmann (1892–1939) moved to Palestine, where he established the so-called "Oriental music archive" at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was the author of 12 radio programmes—"Oriental Music"—transmitted between 18 November 1936 and 28 April 1937 by the PBS. See Robert Lachmann, *The "Oriental Music" Broadcasts, 1936–1937: A Musical Ethnography of Mandatory Palestine*, ed. Ruth F. Davis (Madison: A-R Editions, 2013).

the Yishuv and post-1948,¹¹ and initial contributions on missionary musical activities,¹² research on musicians and music in late modern Ottoman and Mandate Palestine remains a desideratum, despite the importance of Palestine for musicians travelling within the region and between the Levant and the West.¹³

In this landscape, Christian religious congregations played an important role. Although often underestimated by or barely quoted in historical studies, music was part of the cultural agenda of church institutions and missionary congregations. Christian actors imported Western classical music, teaching musical notation and Western composition styles in Palestine. The Franciscan schools devoted special attention to music: three of the major Palestinian musicians of the twentieth century, Agostino Lama (1902–1988), Salvador Arnita (1914–1984)¹⁴ and Yousef Khasho (1927–1996),¹⁵ were taught by the friars. Lama spent his entire life in the service of the Franciscan Custody, while Arnita and Khasho used the training received by the Franciscans outside the religious sphere of St Saviour's, working for internationally reputed institutions, such as the American University

¹¹See, in particular, Amnon Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992); Shiloah, ed., *The Performance of Jewish and Arab Music in Israel Today* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997); Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine, 1880–1948: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Olivier Tourny, *Le chant liturgique juif éthiopien: Analyse musicale d'une tradition orale* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009); Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Assaf Shelleg, *Jewish Contiguities and the Soundtrack of Israeli History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Golan Gur, “Israel: History, Culture, and Geography of Music,” and Sarah Hankins, “Israel: Modern and Contemporary Performance Practice,” in *The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Music and Culture*, ed. Janet Sturman (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2019), 1206–1209 and 1209–1212.

¹²Rachel B. Willson, *Orientalism and Musical Mission: Palestine and the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹³Christian Poché, “Palestinian Music,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 18, eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 935–937. For a classic study, see Yusra J. Arnita, *Al-funun al-sha'biiyya fi Filastin* (Folk art in Palestine) (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, 1968).

¹⁴A student of Lama and then his assistant organist at the Holy Sepulchre, Arnita studied composition also in Rome at the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia with Aldredo Casella and organ with Fernando Germani in 1934–1935. After completing his education in London at the Guildhall School of Music with Sir Landon Ronald, he returned to Palestine, where he was appointed music director of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Jerusalem until 1948. During the war, he fled to Beirut, becoming a professor at the American University of Beirut.

¹⁵Born in Jerusalem, Khasho was orphaned at five years old and was admitted to the Franciscan orphanage, where he was taught music by Lama. He worked in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Italy, where he studied with Alfredo Casella and Fernando Germani. In 1966, at the request of King Hussein, he joined the National Conservatory of Jordan, becoming its director. For a presentation of Arnita's and Khasho's production, see Yuval Shaked, “On Contemporary Palestinian Music,” *Search: Journal for New Music and Culture* 8 (2011). <http://www.searchnewmusic.org/shaked.pdf>. Accessed 20 July 2020.

of Beirut in Arnita's case,¹⁶ and the National Conservatory of Jordan in Khasho's. The Custody's *schola cantorum* won renown in the Palestinian landscape during the twentieth century.¹⁷ In 1995 the Franciscans opened the Magnificat Institute, currently one of the few music schools in the Old City of Jerusalem.¹⁸

As regards sources, the history of Palestinian music is intrinsically a connected history. Documents of musical interest are often located in archival fonds not immediately recognisable as "musical archives". Therefore, not only in the Levant but perhaps particularly so, the history of a musical chapel requires surveying multiple archives and records, including land registries, architectural documentation, printing press holdings, municipal archives, radio records and private memoires, in order to retrace its course but also to precisely contextualise the extensive itineraries of the music and its performers.

ST SAVIOUR'S *SCHOLA CANTORUM*

The role of music within the Franciscan Custody—connected with two of its main objectives, evangelisation and education—must take central place in any comprehensive history of music in modern Palestine. These two tasks were strictly linked: music was a liturgical element and a pedagogical tool. And in this way the music sung and taught by the Custody helped to shape the liturgical and civic soundscape.

The Custody was also a space for the production—composing, playing and printing—of music. Established in the mid-nineteenth century, the Franciscan Printing Press (FPP) was among the main Jerusalem printing houses for music.¹⁹ The FPP archives holds printed procession manuals ("Processionalia Terrae Sanctae") for the Holy Sepulchre dating from 1866; books with the Melkite liturgy in Gregorian notation; the musical programme in Latin of the *schola cantorum* for the 1921 Holy Week; a 1935 antiphonarium; a 1938

¹⁶The finding aid of the Archives and Special Collections Department of the American University of Beirut contain some references to Arnita's academic activity, including correspondence with members of the departments, programmes of musical events, and press clippings.

¹⁷Established in 1217 by Francis of Assisi as Province of the Holy Land, the Franciscan Custody.

¹⁸For a short account of the history of the Magnificat Institute, see Adriana Ponce, "Music-Making in the Heart of the Christian Quarter," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 10 (2000): 39–42.

¹⁹On the FPP, see Marion Blocquet, "L'Imprimerie franciscaine de Jérusalem au service de la Terre Sainte (1846–1969)" (MA diss., Ecole nationale des chartes, 2019); Leyla Dakhlī, "Men at Work: The Tipografia di Terra Santa, 1847–1930," in *Ordinary Jerusalem, 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City*, eds. Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 352–365; Maria Chiara Rioli, "Introducing Jerusalem: Visiting Cards, Advertisements and Urban Identities at the Turn of the 20th Century," in *Ordinary Jerusalem, 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City*, eds. Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 29–49.

text in Armenian with songs for the scouts (printed in 700 copies); a volume of *Esercizi di solfeggio e di canto corale* by Luigi Bottazzo and Oreste Ravanello, printed in 1943; religious sheet music from the 1950s and 1960s; Christmas and Easter greeting cards with hymns and sheets; children's songbooks; a songbook printed for the Fascist Working Men's Club; flyers with the Hebrew song "The New Hatikvah"; and the composition of the Jordanian national anthem dated 1965. Some sources refer to the "Archive of St Saviour's Chapel" but this archive is not included in the inventory. The absence of a specific fond on the music played in the Holy Sepulchre reinforces the hypothesis that a separate musical archive has yet to be identified. Franciscan musical activity also included a band in Bethlehem. The most important Franciscan musical group was the *schola cantorum* of the Holy Land, composed of friars, laity and orphan cantors from St Saviour's orphanage.²⁰

In order to retrace the history of the *schola cantorum*, the second tome of the monumental Franciscan inventory mentions two musical sources that deserve deeper attention.²¹ The first one, entitled "Cappella musicale di San Salvatore: Annotazioni, 1923–1945", is a manuscript notebook of 187 numbered pages, written by Lama, who played a pivotal role in liturgical music in Palestine in the twentieth century. Born on 28 August 1902 in Ramleh, he spent the period from 1908 to 1916 in the Franciscan Orphanage in St Saviour's, where he also attended an elementary school run by the Franciscans and was taught music by the friars.

The archives of the Franciscan Custody contain traces of Lama's childhood. In the card index of boys admitted to the orphanage from 1896 to 1931, his entry is number 107, and includes his dates of birth, baptism, confirmation and entry to the orphanage.²² Following this information, a note informs that Lama was raised at the expense of the Latin Parish of Bethlehem. The assistant pastor of this parish, Fra Atanasio Nazlian, made "special

²⁰Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (BOA)/BEO/244–18233, Dosya 244, Gömlek 18233, Ibrahim Hakkı Pasha, Mutassarif of Jerusalem, to the Grand Vizierate, 8 July 1893. According to this document, the Latin community had two music bands, whose members were composed of elementary school students. They chanted music from the elementary school to 14 years old and each band consisted of 12 children, used mainly for liturgical events but also public performances.

²¹Andrea Maiarelli, ed., *L'Archivio storico della Custodia di Terra Santa, 1230–1970*, 3 vols. (Milan: Edizioni Terra Santa, 2012). The authors were able to fully digitise these sources thanks to the agreement between the ERC "Open Jerusalem. Opening Jerusalem Archives: For a Connected History of 'Citadinité' in the Holy City" project, directed by Vincent Lemire, and the Custody archives.

²²Archivio storico della Custodia di Terra Santa (Historical Archive of the Custody of the Holy Land, ASCTS), Terra Sancta Boy's Orphanage, Orfani, Registri degli orfani, Schedario ragazzi entrati dal 1896 al 1931, "107. Agostino Besciara Lama di ignoti parenti, nato a Ramle di Palestina il giorno 28 Agosto 1902. Battizzato lo stesso giorno. Entrato il 16 Ottobre 1908." This information is confirmed by the card no. 386 in ASCTS, ibid., Orfani, Schede personali, 52.

recommendations” to support Lama’s admission to the Terra Sancta boy’s orphanage.²³ This description, which highlights the favour the young Lama enjoyed, stands in contrast to some other descriptions that reported that the boy in question was “caciato” (kicked out) or “rimandato a casa” (sent home) because “ladro, cattivo e incorreggibile” (thief, bad and incorrigible) or that he ran away from the orphanage. As was the case with all orphans, Lama received a health check by a doctor upon entering the institution.²⁴ His name reappears in the registries containing the results of the orphans for each school year.²⁵

Although the orphanage was closed during the First World War, the friars kept Lama in the convent because of his talent for music, especially the organ. Along with the guarantee of food and lodging, he also had the opportunity to attend private lessons, especially in music. From 1919 to 1923, he was a teacher. On 1 January 1920, the Custos, Ferdinando Diotallevi, appointed the eighteen-year old Lama as organist of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, a position he held until his death in 1988. As early as the early 1920s, the compositions of the young Lama, executed by the *schola cantorum*, were appreciated during the liturgies at the Holy Sepulchre.²⁶ In 1923 he also became director of the *schola* and of the Antonian Charitable Society band in St Saviour’s, and was active as a music teacher and choir conductor. Many of his choir compositions are still sung at St Saviour’s and in all Palestinian parishes.

As he states in the introduction of the “Annotazioni”, dated 6 November 1928, Lama, then director of St Saviour’s *schola*, copied and continued the notes written by his predecessors from 1923 to 1927.²⁷ The second source, entitled “Cronache orfanotrofio”, but not written by Lama, covers four decades, from 1929 to 1969.²⁸ While this is not a musical chronicle, music

²³ASCTS, Terra Sancta Boy’s Orphanage, Orfani, Registri degli orfani, Schedario ragazzi entrati dal 1896 al 1931: “N.B. Questo bambino fu allevato a spese della Parrocchia latina di Betlemme e per mezzo del Vice Parroco Padre Atanasio Nazlian venne ammesso a quest’Orfanotrofio. Partito il 13 Agosto 1916. Rientrato nel Luglio 1917.”

²⁴ASCTS, ibid., Orfani, Schede personali, 52: “Je, soussigné, avoir examiné le nommé Augustin avoir trouvé en bonne santé. En foie de quoi, je lui ai délivré le présent certificat. Dr Emile Auad Le 15/X/1908.”

²⁵ASCTS, Terra Sancta Boy’s Orphanage, Scuola, Registri delle valutazioni, 95–96. In the 1915–1916 schoolyear, the marks are reported per “studio” and “condotta” for every week, accompanied by a “numero di merito”, that is, the ranking of every pupils.

²⁶“Abbiamo ammirato la bella composizione del Panis Angelicus fatta dal giovanetto A. Lama dell’Orfanotrofio dei PP. Francescani di Gerusalemme,” “Cronaca dei Santuari,” 24 March 1921, *Terra Santa* 1, no. 4 (15 April 1921): 62.

²⁷ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Miscellanea, “Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945,” 6 November 1928, 1.

²⁸ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Terra Sancta Boy’s Orphanage, “Cronache orfanotrofio.”

features prominently in its pages. The directors of St Saviour's orphanage kept notes on all musical activities involving the students.

In the first document, the notes were started by Fra Augusto Facchini in 1923 and continued by Fra Pacifico Del Vecchio (director of the musical chapel from July 1925 to January 1926) and Fra Francesco Triantafillides (director from January 1926 to July 1927). The document comprises three different notebooks: according to Lama's aforementioned introduction, he decided to collate these notes in one book so as to make it easier to consult them. Lama specified that he copied Facchini's and Del Vecchio's notes "very scrupulously", while he made a selection of Triantafillides's pages, refusing to add "discordant and unpleasant notes" to pages referring to "Melodies and Harmonies".²⁹

Lama describes in detail the choir's activities: the liturgies it attended, repertoire and celebrants. All directors followed the same structure regarding notation: they report the date and the festivity, the location of the liturgy, the programme sung and offer some comments on the performance. Every chronicle is accompanied by critical remarks about the pieces and the performance of the cantors. The *schola cantorum* repertoire mainly included polyphonic pieces. Gregorian chant, unexpectedly, had a secondary role, and the "Annotazioni" was usually critical of performances of it. It often contains harsh criticisms of the execution. The directors lamented the absence of some friars from choir practice, their errors,³⁰ especially in the Gregorian chant, and their distraction during the liturgy.³¹ The sense of decadence was amplified by other elements: the poor state of the organ of the Holy Sepulchre and the difficulty in finding a favourable position for the choir.³²

In the notes of the directors of the musical chapel, the spiritual dimension of these liturgies was also affected by the conflicts and clashes with the other communities allowed to officiate in the Holy Sepulchre, particularly during the Holy Week and Easter ceremonies. The everyday coexistence among the choirs appeared problematic³³ and, at times, very conflictual.³⁴ The "musical clash" also left an impression on the pilgrims visiting the holy places, as evident in the pilgrimage account of the 25-year-old Angelo Roncalli (later Pope

²⁹ ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Miscellanea, "Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945," 6 November 1928.

³⁰ "È costume tra i frati di urlare," ASCTS, ibid., 25 November 1925, 69.

³¹ ASCTS, ibid., 16 April 1924, 19.

³² "Il posto da me scelto per disporre i cantori non sembra essere acusticamente felice. Il suono si sperdeva e le voci virili non davano risonanza alcuna," ASCTS, ibid., 16 April 1924, 19.

³³ "L'esecuzione fu assai disturbata dal canto degli Armeni," ASCTS, ibid., 5 April 1924, 17.

³⁴ "Fu tutta musica sciupata. I copti, terminato il nostro terzo giro intorno al S. Sepolcro, volnero impedire la popolazione latina di seguire la nostra processione, si venne alle mani, producendo una confusione e un baccano indiavolato, che durò almeno per una buona mezz'ora, e disturbò orrendamente gli animi dei cantori e l'esecuzione musicale," ASCTS, ibid., 19 April 1924, 23.

John XXIII) reporting the “nuisance” in hearing the voices able “to scare the dead” of Copt cantors over the “suavity and good taste” of the Franciscans.³⁵

Lama provides a vivid representation of that “infernal cacophony”.³⁶ In 1928, he wrote that on Holy Friday (April 6) at the Holy Sepulchre “all is squalid [and] sad”, adding that “one day the Holy Sepulchre will lose all its splendour because of the Schismatics”.³⁷ These tensions did not involve confessional relations only; they were part of the historical problems of the Latin Catholic Church, and particularly the Patriarchate Custody, especially in celebrations involving Patriarch Luigi Barlassina.

Apart from these conflicts, the notes also report on the everyday strategies and tactics of mutual coexistence. During the 1930s, the restoration of the organ of the Holy Sepulchre risked sparking new tensions: on the day the new instrument was tested, the Franciscan Procurator sent a case of beer to the Armenians and Greeks in order to curry favour and to avoid clashes.³⁸

CONTROLLING AND PATRONISING ORPHANS THROUGH MUSIC

In the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries there were three orphanages within the Franciscan Custody: one in Jerusalem (for boys only) and two in Cairo, one for boys (run by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters) and the other for girls. The male orphanage in Jerusalem was founded in 1879 and situated within the walls of St Saviour’s. In the 1890s orphans and the St Saviour’s parish schoolboys were taught together, but the friars soon separated them. The 11th July 1927 earthquake forced the friars to reunite the orphans and the parish schoolboys in the same building for few years.³⁹ In the 1930s it the orphanage hosted about 80 boys, mainly from Catholic families. It was directed by a Franciscan friar, in coordination with other friars and lay members of the third order for supervision. The boys were

³⁵“Combinazione volle che in quel mattino funzionassero nella basilica, e precisamente in contro a noi, i copti. Erano due preti in tutto, con quattro o cinque monelli, ma gridavano per cento, con certe voci da spaventare i morti. La nostra funzione procedeva quietamente: i buoni padri colla loro schola cantorum eseguivano una bella messa di Haller con molto garbo e buon gusto; ma coloro non tacevano. (...) Fu una vera seccatura.” Angelo Roncalli, *Viaggio in Terra Santa. 1906. Il diario di un “giornalista” diventato Papa* (Milan: Edizioni Terra Santa, 2016).

³⁶“Campane, campanacci, ferri, legni, grida, canti, urlii, zagarit (grido di donne); tutto questo c’era; è abbastanza da mandar in visibilio i futuristi oppure gli autori di musica da Jazz band,” ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Miscellanea, “Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945,” 8 April 1927, 159. On Jerusalem’s “sound war”, see Olivier Tourny, “Silence divin, chant des hommes et cacophonie d’enfer: une promenade musicale à Jérusalem,” in *Jérusalem. Histoire, promenades, anthologie et dictionnaire*, ed. Tilla Rudel (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2018), 279–302.

³⁷ASCTS, ibid., 6 April 1928, 157.

³⁸ASCTS, ibid., Cronaca (Storia dell’Organo del S. Sepolcro), 184.

³⁹The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, *Franciscan Schools of the Custody of the Holy Land: Together with Other Franciscan Schools in the Near East* (Jerusalem: St. Saviour’s Convent, 1933), 13.

divided into two sections: the first for boys under 14 years old and the second for boys aged 14–18, after which they had to leave the orphanage. The education of the orphans was focused on religion and the study of languages, particularly Italian, French and English. The programmes included the basics of music and singing and, for selected students, a special music class in which the orphans were taught the art of singing at a higher level and learned to play an instrument. The most promising students were provided with instruments and books and were followed by a teacher. Some organists were trained and the orphanage provided the *schola cantorum* with sopranos and contraltos for everyday liturgical service. The young choristers and altar boys participated in the friar's daily procession to the Holy Sepulchre and sung the *Te Deum* as pilgrims were entering.

Boys over 14 years old were sent to train in workshops for tailoring, cobbling and typography at St Saviour's. Upon reaching 18, the orphans could leave the compound or stay to work in these workshops run by the friars. Alumni could spend an “honest recess” in the evening in a club in the school.⁴⁰ This entertainment was accompanied by a performance of St Saviour's Antonian band, which was composed of alumni.

As reported in the orphanage chronicles—initiated by the director, Fra Fulgenzio Pasini, on 28th May 1929—the institution had no precise regulations nor had it specific admission criteria for orphans.⁴¹ Italian was the *lingua franca* within the school, as throughout the Custody.⁴² The director was appointed by the Custos. The teachers were both friars and laymen. The orphanage, which closed in 2004, was based in the building that today hosts the Custody curia. Its archive, composed of documents in Arabic, English and Italian, has since been deposited in the historical archives of the Custody.

The *schola cantorum* was composed of friars and of students of the Franciscan male schools and Jerusalem's male orphanage. Around 22 boys served daily in the choir, reaching 30 for the sung masses in St Saviour's parish. Only men and boys were allowed to sing during the liturgy. The only reference in this source to female students singing is from 15 July 1927, the day of Holy Sepulchre feast during the celebrations of the Franciscan centennial, when, despite the damages sustained by the Basilica due to the earthquake four days before,⁴³ hundreds of male and female students of the

⁴⁰ *La Custodia francescana di Terra Santa 1217–1933* (Jerusalem: Tipografia di Terra Santa, 1933), 95.

⁴¹ ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Terra Sancta Boy's Orphanage, “Cronache orfanatario,” 11.

⁴² “Tra i Sorveglianti (...) nel tempo delle ricreazioni proibito affatto il linguaggio arabo” (ASCTS, *ibid.*, 12, underlined in original).

⁴³ Raymond Cohen, *Saving the Holy Sepulchre: How Rival Christians Came Together to Rescue Their Holiest Shrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1–12.

Catholic schools in the Holy Land sung the *Missa de Angelis* together in the basilica.⁴⁴

St Saviour's *schola cantorum* was not a professional choir: singing was part of the duty or training of its members. Although the performances by the cantors were often criticised by the director, the judgements on the orphans and the alumni were much more positive and encouraging. The boys were described as "exact and sure" in their way of singing, their voices highly praised and their commitment the object of special attention. The liturgical service was demanding, requiring a daily presence at the Holy Sepulchre and frequent participation in St Saviour's celebrations. In addition to the liturgies were daily practices: "To have good executions, at least three weeks of last rehearsals are required, otherwise fiasco",⁴⁵ noted Fra Triantafillides in 1926. For special festivities, the choir's performances in St Saviour's were accompanied by the orchestra.⁴⁶

The orphan members of the chapel were gradually separated from the others: in consideration of their commitment, the orphan cantors were allowed to leave the compound. And the schola's activities were not limited to the Holy Sepulchre and St Saviour's parish liturgies; the choir was involved in all the major celebrations of the Franciscan Custody and of its churches and sanctuaries, not only in Palestine but also in Damascus and Aleppo, which meant that some of the orphans travelled widely.

Franciscan musical activity was also disseminated via radio. In January 1936 *Filastin* reported that an agreement had been reached between the Franciscan friars and the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS) to broadcast the music played by the Antonian band in the Arabic section of the programme through the new transmitter in Ramallah that was scheduled to begin operation in March 1936.⁴⁷ The "Annotazioni" also reports that in

⁴⁴"Per commemorare il Centenario Francescano nel S. Sepolcro si è voluto solennizzare la festa d'oggi col Pontificale di Mgr. Patriarca. Non vi fu musica polifonica, ma allievi e allieve di quasi tutte le scuole cattoliche di Gerusalemme cantarono la Messa degli Angeli rispondendo al Coro dei Religiosi. [...] C'era[no] i due orfanotrofi di Terra Santa, le due scuole parrocchiali, gli orfanotrofi delle Suore di Carità, la scuola "Arti e mestieri" dei PP. di Ratisbonne, il noviziato dei Frères (Betlemme), la scuola delle Salesiane, il Collegio delle Suore di Sion (queste suore si curano molto del C[anto] greg[oriano]), i laboratori delle Suore Francescane Miss[ionarie] d'Egitto, e delle Suore Francescane Miss[ionarie] di Maria". ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Miscellanea, "Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945," 15 July 1927, 132.

⁴⁵ASCTS, ibid., 26 March 1926, 78, underlined in original.

⁴⁶ASCTS, ibid., 1 January 1926, 76: "Il primo dell'anno è stato celebrato con grande solennità dalla Schola Cantorum di San Salvatore. (...) Tutto eseguito con l'Orchestra che ha dato un risalto stupendo alla musica. Cantavano in maggioranza i giovani ex-allievi."

⁴⁷*Filastin*, 19 January 1936, 10. The relationship between the Catholic Church and the PBS was not linear. In 1946 the Latin Patriarch, Luigi Barlassina, protested to the Mandate authorities over their request to use the Anglican version of the Bible in the Christian radio programmes and to submit the texts of sermons to the censor. See Israel State Archives (ISA), 361/33/2, Barlassina to the High Commissioner for Palestine, Alan Cunningham, letter no. 395, Jerusalem, 7 May 1946, and Andrea Stanton, "*This Is Jerusalem Calling*": *State Radio in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 162.

1935 Radio London, in programmes transmitted in Europe and the United States, and in the following year Radio Jerusalem began to broadcast the liturgies sang by the schola, particularly during Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost and Christmas, from the Holy Sepulchre, Gethsemane and Bethlehem.⁴⁸

The choir also accompanied cinematographic projections: at the end of May 1930, it sung in a hall of the Terra Santa College during the silent movie *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*.⁴⁹ Soon afterwards the Custos forbade them to participate in such events, with the exception of the screening—organised by the Italian Consulate of Jerusalem—of the movie celebrating the signing of the Lateran Treaty in 1929 between the Fascist regime and the Holy See.⁵⁰

This attention paid to the orphan cantors was accompanied by a system of control by religious and lay probation officers. The cantors were not allowed to speak in Arabic during the recess.⁵¹ Each year, during the Easter vacations, the cantors, divided in groups (friars, laymen and boys), organised a trip called the “scampagnata”, offered by the Custody as a reward for their services. Likewise, a ten-day paid vacation was offered to some of them, suggesting a regime of strict rules and occasional rewards.

⁴⁸“Nel Natale del 1935, dietro richiesta del Governo Americano, la Schola cantò l’Adeste Fideles per essere trasmesso per mezzo della Radio di Londra in America. Nel 1936 il Governo Inglese inaugurò la Radio di Gerusalemme ed a Natale del medesimo anno si trasmise il Kyrie ed il Gloria della Messa di Mezzanotte che fu poi sempre fatto, però dal 1938 si cominciò a trasmettere tutta la Messa terminando con una strofa dell’Adeste. Il giorno di S. Stefano nel 1937 si fece un programma speciale di 15 minuti nella Chiesa di S. Caterina per essere trasmesso in Inghilterra per mezzo della Radio di Londra. Ci pagarono 20 Lire sterline. Pure nel 1937 nel giorno di Pasqua si trasmise la Messa dal S. Sepolcro, che poi non si ripeté più, perché il Governo chiuse la Basilica ai fedeli, pretestando il pericolo dell’edificio ed i restauri. Anché noi non ci tenevamo molto a questa trasmissione perché non si può sempre fare buona musica a Pasqua. Per questa ragione nel 1940 ho chiesto dalla Radio di Gerusalemme di trasmettere la Messa di Pentecoste da S. Salvatore, il ché fu accettato e finora sempre si fece con grande effetto. Pure si trasmette l’Ora Santa il Giovedì Santo da Getsemani quando non ci sono impedimenti di programma appartenenti alla Radio” (ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Miscellanea, “Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945,” 175). This part of the manuscript (“Cronaca brevissima di fatti avvenuti tra 1928–1942”), comprising two-and-a-half pages, was written in 1942.

⁴⁹ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Terra Sancta Boy’s Orphanage, “Cronache orfanotrofio,” 2 June 1930, 47–49.

⁵⁰ASCTS, ibid., 31 December 1930, 65–66. For the philo-Fascist propaganda by the Italian Consulate of Jerusalem see Roberto Mazza’s chapter in this volume, PAGESXXX.

⁵¹ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Miscellanea, “Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945,” April 1928, 162. As explicitly stated by Lama: “Alcuni non vorrebbero avere dei riguardi speciali per loro [i ragazzi], perché, dicono, sono allevati e nutriti nell’Orfanotrofio; ma ciò non vale, perché nell’Orfanotrofio ci sono 60 fanciulli e non tutti cantano; allora è giusto distinguere chi fatica di più chi di meno; e poi i ragazzi cantori per tutto l’anno prestano servizio quotidianamente al S. Sepolcro e quasi quotidianamente a S. Salvatore, senza contare prove e feste ecc. Ecc. Dunque bisogna cercare tutti i mezzi per incoraggiarli.”

A MUSICO-POLITICAL AGENDA

The orphans and their choir did not only sing liturgical music. The music performed by the Jerusalem and Bethlehem bands marked feasts and entertainment within the convents but also in public spaces. Politics entered the Custody walls: the musical activity of the orphan and alumni cantors also included singing at performances organised for political events. In 1925 during the journey to Palestine of the former British Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith, who was accompanied by Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner for Palestine, the Franciscan band played the British national anthem.⁵² The orphans also sang a hymn in Arabic composed by Lama in the presence of King Abdullah of Jordan during his visit to Jerusalem on 11 April 1935.⁵³

The increasing alignment of the Custody with the Fascist regime also influenced musical life. The chronicle mentions the song “I crociati balilla” together with other popular Italian songs performed by the schola.⁵⁴ The Fascist regime devoted considerable attention to Palestine, aiming to increase Italian influence in the Levant. Benito Mussolini, who promoted a revival of the cult of St Francis as an “Italian saint”,⁵⁵ called on the Franciscan minor order to increase the number of Italian friars sent to the Holy Land, although this pressure did not produce the results anticipated by the Prime Minister.

In this diplomatic strategy, Mussolini found an ally in Victor Emmanuel III, who intended to reinforce and legitimate his family’s claims to titles such as King of Cyprus and Jerusalem. The Italian Consul in Jerusalem proposed to Mussolini a pilgrimage by the crown prince, Umberto.⁵⁶ The king encouraged this idea and the pilgrimage took place during the 1928 Holy Week and Easter celebrations (1–9 April). In the celebrations organised during this journey, the choir took centre stage.⁵⁷ The orphans were educated to be

⁵² “Cronaca palestinese,” *Terra Santa* 4, no. 12 (15 December 1924): 302–303.

⁵³ ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Terra Sancta Boy’s Orphanage, “Cronache orfanatario,” 11 April 1935, unnumbered page.

⁵⁴ ASCTS, *ibid.*, March 1931, 23: 70.

⁵⁵ Tommaso Caliò and Roberto Rusconi, eds., *San Francesco d’Italia: Santità e identità nazionale* (Rome: Viella, 2011).

⁵⁶ ASDMAEI, Affari Politici (1919–1930), Palestina, 1460, 6315, 1988/163, Pedrazzi to Mussolini, Gerusalemme, 2 September 1927, quoted by Paolo Pieraccini, “La diocesi patriarcale latina di Gerusalemme, la Santa Sede e le grandi potenze. Dalla caduta dell’impero ottomano alla seconda guerra mondiale (1917–1939)” (PhD diss., University of Florence, 2009), 276.

⁵⁷ The director also reports on the competition between the different religious musical bands during this pilgrimage. Commenting on the entry of the prince to Jerusalem for Palm Sunday (1 April), Lama wrote: “tutto andò bene, e sarebbe andato meglio se non fossimo stati disturbati dalla Banda dei PP. Salesiani di Betlemme, che invece a concorrere a rendere più solenne la Processione, le fece sembrare un po’ al “Nebi Musa” dei Mussulmani oppure alle Processioni degli Scismatici dove non regna che la confusione” (ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Miscellanea, “Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945,” 1 April 1928, 151).

loyal to the Savoy monarchy: after the death of Queen Margherita (4 January 1926), a mass was celebrated in her memory in the presence of General Consul Antonio Gauttieri and the vice-consul of Haifa, Giordani: during this liturgy the choir sang Lorenzo Perosi's requiem mass for three male voices.

On 11 November 1929, the king's birthday, the consul sent a gift—some sweets ("un cartoccio di bomboni")—to every orphan. On the same day, 12 cantors sang the Gregorian chant during a solemn mass in honour of Victor Emmanuel. The notes report that the orphans sent a "little letter" thanking the consul. In December 1930, for the celebrations of New Year's Eve, the orphans had to read a poem in Italian.⁵⁸

The late 1920s and early 1930s were marked by the conflict between the Latin Patriarchate and the British authorities over the education bill in Mandate Palestine, a first draft of which was presented in 1928, then promulgated in 1933 as the Education Ordinance. Patriarch Barlassina, who was very active on the educational front,⁵⁹ resisted any form of control by the British government over Catholic schools, especially the patriarchal ones (which comprised 24 schools with around 800 pupils, mainly from Catholic families).⁶⁰

At the end of the 1920s, the Palestinian situation was also changing. The 1929 riots and later the outbreak of the Arab revolt in 1936 profoundly affected the organisation of the Custody schools. The orphanage classes were interrupted from May to early October and from 1936 to 1938 the choir was not allowed to go to Mount Tabor to chant at liturgies.⁶¹

At the same time, Lama's growing fame in Palestine was used by the Custody in order to increase its reputation in the eyes of the Holy See and the Fascist government, which involved "Italianising" the figure of the Arab teacher. In 1935 Custos Nazzareno Jacopozzi requested the Holy See, through the Apostolic Delegate of Palestine, Gustavo Testa, to confer a decoration—the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice cross⁶²—on Lama as "reward and encouragement" for his activities as composer, organist and director of the *schola cantorum*.⁶³ Instead of the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, Mgr. Alfredo

⁵⁸ASCTS, Archivio della Curia Custodiale, Terra Sancta Boy's Orphanage, "Cronache orfanatario," 31 December 1930, 65–66.

⁵⁹Luigi Barlassina was also the promoter of the—very short—experience of the Palestinian Patriarchal University, established in 1923, whose music classes were attended by around 100 students.

⁶⁰British National Archives (BNA), CO 733/222/1, CO 733/262/1, CO 733/146/7 and FO 371/13750; Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri italiano (ASDMAEI), Archivio del Consolato italiano a Gerusalemme, 26, 143, and 54, 424.

⁶¹From 1938 to 1954 no annotations are reported.

⁶²This award was established by Leo XIII in 1888 with the apostolic letter *Quod singulari Dei concessu* for men and women, laity and clergy, for distinguished special service to the church. *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 21 (1888): 65–67.

⁶³"Come compositore egli ha saputo unire alla rigidità del classicismo un che di geniale, che, niente togliendo alla serietà delle forme, pervade la composizione di un caratteristico senso di unzione. Come organista e come direttore della Schola Cantorum di Terra Santa egli

Ottaviani awarded Lama the Benemerenti medal in October 1935.⁶⁴ Two years later, in 1937, Jacopozzi's request for another decoration for Lama, this time from the Italian government, was refused by the Italian consul, Quinto Mazzolini.⁶⁵

LAMA: FROM CECILIANISM TO THE NAKBA

In the “Annotazioni”, references to Palestinian music in Arabic are very limited: the liturgical music was mainly chosen from the Gregorian repertoire. On Holy Friday in 1924, the choir was reported to have sung the ‘*adbka al-salam*, to the popular theme of *Vexilla regis*.⁶⁶ In 1928 Lama noted that “We must also remember to have a song in Arabic in honour of the Madonna that can be sung at the end of the various ceremonies, so as to contribute to making the feast more solemn by making the people sing it too”.⁶⁷ He was also the author of devotional music and songs in Arabic.⁶⁸ The FPP catalogue attests to the publication of manuals of popular and spiritual Arab songs, and the abovementioned article from *Filastin* reported that the music played by the Antonian Charitable Society band and broadcast by the PBS was in Arabic.

This was a highly significant period for Arab music. In March–April 1932 the Cairo Congress of Arab Music gathered Arab, Jewish, Turkish, Persian and European musicians and musicologists.⁶⁹ During this event, opened by King Fu’ad, the discussions and complex exchange shaped and standardised the category of “Arab music”, in a debate around “tradition” and “modernity” that influenced subsequent cultural policies in the Middle East and its

è apprezzatissimo; e con le sue esecuzioni, che potremmo dire perfette, aumenta grandemente il decoro delle sacre funzioni che si celebrano nei Santuari di Nostra Redenzione” (Archivio Apostolico Vaticano [AAV], Archivio della Delegazione apostolica in Gerusalemme e Palestina, 8, 36, 2, Jacopozzi to Testa, Jerusalem, 22 July 1935, ff. 17–18).

⁶⁴ AAV ibid. 8, 36, 2, Ottaviani to Testa, Vatican, 4 October 1835, f. 20. The Benemerenti medal was first awarded by Pius VI (1775–1799).

⁶⁵ ASDMAEI, Consolato italiano a Gerusalemme, 50, 370, c. Lama’s curriculum, contained in a letter by Jacopozzi, dated 6 April 1937, received the handwritten remark from Mazzolini “non è il caso” (it’s not opportune).

⁶⁶ ASCTS, Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945, 18 April 1924, 23.

⁶⁷ ASCTS, Cappella musicale di San Salvatore. Annotazioni 1923–1945, 1 July 1928, 169. “Bisogna ricordarsi di portare anche un canto in arabo in onore della Madonna per cantarlo in fine delle diverse funzioni, così si concorre a rendere più solenne la festa facendo cantare anche il popolo.”

⁶⁸ See Lama’s songs for St Anthony’s cult in ASCTS, Archivi delle parrocchie, Ain Karem, Carteggio, “Cantos en arabe,” 8.

⁶⁹ Jean Lambert and Pascal Cordereix, eds., *Congrès de musique arabe du Caire: The Cairo Congress of Arab Music*, orig. text by Bernard Moussali, music restoration by Luc Verrie, 18 CDs (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2015).

relations with European countries. The conference, in which some Palestinian musicians and composers participated, was a seminal event that has shaped music education, scholarship and cultural policy in Arab countries ever since.

No trace of this event is to be found in the “Annotazioni”. The repertoire listed in the “Annotazioni” provides information not only about what was chanted and played but also how the choir and organ were expected to perform and, implicitly (as the liturgical service was one of the main objectives of the music schools), how the choirboys were trained, as well as the theological and aesthetic ideals according to which the pieces were selected. The “Annotazioni” carefully records the musical programmes of the most important liturgical celebrations. Among the most recurrent musical pieces, the choir sung an *Introito* by Angelo Fabiani (1868–1938); *Kyrie* and *Gloria* from the *Messa a tre voci d'uomo* by Lorenzo Perosi (1872–1956); a four-voice graduale (*Christus factus est*) by Felice Anerio (1560–1614); *Credo* from the *Missa Papae Marcelli* by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–1594); *Offertorio* and *Communio* by Ignaz Mitterer (1850–1924); *Sanctus*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei* from the *Missa O quam gloriosum* by Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611). This programme is representative of the fundamental criteria on which the repertoire of the Schola was selected: the best-known musicians of the sixteenth-century Roman School alternate with contemporary composers engaged in the refoundation of liturgical music on the basis of church tradition. Almost all of the choir’s performances follow this model.

One of Lama’s main intentions in collecting and continuing the chronicles of the Schola’s liturgical performances was not only to select the most suitable pieces for each celebration but also to establish a canon of authors and musical styles. This aesthetic standard was clearly shaped on the ideals of the Cecilian movement.⁷⁰ This movement, developed in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century, promoted a reform in Catholic Church music, with the aim of defining the features of liturgical music according to church teaching and to acquaint church musicians (choirmasters, choristers and organists) with the official instructions on sacred music. The movement sought to counter the influence of the operatic style on liturgical music, in an attempt to restore, with the return to plainchant and Renaissance polyphony, a supposedly decayed tradition.

The Cecilian programme was motivated not only by aesthetic purposes but also by pastoral concerns. Through the rediscovery of Gregorian chant and the

⁷⁰For more on Cecilianism, see Eckhard Jaschinski, “The Renewal of Catholic Church Musica in Germany/Austria, France and Italy in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Renewal and Resistance: Catholic Church Music from the 1850s to Vatican II*, ed. Paul Collins (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 13–28; Anthony Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2007); Mauro Casadei Turroni Monti and Cesario Ruini, eds., *Aspetti del cecilianesimo nella cultura musicale italiana dell’Ottocento* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004); Siegfried Gmeinwieser, “Cecilian Movement,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 5, eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 333–334.

emphasis on musical training according to tradition, the Cecilians sought a restoration of church authority, pursuing the aims of the First Vatican Council. In their view, sacred music had to be subject to the purposes of the liturgy, through the adoption of a simpler harmonic and melodic language. This reform movement was embraced and supported by the papacy and particularly by Pope Pius X, who, in his motu proprio *Inter plurimas pastoralis officii sollicitudines*,⁷¹ published significantly on St Cecilia's feast day (22 November) in 1903, endorsed the Cecilians' aims. This document on sacred music gave a strong impulse to musical training and the birth of the parochial *scholae cantorum*.

From the end of the nineteenth century, the directors of Custody's *schola cantorum* were strongly aligned with the Cecilian movement. The Franciscan Hartmann von An der Lan-Hochbrunn (1863–1914), better known as Pater Hartmann, a well-known composer of sacred music, friend of Perosi and leading exponent of Cecilianism, held the post of organist in the Church of St Saviour and in the Holy Sepulchre from 1893 to 1895. According to Hartmann, the primary purpose of sacred music had to be the promotion of religious devotion in the congregation and this would be achieved through the adoption of a simpler and more sober musical language.⁷² His successor in the church, Fra Agostino Frapiccini, was a student of Antonio Cicognani (1857–1934), who was deeply influenced by the Regensburg school of church music, one of the main European institutions that promoted Cecilian ideals. He was also the author of the music of the "Hymn of the Holy Land".⁷³ Moreover, the "Annotazioni" records that Fra Ilarione Nacuzi, *sorvegliante* in the orphanage for about 30 years, was one of the friars most involved in the reception of Pius X's motu proprio.

As his musical choices as choir director and composer testify, Lama was trained in a musical environment, that of the Franciscan Custody, that was deeply influenced by Cecilian values, and he too contributed to their promotion. Thus, if the basis of musical teaching in the Franciscan school and orphanages can be placed within the Western classical musical tradition, this was mediated by the theological and aesthetic values of the Cecilian movement. The Christian listening community of the Franciscan Custody was built according to these values. The music sung and played during the liturgies was meant to be the sound in which the local Arab Christian community and pilgrims could recognise and distinguish themselves, in an interfaith context, as part of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land.

Lama's musical output is mainly composed of vocal and instrumental (organist) music for the liturgy. Today his scores are mainly in the Franciscan

⁷¹ *Acta Sancte Sedis* 36 (1903–1904): 387–395.

⁷² Hildegard Herrmann-Schneider, "P. Hartmann Von Der Lan-Hochbrunn OFM (1863–1914): A Tyrolean Franciscan as a Musical Cosmopolitan and Phenomenon in Music History," *Fontes Artis Musicae* 62, no. 3 (2015): 222–237.

⁷³ Roberto Razzoli and Agostino Frapiccini, *L'inno di Terra Santa* (Jerusalem: Tipografia di Terra Santa, 1907).

Custody archive and in the private collection of the Lama family. Among them, the *Prayer* is a small piece for solo baritone with organ accompaniment. It was composed as “a humble souvenir to the honourable members of the UNSCOP” (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine). The score was printed in a leaflet format (probably in 100 copies), dated 13 June 1947—while the members of UNSCOP were arriving in Palestine, and given to the audience. The title page is in itself an explicit declaration of political intentions. It describes the author as an “Arab Palestinian” and that he is the organist of the Holy Sepulchre. At the bottom of the page, the text of the piece, given in three languages, English, French and Arabic, surrounds an image of Jerusalem in which the dome of the Holy Sepulchre is clearly visible. The text consists of two biblical verses taken from Psalm 18:6/2 Samuel 22:7 and Ecclesiasticus 36:13: “In my distress, I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God / Be merciful, o Lord, unto Jerusalem, Thy holy city, the place of Thy rest”. The piece, in B flat minor, is in the form of a recitative and arioso. The three-bar recitative, based on the words of Psalm 18:6 and 2 Samuel 22:7, is based on the harsh sonority of the seventh diminished chord and serves as an introduction. The arioso that follows can be divided into three sections, with a concentric ABA’ structure. In the sections A and A’ the invocation “Be merciful, o Lord, unto Jerusalem” is repeated through a simple melodic idea imitated by the organ, while in the central part B the words “Thy holy city, the place of thy rest” are accompanied by dense chromatic harmonies. The dedication of this song to Jerusalem may echo the hymn “Jerusalem”, whose music was written in 1916 using “And did those feet in ancient time”, William Blake’s preface to his poem “Milton”. Composed by Sir Hubert Parry as an anthem for the suffragette movement, it became extremely popular and in some ways acted as a British claim to Palestine, with no other comparable example with such political implications in Europe.⁷⁴

According to documents collected in the recently released Pius XII’s papers in the archives of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the memories of Lama’s eldest son, Tony, after the outbreak of the 1948 war, the family took refuge in St Louis’ Hospital, which was adjacent to Notre-Dame de France, near the New Gate.⁷⁵ After the assault by the Haganah, the family was split and Agostino was transferred to a camp. After he was released through the efforts of the French Consulate a few months later, he took refuge in St Saviour’s.

During these dramatic months, probably in November 1948, Lama composed the *Postlude*. The postlude is, by definition, an instrumental piece performed at the end of a liturgy or a celebration, after the concluding rite and during the exit of the congregation from the church. This composition is

⁷⁴ Philip V. Bohlman and Ruth F. Davis, “Mizrakh, Jewish Music and the Journey to the East,” in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s–1940s: Portrayal of the East*, eds. Bennett Zon and Martin Clayton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 95–125 and esp. 99–100.

⁷⁵ See Archive of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Latini, Palestina e Transgiordania: affari generali, 457/48, 2, doc. 112, Jerusalem, 25 August 1948.

based on the plainchant of the *Ite, missa est IV* and can be inscribed in the nineteenth-century tradition of the organ postlude. As for many other examples of this musical genre, the beginning of Lama's postlude takes the form of a fugue: the incipit of the theme is imitated through the voices shaping the polyphonic texture of the piece. The character of this first part is flowing, harmonious, but the musical discourse is interrupted by a sharp and dramatic augmented sixth chord, which suddenly leads to a choral restatement of the theme, which is accompanied by a fanfare-like rhythm that gives to the plainchant the nature of a march echoing the ongoing war.

REVERBERATING AROUND A CHANGING CITY

The events of 1948 had harsh impacts on the professional careers and personal trajectories of Palestinian musicians, forcing many of them to emigrate.⁷⁶ The consequences of the war for Palestine would not only be echoed in Lama's *Postlude*. After the 1967 war, Salvador Arnita composed the "Cantata", based on the text of Mahmoud Darwish's poem *Bitaqat Hawiyyah* (*Identity card*).⁷⁷

From 1948 to 1967, when the Old City—and therefore St Saviour's compound—was under Jordanian control, Lama expressed his loyalty to King Hussein, composing music for the monarchy, in a phase in which most Palestinian Catholics did not support the Jordanian annexation of Jerusalem and the West Bank, as demonstrated some years before by the participation of Fr Ibrahim Ayyad in the conspiracy to murder King Abdullah. However, the post-1948 history of the cultural policy of the Franciscan Custody towards Israel and Jordan, including its musical engagement, remains worthy of further study.

Looking back at the late Ottoman and Mandate period, in the St Saviour's microcosmos, music was a tool for the friars to maintain and strengthen the internal dynamics of patronage and control over the orphans, students and artisans in the workshops. At the same time, music was a powerful way to elaborate the Custody's public presence, to assist in developing its relationships with the local authorities and foreign representatives, as well as in differentiating itself from other Christian confessions, but also in inhabiting, through public performances, the sound spaces of a *citadinité* in transformation, as during the Mandate period.

Lama's itinerary, from orphan to master, highlights some elements of the history of the Franciscan educational system. His example demonstrates the growing importance of the Palestinian laity within the Custody, and, at the same, the efforts of the friars to Westernise and, more particularly, Italianise (and therefore

⁷⁶Nader Jalal and Issa Boulos, "A *Musical Catastrophe*: The Direct Impact of the Nakba on Palestinian Musicians and Musical Life. Nader Jalal and Issa Boulos interviewed by Heather Bursheh," in *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance Since 1900*, eds. Moslih Kanaaneh et al. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 37–52.

⁷⁷"Identity Card: Arnita's First Cantata in Arabic," *Al-Kulliyah* (Autum 1971): 7–9.



Fig. 1 St Saviour *schola cantorum*, 1925–1934, ASCTS

use the figure of Lama in the internal disputes between the various national components of the Custody), as demonstrated by the requests for honours to the Holy See and the Fascist government, and by sending the most promising Palestinian music students to study in the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia in Italy.⁷⁸ In a multilingual institution like the Custody,⁷⁹ music was an alternative language to promote and, at the same time, to control circles, actors and rules.

In a period that saw the progressive separation of religious communities, music broke through, in some ways, the sectarianism imposed by the authorities, although it offered in parallel a means to perform the increasing political and social conflicts within the city and beyond. In Jerusalem, religious music was also “city music”, reverberating in its streets and neighbourhoods but also delivering an echo of the international politics pursued by the Franciscan Custody, thus contributing to the shaping of its complexity (Figs. 1, 2 and 3).

⁷⁸ Exploratory research in the archival fonds of Casella gathered in the Fondazione Cini archives in Venice revealed no correspondence with Arnita and Khasho. The temporary closure of the historical archives of the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome represents an obstacle to the study of Arnita’s and Khasho’s formative years and their relationship with Casella and Germani.

⁷⁹ See Leyla Dakhli, “Between Local Power and Global Politics: Playing with Languages in the Franciscan Printing Press of Jerusalem”, in *Arabic and its Alternatives: Religious Minorities and their Languages in the Emerging Nation States of the Middle East (1920–1950)*, eds. Heleen Murre-van den Berg, Karène Sanchez Summerer and Tijmen Baarda (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 287–302.



Fig. 2 Latin Patriarchal band, undated, Archive of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem/Archive of the Ecole biblique et archéologique française



Fig. 3 Madaba Patriarchal band, 1931, Archive of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem/Archive of the Ecole biblique et archéologique française

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The Melkite Community, Educational Policy and French Cultural Diplomacy: Archbishop Grigorios Hajjar and Mandatory Galilee

Charbel Nassif

The French Mandate over Syria and Lebanon was instituted by the League of Nations on April 25, 1920, after the First World War, did not slow France's desire to spread its cultural influence over Palestine, a territory under British mandatory rule. This linguistic and cultural rivalry thrived in a politically unstable region witnessing the emergence of competing nationalisms. While they maintained a belief in the superiority of their culture, the political and cultural situation left the French authorities concerned for their continued influence.

This chapter aims to analyse the recourse of the French, in the face of reduced political influence, to cultural diplomacy in its relations with the Melkite community. It asks how effective a means culture represented in France's efforts to influence the Melkites politically, particularly in the Eparchy of Akka in Mandate Palestine, which numbered around 20,000 people in 1924, scattered over 37 parishes, almost every parish with its own school.¹ In particular, this chapter highlights the role of the Archbishop of Saint John of Akka, Grigorios Hajjar (1875–1940, in office 1901–1940), spearhead of the educational policy of the Melkite Arabic community, a man

¹Jamil al-Bahri, “Akhbār Tā’ifiyya: ābrashīyat ‘Akkā,” *Al-Masarrab: majallat Batrīyarkīyat al-Rūm al-Kāthulik* 1 (1924): 56–59.

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of the Palestinian interwar period as well as a Francophone and Francophile personality.

Education was one of the cornerstones of French cultural diplomacy in the Middle East. To achieve French political ends would have been impossible without cooperation with the religious hierarchy who had the responsibility of establishing and maintaining schools. Thus, France sought to build ties with ecclesiastical structures in the Middle East, ties that seem to have been more effective and influential than those with secular structures, given the attachment of many Arabs to their respective religious affiliations.

The Melkites, present in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine,² constituted a suitable target for France for a number of reasons. Capitulations had been granted by the Ottoman Empire to France for the protection of Eastern Catholics (including Melkites) in the Ottoman Empire, so the Melkites, united with Rome since 1724, had close ties with France and the French Consulate in Aleppo founded in the sixteenth century. They also had established relationships with the French missionaries (principally Jesuits and Lazarists) who had settled in the Middle East since the seventeenth century and were

²With small numbers also in Jordan and Egypt. Palestine is divided into the patriarchal eparchy of Jerusalem and the eparchy of Akka. The patriarchal eparchy covers Jaffa, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Beit Sahur, Beit Jala and Nablus, and the eparchy of Akka covers Haifa, Nazareth and all of Galilee. The eparchy of Akka was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Antioch until the patriarch Ignace Attieh yielded it, in 1626, to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In the patriarchate of Antioch, Eftimios Saïfi was consecrated archbishop of Sidon and Tyre in 1682. As a pro-Roman Catholic, he had succeeded in bringing together the faithful of Palestine who showed sympathy for the Roman Church. Towards the end of his life he even signed himself Archbishop of Sidon, Tyre and Akka. Saïfi sent priests to look after the faithful of Akka, including his nephew Serafim Tanas who was put forward twice for the episcopate but rejected by the patriarch of Jerusalem. Elected Patriarch of Antioch in 1724, Tanas gave particular importance to Akka and the Galilee region. Because of the persecution carried out by the Orthodox in Syria and Lebanon after the split of 1724, Melkites and their priests began to emigrate to either Palestine or Egypt. In Palestine, they gathered in the north and along the coast to Jaffa under the protection of Zahir ‘Umar al-Zaydani, who had managed to establish a quasi-independent principality. The Catholic Melkites of Akka fell under the eparchy of Sidon and Tyr until the election of Andraos Fakhoury in 1752. The archbishops of Akka did not always reside in their dioceses because of the persecutions of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Ottoman authorities. Following the death of Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar in 1804, archbishop Makarios Nahas settled in his diocese. In 1772, the Propaganda entrusted to the Melkite patriarch of Antioch jurisdiction over all the Melkite Catholics in the patriarchate of Alexandria and Jerusalem. In 1837, the Melkite patriarch Maximos Mazloum obtained a firman which conferred the civil jurisdiction in the territory of the three patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem on him. In 1838, Rome granted Mazloum the title of Patriarch of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem and all the East. The latter appointed Bishop Malatios Finde Patriarchal Vicar in Jerusalem. A Melkite cathedral was built near the Jaffa Gate and inaugurated in 1848 (Cathedral of the Annunciation). In 1883, the patriarchate bought the sixth stage of the Stations of the Cross, and built the Saint Veronica church in 1894 (Ilyas Kuwaytir, *Al-Rubbāniyya al-Mukhallisiyya manāra mush‘a fī ar-arrādi al-mugaddasa* [Joun: Manshūrāt al-Yūbil al-Mi‘awī al-Thalīth lil-Ruhbāniyyah al-Mukhallisiyah, 1997], 96–84; No author, “Abrashiat Urshalim al-batrīrkā,” *Al-Masarrah* [1939]: 385–399, 470–480).

considered the primary cultural intermediaries of the French government.³ In addition to their relationships with the authorities and missionaries, the founding of the Seminary of Saint Anne in Jerusalem in 1881 was one of the outlets that France used to spread its cultural influence. Led by the Missionaries of Africa or “White Fathers”, this seminary hosted young Melkites from Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Palestine.⁴

MELKITE ARCHIVES FOR A MELKITE CULTURAL HISTORY

This chapter proposes a history of Melkites through their own archives instead of working from Roman Catholic archives or published literatures: these archives are those held at the patriarchal residence in Rabweh in Lebanon, at the Saint-Sauveur Monastery in Joun, and at the Melkite Patriarchate in Damascus. Opened for the first time to researchers, these archives contain many details related to the culture, education, political affairs and rights of the community, as well as information on the religious and parish life of the Melkite community. Examining these archives enables us to better perceive the cultural agenda of the Melkites and the use they made of cultural diplomacy to achieve their goals. This chapter does not claim to retrace the history of these archives. Nevertheless, this brief overview reveals, besides the loss of a large part of the archives, the importance of France, the French people and the French language in the cultural life of the Melkites.

The Archives of the Patriarchal Residence: Rabweh

This archive contains the patriarchal correspondence register of Patriarch Dimitrios Qadi, recording letters sent between 1921 and 1925 to the Roman Curia, to France and to the Mandatory authorities in Lebanon and Syria. It also holds the correspondence of the Archbishop of Saint John of Akka, Grigorios Hajjar, with the ruling Patriarchs between 1901 and 1940. This is collected in two folders, each of which consists of three files. The recipient is always—unless otherwise stated—the Melkite Patriarch.⁵ The documents are not always organised in chronological order. It often happens that Hajjar does not date his letters. The ink is erased in some letters, hence the difficulty

³Jennifer Dueck, “International Rivalry and Culture in Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate,” in *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, eds. Jessica Gienow-Hecht and Mark Donfried (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 146.

⁴Philippe Gorra, *Sainte-Anne de Jérusalem Séminaire grec melkite dirigé par les Pères Blancs à l'occasion du son cinquantenaire (1882–1932)* (Harissa: Press Saint Paul, 1932); Nicolas Dahbar, *Sainte-Anne de Jérusalem Séminaire grec-melkite dirigé par les RR. PP. Blancs à l'occasion du 75^e anniversaire de sa fondation (1882–1957)* (No location: No publisher, 1959); Dominique Trimbur, “Sainte-Anne: lieu de mémoire et lieu de vie français à Jérusalem,” *Chrétiens et sociétés XVI^e-XX^e siècles* 7 (2000): 39–69.

⁵Pierre IV Graigiry (1898–1902); Cyril VIII Geha (1902–1916); Dimitrios I Qadi (1919–1925); Cyril IX Moghabghab (1925–1947).

in reading some excerpts. Some of the correspondence is in French, but the bulk of it is in Arabic.

The first patriarchal residence in Lebanon was the monastery of Our Lady of the Annunciation at Ayn Trāz, built in 1811. Equally conceived of as a seminary to train Melkite seminarians, this monastery held manuscripts, printed theological and philosophical works, and the correspondence of the Melkite Patriarchs with the civil and religious authorities. The monastery was burned and pillaged by the Druze on 20 October 1841 before being stocked again under the care of Patriarch Grigorios Sayyour (1864–1897) and the generosity of the French abbé Damourat, who offered four chests of French books.⁶ During the Lebanese Civil War, the monastery was looted and burned again in spring 1983, resulting in the loss of a large section of the library and the patriarchal archives. The new patriarchal residence established in Rabweh in 1977 holds the rest of the archives as well as the rest of the documents retrieved or collected over the course of time. This consists of about ten manuscripts, part of the registers of the Patriarchs and the personal correspondence of archbishops and some priests with the reigning Patriarch.

Library of the Monastery of Saint-Sauveur: Joun

The archives concerning Hajjar were probably imported from Saint John of Akka by a Salvatorian monk, this collection is very well preserved and has been numerised and classified recently. In addition to ordinary correspondence, these records show that the inhabitants of his see often referred to Hajjar for advice on civic matters: purchase of land, disputes, opinion concerning marriage, asking for alms and employment requests, especially in Hajjar's schools (ASS 1, fol. 42–63, 64, 65) but also as sacristan or cantor. The archives also contain the texts of Hajjar's spiritual retreats, a book of anecdotes collected by Hajjar, all papers pertaining to his 25th episcopal jubilee (1925) and his funeral, as well as several printed pamphlets on his works.

The origins of the archives of Monastery of Saint-Sauveur date back to the founder of the Salvatorian Basilian Order, archbishop Eftimios Sayfi (1643–1723), known for his vast knowledge of science and his literary works. The copyists abounded in this monastery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but it was looted and destroyed in 1777. Subsequently, two monks were sent to France to finance the acquisition of new books, carrying letters of recommendation from the French consul in Sidon. The monastery was again looted and burned by the Druze in 1860; the fire persisted for three days. During the Lebanese Civil War, the monastery was bombarded in 1985

⁶Wisām Bishārah Kabkab, *Ayn Trāz, 1811–2004: Iklīrikiyat Sayyidat al-Bishārah al-Batrīyarkī wa-al-maqarr al-Batrīyarkī* (Rabwah: Markaz al-Abhāth al-Malakīyah, 2008), 123–129.

and then occupied until the year 1990. Some manuscripts and archives were saved and the Salvatorian Basilian order endeavoured to recover the rest of the manuscripts. 2884 of the library's manuscripts have been digitised.⁷

Archives of the Melkite Patriarchate: Damascus

The archives in Damascus contain 191 digitised manuscripts, a hundred account registers and inventories,⁸ and the patriarchal registers of the Patriarchs Cyril VIII Geha (1902–1916), Demetrios Qadi (1919–1925) and Cyril Moghabghab (1925–1947). These valuable texts constitute the primary sources for any research on the history of the patriarchate in the twentieth century. The archival room also contains Arabic books printed in the nineteenth century and a selection of French books published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁹ There are also two small collections of large-format photos of Patriarch Cyril Moghabghab, the 25th anniversary of Grigorios Hajjar's (1927) episcopal jubilee and some photos of the Sainte-Anne Seminary and other prelates.

EDUCATING THE MELKITES À LA FRANÇAISE

The French language was widespread amongst the Melkites many years before the French Mandate over Lebanon and Syria as a result of a number of close links. By way of example, in January 1629, the Jesuit Jérôme Queyrot started a school at the Melkite headquarters in Aleppo, immediately attracting over thirty students.¹⁰ Between 1831 and 1834, two Francophone Jesuit priests and a brother also supported Archbishop Maximos Mazloum in managing the Ayn Trāz seminary.¹¹ In addition to founding the Saint Anne Seminary in Jerusalem, in 1900 the French government offered two places for young Melkites to continue their philosophical and theological formation at the

⁷Faez Freijat, "La biblioteca del convento de San Salvador (Ǧūn)," in *Manuscritos árabes del Líbano, Encuentro de culturas, religiones y saberes*, ed. Philippe Roisse (Beirut: Cedrac, 2010), 57–72.

⁸These are often tables showing the expenses and income of the patriarchate as well as the inventories of several patriarchal institutes or foundations (Patriarchate—Damascus, Patriarchal College—Damascus, Patriarchal College—Beirut, Abra waqfs, charitable associations).

⁹*Vie des saints* (1880); *Histoire de l'Église* (1843); *Histoire du monde universelle*, 10 volumes (1866); *Abrégué de l'histoire ancienne de Rollin*, 5 volumes (1826); *Abrégué de l'histoire romaine de l'abbé Tailhé*, 5 volumes (1827); *Histoire romaine de Rollin*, 16 volumes (1758); *Histoire ancienne de Rollin*, 13 volumes (1735); *Histoire du bas empire*, 27 volumes (published between 1752 and 1817); *La vie des saints*, 12 volumes (1884); *Beauté de l'histoire de Turquie* (1818).

¹⁰Abdallah Raheb, *Conception de l'union dans le patriarcat orthodoxe d'Antioche (1622–1672)* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1981), 54.

¹¹Effectively, this seminary only received seminarians in 1833. The Jesuits left the seminary in January 1834 (Kabkab, *Ayn Trāz*, 39–48).

Saint-Sulpice seminary in Paris.¹² And in 1924, another seminarian was being trained at the seminary in Marseille.¹³ Alongside the role of French in formal religious education, the chronicles in the Paulist fathers' journal *Al-Masarrah* often evoke the French plays performed by the seminarians of Saint Anne and by other schools in Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut and Haifa. They also recount the poems and the speeches delivered in French on various occasions.¹⁴

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the French state was making the importance it attached to Francophonie publicly apparent. In 1911, Patriarch Cyril Geha was decorated by the French government for the services he had rendered to his church for 27 years, and especially for having favoured the French language in the patriarchal schools of Beirut, Damascus and Egypt.¹⁵ During the ceremony, the consul evoked Geha's efforts to elevate the place of education and its virtues. Geha responded by recalling the good deeds of France in encouraging education in the first place, and then his friendship with the Ottoman Empire and its protection of the Eastern Catholic churches, particularly the Melkites.¹⁶ Education, Geha's example demonstrates, occupies a primordial place in Franco-Melkite relations.

After the French Mandate, the Syrian and Lebanese populations did not in general perceive culture as part of a political project and thus did not associate it with negative images of imperialism or felt the need to resist it as part of their nation-building projects.¹⁷ The Melkites continued to teach French in their schools, and French remained, along with Arabic, a language of correspondence among Melkite clergymen. During his inauguration speech in 1921, the new Archbishop of Beirut, Bassilos Qattan, told the representatives of the French Mandate: "Syria's relations with your noble fatherland

¹²Rabweh, PM, DQ fol. 114. Henceforth, the following abbreviations are used in footnotes: PM = Melkite Patriarchate; DQ = Dimitrios Qadi; GH = Grigorios Hajjar; ASS = Archives Saint-Sauveur.

¹³Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 269. Letter sent to the Superior of the Major Seminary of Marseille on July 17, 1924.

¹⁴During the sacerdotal jubilee of the patriarch Cyril VIII Geha, organised in Damascus on June 12, 1910, a poem in French was read by Father Elias Batarekha in the name of the patriarchal clergy. The next day, a French play was performed at the patriarchate in the presence of the French consul. On 16 July 1911, the students of the Melkite school in Aleppo performed a play entitled 'Būvīn', with very good French pronunciation, in the presence of the French consul (this may have been a dramatisation of the Battle of Bouvines, 1214, in which a French army defeated a force commanded by the Holy Roman Emperor). A play on the feast of Saint Gregory (1912) at Haifa was performed with a good accent in French (Ighnātius Qarūshān, "Haflat yūbīl ghibṭat abīna al-baṭriyark kirillūs al-thāmin al-külliyyi al-tūbā," *Al-Masarrah* 3 [1910]: 86; No author, "mukātabāt," *Al-Masarrah* 6 [1911]: 239; Būlos Sayyūr, "mukātabāt," *Al-Masarrah* 18 [1912]: 717).

¹⁵No author, "mukātabāt," *Al-Masarrah* 6 (1911): 238.

¹⁶Ilyas Batārikh, "Haflat taslīm wiṣām jawqat al-sharaf li ghibṭat batriyarkina al-külliyyi al-tūbā," *Al-Masarrah* 8 (1911): 313–317.

¹⁷Dueck, "International rivalry and culture," 139.

[...] can be summed up in a few words: protection, charity, education”.¹⁸ This sentence testifies to the importance that France accorded to the promotion of education and the teaching of French. In the same year, the High Commissioner awarded 1200 gold pounds to repair the schools in the Midan area of Damascus, which had been damaged by the Turks in WWI.¹⁹ In 1922, Patriarch Dimitrios Qadi thanked the French Alliance for the sum of 400 francs paid to the Melkite patriarchate:

For a very long time our families in Damascus held for France a love that one vows to a country of adoption. Since the French Mandate our attachment became stronger and our love more ardent. Our children give themselves with more passion to study French. They make ever constant progress in it.²⁰

Also in 1922, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid 30,000 francs to support the works of the Melkite Patriarch.²¹ In 1923, the Patriarch also received a sum allocated to his schools by the Directorate of Public Instruction and the following year, l’Œuvre des Écoles d’Orient sent him 24,000 francs for the schools of the Melkite dioceses. According to the letter sent by Qadi, the diocese of Saint John of Akka received 2000 francs.²²

Even the Patriarch Dimitrios Qadi, who died in 1925, wrote his will in French, and filed three copies at the French consulate in Alexandria, the French legation in Cairo and the High Commission in Damascus.²³ This Francophone ambiance within the Melkite Patriarchate extended beyond the French mandatory territories, however, and was not unfamiliar to the diocese of Akka in British-ruled Palestine.

GRIGORIOS HAJJAR: BISHOP OF THE ARABS AND PRINCE OF PREACHERS

Dubbed by Melkites the Bishop of the Arabs and other superlative titles, Grigorios Hajjar is best known both in the popular Melkite memory and in the academic literature on Mandate Palestine as the charismatic leader of the Melkite community in northern Palestine.²⁴ Invested as Archbishop of Saint

¹⁸Basilius Qattān, “Khūtāb siyādat al-mutrān kīriūs Basiliyus Qattān mitrupulīt Bayrūt wa Jūbayl wa tawābi‘ihimā,” *Al-Masarrah* 5 (1921): 220.

¹⁹Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 201.

²⁰Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 214.

²¹Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 218. Letter sent in January 1923 to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

²²Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 269. Letter sent on May 24, 1924 to the Secretary General of the Work of the Schools of the East, M. Desmonts.

²³“Testament de S.B. Dimitrios Cadi,” *Al-Masarrah* 11 (1925): 709–710.

²⁴See, for example, the brochure of the Monastery of Saint-Sauveur, where Hajjar was ordained, and which says of him that he was “rightly called Amir (Prince) of Preachers... Bishop of the Arabs and Christ of the Orient” (Basilian-Salvatorian Order, *Monastery of St Saviour*, trans. K. Mortimer [Joun: Deir al-Moukhaleess, n.d.], 15).

John of Acre in 1901, he was an open Francophile even at times of Ottoman confrontation with France. During WWI, the Ottoman authorities sentenced him to death (in absentia), accusing him of having recruited Arab youths for the French army.²⁵ Under British colonial rule, he remained an outspoken advocate of Palestinian and Arab nationalisms, a campaigner for Arab political unity who worked with the mainstream Palestinian nationalist leadership and was affiliated with the network of Muslim-Christian Associations.²⁶ Of the regional church leaderships in the Haifa and the Galilee, he seems to have attached most importance to political unity with Islamic communities.²⁷ These views did not, however, preclude occasional opposition to and conflict with Islamic organisations in Haifa and with the Islamic press in Mandate Palestine, and assertion of Christian rights in communications to the leadership of the national movement.²⁸

Hajjar was killed in a car crash on the road to Haifa in November 1940; his cortege was described at the time—perhaps with an implicit comparison to the large numbers at that of Islamic leader ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam in 1935²⁹—as “one of the most impressive funerals ever witnessed in Haifa”.³⁰

Hajjar’s Educational Policy in Galilee

In much of the scholarly literature, Grigorios Hajjar is a monolithic figure associated primarily with nationalist politics. However, as the internal documents of the Melkite church emphasise, one of his most important areas of activity was actually the expansion of education to the Melkite population under his care. Given that France lost its direct political influence in Palestine at the beginning of the British Mandate, it sought to consolidate its influence by supporting Melkite schools, whose works were complementary to French schools. Education thus acquired a primary importance in Franco-Melkite relations: “For schools and seminaries, full and complete freedom! We cannot complain”.³¹ Grigorios Hajjar, meanwhile, sought to fight illiteracy and founded schools in every town and village, even if they had only a small number of inhabitants, and the resources made available in the French pursuit of its cultural and political aims made many of his educational projects possible.

²⁵ Mahmoud Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period, 1864–1914: A Muslim Town in Transition* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 211.

²⁶ Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism 1917–48* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 33, 42, 154.

²⁷ Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 104, 106.

²⁸ See chapters by Maggiolini and Hillel in this volume; also, Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 46, 153.

²⁹ Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 19.

³⁰ Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 184.

³¹ Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 283. Letter sent to the director of the seminary of Saint Sulpice, abbé Vigourel, by Patriarch Demetrios Qadi.

The episcopate of Grigorios Hajjar is particularly marked by the founding of schools known as the Hajjar Schools, and the record of Melkite schooling under his care is shown in the accompanying table.³² Establishing a school was not always an objective in itself. It was also a means to win the Orthodox over to the Melkite Church on the one hand,³³ and to keep the Melkites away from other non-Catholic denominations on the other.³⁴ In 1905, Hajjar clearly evokes with the Patriarch the need to open at least 30 schools to fight the proselytism of Protestants and Russian Orthodox missionaries.³⁵ The construction of schools was also a means to avoid the Latinisation of Melkite children attending Latin schools. The Melkites built schools in Haifa, Saint John of Akka and Shefa-'Amr, where the Latins already had flourishing educational establishments. In Tiberias, Melkites were forbidden to send their children to the school of the Italian sisters, under penalty of being refused the sacraments.³⁶

In a pamphlet on the Melkite Church in Galilee published in 1890, Jean de Sarepta mentions the presence of French schools run by the Frères des écoles chrétiennes, whose zeal and talent “are above all praise”, alongside the Italian schools directed by the Franciscans. De Sarepta deplores the absence of Melkite schools for lack of financial resources but is optimistic, hoping that the Latins and France will come to the aid of the Melkites.³⁷

The arrival of Grigorios Hajjar in Akka gave impetus to the parish and cultural life of the diocese. In addition to literary Arabic, which he mastered perfectly, Hajjar had learned French, Italian, Latin and ancient Greek at the Monastery of Saint-Saveur in Joun. During his stay in Egypt, he taught Arabic at the School of the Christian Brothers in Choubra, which allowed him to perfect his French as well as to learn English.³⁸ Becoming the Melkite archbishop of Saint John of Akka in 1901, Hajjar accorded great importance to the construction of schools in his diocese, whose territory covered Upper and Lower Galilee (including the cities of Akka, Haifa, Nazareth, Tiberias and

³² Or the Catholic episcopal schools.

³³ Rabweh, PM, GH rapport 1939, 5.

³⁴ Grigorios Hajjar, *Mes œuvres en 1936* (No publisher known), 11: “I do not speak of the schools to open in the various countries that are deprived of them, where our children are exposed to all dangers in the midst of so many religions and sects that coerce them on all sides.” In a letter sent to an American bishop on December 29, 1928: “It must not be that these flocks remain the prey of the ravening wolves who run constantly around the herd.” ASS 3, fol. 13.

³⁵ Rabweh, PM, GH 1.1 fol. 22.

³⁶ ASS 3, fol. 31, 33.

³⁷ Jean de Sarepta, *L'Eglise catholique-grecque en Galilée* (Paris: Imprimerie de F. Levé, 1890), 49–51.

³⁸ Ilyas Kuwaytir, *Al-akimma al-nayyira* (Joun: Manshūrāt al-Yūbil al-Mi'awī al-Thalith lil-Ruhbāniyah al-Mukhallisiyah, 1993), 295; Qusṭanṭīn Bāsha, *Tārikh al-tayyib al-athar Ghrīghorios Hajjār mutrān 'akkā wa Hayfā wa al-nāsira wa al-jalīl* (Joun: Matba'at Deir al-Moukhaleess, 1941), 19.

Safed), and which brought together, upon his death in 1940, 20,500 faithful distributed in 40 churches served by 42 priests.³⁹

In 1901, there was only one school in Akka and two small schools in Haifa and Shefa-‘Amr⁴⁰; Hajjar thus proceeded immediately to the construction of schools. During his *ad limina* visit in 1903, Hajjar presented Pope Pius X with a report in which he indicated that the maintenance of the ten entirely free schools cost him 5000 francs and that he still had to create ten more for boys and twenty for girls. Among the resources to support the needs of his diocese, he mentions the French government and the *Œuvre des Écoles d’Orient* which granted him, respectively, 3000 and 400 francs. In another letter addressed to the Patriarch in 1910, Hajjar mentions having 37 large and small schools.⁴¹ Between 1901 and 1918, Hajjar founded 43 schools, the majority of which were for boys.⁴²

During the First World War, Hajjar did his best to keep schools open and dispense education in the French language. In 1919, the number of schools reached 50. In 1920, Hajjar noted that he had opened 22 schools out of the 50 that were under his care before the war.⁴³ In 1927, Jamil al-Bahri mentions that these schools admitted at least 3000 pupils.⁴⁴ In 1928, we count 29 schools.⁴⁵ In a report on his works in 1929, Hajjar mentions having 33 large and small schools at which tuition was free or at very low cost and that he hopes to open another 50, also charging little or no fees. As for the number of children enrolled in schools, this reached 2000 in 1936.⁴⁶ In 1939, the budget for these 28 schools, large and small, amounted to 2000 Palestinian pounds, for schools ranging from a single teacher to those of towns and cities such as Haifa, Shefa-‘Amr and Nazareth with up to eight or twelve teachers each (Table 1).⁴⁷

References: Statistics of the eparchy of Akka (ASS 1, fol. 74–75). “Nomenclature des églises, cures, écoles et œuvres diverses érigées et créées

³⁹ Rabweh, PM, GH rapport 1939, 1.

⁴⁰ The eparchy had only one school in Akka and a couple minor ones in two villages under the eparchy. In no school affiliated to the community other than in the Akka School that grammar, syntax, vocabulary, mathematics, catechism and language were taught except in its analogous, perhaps to a lesser extent, school in Haifa, and similarly in Shafa ‘Amr. Jamil al-Bahri, *Għrigħorios Hajjār mitru puliit ‘akkā wa Hayfā wa al-nasirah wa sa’ir al-jalil tarjamatahū a’mälūhū* (Haifa: Maṭba’at al-zahra, 1927), 9.

⁴¹ Rabweh, PM, GH 1.1 fol. 62.

⁴² In 1909, there were 34 schools. In the 1939 report, Hajjar mentions that there were 45 schools before the war. Rabweh, PM, GH rapport 1939, 1; *Rapport des œuvres de S.G. Mgr Grigorios Haggear, archevêque catholique de la Galilée 1903 et 1909*, 6.

⁴³ Rabweh, PM, GH 1.2 fol. 20. Letter of Hajjar to Patriarch Qadi, 27th December 1920.

⁴⁴ Al-Bahri, *Għrigħorios Hajjār*, 11.

⁴⁵ ASS 3, fol. 14.

⁴⁶ Hajjar, *Mes œuvres en 1936*, 6.

⁴⁷ Grigorios Hajjar, *Rapport succinct contenant les réponses au questionnaire qui m'a été adressé par S.B. Monseigneur notre Vénéré Patriarche Cyrille IX*, 1939. Rabweh, PM, GH rapport 1939, 1.

Table 1 Melkite schools of the eparchy of Akka under Grigorios Hajjar

<i>Location</i>	<i>Number of schools</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Students, 1927</i>	<i>Number of Melkites, 1929</i>	<i>Additional information</i>
Saint John of Akka Haifa	1 1 (boys)	Before 1900 1904	400 206	French language courses provided Large school run by the French nuns of Notre Dame de Nazareth—202 students in 1939. French language courses provided	
Caiffa (Haifa) suburbs	1	Around 1923			Presbytery school
Esfiat	2 (one each, boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918	150		Presbytery school
Jdaideh	2 (one each, boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918	66		Presbytery school
Macre	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918	59		School rented and maintained by Hajjar
Chaab	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918	50		Built by Hajjar
Abelline (Ibelin)	2 (one each, boys and girls)	Before 1914	135		Leasehold. Closed in 1914
Shefa-'Amr	1 (boys)	1901	148	1300	School run by the French nuns of Notre Dame de Nazareth. 200 students before and after World War I—7 teachers. French language courses provided
Jaffa of Nazareth	2 (boys and girls)	Before 1914	213		School for boys built by Hajjar and school for girls maintained by Hajjar. Closed in 1914
Beineh	2 (boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918	140		Leasehold. Closed in 1926
Cana of Galilee	2 (boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918			Built by Hajjar Presbytery school
Tauraan	2 (boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918	32 boys 18 girls	220	Presbytery school. French language courses provided
Sirine	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918		80	Leasehold. Presbytery school
Tiberias	2 (boys and girls)	1900		300	

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Number of schools</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Students, 1927</i>	<i>Number of Melkites, 1929</i>	<i>Additional information</i>
Ailaboune	2 (boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918	40 boys 35 girls	245	
Deir Hanna	2 (boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918	22	135	Leasehold
Arrabeh	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918	12	55	
Sakhnin	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918	36	112	
Moughar	2 (boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918	35 girls	1600	
Safed	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918		350	French language courses provided
Djische	2 (boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918			Leasehold
Fassouta	2 (boys and girls)	Between 1901 and 1918	43 boys	534	Leasehold. French language courses provided
Sahmata	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918		40	
Maaliya	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918	37 boys 25 girls	500	French language courses provided
Tarchiha	1 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918	39	400	French language courses provided
Bassa	2 (boys)	Between 1901 and 1918		800	Large rented school and a boarding school for the students from Jenin, Qalqilya, Nablus and other villages of Galilee, run by the French nuns of Notre Dame de Nazareth. Secondary school—graduated students could pursue university studies. French language taught
Nazareth			130		
Damoun			1		
Be'ine?	1				Presbytery school built in 1935

depuis mon arrivée et ma prise de possession du Siege Archiépiscopal de Saint-Jean-D'acre, Haifa, Nazareth et de toute la Galilée,” typewritten text of 42 pages prepared by Grigorios Haggear in Rome, 28 June 1926. Statistics of the Melkite Episcopal Schools in the eparchy of Akka in 1927: Johnny Mansūr, *Ru'ya mū'āsira lihayāt wa a'māl al-mutrān Ghrigurius Hajjar* (Haifa: No publisher, 2013), 109–111; Qusṭanṭīn Bāsha, *Tārikh al-ṭayyib al-athar* (Joun: Maṭba'at Deir al-Moukhaleess, 1941), 54–66.

French in the Melkite Schools

What about the teaching of French in these schools? In fact, only some schools provided French classes. According to an undated letter to the Director of Public Education, Hajjar lists eleven schools with about 1,025 students and mentions that he cannot find French teachers for the other schools.⁴⁸ In 1913, the Melkite schools of Haifa, Nazareth, Akka and Shefa-'Amr were entirely managed by the French nuns of Notre Dame de Nazareth.⁴⁹ In 1924 French, which had the status of a semi-official language, was no longer recognised as the language of examination for all school institutions.⁵⁰ This may justify the limited number of Melkite schools that taught French. Nevertheless, French remained a language of prestige often reserved for the most affluent social classes and within the ecclesiastical milieu.⁵¹ The Melkites of Palestine also read French Catholic newspapers. When an American missionary wanted to found a branch of the Protestant YMCA in Haifa, the inhabitants were favourable to the idea until they read in *La Croix* (January 6, 1921) the prohibition from the Holy See on joining this association. Subsequently, Hajjar asked his flock to leave this non-Catholic association.⁵²

The number of schools, students and other data mentioned in the table must be considered with caution, especially since this information is often evoked to appeal to donors. This suggestion appears in a long letter written in 1913 by the vicar of the Latin parish of Haifa, criticising Hajjar's work. The author notes that “having many schools is a title to ignite generosity in Europe”. According to this letter almost all Melkite parishes had a boys' school and a girls' school, but the writer alleges that: “by schools, I mean

⁴⁸ Probably after 1927. ASS 1, fol. 52 Haifa: 300; Saint John of Akka 50; Shefa-'Amr 130; Nazareth 125; Safed 50; Bassa 100; Maalia 70; Tarchiha 50; Fassouta, 50; Barco of Galilee 40; Touranne 60.

⁴⁹ ASS 3, fol. 29–38.

⁵⁰ Karène Sanchez Summerer, “Le triptyque ‘Langue – Education – Religion’ dans les écoles missionnaires françaises de Jérusalem en Palestine ottomane et mandataire,” *Sociolinguistica* 25 (2011): 67.

⁵¹ Karène Sanchez Summerer, “Les catholiques palestiniens et la langue française (1870–1950),” *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde* 45 (2010): 7.

⁵² The decree of the secretary of the Congregation of the Holy Office, Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val promulgated on November 5, 1920. Jamil al-Bahri, “Akhbār Tā'iyya: ābrashāt ‘Akka,” *Al-Masarrāh* 3 (1921): 138–139; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 12 (1920): 595–597.

small rooms. For how many students? Except for the cities of Haifa, Saint John of Akka and Shefa-'Amr, except as well for the villages maintained by the Lazarists [...], we count very few pupils or almost none". The author of the letter also claims that Hajjar "presents his schools to Paris, with the government, as secular schools in order to receive a subsidy".⁵³ These comments are a corrective to the Melkite hierarchy's stories of success, but must also be understood through the lens of inter-denominational rivalries and the competing cultural diplomacies of Melkites and Latins towards the French as a source of sponsorship.

Hajjar's Francophilia did not exclude an openness to the English language, however; the Haifa school, for example, provided both French and English classes.⁵⁴ Hajjar was also not always content with his French benefactors. Taking advantage of the British Mandate, he also sought Anglophone donors, as seen in a report written in English on his works in 1929. This letter states that "adopting" a small school with a single teacher costs 400 dollars per year, suggesting that he was reaching out to communities in North America.⁵⁵ It is thus possible to observe that education in French and teaching of the French language was a multidirectional set of relationships, in which the French state sought to attract the sympathy or even loyalty of the Melkite communities, while the Melkites themselves juggled different sponsors in a bid to maximise their resources.

THE MELKITES BETWEEN DIPLOMACY AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

The Melkite deployment of cultural diplomacy as a means of asserting themselves, as a small regional minority, to make demands on various states did not begin with the Mandate period. When, during Ottoman rule, Jamal Pasha expressed to France his dissatisfaction with the opinions of Archbishop Dimitrios Qadi, *locum tenens* of the patriarchal seat, the latter responded by pointing out that the community's loyalty would come with better treatment from the Ottoman government: "And what do we hold against the State? Let it open schools for our children and build hospitals for our patients and do what France has done and we will prefer it over all other states".⁵⁶

Archbishop Grigorios Hajjar was equally willing to aim similar arguments at the French. In 1906, during his visit to Beirut, Hajjar complained to the French consul that the Melkite Patriarch Cyril VIII Geha was not treated like

⁵³ASS 3, fol. 29–38: The author considers that Hajjar is doing his best to fight the apostolate of Latin missionaries in Palestine. This letter was retrieved from the Post Office and was never sent to its real addressee who was probably a prelate from Belgium asking for information about Hajjar's requests for financial help.

⁵⁴ASS 1, fol. 62. Bāsha, *Tārikh al-tayyib al-athar*, 65.

⁵⁵Grigorios Hajjar, *My work during 1929* (No publisher known), 3.

⁵⁶Ilyas Andraos, "Wafāt al-mūthallath al-rahāmāt al-batriyark dimitrius al-awwal qādi batriyark Anṭākyā wa al-iskandariyyah wa ūrashalim wa sa'ir al-mashreq," *Al-Masarrab* 11 (1925): 688.

his counterparts. In fact, the French consul was upset because the Melkite Patriarch organised a banquet in honour of a German delegation. To settle this case, Hajjar advised him to “decorate” the Melkite Patriarch in the same way as his Maronite counterpart.⁵⁷ The Patriarch would be thus decorated in 1911. The case was different with the Patriarch Cyril Moghaghab, elected in 1925 and therefore under the French Mandate; he was decorated the following year.⁵⁸

Under the French Mandate over Lebanon and Syria, the Melkites continued to take advantage of their “exceptional” relations with the French to preserve the rights of their community within a multi-confessional society. Patriarch Qadi at times adopted harshly critical tones when the French Mandate acted contrary to the well-being of his community. Following the decision of the High Commissioner of Damascus to replace a Melkite with a Greek Orthodox in the judicial administration, Patriarch Qadi demanded to know of the High Commissioner

How under the French regime, would the Greek Catholics be less well treated than under the Turkish regime and the regime of Faisal? Do you want to reward thus our unwavering attachment to France?⁵⁹

This also applies to the post of *mutasarrif* in Zahle whose holder had formerly to be Melkite, a tradition the French Mandatory authorities threatened to disrupt: “I do not think I owe to our friends the French what the Turks had done spontaneously for a very long time”.⁶⁰

This tension between Melkite and French also found a terrain in the educational field. In 1924, when the Public Instruction learned of the circulation of a French book published by the Germans in a Melkite school in Deir al-Qamar, a major village of the Chouf region, France decided to close the school. Patriarch Qadi tried to clarify this misunderstanding:

As for the issue of the book, it is an error committed with incontestable good will. The Director of the School of Deir al-Qamar, relying on the title of the book, *The Destruction of Churches and Art Monuments on the Western Front*, believed that it was to demonstrate German vandalism. Undoubtedly he should have examined the contents of the book. He neglected to do so, which is unfortunate. But the error is explicable. Often in the schools, we do not read all the books [...]. The Germans gave their book a title that raises no suspicion. The engravings leave nothing to guesswork either. To realize the spirit that animates the author, we should read the text. We did not do so, we just read the title and saw the engravings. It is a regrettable negligence, that is well understood; but it

⁵⁷ Rabweh, PM, GH 1 fol. 28.

⁵⁸ No author, “ghibṭat al-batiyark fi Bayrūt,” *Al-Masarrab* 2 (1926): 114.

⁵⁹ Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ p. 213 (N2/57) 15 December 1922.

⁶⁰ Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 214 (N2/63) 26 December, 1922.

does not deserve the sanctions that the Department of Public Instruction has thought it necessary to impose.

An establishment which has always distinguished itself by its attachment to France, which has always deserved the complete satisfaction of the French Authorities; which excites jealousy among certain circles cannot be sentenced to closure.⁶¹

In the example cited above, formal diplomatic relations and cultural diplomacy intertwine, at times uncomfortably. This tension is less present in Palestine because it was under a British Mandate and French and Melkite interests tended to map more clearly onto one another. Grigorios Hajjar's activity, as we shall see, clearly reflects a two-way pattern of cultural diplomacy between the French and the Melkites.

GRIGORIOS HAJJAR, AN AGENT OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

For Eastern Catholics in Palestine, France still embodied the Catholic Protectorate despite this arrangement's formal end under the British Mandate.⁶² The Consulate of France sustained its cultural action through religious congregations, cultural centres and financial support to Eastern communities, especially through its presence during liturgies or ceremonies that marked the life of the Melkite community. One example of this French presence was the 25th jubilee of the priesthood of Grigorios Hajjar (January 3–29, 1922). The magazine *Al-Masarrab* relates the presence of the French consul during the pontifical liturgies which inaugurated and closed this jubilee.⁶³ After the concluding liturgy, the consul decorated Hajjar and congratulated on his own behalf and that of General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in the Levant. No mention is made of an English presence at the ceremonies. The reader could easily believe that we are equally under the French Mandate.

But Grigorios Hajjar was not only a tool used by French diplomacy to achieve its cultural ends. He, too, was trying to benefit from his relations with the French for his own projects. He did not hesitate to get in touch with the French diplomats but also with French Catholics, trying to awaken in France the dream of the Crusades to solicit their generosity. In a seven-page printed pamphlet, in French,⁶⁴ about his works in 1903 and 1909, addressed to the “benefactors of the Catholic Galilee”, we read this introductory note:

⁶¹ Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 269–271. Letter of July 22, 1924 to General Weygand.

⁶² Sanchez Summerer, “Le triptyque,” 70.

⁶³ No author, “Akhbār Tā’ifiyya: ābrashīyat ‘Akkā,” *Al-Masarrab* (1922): 92–93, 140.

⁶⁴ *Rapport des œuvres de S.G. Mgr Grigorios Haggar archevêque catholique de la Galilée 1903 et 1909*. This pamphlet consists of the report presented to Pope Pius X in 1903 (five pages) and an overview of the year 1909 (two pages).

The realised progress, at the same time as it will draw attention to the sum of what remains to be done, will encourage the Catholics of France to continue the endeavours of the Crusades, saving the country of Christ!

Hajjar considers France to be a Christian country despite the law of 9 December 1905 which established an official secularist policy and the separation of church and state. In a letter sent from Cairo to French benefactors on 30 November 1918, following the end of the First World War,⁶⁵ Hajjar glorified France as the standard bearer of Christian civilisation.⁶⁶ In a later letter, he mentions “its beautiful mission as educator and civiliser of humanity”.⁶⁷

Hajjar’s school construction movement undoubtedly required external funding given the precarious economic situation of the diocese. Aware of the importance of francophony in Arab countries and of the power of French, Hajjar attempted to take advantage of his relations with the French authorities for the good of his diocese and also of the Melkite patriarchate. In a letter to the Melkite Patriarch in 1913, Hajjar talked about his trip to Paris and his meetings with top politicians. He mentioned pleading for the need to allocate special attention to the Melkite schools, particularly those in Jerusalem and its suburbs, as these schools were the only ones which taught the French language and sought to spread the language and to support French influence. According to Hajjar, the French party was very favourable to supporting the Melkites but the affair required time. He therefore advised the Patriarch, once this assistance was granted, to open schools throughout his territory at the expense of the French government or a French association.⁶⁸ In an undated letter addressed to the Patriarch Qadi, Hajjar notes receiving 300

⁶⁵ During his visit to Paris in 1914 before the outbreak of the First World War, Hajjar met young Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians wishing to join the French army to fight the Turks. As a result, the Turkish government no longer recognised Hajjar as archbishop of the Melkites of the Archbispopric of Saint John of Akka and he was sentenced to death. Hajjar only learned this news once back in Egypt. He was therefore obliged to remain there until the end of the war. Mansūr, *Ru'ya mū'āsira*, 63–66.

⁶⁶ “Glory be to France! Flag bearer of Christian civilization; France, home of our hearts; Just as its soldiers have tied their history with unequalled Victory, we hope that France will bind its history in the victory of Christ, the august Prince of peace!... That by and with her, the nations united by the charity of Christ in the highest ideal recognize the flock of a single Pastor, the members of one family, even one body, of whom Christ is the head!” ASS 1, fol. 15.

⁶⁷ ASS 1, fol. 69.

⁶⁸ “I took on pointing out to the authorities the importance of paying special attention to our confessional schools, particularly your Patriarchal schools in Jerusalem and its suburbs, showcasing that it is only the Patriarchal schools that teach and seek to spread the French language and endorse French influence... We were clearly heard; however, these matters require some time to be studied but will be brought to a successful end, by God’s will and your Beatitude’s supplication. If that happens, you can then inaugurate, in all your missions, flourishing schools at the expense of the government or a French association.” Rabweh, PM, GH 1,1 fol. 13.

Francs from l’Œuvre des Écoles d’Orient and a sum of 2000 francs in 1924.⁶⁹ Hajjar had planned to build a select boarding school in Haifa with the collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris but the First World War put an end to this project.⁷⁰

At the end of this study, certain elements deserve to be taken into consideration. France did not collaborate with another state but with a particular community, the Melkites, who had had their own history of relations with France for two centuries. The Melkites were widespread in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, with a few in Egypt, while other Christian communities tended to be more concentrated in one country (Maronites in Lebanon, Syriac in Iraq and Copts in Egypt). The triple title of Patriarch (Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Alexandria and Jerusalem) granted to Maximos Mazloum in 1838 is indicative of this aspect of the community’s experience. The circulation of Melkites between these different countries is very evident, as attested by their archives. The largest presence of Melkites was in Syria and Lebanon,⁷¹ two countries under French mandatory rule since 1920 and, as a consequence, the influence of French action in Palestine overflowed territorial borders.

French cultural diplomacy towards the Melkites of Galilee was thus not limited to intervention by the public authorities. The intervention of non-governmental organisations and, in our context, the Catholic hierarchy, acquired considerable importance. The upkeep of certain Melkite schools by the French nuns of Notre Dame de Nazareth and the subsidies received from l’Œuvre des Écoles d’Orient favoured the propagation of French culture. In addition, Hajjar solicited French Catholics to finance the construction and maintenance of these schools. As a result, state, churches and French Catholics were three inseparable and complementary agents in the conduct of French cultural diplomacy in Mandatory Galilee.

Grigorios Hajjar collaborated simultaneously with the political and ecclesiastical authorities, but these two authorities did not necessarily have the same priorities. The Catholic Church of France sought first and foremost to keep those coming from the oriental schism within the fold of the Roman Church, to bring back the schismatics to Roman obedience and also to propagate French culture. Consequently, close links existed between the spread of the French language and Catholicism in Mandatory Galilee. Aslanov’s research even shows that the religious factor, well before colonial expansion, was at the

⁶⁹ Rabweh, PM, GH 1.2 fol. 25; Rabweh, PM, GH 1.2 fol. 32. Letter from Haifa, sent on June 3, 1924.

⁷⁰ Rabweh, PM, GH A fol. 12. A letter from June 24, 1933.

⁷¹ The patriarchal seat is in Damascus and the cradle of its religious orders is in Lebanon (the Salvatorians at Joun, the Choueirites at Khenchara, the Paulists at Harissa).

roots of the preservation of the French language in the East.⁷² French missionaries are therefore both “missionaries of faith and language”.⁷³

The Melkites were aware of the advantages they acquired as Catholics in their relations with the French government: “Whatever their religious opinions are, the French are obliged to recognise that their most loyal customers, most active and most cultivated are the Catholics!”⁷⁴ Public power and Catholic hierarchy were two inseparable elements in French cultural diplomacy in the East. Grigorios Hajjar took advantage of his religious and political network to build schools and churches in Mandatory Galilee where, despite his efforts, French was losing ground to English, Arabic and Hebrew, mastery of which was central to gaining access to administrative positions.⁷⁵

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⁷²Cf. Cyril Aslanov, *Le français au Levant, jadis et naguère. À la recherche d'une langue perdue* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006). On the link between the French language and the Catholic religion in Palestine cf. Sanchez Summerer’s study on the colleges of Brothers of the Christian Schools of Jerusalem in Mandatory Palestine studied in Karène Sanchez Summerer, *Politiques, éducation et identités linguistiques: Le collège des frères des écoles chrétiennes de Jérusalem (1922–1939)* (Utrecht: LOT, 2009).

⁷³Karène Sanchez Summerer, “Pour Dieu et la Patrie: Formation des missionnaires français envoyés au Levant (1880–1940). Le cas des frères des écoles chrétiennes,” *Documents pour l’histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde* 55 (2015): 2.

⁷⁴Rabweh, PM, Reg. DQ, 283. Letter sent to the director of the Saint Sulpice seminary, abbé Vigoureil.

⁷⁵Sanchez Summerer, “Les catholiques palestiniens,” 7.

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Cultural Diplomacy in Mandatory Haifa: The Role of Christian Communities in the Cultural Transformation of the City

Maayan Hilel

The concept of cultural diplomacy is far from uniform or unequivocal and holds multiple definitions and interpretations depend on the context under examination. In order to analyse the connections between Christian communities and European powers in Mandatory Haifa it would be useful to adapt some of the theoretical aspects of this concept.

The classic definition of cultural diplomacy “as a means of serving strategic interests of national governments while at the same time holding out the promise of moving beyond the national interest to support a greater good through mutual cultural exchanges”¹ is only partially suitable for the case of Haifa. It is safe to say that for the most part the attitudes of European powers towards local populations in the Middle East were characterised by a condescending and orientalist approach and that relationships were shaped by a deep inequality and exploitation of the colonial systems. The drive behind practices of European cultural involvement in the Middle East, and in Palestine in particular, was normally based on the promotion of foreign interests with no desire by the European parties for cultural exchange with

¹Ien Ang, Yudhishtir Raj Isar and Phillip Mar, “Cultural Diplomacy: Beyond the National Interest?” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 2 (2015): 366.

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the local Arab population. Under this context, the narrow definition of cultural diplomacy as a two-way exchange or a mutual understanding fails to describe the form of cultural relations between Europe and the Middle East. However, we should not entirely abandon this concept as over the years it has expanded considerably to finally contribute to the historical analysis of the case under scrutiny: the cultural relations between Christian communities and various European actors in Mandatory Haifa. The broad term of cultural diplomacy overlaps or is used interchangeably with associated notions such as “foreign cultural relations”, “international cultural relations”, “public diplomacy” and “soft power”.² The latter term, for example, refers to the “the ability to establish preferences of others through appeal and attraction associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology and institutions”³ and can shed light on how European countries, particularly Britain and France, sought to advance their interests in the area through their country’s “cultural attractiveness”. In order to do so, they established, various institutions which spread their culture and language. Yet, they did not perceive these activities as a platform for cultural exchange between equal partners, but rather a one-way impact on the locals. Moreover, this process of gaining influence was not always direct and government-dominated, but encompassed diverse actors including the formal public sector (consulates, national cultural institutions, etc.) and the private sector (merchants, religious associations, missionaries, etc.). A more inclusive and flexible concept of cultural diplomacy allows a scrutiny of varied forms of European cultural intervention as well as the different ways in which European Powers enhanced their influence in Mandate Haifa.

THE EUROPEAN PRESENCE IN HAIFA

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, and accelerating during the first half of the twentieth, Haifa attracted various missionary organisations, consular agents and foreign merchants. Settled in the city, these European powers represented the interests of their countries of origin and cultivated cultural networks with local communities, mainly affiliated with various Christian denominations. The advent of steamships in the second half of the nineteenth century boosted the importance of the port of Haifa and led to an increasing number of consular agents from Russia, Prussia, USA, Greece, Holland, Britain, France, Austria and Sardinia (later Italy), which improved the security of the Christian minority. In terms of its religious composition, by the mid-nineteenth century Haifa comprised a Muslim community which constituted 51% of the total population, Christians with 36% and Jews

²John Matthew Mitchell, *International Cultural Relations* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986).

³Josef Nye, *Born to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1990), 32.

Table 1 Haifa population

HAIFA POPULATION	MUSLIMS	CHRISTIANS	JEWS
MID CENTURY	51%	36%	13%
1922 CENSUS	38%	36%	25%
1931 CENSUS	38,5%	26,2%	34,7%

with 13%. By 1922 the Muslim population had dropped to 38%; Christians remained at 36% and the number of Jews had risen to 25%. By 1939, a period in which Haifa underwent an extensive process of immigration and urbanisation, the Muslims constituted 38.5%, Christians dropped to 26.2% and Jews increased to 34.7%.⁴ The Christian community of Haifa was varied and included various denominations, the most prominent among them the Greek Orthodox, Greek and Latin Catholics, Protestants, Maronites and Armenians. The Greek Orthodox was the largest and oldest religious minority in Haifa, followed by the Greek Catholics, together giving them numerical superiority over all other denominations (Table 1).⁵

While enjoying the protection provided by the European presence in the city, Haifa's Christians were also subject to the political and cultural influences of competing European interests, by way of educational missions, cultural clubs and the trading opportunities introduced by European consulates. Perhaps the most significant source of influence was the arrival of various missionary organisations in the city, which established a series of educational, religious and cultural institutions for the benefit of the local Christian communities. The spread of Western schools provided the local population with modern education which was viewed as an opening for cultural penetration.⁶ The Catholic Mission, supported by France, was the most dominant. Through the patronage given to the Catholic communities, France sought to gain influence in the city,⁷ for example, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, providing substantial funds to the Carmelite Mission for the founding of a spacious French-style convent on Mount Carmel, that

⁴ May Seikaly, *Haifa: Transformation of a Palestinian Arab Society 1918–1939* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1955), 21, 49.

⁵ Ibid., 30–31.

⁶ Enaya Hamad Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood: Encounters Between Palestinian Women and American Missionaries, 1880s–1940* (London: Lexington Books, 2016).

⁷ Alex Carmel, *Ottoman Haifa: A History of Four Centuries Under Turkish Rule* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 97.

remained of the most impressive landmarks in Haifa up until the establishment of the Mandate. This institution promptly became a magnet for foreign European guests as well as for local Christian believers who were exposed there to the French language and culture.⁸

Despite the importance of religious institutions, education was the primary tool used by missionaries to gain influence in the area. Christian missionary education, predominantly French, was first introduced in Haifa by the Roman Catholics. Despite the very small number of Latins among the local population, this congregation had the largest number of schools and convents in the city. The Greek Catholics (Melkites) and the Maronites also established schools next to their churches, but the increasing number of European institutions run by Catholic orders which specialised in education were more attractive to all Christian groups, including the Greek Orthodox. Jamil al-Bahri, a Christian intellectual from the Melkite community in Haifa, noted in 1922 that “the task of every clergy who comes to Haifa is to open schools for its sons and daughters, and to teach them the principles of the French and Arab cultures as well as religious matters”.⁹ More than 10 French-oriented schools operated in the city before the Mandate period, alongside other private Christians schools which taught in Greek, English and Arabic. On the eve of British rule about 80% of Haifa’s Catholics knew French while English was more prevalent among the Protestant community.¹⁰ The English high school for girls, for instance, founded in 1919 by the Anglican Mission emphasised in its published brochures that it was a “Christian institution” with a “well educated and cultured Christian staff”. The headmistress stressed that the school would only succeed if the teachers and the majority of the pupils were Christians.¹¹ Towards the end of the Mandate period, 22 schools operated in the city, 4 were governmental and the rest private, divided into 12 Christian and 6 Muslim schools.¹²

Unlike the churches affiliated with Rome, the Orthodox Church in the East did not provide a unifying leadership with which the laity could identify with, nor did it supply its adherents with adequate material, social, educational or spiritual services. For this reason, European and American missionary activities won the majority of their converts from this Church and provided them with an attractive range of educational and cultural services. Thanks to the large budgets of missionary institutions, largely coming from

⁸Ibid., 103.

⁹Al-Zahara, 15 June 1922.

¹⁰Seikaly, *Haifa*, 22.

¹¹Ela Greenberg, *Preparing the Mothers of Tomorrow: Education and Islam in Mandate Palestine* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2010), 77.

¹²Johnny Mansour, “The Arabs in Haifa During the British Mandate Period, Social, Economic and Cultural Developments and Changes,” in *The Secret of Coexistence: Jews and Arabs in Haifa During the British Mandate in Palestine, 1920–1948*, eds. Dafna Sharfman and Eli Nahmias (North Charleston, SC: Book-Surge, 2007), 251–259.

France, Britain and the US, poor Christian students were also able to acquire an education and live in the boarding schools.

The settlement of German Templers, who established a European-style colony in the city in the second half of the nineteenth century, served as another source of influence on the local population. The Templers introduced new cultural activities such as libraries, music, drama and sports activities which were frequented by educated elites: Christian families for the most part.¹³ In the last years of Ottoman rule, the Templers and the French competed for influence, but while the former held mainly economic influence, the latter continued to support a large network of schools and cultural institutions to preserve their cultural precedence.

The educational, professional and cultural advantages Christians had acquired since the nineteenth century led to the emergence of an educated generation who spoke a variety of foreign languages, which opened up more lucrative business, created and benefited from more employment opportunities. The Ottoman Tanzimat reforms in the nineteenth century extended this trend by enabling Christian minorities to organise and control their secular affairs and to promote social and cultural matters. With the transition to British rule, these changes proved highly beneficial as Christians easily integrated within the British administration as well as within the city's expanding private sector. Wealth began to be directly linked to education, with educated families acquiring key positions in the new cultural and economic institutions of the city. Furthermore, the replacement of Islamic rule with foreign Western government changed the criteria of elite affiliation and allowed previously disconnected members of the Christian minority to make their way into the elite ranks and to gain social prestige and local influence. Families from the Melkite community, for example, became especially dominant and successful in the city's public life. A growing middle class which included a large number of Christians was closely connected with the increasing trade with Europe and many of them continued to acquire socio-cultural privileges through the patronage of foreign agents.¹⁴ All of these well-established assets laid the foundation for the key role Christians played in the cultural transformation of Haifa during the Mandate years.

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN HAIFA AND THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Haifa under British rule represented a unique case in Palestine in terms of the variety and scope of dramatic changes it experienced, including accelerated economic, social, spatial and demographic growth over a short period of time. From a small and neglected town in the nineteenth century, Haifa

¹³Ibid., 122.

¹⁴Seikaly, *Haifa*, 29.

became an economic, industrial and cultural capital in northern Palestine. This process was already under way during the last years of Ottoman rule, but it was enhanced dramatically during the Mandate. Haifa constituted a crucial element in British imperial plans as the British regime saw the city as a gateway to the Middle East and thus established there its biggest imperial projects as well as its administrative and military headquarters. These rapid developments reinforced the expansion of the city's economic infrastructure and encouraged its growth as a regional hub for employment which attracted thousands of Arab and Jewish immigrants. The city's population grew six-fold in those years: from 22,000 residents in 1918 to 130,000 by 1947. This growth significantly changed not only the city's size but also its ethnic composition which became more heterogeneous and cosmopolitan. The swift urban transformation modified the city's public spaces and created a new reality, more dynamic than ever before.

The urban development spurred processes of cultural change and the appearance of new lifestyles, which were evident in the emergence of new patterns of cultural production and consumption. Within a few years, Haifa experienced a tremendous expansion of leisure and recreational opportunities that became available to different social groups. Public forms and institutions of leisure thrived quickly throughout the city and changed the face of urban culture: cafés, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, hotels, cinemas, theatre troops, cultural clubs, sports teams, commercial beaches, playgrounds, urban parks, newspapers, public libraries, as well as new entertainment technologies such as the radio and gramophone. Recreation became an important economic enterprise and gradually grew into a significant factor in the city's economic setting. These changes reshaped the daily experiences and desires of individuals and shifted their perception regarding the role of leisure in their lives. Entrepreneurs and businessmen from different communities identified recreation as a promising source of profit and invested money in developing cultural activities and entertainment centres, utilising advanced technological improvements.

Despite being a numerical minority, the Christian community in Haifa had the financial and cultural privilege to invest substantially in leisure infrastructures and thus become a major factor in the development of cultural life in the city. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's framework of analysis, I argue that these assets served as *cultural capital* which Christians had accumulated due to their long-lasting educational and cultural ties with various European and missionary forces. The transition from Ottoman rule to the British Mandate enabled them to bring their *cultural capital* into play by contributing to the city's cultural developments. In other words, the significant role they assumed in the cultural arena was in fact a product of acquired social advantage, dependent on religious affiliation and cultural ties. However, it is important to clarify that their *cultural capital* did not stem directly from their religious identity as Christians per se, but rather was generated thanks to the cultural networks they fostered with Western powers based on shared religious

affiliation. As we shall see below, their involvement in cultural life promoted their social mobility in a society undergoing intensive national and cultural crystallisation processes. Examination of different cultural and leisure arenas sheds light on Christians' impact on the cultural transformation in the city.

During the Mandate period, Haifa grew as a hub for newspaper publishers (though it remained smaller than Jaffa and Jerusalem).¹⁵ In October 1919, right after Palestine was secured by British forces, Ottoman censorship was abolished and the press received a strong boost with the emergence of new newspapers and those who were closed during the First World War resumed their publications. The latter were the newspapers *Al-Karmil* (1908), *Filastin* (published in Jaffa) (1911) and *Al-Nafir* (1913) whose editors were Christians of the Greek Orthodox community. They were the pioneers of the Palestinian press who, after the 1908 revolution, used the educational advantage they had gained to give voice to political sentiments that prevailed during those years. Within a short time after the inception of the Mandate, additional newspapers and magazines began to be published in Haifa regularly, the most prominent of which were: *Al-Zahrah* (1921), *Al-Yarmuk* (1924), *Al-Bushra* (1934), *Al-Samir* (1939), *Al-Ittihad* (1944), *Al-Rabita* (1944), *Mihmaz* (1946).¹⁶ The fierce competition with high-level newspapers imported from neighbouring countries encouraged editors to introduce innovations and improvements in the structure and content of their published products. For instance, editors hired local intellectuals to contribute with articles and regular columns.¹⁷ The upgraded press provided Haifa's public with a diverse range of services, from news reporting to literary and cultural articles, advertisements for consumer goods and details about public events. In addition, it reported on leisure activities, sports competitions, concerts, film screenings and radio broadcasts. The literacy rate grew considerably thanks to the establishment of a governmental education system, whose foundations were laid by the Ottomans as part of the Tanzimat, and later further expanded by the British, as well as due to Christian and Muslim initiatives to open private schools. This process also created a growing readership among the Haifa expanding population. Newspapers quickly became a popular and accessible leisure product used both in private and public spheres. Cafes, for example, became places where the literate read aloud, with one person's reading skills providing new knowledge to an entire group, so that

¹⁵Jamil al-Bahri, *History of Haifa* (Haifa: The National Library of Haifa, 1922), 29–34 (in Arabic).

¹⁶Israel State Archive (ISA), RG 2, M-366/32, "Licensed Periodicals (Palestine)," 1945; Mustafa Kabha, *The Press in the Eye of the Storm: The Palestinian Press Shapes Public Opinion 1929–1939* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi & The Open University of Israel 2004), 20; Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900–1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 64–65; H. Al-Bawwab, *Encyclopedia of Carmel Haifa* (Amman: Self-Publishing, 2009), 273 (in Arabic).

¹⁷Kabha, *The Press*.

those who remained semi- or illiterate could stay on top of events and participate in the discussions that accompanied the reading.¹⁸ Cafe owners, who sought to increase their customer circle, subscribed to several newspapers to attract more clients.¹⁹ Reading newspapers represented a great novelty which gradually became a common cultural practice that has spread from a limited circle of educated elites to other groups in Arab society. The intensification of the national struggle, through the 1920s, enhanced this trend as people were thirsty for up-to-date information, which accelerated the emergence of newspapers as an everyday consumer product. Up until the 1930s newspaper editors, many of whom were Christians who had acquired their education in Western or missionary institutions as mentioned earlier, gave extensive coverage to political issues though they did not deviate in their writing from Mandate policies. The riots of 1929 and political developments thereafter triggered a change as more newspapers, both Christian- and Muslim-owned, entered the arena, devoting an increasing number of articles to questions of national identity and opposition to Zionism. Editors began using their newspapers as a tool for consolidating Palestinian national awareness while criticising the British government.²⁰ This trend was reinforced during the Arab Revolt in the second half of the 1930s, which led to the suspension of many publications by the authorities. The press, in Palestine in general and in Haifa in particular, had an important role in shaping public discourse in those years, while Christians played a substantial role in this process.

Theatre was another domain that expanded dramatically during the Mandate years, becoming an important component of the leisure and cultural life of the Arab-Palestinian community in Haifa. A modest theatrical scene started in the city in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when students of missionary schools began to occasionally stage some plays. In 1892, for example, the Franciscan school performed "The Story of Cleopatra" in Arabic, and in 1902 the Frères School staged two plays, one in Arabic and the other in French.²¹ These sporadic activities were increased after the 1908 Ottoman revolution, which allowed for greater freedom of expression for people throughout the Ottoman Empire. During this period, missionary and private Christian schools performed plays twice a year, at Christmas and the end of the year, staging shows which were open for all school students and their families.²² Two Ottoman clerics, Rafik al-Tamimi and Muhammad Bahajat, who were sent in 1915 to write a report for the governor of *Wilayat* Beirut based on a tour of Palestinian towns and villages, noted that in Haifa

¹⁸Ayalon, *Reading Palestine*, 142–152; Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity, the Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1997), 57.

¹⁹Ayalon, *Reading Palestine*, 103.

²⁰Kabha, *The Press*.

²¹Al-Bawwab, *Encyclopædia*, 293.

²²Hala Nassar, "Palestinian Theatre: Between Origins and Visions" (PhD diss., Free University of Berlin, 2001), 16–17.

there were six Christian associations, one Muslim society, two women's associations and one Christian theatre group.²³ During the Mandate period Christian, Muslim and state-run schools allocated resources for theatre performances which now took place not only in school halls but also in communal clubs or on the larger stages of the city's new cinemas.²⁴ Madj Khoury, a Palestinian interviewee from Haifa, told me joyfully about a play in which she participated as a child in the mid-1940s at the Sisters of Nazareth School, shedding light on the continuing cultural involvement of missionary figures:

One day the nun came and asks me, “Are you interested in playing Santa Maria in the Christmas show?” I said to her: “Yes, but I do not look like Santa Maria.” “Santa Maria was from the East and she was like you, if you want, come.” I said to her: “Yes I do”, so eventually I went and acted. The nuns, they were in charge of everything, they wrote the script, taught us how to act, prepared the set and costumes, everything.²⁵

Najib Nassar (Greek Orthodox), owner and editor of *Al-Karmil* newspaper, was a staunch supporter of theatre plays, which he saw as an essential means of establishing national identity among students, who were in his eyes the future generation of the nascent Palestinian state. He often published articles about upcoming shows, encouraging Haifa's Arabs to go and watch them. He also added reviews on the plays he watched and commented on their content, quality of acting, decor and costume.²⁶ The reviews in *Al-Karmil* as well as in other local newspapers indicate that these plays incorporated national content and linked figures and tales from Arab popular folklore to current political issues.

The growing middle class and the increasing number of educated people in these years gave a further boost to the theatre which spread beyond the domain of schools to become an attractive cultural activity for young people. A rising number of independent drama groups were established, as the new commercial entertainment venues in the city allowed them to perform on their stages because they attracted large crowds.²⁷ The most prominent figure in Haifa's theatre was undoubtedly the Christian actor and director Iskandar Ayyub Badran. He was one of the leaders of theatrical activity in the

²³Yad Yaari Archive (YYA), Yosef Vashitz Collection, (5) 26.35-95 ‘The Educated Class in Haifa’. Mahmoud Zaid noted in his article in the Palestinian Encyclopedia that in pre-Mandatory Haifa there were 15 cultural associations which were mostly Christian “due to the influence of foreign churches and consuls in the city which represented the interests of their countries in Europe”. Mahmoud Zayed, “Unions and Associations,” *The Palestinian Encyclopedia* Vol. 3 (Damascus: The Palestinian Encyclopedia Institute, 1984), 182.

²⁴See for example: *Al-Karmil*, 2 April, 1921; ibid., 1 July 1921; ibid., 19 December 1921; ibid., 2 June 1924; ibid., 15 September 1924; ibid., 6 July 1932.

²⁵Interview with Madj Khoury, Haifa, 16 December 2014.

²⁶See for example: *Al-Karmil*, 15 September 1925.

²⁷*Al-Karmil*, 29 June 1921; 1 July 1921; 28 June 1924; *Al-Nafir*, 29 July 1926.

city and was involved in the establishment of several actors' groups during the 1930s. At the beginning of the decade he founded *Al-Karmil*, which was the most professional theatre troupe in Palestine up until the end of the British Mandate.²⁸ *Al-Karmil* maintained close ties with famous theatre actors from Egypt and Syria, and sometimes its players performed in Yosef Wahabi's plays which were staged in different cities in Palestine.²⁹ In 1944, for example, Wahabi directed the play "The Desert" in Haifa in collaboration with *Al-Karmil*.³⁰ During the 1930s Badran also founded the Actors and Education Club with the aim of "educating the younger generation through theatrical performances". In addition, he served as a professional consultant to the Haifa Theatre Club, which was open to "every young man or woman over the age of twenty, who loves art and Acting".³¹

The theatre scene saw the growing involvement of local intellectuals who began to write plays and facilitated groups of actors. Jamil al-Bahri, a famous Melkite writer, wrote original plays which were published in his two Haifa literary magazines, *Al-Zahara* and *Al-Zahur*. Mastering different languages thanks to his missionary education, he translated classic Western plays into Arabic, adapting them to Arab culture.³² Many of his novels inspired local groups who staged them as plays for the general public of Haifa. A particularly popular novel was "the Killer of His Brother", which was staged not only in Haifa but also in many other cities in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.³³ In addition to promoting the theatre, Najib Nassar himself also wrote several plays. In 1922 he founded the Arab Economic Revival Society which encouraged acting by donating money to groups of actors in the city.³⁴ The mid-1940s saw the mushrooming of more theatre groups, mainly composed of educated young people who recognised theatre's cultural power as a platform for promoting social and political goals.³⁵

The great popularity of theatre plays made them a convenient arena for the dissemination of national ideology. Like plays presented in schools, those performed by professional actors were based on texts and figures from Arabic literature, poetry and history. These plays related values attributed to Arab tradition such as courage, nobility, loyalty and patriotism to the Palestinian

²⁸Haganah Archives (HA), 105/310, 'Al-Karmil troupe,' 1946; *Al-Difa*, 9 October 1945; Al-Bawwab, *Encyclopedia*, 298.

²⁹Mansour, "The Arabs," 287.

³⁰HA, 10\309, 'The Desert Play', 1944.

³¹*Filastin*, 10 April 1930; ISA, RG 2, M-61/51, 'The Theater Club of Haifa', 1930.

³²Abdul Rahman Yaghi, *The History of Modern Palestinian Literature: From the Renaissance to the Nakba* (Ramallah: Publications of Palestinian Culture, 2001) (in Arabic).

³³Mansour, "The Arabs," 284–285.

³⁴Nasri al-Jūzy, *History of the Palestinian Theater 1918–1948* (Cyprus: Nicosia, 1991), 23–33 (in Arabic).

³⁵Other theater groups founded in the city during those years were: The National Players and Music Association, The Art Forum and The Art Foundation Club. ISA, RG 25, M-61\31, 1947.

nation.³⁶ The content of the plays sought to create an affinity for past traditions and to link national topical issues with glorious cultural history. The Palestinian political struggle and attempts to strengthen the national identity served as a driving force in the revival of the theatre during the Mandate period, especially in Haifa, where theatrical activity was advanced more than any other city in Palestine.

The close connections between Haifa and neighbouring countries greatly influenced the development of theatre in the city. During the Ottoman period and even after the inception of the British and French Mandates which created new colonial borders, Palestine continued to be an integral part of the cultural and social system of the Middle East. Within the shared Arab cultural space, Cairo and Beirut served as leading cultural centres which inspired the entire region. Beginning in the Nahda period and increasingly in the first half of the twentieth century, Cairo and Beirut led intensive cultural activity in a variety of fields and constituted a dynamic focal point for theatre activities that became a role model to the Middle East as a whole. Haifa was not detached from these occurrences and derived cultural ideas, patterns and products from its neighbours. Its geographical proximity to Beirut, along with the improvement in means of transportation, deepened the contacts between the cities and strengthened theatre collaborations, as in many other areas. During the 1920s and expanding in the decades that followed, Arab theatre groups, especially from Egypt, came regularly to perform in Haifa.³⁷ The city's Arabs were familiar with these troupes and followed their activities through radio programmes and cultural magazines that were imported to the city.³⁸ Newspapers reported that the local audience filled the city's halls at their performances. In May 1929, for example, *Al-Karmil* reported that "Yosef Wahabi and George Abiad, who performed three nights in a row on the stage of Bustan al-Inshirah theatre, attracted a crowd of nearly two thousand people".³⁹ These performances left their audiences with an appreciation for the theatre and encouraged them to attend the shows of local groups. This active and ongoing interaction served as a source of inspiration and incentive for the flourishing of local theatre activities in Haifa.

Examination of various associations and clubs which operated in the city illuminates how the old ties between local Christians and European agents

³⁶ *Al-Karmil*, 2 April 1924; 18 June 1924; *Filastin*, 5 April 1944; *Al-Difa*, 28 November 1946; The National Library (TNL) Israel, Ephemera Collection.

³⁷ To mention only a few examples: On October 1925 the Egyptian play "Miserable Tears" was staged at the Colosseum Hall in Haifa, *Al-Karmil*, 17 October 1925; The famous Egyptian theater troupe 'Ramsis' starring Youssef Wahbi and Amina Rizk staged often their plays in Haifa during the 1920s. For instance, "Poor's Children", "The Confession Throne", "Rasputin", "Alma", "The Trio", and more, *Filastin*, 23 June 1925; ibid., 30 April 1929. For more examples see *Al-Karmil*, 8 May 1929; *Al-Nafir*, 31 January 1926; *Al-Difa*, 10 October 1945.

³⁸ Interview with Samia Shehadeh, Haifa, 16 December 2014.

³⁹ *Al-Karmil*, 5 August 1929.

shaped the cultural sphere in Mandatory Haifa. Different clubs offered their members a whole array of leisure activities which constituted a central ingredient of Haifa's Arab leisure life. Already before the Mandate, Christians were central to establishing the majority of these organisations. Although at their inception the activities of these associations were fairly modest, they served as a model for the establishment of associations later in the Mandate period. Official documents show that 54 associations and cultural clubs were registered in the Haifa district, 45 of which operated in the city itself and the majority were Christian based.⁴⁰ These organisations functioned as an alternative to the expanding commercial leisure industry in the city, though their activity was not isolated from the new scene. Commercial sites occasionally hosted events that were organised by the communal clubs. These clubs offered a range of leisure and cultural activities, such as social gatherings, sports activities, lectures, theatre, poetry readings, dances parties, enrichment classes and libraries.

Of all clubs and associations operating in the city, those founded on sectarian basis were the most dominant. Different religious denominations created frameworks for social activities that would strengthen the denominational identity of their members. For Christians, Churches played an important role in the leisure life of their communities by establishing cultural clubs that competed with the new for-profit leisure venues and were opened to their followers. Madj Khoury recalled in relation to this:

We had a club that belonged to the church. There was also a club for Latins, Catholics, Maronites, Muslims, all the communities in the city. We used to go there as children, women would gather there, order coffee and cake. It was like a cafe, they did handicrafts or participated in other circles. My parents used to go to parties, lectures by poets and writers which were organised by this club. That's how we would spend time in our community. The rich used to go to fancy restaurants and the common people would spend time with the community at the church club.⁴¹

Each church had a religious leadership that handled religious aspects such as ceremonies, holidays, weddings and funerals. In addition, each year a council composed of representatives of the community was elected in order to cultivate the community's cultural life through its clubs.⁴² However, the clergy was closely involved in the arrangement of social and cultural activities so the line between religious and cultural activity was sometimes blurred. In the Latin club, for instance, the priest himself functioned as a spiritual leader and a social educator who coordinated secular entertaining activities and was

⁴⁰ISA, RG 25, Associations; HA, 8/5, 'Arab Associations', 1944.

⁴¹Interview with Madj Khoury.

⁴²Interview with Salman Natour, Haifa, 2 September 2015.

a member of the club's committee.⁴³ Many of these churches were run by missionaries whose senior hierarchy was comprised of Greeks, French, English and Italians which preserved their long-lasting foreign influence on the city's Christians.

The Orthodox Club was among the most prominent Christian organisation in Haifa. The club was established in 1937 and declared in its initial regulations that it aimed "to promote social, cultural and sports activities among members of the Orthodox community in Haifa" and that "participation is open only to Orthodox followers".⁴⁴ The club offered theatre, wrestling, weightlifting, table tennis and soccer classes; it organised dances for families as well as charity events to raise donations for the community's poor. Likewise, the club hosted famous singers and artists from the Arab world as well as intellectuals who gave weekly lectures on a variety of current issues.⁴⁵ Another central club was the Catholic Club, founded in the early 1920s. The leader of the Catholic community, Bishop Hajjar, raised money throughout the Mandate years from political and social organisations in Europe, which was allocated not only to the erection of new churches, but also to the establishment of schools and cultural institutions.⁴⁶ From its outset, the Catholic Club offered its members leisure, sports and theatre activities.⁴⁷ *Al-Zahra* magazine, for example, reported on 15 July 1922, that "a cultural party was held at the school of the Greek Catholic Church for members of the community in the presence of senior clerics. The party included among other things reading of poetry and prose in French and Arabic".⁴⁸ In the early 1940s the club sought to expand its ranks by including all members of the denomination. By the mid-1940s, the club had already numbered several hundred members.⁴⁹

The vigorous activity of Christian associations in the city, especially of the Christian Association founded in the early 1920s, catalysed the establishment of similar clubs by groups of young Muslims. Among them were the Association of Muslim Youth, the Muslim Brotherhood, the [Association of] Adherence, Muslim Virtues Association, Ahmadiyya Association, Syrian Union Club, al-Rama Young Men's Club, Kafir Kanna Young Men's Club and

⁴³ *Filastin*, 5 May 1942; ibid., 17 March 1946; *Al-Karmil*, 14 June 1924.

⁴⁴ Haifa City Archives (HCA), 8515 'The Orthodox Club', 1940–1943.

⁴⁵ HA, 8/6 a, 'A Party in the Orthodox Club'; Hanna Naqara, *Memoirs of a Palestinian Lawyer* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2011), 94–97 (in Arabic); *Filastin*, 7 January 1945.

⁴⁶ Yosef Vashitz, "Social Changes in Haifa's Arab Society Under the British Mandate" (PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1993), 134 (in Hebrew).

⁴⁷ *Al-Karmil*, 2 June 1924.

⁴⁸ *Al-Zahra*, 15 July 1922.

⁴⁹ HA, 8/3 a, 'The Catholic Club', 13 November 1942.

more.⁵⁰ The Association of Muslim Youth was the largest and most central organisation and its main goal was the “promotion of Islamic education and values among the Muslim population through cultural activities”.⁵¹ In a very short period of time, this association became a significant factor in the life of the Muslim community in Haifa. It organised parties and receptions, national conferences and religious celebrations as well as sports, theatre and weekly lectures of Islamic and national nature.⁵² These activities were attended by a wide range of social groups: the elite was interested in receptions of high-ranking public figures, educators showed interest in its weekly lectures, ordinary people went to popular celebrations, uneducated found interest and usefulness in evening classes and youth participated in sports events.⁵³

Official documents and oral interviews indicate that activities offered by the denominational clubs in the city enjoyed a high rate of public attendance and that various social groups, especially the popular classes, could access new forms of urban leisure thanks to these organisations. Furthermore, it seems that people chose to spend much of their free time in these places alongside members of their own religious or denominational community. These multiple institutions reflected on one hand the heterogeneous composition of Arab society in Haifa and on the other its preference to spend spare time with people from the same social group. In the context of the Christian community, this natural tendency to be with people of the same group, combined with the domination of cultural life by the churches and their Western supporters, further preserved European influence over local Christian. This pre-dilection mirrored the existing sectarian demarcation lines which expressed the tense historical relationship between Christian and Muslim communities in the city.⁵⁴ Mahmoud Yazbak argues that Haifa's associations and clubs worked solely for the benefit of their members and that their sectarian loyalty overcame any other allegiances.⁵⁵ Archbishop Hajjar and some wealthy

⁵⁰ *Al-Yarmuk*, 10 September 1925; HA, 105\159, “Muslim Brothers' celebrations”, 1946; *Al-Bushra*, 1 January 1936.

⁵¹. ISA, RG 25, 61\141, “A Letter from the Deputy Chairman of the Young Muslim Association to the District Governor,” 1940.

⁵²ISA, RG 25, 61\141, “Invitation to Celebrate the Muslim Year at the Muslim Youth Association,” May 1930; Prophet's Birthday Celebrations, *Filastin*, 21 July 1932; ibid., 6 July 1933; Ibid., 19 April 1940.

⁵³ISA, RG 25, 61\141, “Lectures on Behalf of the Muslim Youth Association,” 1935; *Filastin*, 31 December 1932; ibid., 16 January 1932; ibid., 19 July 1933.

⁵⁴For a discussion of the historical roots of the tensions between various religious groups in Haifa, see Vashitz, “Social Changes,” 144–146; Mahmoud Yazbak, *Haifa in the Nineteenth Century, History of the City and Society* (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1998), 163–165 (in Hebrew); Mahmoud Yazbak, “Immigrants, Elites and Popular Organizations Among the Arab Society of Haifa from the British Conquest to 1939,” in *Economy and Society in Mandatory Palestine, 1918–1948*, eds. A. Bareli and N. Karlinsky (Sede Boqer: The Ben-Gurion Research Center, 2003) (in Hebrew); Seikaly, *Haifa*, 36–38.

⁵⁵Yazbak, “Immigrants, Elites and Popular Organizations,” 373.

Christian merchants in the city, for example, openly forbade their community's members from participating in any political or cultural activity initiated by Muslims.⁵⁶ Similar phenomena prevailed in the Muslim community as well, where cultural activities took place in separate groups based on political or sectarian identification. The leaders of different Muslim subgroups sought to emphasise the predominance of their community over others as reflected in separatist recreational activities.

The escalating national struggle from the mid-1930s onward urged the denominational clubs to engage in national-political activity and deepened the need to unite the ranks. Thus, occasional attempts were made to collaborate and merge different clubs within the Christian and Muslim communities as well as attempts to unite Christian and Muslim clubs. However, disputes and power struggles that were common in leadership circles prevented these initiatives from being implemented.⁵⁷ The denominational clubs were well aware of the necessity to consolidate national awareness, therefore they embraced cultural activities with a strong national character. Nonetheless, this was not enough to transcend the divisions among the various communities in the city. While the clubs increasingly conducted political-national activities, these took place within each club separately. At the individual level, there were people who crossed their community lines and spent leisure time in other clubs, but this trend was not strong enough to undermine the cultural separation which was led by the various denomination leaders. The denominational clubs were, more than anything, oriented internally to their own communities. Nevertheless, the extensive cultural-national activity that took place in the Christian clubs turned the Christian minority in the city into a crucial actor as well as an equal to its Muslim counterpart at the forefront of the national-Palestinian struggle.

Alongside the denominational clubs, other cultural groups were established by European organisations in the city and functioned as an additional source of influence over local communities. One of the most prominent was the British Council, which was founded "to spread the English language throughout the British Empire, to develop close cultural relations with local populations and to fight the rise of Fascism".⁵⁸ Initial attempts to establish branches in Palestine began in 1936 and rose towards the end of the decade. The first branch was established in Haifa in 1940 as the council's committee believed that "Haifa is the best place to start, since there is no branch of the YMCA and the city will probably remain under direct British control due

⁵⁶Ibid., 386.

⁵⁷HA, 105\159, "The Unification of All Arab Societies in Haifa," 1946; Hashomer Hazair Archive (HHA), Israel, The Aaron Cohen Collection, 8.10-95 (1), 'Clubs Unification,' 1 February 1946.

⁵⁸TNA, BW, 1, British Council: Registered Files, General Series, 1936–1994.

to the oil pipeline and port facilities".⁵⁹ Apart from the British administration, the target audience for the Council was mainly the affluent classes of the Arab and Jewish communities, who were considered to share the same cultural needs with the British community: "If we want to provide a social and cultural club for the Jewish and Arab communities, both of which have a large number of educated and affluent people, it is absolutely necessary to establish a first-class institution".⁶⁰ The club offered activities for groups of men, women and children in music and sports as well as English classes, exhibitions, lectures and libraries. The 1943 club report shows that 20 young Arabs attended an English course, 16 Arab women participated in the club's activities alongside several dozen Arab men. From the names appearing in the club's records, we learn that a large part of the Arab members were Christians.⁶¹

A glance into the field of sports in Haifa sheds further light on the intensive involvement of the Christian community in the city's cultural life. Sport, in its modern and organised form of leisure was practised in Palestine already at the end of the Ottoman period, when middle-class young men began to engage in physical activity as part of a new idea that modern and healthy individuals should partake in sports activities on a regular basis. This perception was influenced by Western ideas that seeped into the urban centres in the Middle East.⁶² The first Arab football team in Palestine was established at St George's Missionary School in Jerusalem in 1908; a year later, it defeated the American University of Beirut team, then considered one of the best in the region. In 1912, local Arab youths formed the National Football Team, which competed with missionary groups.⁶³ A large-scale institutionalisation of football in Palestine began after the British occupation, as one of the means through which the colonial government Eurocentrically believed it should modernise the local inhabitants.

The government schools emphasised physical education, trained sports teachers and purchased equipment and books on the subject.⁶⁴ They incorporated football games as part of the curriculum, which boosted the distribution of the game across the country. The British also set up an organisational framework for football games called the Sport Club and, in search of rivals to compete against them, invited local Jews and Arabs to participate in the games.⁶⁵ The key innovation during these years was that previously informal

⁵⁹Ibid. In subsequent years, branches were also established in Jaffa, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Nablus, and Nazareth.

⁶⁰TNA, BW, 47/2, British Institute Haifa, 1940–1945.

⁶¹TNA, BW, 47/2, Annual Report Haifa Institute, 1943.

⁶²Murat Yıldız, "Institutions and Discourses of Sports in the Modern Middle East," *Cairo Papers* 34, no. 2 (2016): 13.

⁶³Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora*, 231.

⁶⁴*Al-Dida*, 1 January 1939.

⁶⁵Tamir Sorek, *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State* (Jerusalem: Magness, 2006), 25.

games such as football became standardised and institutionalised and were organised by various bodies. From the 1920s onwards there was a significant increase in awareness of and presence of sports in Palestine, as elsewhere in the Middle East, in the form of facilities, organisations and competitions. Physical training began to be associated with a national culture that promoted values of discipline, order, strength, masculinity, and most of all, modernity.⁶⁶ Already in the mid-1920s, *Filastin* reported that “the sports movement has spread rapidly all over the country”.⁶⁷

In Haifa, these trends were further reinforced due to the substantial presence of various European agents. Thus, for example, the English High School for Girls that was funded by the Anglican Mission regularly held sporting events for its students, both Muslim and Christian, in the presence of their parents. Girls' sports were not common among the governmental and private Muslim schools since it was seen as a contradiction to the values of woman's modesty. However, in this Missionary school sports was an integral part of the curriculum, where the students demonstrated their abilities in gymnastics and other physical activities.⁶⁸ Likewise, a variety of new sports fields, clubs and teams appeared at that time and drew participants from all walks of Palestinian society. A wide range of sports such as basketball, volleyball, table tennis, gymnastics, weightlifting, and especially soccer and boxing became highly popular among young people. However, a careful look at this vibrant arena reveals a complex picture regarding inter-communal divisions. Much like the city's cultural clubs, many sport teams were founded on religious denominational basis, largely thanks to the support and resources they received from their communities. Christian sport teams generally enjoyed financial resources that were allocated to them by the missions, which in some cases allowed for the purchase of lands that were transformed into sport fields. Benefiting from Italian professional support, the *Salizyan* (Salesian) basketball team, for instance, was considered the best and most qualified team in the city and played against Jewish professional teams such as Maccabi and Hapoel. This team was open only to young Christians who were nurtured by the Italian mission and its players were trained by the best coaches, especially invited from Italy.⁶⁹ Similarly, Geryes Jamil, who was the chairman of the “Christian Brotherhood”, described its football team that was the pride of his association:

We had our club, the ‘Christian Brotherhood’ in Wadi Nisnas on Haddad Street. This club was closed in 1948 ... we had a very high-level football team with coaches and costumes. It was a professional team and we played in

⁶⁶Yıldız, “Institutions and Discourses,” 14–16.

⁶⁷*Filastin*, 17 December 1927.

⁶⁸*Al-Difa*, 5 June 1939; see also: ibid., 13 June 1939; ibid., 20 April 1938.

⁶⁹Abd Kanafani Al-Latif, *15 al-Burj Street – Haifa* (Beirut: Baysān, 1996), 105–115 (in Arabic).

Jerusalem, in Tel Aviv and all over the country. Even articles in the newspapers were published about us.⁷⁰

The sectarian element was particularly prominent in encounters and competitions held between different teams within Arab society in the city, with each group standing out and taking pride in its denominational affiliation. However, the expansion of national awareness, mainly from the mid-1930 onward, encouraged the establishment of sports clubs that emphasised national element in their identity. Teams such as the Arab Youth Club consisted of Christian and Muslim players and collaborated with the sectarian clubs, using each other's facilities for training and games. For example, in September 1943, a football tournament was held between Cairo and Haifa teams (the latter was composed of players from the Islamic Club, the Orthodox Club and the Armenian Club) on the field of the Islamic Club in Haifa.⁷¹ In the summer of 1945, the Arab Youth Club won the national finals and was awarded the title of Palestinian champion in football.⁷² Interestingly enough when such clubs played against Jewish or Arab teams from neighbouring countries, the sectarian identity gave way to the national- Palestinian one. Hence, despite the sectarian nature of Haifa's cultural and sports clubs, from the mid-1930s they increasingly operated in the spirit of nationalism using the popularity of sports as a vital tool in consolidating national sentiments.

Alongside the vivacious sports scene, another new form of leisure gained popularity in Mandatory Haifa. During those years, a number of commercial beaches were established and promptly turn into amusement centres that offered various services to Haifa's public. These beaches functioned as popular recreation sites and were mostly owned by Christian private entrepreneurs who made the seashore a legitimate leisure venue. The most popular beach in the city was Khayat Beach, with its high standards of amenities. Its owner, Aziz Khayat (a Melkite), was among the richest in the city who maintained substantial trade relations with Europe. A resident of the city, Abd al-Latif Kanafani, described the beach in his memoirs:

Al-Aziziyya was the favourite destination of travellers due to its high level, unmatched anywhere in the country. The food and drinks, which were of the highest quality, were served by a Nubian waiter wearing a fez and a garment that was so white it sparkled. He wore a red clock around his waist, like the palace servants that filled the Egyptian films. The original jazz orchestra played dance melodies hour after hour in a cheerful, gay atmosphere and the

⁷⁰Interview with Geryes Jamil, Haifa, 2 September 2015.

⁷¹Central Zionist Archive (CZA) S25\6693, Sports activities with sports associations from neighboring countries, 1943.

⁷²TNL, Ephemera Collection.

Mediterranean water always shining in the sunlight days and the moonlight night.⁷³

This place had a great influence on the city's cultural scene and despite being relatively distant from the city centre, it regularly attracted large numbers of people. The attendees were among different sectors and classes, both Jews and Arabs, who were provided with services at various costs to suit different economic statuses. In the summer of 1931, a reporter from the daily newspaper *Doar Hayom* described the great popularity of the place: "Thousands of Haifa's residents and other cities flock to Khayat beach to escape the heat of the last few days. On last Saturday and Sunday an effort was made by the city's taxi drivers to bring back at once the many masses who spent their time on the beach".⁷⁴ The beaches, like other commercial leisure sites in the city, were a space where people from different religious, sectarian and national groups socialised and spent time alongside each other. Unlike sports games which were competitive in nature and allowed ordinary people to participate in the process of formulating the national culture, the beach was characterised by an open, positive, relaxed and informal atmosphere, where people came to forget everyday worries and be entertained. The choice to go there was due to personal taste and style and was not necessarily related to political sentiments.

Another popular beach in the city was owned by the Buthaji family (Protestant) which served mostly the Arab middle class as well as some foreigners.⁷⁵ This family also owned the T.S Boothaji & Sons Company and a chain of department stores selling novel leisure products such as records, gramophones, radios and more.⁷⁶ Charles Buthaji, one of the family members, owned the Windsor Hotel in the city and acted as the head of the Association of Arab Hotel, Restaurants and Cafes Owners in Haifa in the early 1940s. In this capacity, he worked to cultivate the cultural life of the city and protected the interests of its business owners. Khayyat and Buthaji are just an example of how prominent Christian families with long-standing economic and cultural connections with Europe functioned as important cultural entrepreneurs who contributed substantially to the city's cultural transformation.

The examination of several cultural arenas in Haifa indicates that even though the Christian community was a minority, it served as a significant protagonist in the cultural change which unfolded in the city during the Mandate period. In the light of strengthening Palestinian nationalism, one should ask

⁷³Kanafani, 15 al-Burj Street, 36; For a further description of the lively activity on the beach, see *Filastin*, 20 May 1932.

⁷⁴*Doar Hayom*, 31 July 1931.

⁷⁵Al-Bawwab, *Encyclopedias*, 81.

⁷⁶Andrea Stanton, *This Is Jerusalem Calling, State Radio in Mandate Palestine* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2013), 48–54.

how these actions affected their identity and status within Palestinian society. In order to answer this question, we now look at the wide politicisation processes unfolded at the time.

CULTURE AS A TOOL FOR CONSOLIDATING PALESTINIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

Palestinian nationalism rose during the Mandate years to become a dominant category in the collective identity. The need to confront the Zionist threat accelerated political and national activities, which in turn contributed to a cultural revival.⁷⁷ Under this process, leisure sites served as a crucial space for forming a Palestinian culture and invigorating the identity of the national community. Leisure emerged as an effective arena for distributing national ideas, converted as they were into catchy and accessible cultural products for ordinary people. Activities such as sports competitions, cultural clubs, scouts, theatre shows and newspaper publishing became important avenues in the nation-building process. The Christian community in Haifa functioned as a decisive actor in these processes by taking active steps to develop and foster a distinct Palestinian culture. The realm of theatre, for example, became a convenient arena for the dissemination of the national ideology, while also being dominated by the Christian communities. This trend, as we saw, was prominent in plays staged both by schools and by independent troupes of young actors. Some of the plays were based on translations of classical plays such as Shakespeare's Hamlet and Macbeth or Molière's *The Misérables*, while the most popular were based on themes from Arabic literature, poetry and history. These plays linked values attributed to Arab tradition such as courage, nobility and loyalty with patriotism and the Palestinian nation.⁷⁸ The intensification of national consciousness reinforced the popularity of these plays and gave the audience the feeling that their participation as spectators supported this cultural activity and thus contributed to the national effort in the competition against Zionism. A report in *Filastin* from 1944 illustrated this:

The theatre society of the Gaza College staged the play 'For You Oh Motherland'. This play critically examines the social and economic situation of Palestine. All the events in the play revolve around the sale of lands. The two gentlemen wrote the play in 1934 and it seems as if they wrote it today. The hall was flooded with attendees, attesting to the high importance the residents attribute to this matter.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Maayan Hilel, "Cultural Transformation in Palestinian-Arab Society, 1918–1948: Haifa as a Case-Study" (PhD diss., Tel Aviv University, 2018).

⁷⁸ See for Example: *Al-Karmil*, 2 April 1924; *ibid.*, 18 June 1924; *ibid.*, 2 April 1924; *Filastin*, 5 April 1944; *Al-Dif'a*, 28 November 1946; TNL, Ephemera Collection.

⁷⁹ HA, 105/309, 'For You Ya Motherland,' 1944.

Similarly, sports games became a vital channel for strengthening national feelings, due to their ability to function as a unifying force. The participation of young people in sports contests allowed them to express their affiliation not only to a particular fan group, but also to the Palestinian national community as a whole. The sense of belonging that sports games provided paved the way for this form of entertainment to the hearts of many young people. Local newspapers contributed to this trend by giving extensive coverage to the games and by providing vivid descriptions of what was happening on the fields.⁸⁰ The politicisation of leisure was also evident in the cultural clubs of the various city's denominations, which since the mid-1930s increasingly incorporated cultural activities of a national character. The national struggle sharpened the need for unification between the different communities and occasionally led to attempts to merge various clubs within Arab society. As such, for example, the lawyer Hanna Nakra, head of the Orthodox club, changed the rules of the club (which was the largest and most popular one in the city) to define it as a national rather than a denominational club. He therefore invited onto the board important figures from the Muslim community in the city, such as Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim, Abd al-Rahman al-Khadra and 'Abd al-Karim al-Karmi.⁸¹ These are only a few of many examples of the ways in which culture was appropriated as a crucial tool in the national struggle. Against this background, the intensive and long-standing engagement of Christians with cultural development strengthened their national identity and functioned as a channel for their mobilisation within Palestinian society.

CONCLUSIONS

Using the more inclusive concept of "soft power" allowed us to interpret missionary and other European activities in Haifa as forms of cultural diplomacy. In seeking to gain influence in the region, these forces supported and fostered local Christian communities as early as the nineteenth century. As a result these communities were able to acquire a substantial *cultural capital* in the form of social and cultural advantages that qualified them to contribute significantly to the cultural developments unfolded in the city during the British Mandate. Through "soft" intervention, then, European presence indirectly influenced local processes in the sense that it served as a powerful platform for local Christians to play a key role in the cultural transformation which was vital to the national struggle. The rapidly changing political circumstances deepened the need for a cultural revival as a tool for consolidating a Palestinian national identity. The nation-building process required the formulation of national culture and this intersected with the ability of Christian communities to translate their long-established *cultural capital*

⁸⁰ *Filastin*, 17 August 1947; *ibid.*, 8 August 1947; *ibid.*, 20 June 1947.

⁸¹ Naqara, *Memoirs*, 94–97.

into investments in the city's cultural life, which boosted their mobility in the Palestinian national system. As Noah Haiduc-Dale shows, during the Mandate period, Christians tried to determine their own space in society. They sought to navigate nationalism and communalism as two modes of identifications as the shifting political balance reshaped their options.⁸² Building on this, I argue that by cultivating cultural activities that took place mainly within the framework of their denominations, Haifa's Christians placed themselves as an integral and legitimate part of the Palestinian national movement, thereby reinforcing their Arab-Palestinian identity. Paradoxically, what enabled them to do so was their long-term association with European organisations. In other words, their extensive cultural activity, which drew inspiration from European sources, served as a springboard to the heart of Palestinian nationalism meant to fight Zionism: another European export.

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⁸²Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 3–4.

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Showing and Telling: Cultural and Historical Entanglements under the Mandate



Introduction Part II Colonial Hegemony, Arab *Virtù* and the Philosophy of History: Excavating, Exhibiting and Cultural Diplomacy in the Palestine Mandate

Philippe Bourmaud

In *Between Past and Future*, Hannah Arendt explores the philosophical implications of the way the understanding of history changed in the modern age. In confronting the belligerent masses of the past and the future, historical actors are crushed less by the opposed social forces of tradition and progress in the Gramscian sense, than by the weight of the consciousness of history over all human actions.¹ All actions happen in a process, and all an individual can do is to hone their skills at grasping historical processes and to find allies in tradition and modernity in order to act decisively. *Virtù*, the Machiavellian quality of the Prince able to play among forces that overwhelm him and seize the moment, is an early manifestation of this modern consciousness of history: the alliance of an understanding of the crucial and yet constantly forgotten character of foundational moments that orientate history, and of a capacity to show one's will in the right moment in the present, so as to make a political difference.²

¹ Hannah Arendt, *La Crise de la culture*, coll. Folio Essais (Paris: Gallimard, 2018), 16.

² Ibid., 178–185.

My goal here is obviously not to advertise *virtù* as useful for the social sciences, when a forest of robust methods and concepts exists to account for individual choices. But the notion captures well the feelings of individuals confronted with experiences of profound, at once auspicious and ominous, and thus foundational political changes, and why a sense of history matters under such circumstances. There was a lot, for instance, for the denizens of Palestine under the Mandate, that required *virtù*, adaptation and creativity in order to have a say in the shaping of the new political realities. Newcomers, adventurers, prophets of salvation and doom were many, as were men and women with historical expertise, projects and an axe to grind. Knowing one's way in society and understanding history were assets wherever the past and the modern, which both were part and parcel of the goals of colonial rule, were on display.

It could be argued that *virtù* had several components and quasi-synonyms. As mutual stereotypes of the Jewish and Arab national communities took form, collective images may not have been absent from cultural debates. Arab academics, intellectuals and artists may have recoiled at behaviours that would have been identified as British imperial arrogance on the one hand, or *chutz-pah* on the part of Zionists on the other. In her chapter, Mathilde Sigalas analyses the collaboration and competition between British, French and American archaeological institutions during the Mandate. What she shows could again be called *virtù*: the Americans, seen as newcomers in the field of Palestinian archaeology, were actively constructing a business-like and efficient collective image, even as they worked to dig and display the Palestinian past. Older actors, seen as increasingly less relevant, could also play with their self-image in a strategic and opportunistic fashion: Barbara Haider-Wilson's piece on the history of Austrian humanitarian and cultural diplomacy in Palestine highlights how Republican Austria banked on the good reputation left by the Austrian military presence in Palestine during World War I. Self-assertive behaviours were commonly frowned upon in Arab locales. But as Sherene Seikaly makes clear in the case of modernist Arab capitalists,³ there was no shortage of Arab individuals ready to seize the circumstances offered by the Mandate.

Among Arabs, those who were able to seize opportunities in the cultural realm did not come from just anywhere. Indeed, the initial interrogation of the editors of this volume on the fortunes of Arab Christians in the cultural arena—or their misfortune, perhaps, in being sidelined in most other aspects of policy—shows examples of *virtù*, and of its absence. Sarah Irving's chapter on two Arab Christians in the Department of Archaeology of the Government of Palestine presents two contrasted trajectories. Stephan Stephan stands out as a well-connected, self-staging successful figure, savvy

³Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 23–52.

about the mindset of his British superiors and about when to make his nationalistic research agenda explicit, and when not. Yet the career of his colleague Na'im Makhouly, presenting similar sociological and educational features, appears much less successful, especially when we consider the shortage of trained archaeological staff in Palestine in those years. How can we make sense of the contrast? Irving suggests that geographical origins—in Stephan Stephan, his ties to the centre of the Mandate and of Palestine's cultural life, Jerusalem—matter more than denominational belonging and the educational opportunities it gave Arab Christians. But further research might also tell us about the qualities nurtured through education, and in particular the role of pedagogy: what was special about the teaching at schools such as the Syrian Orphanage, near Jerusalem, attended by many prominent figures, Stephan included? Was the pedagogy so different in Makhouly's village of Kufr Yasif, also known for its numerous intellectuals? What made a difference—individual psychology, pedagogy, the whole networks (professional, geographic, religious, or else) around the individual, or all of these combined?

Showing a daring sense of opportunity was rewarded by the Mandate system. In the cultural arena, opportunities owed not only to the pervasiveness of the Bible in Britain's psyche, but also to the theatrical nature of the Mandate, whose results were under yearly examination by the League of Nations, and afterwards by many public and private organisations. The competition between Arabs and Jews in Palestine meant not only that British rule in Palestine was staged for representation in Geneva, but that all aspects of collective action tended to be theatricalised; and this was no less true of archaeology, which the Mandate charter made it incumbent upon the British authorities to promote. Museums, as sites of representation of the past, and international exhibitions, devoted to anticipating the future as much as to marketing the present, were of more direct diplomatic importance on the international stage than the kind of alternative diplomatic channel that is suggested by the expression “cultural diplomacy”.

What seemed lost in the new circumstances of the Mandate, though, was the past as tradition. The simultaneous political redefinition of the country in Biblical terms, “from Dan to Beersheba”, as claimed by British diplomats during the Paris peace conference,⁴ and the public dismissal of the Ottoman past by Britain and Arab nationalists alike,⁵ meant that the past was cleanly cut from the present. Connection to the past could only be restored through operations of re-establishing and exhibiting historical continuity—by Western-trained expertise. The collaborative efforts of archaeologists,

⁴Gideon Biger, *The Boundaries of Modern Palestine, 1840–1947* (London: Routledge, 2004), 69–70.

⁵The dismissal was neither complete nor immediate, however, as the Ottoman order compared favourably to the new colonial reality in the eyes of Ottoman-turned-Arab leaders. See Michael Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

highlighted by Mathilde Sigalas in her chapter, anthropologists and museum curators, was the cultural translation of the foundation of an old-new political construct. Mandatory Palestine was born of a promise to found a new reality—the Jewish National Home under the aegis of the British Empire—in a new system—the Mandate—on a claim to legitimacy based on anteriority—Jewish Palestine and the crusades—and imported traditions—Jewish diasporic cultures and British imperial government. Much like Marx's remark that the French Revolution was cloaked in Roman clothes,⁶ Mandatory Palestine was supposed to be created in Biblical image.

But what of the future, then? Where was “the sacred trust of civilization” known as the Mandate taking Palestine? Was it also to be, in René Char’s words, “an inheritance without a will”—a creation from scratch? Far from it, as Palestine was already home to institutions of science, such as the British School of Archaeology and the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française—and design—in the case of the Bezalel School—that were waiting to reopen or expand. Yet, as Nisa Ari explains in her chapter, the work of fashioning and designing a new Palestine was initially understood by the colonial administration to be inspired by the spirit of the Mandate—i.e. the native population had to be brought to the conditions of the modern world by Western minds, following Western models.

Colonial notions soon encountered a self-assertive Arab reality. Very early on, Arab political leaders and intellectuals made it clear that they would have a say in the shaping of the new country. And in their eyes, the selective memory of the new rulers and their Western partners in expertise, dissected here by Mathilde Sigalas, as well as their disregard for the Islamic history of the country, contrasted by Sarah Irving with the interest of (Muslim and Christian) Arab archaeologists, was highly questionable. There was an Arab history to publicise, cultural projects and a sense of design that were part of Arab claims to sovereignty. Design and fashion were sites of self-assertion of Arab agency throughout the Mandate. By 1929, competing projects for an Arab national flag were floated in the Arabic press.⁷ The politics of dress intersected with inter-Arab class wars during the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, when the suit-and-tarbush-wearing Arab bourgeoisie was briefly made to wear elements of traditional rural dress by the insurgents.⁸ From literature to design, to architecture, to music, all forms of cultural creation were discussed within the Arab community. A historiographical stress has been put on “the politics of popular culture”.⁹ But this is a reflection of the way Arabs, having

⁶Quoted in Arendt, *La Crise de la culture*, 183.

⁷Tamir Sorek, “The Orange and the Cross in the Crescent—Imagining Palestine in 1929,” *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 3 (2004): 269–291.

⁸Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003), 32–33.

⁹Rebecca L. Stein and Ted Swedenburg, eds., *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).

been cornered into supposedly inferior and iterative cultural forms (highlighted by Nisa Ari throughout her piece, and by Barbara Haider-Wilson in the evocation of the unusual interest shown by Austrian cultural diplomats for Arab artefacts), used cultural hierarchies to protest and subvert the colonial order. Yet this twist, which has to do with the economic hardships of the 1930s, should not hide the versatile, heritage- and creation-oriented cultural concerns displayed by Arabs.

Indeed, public debate among Mandatory Palestine's Arabs was full of interrogations about the referential past and future ideals on which they wanted to base their new polity. Some of these questions articulated the academic and the political: how to counter Zionist claims to anteriority, and yet to dismiss European images of an unchanging East at the same time? Should certain historical periods be used defensively, perhaps even weaponised against Zionist historical claims, should national history be used as a mobilising tool and therefore appeal to popular imagination within the Arab community, or should the whole and long history of the land be embraced?¹⁰ In any case, as Sarah Irving reminds us, the colonial endorsement of Biblical archaeology and the epistemological influence of exegetic literalism in that endeavour since the 1830s, now an historiographical commonplace, was immediately felt to be political and hegemonic in nature by Palestinian Arabs, and at their expense.

Other debates were axiological, but values blended with aesthetics and strategies of mobilisation: how to accommodate cultural "authenticity" and signifiers of modernity? How could Arabs define, preserve and represent heritage, how could they experiment with shapes and structures that could stand in the future on their own terms, when the British government controlled policy-making and funding, and the Zionist movement had already claimed a monopoly over modern forms and codified them with references to its own heritage? When the political, economic and scientific playing fields could not be described as on a level for Arabs and Zionists, should the former accept the game of intercommunal collaboration as junior partners? Or, as the decision to set up the Arab Fair of Jerusalem in Nisa Ari's chapter illustrates, should they resort to boycott and exclusive institutions? These questions structured cultural public debates among Arabs and beyond; they also attested to the undecided, foundational character of the era.

The newly hegemonic Biblical reading of history had effective marginalising effects for the Arab community, though, and denied it an autonomous course in history. In Ottoman times, Palestine and its inhabitants had been included in narratives that made history closer, and thus more relatable. Teleological Ottoman historiography stressed the inevitability of the Empire's reforms and, their violent enforcement notwithstanding, they made a bridge

¹⁰ Salim Tamari, "Lepers, Lunatics, and Saints: The Nativist Ethnography of Tawfik Canaan and His Jerusalem Circle," in *Mountain Against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture*, ed. Salim Tamari (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 93–112.

between the more distant past, the present and beyond. *Tarih Cevdet*, the epitome of this historiographical trend, had been popularised in the Arab Levant by Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, a journalist and intellectual born in present-day Lebanon, in the 1870s.¹¹ Even ancient archaeology was concerned by the endeavour to make history both Ottoman and local: the long-standing head of the Imperial Archaeological museum in Istanbul, Osman Hamdi Bey, did not limit himself, in his militant defence of Ottoman archaeological heritage, to the organisation of a central institution in Istanbul. He also supported projects aiming at the creation of other *Müze-i humayun* in archeologically significant locales, such as, from 1901 onwards, Jerusalem.¹² The collapse of the Ottoman state undermined the position of Ottoman history and heritage as the past with which people could identify; but then, with the British and the Zionists co-opting the Biblical past as their own, what historical narrative could shore up national claims? And how to disprove a teleological idea, namely the mandatory claim that civilisation was on the side of the coloniser? How could Arabs dismiss the colonial articulation of the past and the future which relegated them to the status of case study for evolutionary anthropology and a function of illustration of Biblical times? Based on what historical references, with which academic and cultural tools, and through which networks or channels of public opinion, would they be able to counter a deeply rooted Western Biblical imagination which assigned them a passive historical role?

The past and the future were heavily contested notions, but as such they offered ample opportunities for various new actors to intervene: international organisations and American archaeologists, as illustrated by Mathilde Sigalas; Arab Christians with modern education and expertise, in Sarah Irving's paper; or artists and entrepreneurs, who feature in Nisa Ari's chapter.

Ironically enough, it could be said that the *virtù* of the men and women of the Mandate and the foundational character of the period were lost on later visitors: when Hannah Arendt visited the West Bank and Gaza in the aftermath of the war of June 1967, she read the landscapes she saw through the lens of development and of the most recent history, blaming Gamal Abd al-Nasser squarely for the state she found the Gaza Strip in and infamously suggesting he "be hung instantly".¹³ Much as no history of Gaza could make sense of its present without taking into account the forced migrations during and following the war of 1948, no analysis of heritage in Palestine/Israel today could skip over the aesthetic and policy choices that Arabs made during

¹¹ Juan R. Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's 'Urabi Movement* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999), 116.

¹² Beatrice St. Laurent and Hımmet Taskomur, "The Imperial Museum of Antiquities in Jerusalem, 1890–1930: An Alternative Narrative," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 55 (Autumn 2013): 6–45.

¹³ Quoted in Susie Linfield, *The Lion's Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 77–78.

the Mandate, under fluid circumstances, to select visions of the past and the future and articulate them into images of the newly carved territory.

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Palestinian Christians in the Mandate Department of Antiquities: History and Archaeology in a Colonial Space

Sarah Irving

When British forces took Palestine from the Ottomans in 1917, the territory's antiquities were high on their list of priorities. Fuelled by a long-standing British Protestant interest in—not to say obsession with—the Holy Land,¹ measures to establish control over and *soi-disant* protection of ancient and historic sites were quickly rolled out. These were in some respects the logical conclusion of decades of European and American archaeological interventions in the region in which investigation of tells² and other sites was often paired (especially in the British and American expeditions) with the desire to “prove” Biblical narratives and identify existing Palestinian sites with places named in scripture. But Mandate antiquities policy was also a multi-layered strand of cultural diplomacy, asserting British stewardship of the Holy Land

¹As most comprehensively described and analysed by Eitan Bar-Yosef in *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799–1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

²In archaeological parlance, a *tell* (from the Arabic for hill) is an artificial mound, often as large as a natural hill, which is composed of centuries or millennia of deposits from sequential layers of occupation. It is best-known as a Middle Eastern phenomenon, resulting from the use of mud brick for a large proportion of buildings, as this breaks down to form layers, unlike stone or wood.

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to international audiences, and playing a role in how the authorities communicated with and sought to influence the inhabitants of Palestine.

Studies of how the Department of Antiquities interacted with the various populations of Mandate Palestine, imposed its powers and concepts of the past, and shaped the future of archaeology, archaeologists and antiquities institutions in Israel, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories are still fragmentary.³ This chapter explores one aspect of the Department's history, that of its Christian Arab staff, by tracing the lives and careers of two men who spent several decades working there. The notion of cultural diplomacy is useful here in several respects, while the discussion also reflects upon recognised problems in the cultural diplomacy literature, namely the absence of reception and reactions among target populations.⁴ Firstly, the Christian employees of the Department tended to be products of pre-WWI cultural diplomacy by those imperial powers which sponsored education in Palestine in order to expand their influence in the region. Secondly, as staff in a Mandate Administration department, they were part of the exercise of cultural diplomacy by the British, who sent messages both to the populations they ruled and to other colonising states through their handling of matters of culture, be they antiquities and history or other fields. And thirdly, we might see the actions of at least some of those Palestinians working for the Department as a form of subaltern cultural diplomacy, as they used the processes and findings of archaeology, translation, cultural explication and museum displays to make their own points about identity and history in this contested environment.

The information which can be reconstructed on the working environments, personal lives and publications of Stephan Hanna Stephan and Na'im Shehadi Makhoul highlight the diversity within the sometimes catch-all notion of Palestinian Christians in the Mandate period. It makes clear the need to consider a range of factors as complicating elements in their interactions with the Mandate authorities. These include proximity to the cultural and political "core" of Jerusalem, denominational background, sense of identity and political viewpoint. Following the careers of Stephan and Makhoul

³There are a number of histories of the development of 'modern' archaeology and of antiquities departments in Egypt (including those by D. M. Reid, mentioned below, but for the Mashriq the only overview of national archaeological institutions is Elena Corbett's *Competitive Archaeology in Jordan: Narrating Identity from the Ottomans to the Hashemites* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014). Zeynep Celik has also done valuable work on archaeological institutions during the Ottoman period, particularly in Turkey and Iraq (*About Antiquities: Politics of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire* [Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016]), as have Edhem Eldem and Zainab Bahrani (*Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914* [Istanbul: SALT/Garanti Kültür, 2011]). The rupture of 1948 and the ongoing tendency towards obsessive interest in the Biblical aspects of Palestinian antiquity, however, seem to have resulted only in studies which tackle specific aspects or themes, and which often frame Palestinian archaeology as that of the 'Holy Land.' See Footnote 6 for examples.

⁴Clarke, "Theorising the Role," 149.

beyond 1948 also shows how the impacts of Mandate structures extended beyond the life of British rule, with Palestinians who had worked for the British remaining embedded in its colonial institutions and in the operation of cultural diplomacy as a means by which Britain retained a place on the world stage as its overt colonial power declined.

In taking a microhistorical approach, focusing on the lives and works of Stephan and Makhoul, this chapter adds granularity to the existing literature, which tends to concentrate on institutions and/or ideas, privileging narratives and experiences of the white, British men of the Mandate administration or of the institutions they ran and imposed on others.⁵ Studies of, for instance, the history of Biblical themes in Euro-American archaeology in Palestine are undoubtedly important in tracing how orientalist thought operated to reinforce colonial domination in Palestine. This paper instead seeks to contribute to knowledge and analysis of a different strand of Palestinian history, focusing on the dynamics of cultural diplomacies for the colonised population, in this case those working for the Department of Antiquities itself, and the complex tensions of identity and structural position that their professional positions entailed. It also intervenes in the ongoing debate over culture and identity under colonial regimes: had Palestinian Arabs who worked for the British Mandate Department of Antiquities, operating within the disciplinary terms of Western archaeology, been “ensnared” and become “lost to their people”, as Frantz Fanon saw them?⁶ If so, in the Palestinian context, does this label Christian communities, which often had more educational, religious or professional contact with missionaries, foreign visitors and later the Mandate authorities, as more susceptible to colonisation? Or were they, consciously or not, using the resources of the colonial regime to research, record and protect their heritage at a time when its ownership and meaning was fiercely contested?

⁵See, for example, Thomas Davis, *Shifting Sands: The Rise and Fall of Biblical Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Shimon Gibson, “British Archaeological Institutions in Mandatory Palestine, 1917–1948,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 131, no. 2 (1999): 115–143; Burke Long, *Planting and Reaping Albright: Politics, Ideology, and Interpreting the Bible* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2010); P. R. S. Moorey, *A Century of Biblical Archaeology* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1991); John Moscrop, *Measuring Jerusalem: The Palestine Exploration Fund and British Interests in the Holy Land* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000); Neil Silberman, *Digging for God and Country: Exploration in the Holy Land, 1799–1917* (New York: Anchor Books, 1982); Amara Thornton, “Archaeologists-in-Training: Students of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1920–1936,” *Journal of Open Archaeology Data* 1 (2012). A valuable contribution which bucks this trend is Daniella Talmon-Heller’s chapter on the Arab scribe who aided the Palestine Exploration Fund’s Survey of Western Palestine, “Job (Ayyūb), Ḥusayn and Saladin in Late Ottoman Palestine: Religious Life and Local History in the Memoirs of Nu’mān al-Qasāṭḥī, the Arab Scribe of the Survey of Western Palestine, and Beyond,” in *Exploring the Holy Land: 150 Years of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, eds. David Gurevich and Anat Kidron (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2019) which, along with my own research on Yusif Khazine and Yusif Kana’an, who worked for the PEF prior to WWI, helps bring to light the involvement of local figures in imperial archaeology in Palestine.

⁶Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 148.

THE PALESTINE MANDATE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES

Although the pre-WWI European and American organisations set up to excavate and explore the “Holy Land” and the discourses which gave rise to them have been widely studied, there is still no comprehensive study of the history and operations of the British Mandate administration’s Department of Antiquities. The lives of some individuals who worked in the Department have been examined, but these are primarily British staff who occupied senior positions.⁷ The process of tracing the histories and works of most of the Arab Palestinian employees is, with the exception of Donald Whitcomb’s articles on Dimitri Baramki, an ongoing process. This gap in the historical knowledge contributes to somewhat fragmented and one-dimensional understandings of the role and functions of the Department and its relationships with the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine. Articles⁸ which touch on the subject often rely on the archaeologist Albert Glock’s unnuanced and sometimes inaccurate article⁹ and dictionary entry¹⁰ which, seeing the social and political dynamics of Mandate Palestine solely through the lens of Zionist colonialism, use raw numbers of the employees of the Department to draw conclusions about the biases which drove its decision-making. The result is a somewhat monolithic image which obscures variation within the staff of the Department and change over time in its policies, practices and staffing, and attributes little agency to Palestinians themselves.

A full description of the Department of Antiquities is outwith the scope of this chapter, but some idea of its workings is necessary to understand much of the discussion. Based, like most other divisions of the Mandate administration, in Jerusalem, the “Blue Book” official records show its growth from the early 1920s to the late 1940s. In 1926, it was headed by a director (always an archaeologically trained British official, starting with the well-known figure of John Garstang). Below him was a chief inspector and an inspector of antiquities, also both based in Jerusalem; assistant inspectors (at this time Jacob Ory in Jaffa and Na’im Makhoul in Acre) fulfilled this role in other regions of Palestine. The position of student inspector—a trainee role which was, over the period of the Department, filled by Dimitri Baramki (1909–1984), Salem al-Husseini (1905–1984) and Awni Dajani (?–1967)—was at the time empty,

⁷ Examples include John Green’s “Archaeology and Politics in the Holy Land: The Life and Career of P. L. O. Guy,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 141, no. 3 (2009): 167–187, the copious obituaries of figures such as John Garstang, R. W. Hamilton and C. N. Johns, and the books listed in n4.

⁸ For example: Irene Maffi, “The Emergence of Cultural Heritage in Jordan: The Itinerary of a Colonial Invention,” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 9, no. 1 (2009): 17.

⁹ Albert Glock, “Cultural Bias in the Archaeology of Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no. 2 (Winter, 1995): 48–59.

¹⁰ Albert Glock, Lois Glock and Nancy Lapp, “Archaeology,” in *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, ed. Philip Mattar (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2005), 74–75.

with Baramki joining in 1927. Supporting these professional staff, who handled archaeological preservation and exploration across Palestine, were manual labourers, guards and messengers. Secretarial support was supplied from the civil service pool. Alongside the excavators were those whose roles focused on finds, archives and displaying the department's work to the public, initially in a small museum comprising just a few rooms. In 1926 these were a departmental and museum assistant (the numismatist C. Lambert) and a museum assistant whose position was also empty.¹¹ Although unlisted in the Blue Book, Stephan Hanna Stephan had been seconded to the library by this time.

By 1944 the situation shows both continuity and change. There is still a director, R. W Hamilton, supported by a field archaeologist (Cedric Johns) and four full inspectors—Ory (now in Tulkarm), Makhouly, who had moved to Nazareth, Baramki and Husseini, both of whom had risen through the ranks after being recruited as students. The opening of the Palestine Archaeological Museum in the 1930s increased the Jerusalem-based staff considerably: John Iliffe was keeper of the museum, with Dimitri Baramki's brother Jalil and Immanuel Ben-Dor as assistant keepers. The Library was headed by Walter Abel Heurtley; Stephan Stephan was his assistant there but still does not appear in the Blue Book listings because he was still technically seconded from the general civil service. William Boyd Kennedy-Shaw was departmental assistant, providing support to the director, while the museum's growing collections demanded a specialist chemist (Haroutune Jamil Halebian) and formatore¹² (Mubarak Saad).¹³ Discussions found in the internal files of the department and its communications with departments such as the treasury show that the museum also employed more ungraded staff including guards, nightwatchmen and museum attendants, some of whom had power of arrest in case of theft or disruption.¹⁴ The Palestine Museum was a substantial and prestigious addition to the British administration's armoury when it came to cultural diplomacy, showing to international audiences the importance of Britain's self-imposed role as protector and explicator of the Holy Land's ancient remains. But it was also a contested space. The Museum's staff made decisions about what finds were displayed, how they would be labelled and what interpretations would be foregrounded, but internal correspondence shows that they were under considerable pressure from different groups to present particular narratives and, in particular, to provide all materials in the three official languages of the Mandate.

¹¹ Palestine Blue Book 1926, 45.

¹² A technical role involving making models and casts in wax, plaster and other materials.

¹³ Palestine Blue Book 1944, 480.

¹⁴ National Library of Israel folders 'Power of arrest for museum and library attendants: Antiquities Ordinance' (26/22) and 'Establishment list, Department of Antiquities, Palestine Archaeological Museum, 1929–35' (23/18).

PALESTINIANS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES

How should we view the positions of Palestinian Arabs who worked for the Department of Antiquities (and, indeed, other divisions of the British Mandate Administration), how were they seen by other Palestinians and how did they understand their own roles? To some of the rebels of the 1936–1939 Palestinian Uprising, anyone working for the British was a traitor who should withdraw their labour or face punishment.¹⁵ In Albert Glock's narrative of the Department, focusing on its colonial nature and the disproportionate numbers of recently immigrated Jews in its upper ranks, Palestinians were sidelined victims of a colonising system.¹⁶ Ilana Feldman's historical ethnography of Mandate employees in Gaza, however, shows that most saw themselves as possessed of agency, negotiating their way between jobs in which they perceived themselves as able to serve their own people, versus police and other security roles which they viewed as potentially collaborating with repression.¹⁷ Stephan's own letters reveal a blend of intellectual and cultural self-confidence¹⁸ with elements of colonisation, as when he writes to Finnish anthropologist Hilma Granqvist that: "We never had this idea [of studying women and peasant societies] and have to learn a lot from the West. We just have to prove that we Orientals are students who are quick and eager to learn".¹⁹

What these varying examples highlight is that blanket assumptions about colonialism or westernisation do not fit the lived experiences of Palestinian Arabs working for the Mandate administration. Glock stresses the large numbers of Arabs working in the lower ranks of the Department of Antiquities, as guards, messengers and labourers, while Jewish employees, from a much smaller fraction of the population, occupied better paid and more prestigious roles. He acknowledges that this is the result of highly educated Jews moving to Palestine (Leo Mayer, for example, already had a PhD from the Institute of Oriental Studies in Vienna when he joined the Department in the early 1920s), but places the blame for the lower number of educated Arabs on the staff squarely with the British. The practicalities of the situation, though, challenge this logic. The number of Palestinians with education and training

¹⁵ Ilana Feldman, *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority and the Work of Rule, 1917–67* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 82–84; W. F. Abboushi, "The Road to Rebellion: Arab Palestine in the 1930s," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6, no. 3 (1977): 42; Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 103–104.

¹⁶ Glock, "Cultural Bias," and Glock, "Archaeology."

¹⁷ Feldman, *Governing Gaza*, 82–84.

¹⁸ Stephan Hanna Stephan to Hilma Granqvist, 15 April 1932. Palestine Exploration Fund, Granqvist file, unnumbered; 27 March 1934, Granqvist file doc 370; 17 March 1932, 367.

¹⁹ Stephan Stephan to Hilma Granqvist, 15 April 1932. PEF Granqvist archive, unnumbered.

in the field was significantly lower and the Department, operating with a fairly small budget, was required to quickly establish itself and then to inspect a large area with scant resources.

The Department does seem to have provided training for Arab candidates from early in its operation, as we shall see in the case of Na'im Makhoully. The Department's hiring of young Arab men who were trained and acquired degrees later on is also apparent in the cases of Dimitri Baramki and Salem Abdulsalam al-Husseini, both of whom went on to have successful archaeological careers; Husseini gained a degree from the American University of Beirut and Baramki (having started as a student inspector at the age of only 17) acquired a University of London degree by distance learning.²⁰ Is it also worth noting that, in the economic setting of Mandate Palestine, government jobs were comparatively well-paid, desirable and prestigious in the eyes of much of the Palestinian population²¹; surviving archives show that even the gruelling position of resident site guard at Atlit Castle near Haifa was much sought-after and fought-over by both local men and those from across the region.²²

The British presence could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be called anything but colonial, and the aims of political Zionism in Mandate Palestine must equally be termed settler-colonial. But in the context of this paper, attempting to consider how Christian Palestinians of the Mandate period viewed and experienced the Department of Antiquities and the discipline of archaeology, what other criteria should be applied? There are undoubtedly criticisms to be made of the British failure to apply the tutelary function of its Mandate trust equitably between Jews and Arabs (as well as of the entire Mandate concept itself), and access to government jobs was a long-standing subject of complaint and tensions between Jews and Arabs.²³ But within the confines of a small department, some Palestinians did access training, career advancement and, presumably, intellectual satisfaction. It can

²⁰Donald Whitcomb, "Dimitri Baramki: Discovering Qasr Hisham," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 55 (2013): 79; Glock et al., "Archaeology," 74–75.

²¹Feldman, *Governing Gaza*, 70–76.

²²Israel Antiquities Authority digital archive, correspondence folder on "Guard Abdallah el Masri," The file contains letters and reports on El Masri from the 1930s and 1940s, covering his working conditions, absences etc., his rejection of allegations which led to the termination of his employment, and the negotiations which the Department had to go through with the nearby village, the inhabitants of which objected to a stranger being given the job and stated repeatedly that it should be given to a man from among their number.

²³Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 173; Weldon Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 172; Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 101, 112, 180.

be argued that in order to do so they had to conform to Western ideas of scholarship and of Eastern culture and history;²⁴ on the other hand they also took some of those ideas and reshaped them to their own purposes.²⁵

As well the general question of the uneasy relationship between the employees of the Department of Antiquities and British colonial rule is that of whether religion played a part in how Palestinian Arabs encountered the antiquities authorities and their ideas. Certainly Christians are more visible than Muslim Palestinians in the historical record of the Department: the most successful archaeologist among the Arab staff, Dimitri Baramki, was Christian, educated at the Anglican St George's School in Jerusalem, as was his brother Jalil, who worked for the Department for a while before switching to law.²⁶ Na'im Makhoul was Orthodox, educated in a Russian school in Nazareth,²⁷ and Stephan came from the Beit Jala Syriac community and was educated by the German Protestants of the Schneller School.²⁸ Mubarak Saad, also Christian, was hired as a formatore around 1930,²⁹ continuing to work at the Palestine Archaeological Museum after its transfer to Jordanian management in 1948; his son Yusif/Joseph became the Museum's secretary.³⁰ A specialist chemist with the Armenian name of Haroutune Jamil Halebian appears in the records sometime in the 1930s and stayed until at least 1945³¹; this is probably the Haroutyun Jamil Halebian (born in Aintab/Gaziantep) who graduated in pharmacy from the Syrian Protestant College in 1915 and in the intervening period worked at the government hospital in Hebron. He was listed in the university's records as Protestant.³²

Among those Arab staff of the Department of Antiquities whose names appear in written sources, therefore, only Salem Abdulsalam al-Husseini, a

²⁴Nadia Abu El-Haj, "Producing (Arti)Facts: Archaeology and Power During the British Mandate of Palestine," *Israel Studies* 7, no. 2 (2002): 33–36, 40–41.

²⁵Sarah Irving, "Stephan Hanna Stephan and Eviya Çelebi's Book of Travels," in *Cultural Entanglement in the Pre-Independence Arab World*, eds. Anthony Gorman and Sarah Irving (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), 217–237.

²⁶Whitcomb, "Dimitri Baramki," 79.

²⁷Ali Zgair, "Rasa'il wa-taqrir katabha mufattish al-athar Na'im Makhoul min Kufr Yasif" (Letters and reports written by Antiquities Inspector Na'im Makhoul from Kufr Yasif), *Al-Madar*, 14 August 2016 (<http://www.almadar.co.il/news-12,N-66149.html>), accessed February 2019.

²⁸Sarah Irving, "A Young Man of Promise: finding a Place for Stephan Hanna Stephan in the History of Mandate Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (2018): 43.

²⁹Palestine Blue Book 1930, 119.

³⁰R. W. Hamilton, *Letters from the Middle East by an Occasional Archaeologist* (Durham: Pentland Press, 1992), 61, 102, 132.

³¹Palestine Blue Book 1939, 480; Blue Book 1945, 480.

³²Hratch Yervant Kestenian, "A Portrait of Armenian Student Life at the Syrian Protestant College, 1885–1920" (MA thesis, American University of Beirut, 2015), 114.

student and then full inspector in the 1930s and 1940s, and Awni Dajani, who joined as an inspector in the final years of the Mandate, were Muslim, both from eminent Jerusalem families. However, among the guards, door-men and labourers of the Palestine Archaeological Museum and the many excavations and historical sites for which the Department had ongoing responsibility, it is likely that the majority were Muslims, although the archives show that they did include both Christians and Jews. This difference is down to various factors, including the varying educational access between different religious communities, the apparent preference of some British administrators for Christian over Muslim employees and, sometimes, the political positions of different denominations vis-a-vis the British.³³ Usually absent from this discussion, though, is the role of a kind of core-periphery dynamic: the Department of Antiquities, in common with almost all central offices of the Mandate administration, was based in Jerusalem, and this city was home to a much higher proportion of Jews and Christians than almost anywhere else in Palestine. At elite levels, this made less difference (hence the presence of Muslim Jerusalemites Husseini and Dajani), but when we encounter names among the Department's manual workers which are likely to be Christian it is mainly in Jerusalem.³⁴

Overall, then, it seems likely that Christians had few formal advantages over Muslims when it came to accessing jobs at the Department of Antiquities. But being Christian did intersect with trends in education, location and language which disproportionately favoured this community among Palestinian Arabs and which were encouraged by a colonial environment. The small number of cases involved makes more generalisation impossible—we cannot, for example, identify specific schools or churches which sent more young men into archaeological training or to the Museum, as would be possible if analysing the intake of, for instance, the Government Arab College or American University of Beirut. There are simply too few examples on which to draw. What we seem to witness among Palestinian Arabs employed in white-collar roles by the Department of Antiquities is that Western-style educations, language skills and intellectual frameworks were privileged, and this created a space into which middle-class urban Christians and a smaller number of urban Muslim notables could enter, but which was closed to those with more traditional Islamic educations.

³³Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism 1917–48* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 13, 23, 32 et passim; Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 17, 22–25 et passim.

³⁴Lists of Department staff which lead to this conclusion can be found in Department of Antiquities files in the Israel National Archives, including the draft estimates file for 1937/38 (4310/6) and especially the unusually comprehensive listings in the estimates files for 1946/47 (147/43) and 1947/47 (178/4).

STEPHAN HANNA STEPHAN AND NA’IM SHEHADI MAKHOULY

Stephan Hanna Stephan was born in 1894 in the town of Beit Jala, abutting Bethlehem, to a Syriac Orthodox family, and was educated at the German Lutheran-run Schneller School (the Syrian Orphanage), one of the most significant sites of German soft power in Palestine.³⁵ The Syriac Orthodox formed a small community which was uncomfortably combined with the larger Armenian church under Ottoman rule and was thus doubly marginal, relative to the richer and more numerous Greek Orthodox and other denominations.³⁶ He joined the British Mandate administration as a general civil servant, starting at the Treasury, but some of his earliest published writings (from 1921/22) show his existing interest in the culture and history of Palestine from a perspective which means that he is often included in the notional “Canaan circle” of nativist ethnographers who “challenged a colonial British version of Palestinian history that saw Arabs in Palestine as transient and ephemeral”.³⁷

In works such as his translations of the Palestine sections of Evilya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname*,³⁸ his “Modern Palestinian Parallels to the Song of Songs”,³⁹ and several guidebooks for English-speaking visitors during World War II, Stephan asserted a strong and distinctive Palestinian culture which can be seen as a kind of subaltern cultural diplomacy, using historical, cultural and religious themes both to assert Palestinian legitimacy against Zionism claims, and to suggest commonalities between Palestinian Christians and their European and American co-religionists.⁴⁰ In Stephan’s portrayal, Palestinian culture had several defining features, including roots in a rich and diverse blend of cultures, and the presence within its contemporary manifestation of instances of modernity which refuted Zionist claims to have brought civilisation to the Arab population of Palestine. His mid-1930s publication of Arabic manuals and phrasebooks for English- and German-speaking learners also fits into the general idea of the Arabic language as a unifying factor among Muslim and Christian Arabs.⁴¹ He intervened in debates in Arabic-speaking

³⁵ Irving, “Young Man of Promise,” 43.

³⁶ 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, 71.

³⁷ Khaled Furani and Dan Rabinowitz, “The Ethnographic Arriving of Palestine,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011): 479; Salim Tamari, *Mountain Against the Sea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 93–111.

³⁸ Irving, “A Young Man of Promise,” 47–55.

³⁹ *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 2 (1922): 199–278.

⁴⁰ Irving, “Young Man of Promise,” 47–55.

⁴¹ K. M. J. Sanchez Summerer, “Preserving the Catholics of the Holy Land or Integrating Them into the Palestine Nation (1920–1950)?” in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, eds. S. R. Goldstein-Sabbah and H. L. Murre-van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 140–142; Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 30–31.

intellectual and educational circles, delivering talks on the Palestine Broadcasting Service's Arabic radio on Palestinian history and folklore,⁴² commenting on the rights of women in Arab societies for the *Nahda* journal *Sarkis*,⁴³ and contributing articles and letters on Palestinian history and culture to the pages of Arabic newspapers published in Cairo and Jerusalem.⁴⁴

At the Department of Antiquities and later the Palestine Archaeological Museum Stephan was largely based in the library, first on secondment from the general civil service pool, and in later years as a full member of the department.⁴⁵ Without a formal university education he seems never to have been considered eligible for the librarian's position, but was an assistant. Despite this, he appears to have built up a considerable reputation in the region, authoring a bibliographic work for a series at the American University of Beirut and becoming known in Jerusalem's scholarly circles for his linguistic prowess.⁴⁶ The Department of Antiquities recognised the value of Stephan's translations, mainly of Ottoman Turkish texts, and paid him extra for carrying them out.⁴⁷ By the end of the Mandate period and in the immediate aftermath of the Nakba (when Stephan, his wife and their two sons became refugees in Lebanon), Stephan was travelling repeatedly to Cyprus to work on Arabic inscriptions there, and regularly took his children with him.⁴⁸

Stephan never expressed overt political or religious opinions, unlike his counterpart at the Palestine Oriental Society, Tawfiq Canaan, who caused something of an uproar with his outspoken pamphlets at the beginning of the Palestinian Uprising in 1936.⁴⁹ As a public employee, open political statements were forbidden.⁵⁰ However, some of his writings suggest a sense of both Palestinian and Christian identity, to the extent of implicitly expressing a vision of the Palestinian future. In his translation and annotations to Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*, there is a strong sense of the existence of a distinctly

⁴²Ibid., 51–52.

⁴³Istefan Hana Istefan (Stephan Hanna Stephan), "al-Mar'a," *Majallat Sarkis* 11, no. 1 (January 1922): 64–65.

⁴⁴These included letters on the site of the grave of Christ in *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya* ("mawqi' al-qabir al maqdis: rad 'ala maqlid," (The site of the Holy Sepulchre: response to article), 5 November 1927; I am indebted to Eli Osherooff for bringing these letters to my attention. The articles in Jerusalem papers were mainly on folk culture and local historical sites and appeared in *al-Muntada*, *al-Dhakira* and *al-Minbar* between 1943 and 1947.

⁴⁵"Appointments, Etc," *Palestine Gazette* 1521 (12 September 1946), 843.

⁴⁶St. H. Stephan, *A Post-War Bibliography of the Near-Eastern Mandates, 1919–1930* (Beirut: American University, 1936); Hilma Granqvist daybook 17 February 1931, Hilma Granqvists Arkiv <http://granqvist.sls.fi>, accessed March 2019.

⁴⁷Irving, "Young Man of Promise," 47.

⁴⁸Email from Cristina Stephan, 30 November 2016.

⁴⁹Tawfiq Canaan, *The Palestine Arab Cause* (Jerusalem: The Modern Press, 1936); *Conflict in the Land of Peace* (Jerusalem: Syrian Orphanage Press, 1936).

⁵⁰Feldman, *Governing Gaza*, 84.

Palestinian selfhood: this encompasses Muslim, Jewish and Christian faiths and urban and rural ways of life, and is seen as vibrant, deeply rooted in myth and scripture, prosperous and cultured.⁵¹

His three tourist guidebooks, co-authored with photographer Boulus ‘Afif, published during WWII and explicitly aimed at British and Commonwealth soldiers on leave in Palestine, present a similar image of a mixed and inclusive society (describing, for example, new Jewish towns as well as the older sites one might expect), but with a particularly Christian edge.⁵² Only when dealing with Christian sites do they shift tone from businesslike guidance to deep reverence.⁵³ It may be that, in stressing their Christian identities and the New Testament connections of Palestine, Stephan and Boulus sought to appeal to British Christian servicemen as part of the ongoing competition with Zionist writers to lay claim to Palestinian land and history. The depth of Stephan’s personal religious convictions is impossible to know, but the guidebook suggests that he possessed enough of a Christian identity to feel comfortable operationalising it in order to propose a common ground between himself and his readers. The appearance of an overt strand of Christian identification in Stephan’s writings in the 1940s, absent in earlier works, also accords with Noah Haiduc-Dale’s observation that Christians in the early years of the Mandate had seen and shown themselves not as a minority, because they were part of the Arab majority, but that in the later period Christian minorityhood was asserted as a way of critiquing British policy.⁵⁴ This also chimes with the fact that Stephan’s writings for Arabic-language papers in the 1940s included entries in specifically Christian publications such as *al-Minbar*, whereas his earlier articles and letters had appeared in journals which emphasised a common Arab culture.

Na’im Makhouly’s work at the Department of Antiquities was of a very different nature. Unlike Stephan’s role in the library, dealing with books and manuscripts and translating documents, Makhouly’s entailed travel from his headquarters in Acre and later Nazareth across the whole northern region of Palestine, to cities including Nablus, Jenin, Tabariyyeh, Akka and Haifa, and to towns and villages along the border with Lebanon and the Mediterranean coast. With a more limited range of publications, and fewer encounters with international scholars and other readers and audiences, his opportunities—and, the evidence seems to suggest, his desire—to exercise a kind of antiquities-based cultural diplomacy were much more limited than Stephan’s. Makhouly’s example thus highlights the variation in Christian Palestinian

⁵¹ Irving, “Book of Travels,” n.p.

⁵² Sarah Irving, “‘This Is Palestine’: History and Modernity in Guidebooks to Mandate Palestine,” *Contemporary Levant* (2019).

⁵³ Stephan Hanna Stephan and Boulus ‘Afif, *This Is Palestine: A Concise Guide to the Important Sites in Palestine, Transjordan and Syria* (Jerusalem: Bayt-ul-Makdes Press, 1942), 14, 114.

⁵⁴ Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 3, 61–62, 71–77, 87, 107–108.

responses to, and use of, cultural diplomacy as a feature of their relations with the Mandate authorities.

Born in the town of Kufr Yasif, north of Akka, in 1898, Makhouly came from an Orthodox Christian family and, after primary education in Kufr Yasif (later dubbed by veteran Palestinian journalist Atallah Mansour “the most academic Arab town in Israel”⁵⁵), went to the school in the Russian compound in Nazareth.⁵⁶ He then seems to have acquired training at the newly formed British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, which in the early years of the Mandate was run in tandem with the Department of Antiquities by John Garstang. Makhouly does not appear in the formal lists of students of the School,⁵⁷ but neither do other Arab students and later employees of the Department who are believed to have studied there. The logical conclusion seems to be that the “official” lists are of students of archaeology from British universities who came for fieldwork, but that the School also served as an instruction centre for the Department of Antiquities, and that Makhouly was the first of these unregistered trainees.⁵⁸

Makhouly was employed in April 1922 as an Assistant Inspector of Antiquities for the northern region of Palestine, based initially in Acre and from 1939 in Nazareth.⁵⁹ His job, as revealed by the Department of Antiquities files, was varied and involved much travel. Archaeological tasks included inspecting buildings and sites to see if they warranted protection and further investigation by the department, often under pressure if remains had been uncovered during construction or farming and the owners of the land needed to get on with their work. Frequently these inspections were brief affairs, resulting in a case folder containing one or two pro formas and a photograph or sketch plan of the site. Sometimes, however, they were major and protracted projects, as at Tell al-Hawwam near Haifa, which became a full-scale excavation and also embroiled Makhouly in a legal case against people accused of illegally digging for antiquities and disturbing the archaeological site. The accused, in their turn, pointed to the Shell Oil Company, whose refinery site (now Oil Refineries Ltd) occupied the adjacent plot.⁶⁰ Conflict over archaeological finds and sites could at times turn nasty: guards and attendants at all protected sites—not just at the Archaeological Museum in

⁵⁵ Atallah Mansour, *Narrow Gate Churches: the Christian Presence in the Holy Land Under Muslim and Jewish Rule* (Pasadena: Hope Publishing House, 2004), 256.

⁵⁶ Zgaier, “Rasa’il wa-taqrir.”

⁵⁷ Thornton, “Archaeologists-in-Training.”

⁵⁸ I am indebted to Dr Amara Thornton for our discussions of Makhouly’s training and the likely explanations for the inconsistencies and gaps which appear in records on the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

⁵⁹ Palestine Blue Book 1928, 111; Palestine Blue Book 1939, 480.

⁶⁰ Israel National Archives folder 25/20, “Destruction of an Illicit Digging for Antiquities at Tel Abu Hawam Near Haifa,” 1929–1933.

Jerusalem—had powers of arrest, and Makhouly himself had received threats in the course of his work.⁶¹

The conventional viewpoint on such cases is that the staff of the Department of Antiquities were preserving archaeological heritage, conceptualised as a kind of universal property. Nadia Abu El-Haj, however, stresses the extent to which ideas of archaeological protection, instituted in the Ottoman period and continued by the British, represented new claims to ownership which dislocated people from the parts of their surroundings which were labelled antique.⁶² The latter, in turn, focused on the Judaeo-Christian past and saw Islamic heritage, particularly that from the more recent Ottoman period, as less worthy of protection. Makhouly's own duties certainly involved interfering in the affairs of people who seem to have been accustomed to exploiting tells and ruins for earth, fertiliser and building stone, and who, with the imposition first of Ottoman antiquities laws and later the British regimen, were encountering a new set of rules governing interactions with their surroundings.⁶³

Where finds proved of sufficient interest, Makhouly or one of his colleagues might also write them up for the *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine*, the administration's academic journal.⁶⁴ Compared to his colleagues, though, Makhouly does not give the impression of being a keen writer, with markedly fewer publications than those of similar rank in the department, whether of Arab, Jewish or European origins. Those articles he did publish tend to be short and, like that on Jish, include long finds lists rather than descriptive or analytic text. One senses an archaeologist whose strength lay in the field and in the logistics and personal relations necessary to conserve the remains on his turf, rather than an academic who wanted to write long articles. One tendency of both Makhouly and Stephan's articles for QDAP is, however, striking. Among American and British excavators, including Makhouly and Stephan's contemporaries (such as DAP chief inspector in the 1920s P. L. O. Guy and the famous US archaeologist William Foxwell Albright, who headed the American School of Archaeology in Jerusalem during periods 1922–1929 and 1933–1936⁶⁵) there is an almost fanatical

⁶¹ Letter from Director of Antiquities E. T. Richmond to Director of the Public Works Department, 9 July 1930, ATQ/235 (Israeli Antiquities Authority digital archive file "Khirbet al Hawam").

⁶² Abu El-Haj, "Producing (Arti)Facts," 35–36, 40–42.

⁶³ Albert Glock, "Jenin," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 678–680.

⁶⁴ Makhouly's articles include a short piece on a number of stone seats found during construction of a hotel at Al-Hamma ("El Hamme: Discovery of Stone Seats," *QDAP* 6, no. 1 [1936], 59–62), a site report on excavations of a sixth-century synagogue at 'Isfiya ("A sixth-century synagogue at 'Isfiya. I Excavation report by N. Makhouly; II The Mosaic Floor, the Inscription, Conclusion, by M. Avi-Yonah," *QDAP* 3 [1934], 118–144) and a report on a series of tombs and the finds from them at Jish ("Rock-Cut Tombs at El Jish," *QDAP* 8 [1938], 45–50).

⁶⁵ Both Guy and Albright's interpretations of archaeological sites attracted criticism, at the time or subsequently, for the extent to which they allowed their desires to discover sites of Biblical importance to lead them to questionable conclusions (Green, "Archaeology and Politics,"

obsession with identifying the Biblical antecedents of archaeological sites. But neither of these Christian Palestinians, or their other Palestinian colleagues, adopted such a narrative. Na'im Makhouly's writings are scholastically dry and scientific in tone, eschewing any kind of opinion or personal comment, while Stephan's approach to the Palestinian past is very much in line with the "Canaan circle" notion of a diverse, blended history creating a richly patterned present.

Makhouly's best-known and most widely cited publication, his *Guide to Akka*, is no exception.⁶⁶ This was one of a series of guidebooks to Palestinian cities published by the Department of Antiquities which also included *Bethlehem* (by R. W. Hamilton), *Megiddo* (Shipton), *Citadel of Jerusalem* (C. N. Johns), *Beisan* (Ben-Dor) and *Sebastieh* (Hamilton).⁶⁷ The *Guide* represents a useful point of comparison between Stephan and Makhouly's works. Stephan's writings display an underlying, or sometimes overt, sense of Palestinian identity and nationhood, and he published in Arabic, German and English in a range of journal and books which carried his ideas to diverse audiences. Makhouly, by contrast, seems only to have written for publication by his employers. The *Guide to Acre*, while undoubtedly a "local"⁶⁸ voice in some respects, often adopts a Eurocentric perspective. Of the 65-page historical introduction to the city, 20 pages deal with the Crusader period, while the "Mamluke and Early Turkish" section which follows is only two pages long, despite stretching from the late thirteenth-century to the eighteenth-century rebuilding of Akka under Daher al-'Omar.⁶⁹ The conquest of Acre by the Mamluks is termed its "fall", suggesting a Crusader rather than Egyptian viewpoint, and there are substantial quotations from medieval Christian writers of European origin, while excerpts from Arabic, Turkish and generally Muslim documents are confined to some paragraphs from the famous Andalusi traveller Ibn Jubayr.⁷⁰

It may be that the very conventional language and narrative of the *Guide* derives from its status as a quasi-official publication, whereas Stephan's books were independently printed and his articles appeared in journals with a much smaller, and more academic, focus. The role of Makhouly's superior in the

171, 173; William G. Dever, "What Remains of the House That Albright Built?" *The Biblical Archaeologist* 56, no. 1 (1993): 25–35.

⁶⁶Jerusalem: Government of Palestine Department of Antiquities/Azriel Press, 1941.

⁶⁷Jean Perrot, "La Musée archéologique de Palestine, à Jérusalem," *Syrie* 25, nos. 3–4 (1946): 268–300.

⁶⁸Amara Thornton, "Tents, Tours, and Treks: Archaeologists, Antiquities Services, and Tourism in Mandate Palestine and Transjordan," *Public Archaeology* 11, no. 4 (2012): 210.

⁶⁹Makhouly, *Guide to Acre*, 21–41, 42–43.

⁷⁰Ibid., 23–25.

Department, field archaeologist C. N. Johns, may also play a part: the first edition of the Guide carries a preface by the Department's director, R. W. Hamilton, calling it "chiefly the work of Mr. Na'im Makhoul", but "assisted in its preparation" by Johns, who is said to have contributed "parts of the historical section" and "revised the whole work".⁷¹ One envisages Makhoul doing the leg-work, hunting around the Old City of Akka for sites and noting their locations and descriptions, while a second contributor adds historical narrative and fine-tunes the manuscript. By contrast, the closest analogue among Stephan's works—the Evliya translations, several of which were published with annotations by Department Librarian Leo A. Mayer—still maintains an aura of independence lacking in Makhoul's *Guide*.

Alongside carrying out actual archaeology, Makhoul had to play bureaucrat, logistics manager, construction overseer and writer. His job entailed liaising between different government departments, some of them with conflicting interests: at Acre (Akka), for instance, the city and sea walls were protected archaeological sites but also—especially the latter—vital parts of the town's infrastructure.⁷² Repairs to Akka's architectural heritage, combined with the Mandate administration's financial pressures, thus entailed convoluted arrangements and sometimes tetchy exchanges of notes on subjects such as which department had prior claim on supplies of building stone.⁷³ When temporary local staff, such as surveyors, labourers and guards, had to be hired for ad hoc excavations, it was Na'im Makhoul who had to source them and negotiate rates of pay with the Jerusalem office; he might also be called upon to take photographs for visiting archaeologists, bring along a spade and measuring equipment if a senior colleague was visiting to inspect a site, or make recommendations to other government offices on whether land could be leased to farmers or used by a school as a playground or by the notorious Akka prison as a "criminal lunatics' exercise yard".⁷⁴ Here there was little or no scope for articulating a particular identity; sites were examined whenever the Department was alerted to their discovery, and Makhoul's role in interpreting and extrapolating from larger excavations was limited.

⁷¹Ibid., iii.

⁷²Letter from Director of Antiquities R. W. Hamilton to C. N. Johns, 31 August 1944; Letter from R. W. Hamilton to A/Director of Public Works, Jerusalem, 13 April 1944, ATQ/6/23 (Israel Antiquities Authority digital archive, 'Acre' folder); Jacob Sharvit and Dror Planer, "Akko, the Southern Seawall: Preliminary Report," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 126 (2014).

⁷³Letters between District Engineer, Haifa District and Director of Antiquities, Jerusalem, 11 July 1943 (ref 16/11); 30 May 1943 (ref 16/11); 18 May 1943 (ref ATQ/6/23) (Israel Antiquities Authority digital archive, 'Acre' folder).

⁷⁴Letter from the Acting Director of Public Works to the Chief Secretary (copied to Director of Antiquities), "Exercise Yard for Criminal Lunatics Acre," 2nd October 1943 (ref. 2/6/1) (Israel Antiquities Authority digital archive, 'Acre' folder).

STEPHAN AND MAKHOULY AFTER 1948

Makhoully and Stephan's trajectories after 1948 are also illuminating in respect both of the relationship between the Mandate administration and its Palestinian employees, and of the place of British cultural diplomacy in the Arab world. Both men became refugees in Lebanon, along with their families. Stephan, though, continued to carry out work for the British-run department of antiquities in Cyprus, similar to his Jerusalem specialisation in analysing texts and inscriptions. This is suggested by an article published after his death on an early Arabic inscription on a Cypriot tombstone; the article is authored by A. H. S. Megaw (1910–2006), head of antiquities on Cyprus, but Megaw states that it is based on notes made by Stephan before his demise.⁷⁵ There is a logic to Stephan being asked to carry out work for the department in Cyprus, as he was an experienced and proven expert on such analyses and situated close by. Megaw had also been seconded to the Palestine Archaeological Museum to carry out surveys for the restoration of the Dome of the Rock in 1946, so the two men's acquaintance may have been founded several years earlier.⁷⁶ One can only speculate on the possible course that Stephan's work in Cyprus might have taken had he lived longer, but his granddaughter's memory of her father's passport containing numerous Cypriot stamps from this period suggests that the family was hoping that the employment would be extended.⁷⁷

By contrast, Na'im Makhoully and his family appear to have experienced financial hardship and trouble finding work in the immediate aftermath of 1948. Letters from Makhoully to his Jewish former colleagues, by then establishing the Israeli Antiquities Authority in the newly founded state, openly beg them to support his application to be allowed back into the country from Lebanon, and to help him find archaeological work.⁷⁸ The responses from Emanuel Ben-Dor are chilly in the extreme and hold out no hope; those from other colleagues were a little warmer but promised nothing, and the family were—like most other Palestinian refugees—denied their pleas to return. Makhoully seems to have been out of work for a period of at least two years.

Then, in 1951, his former colleague C. N. Johns, with whom he had worked on the *Guide to Acre*, obtained a post for him in Libya, where Johns had been sent as the first Controller of Antiquities in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.⁷⁹ The new kingdom had narrowly avoided the imposition of a

⁷⁵A. H. S. Megaw, "A Muslim Tombstone from Paphos," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 3/4 (1950): 108–109.

⁷⁶Israel National Archives folder 4311/22, "Proposal for Secondment of Mr A. H. S. Megaw, Director of Antiquities, Cyprus," 1945–1947.

⁷⁷Email from Cristina Stephan, 30 November 2016.

⁷⁸Raz Kletter, *Just Past?: The Making of Israeli Archaeology* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2006), 46–51.

⁷⁹G. R. H. Wright, "Obituary: C.N. Johns," *Libyan Studies* 24 (1993): iv.

United Nations trusteeship similar to a League of Nations Mandate⁸⁰ and was now formally independent, but with a strong British and US military and civilian presence propping up the government of King Idriss until the late 1960s.⁸¹ Along with some Italian archaeologists from the preceding colonial regime, antiquities thus again formed part of Britain's diplomatic activities, and Palestinian Arab archaeologists were entangled in this extension of British cultural diplomacy—or imperialism—to another Arab state. Makhoul wasn't the only Palestinian archaeologist to join the British-run antiquities department in Libya; his former colleague, Salem al-Husseini, worked there in roles which ranged from excavation director to archivist until his retirement in 1966,⁸² after spending several years working in a “footling” job as a liaison officer for UNWRA.⁸³ Dimitri Baramki also dug in Libya and apparently renewed his acquaintance with Husseini, but this was in his capacity as a university professor, not an employee of the Libyan state.⁸⁴

In Libya, Makhoul worked as a site supervisor and inspector, including on the University of Chicago excavations at Ptolemais,⁸⁵ but was deeply unhappy so far from his home and family, if his letters to Ben-Dor are any indication.⁸⁶ This is not surprising of a man in his fifties who had lived and worked in the same region for his entire life, now completely displaced. His personal unhappiness was coupled with dissatisfaction at the conditions in Libya; he complained of being stationed in a “very poor and small village”, where “I have nobody to talk to, so I spend my time in work, study, and food preparation”.⁸⁷ The British authorities may have seen Makhoul as an “Arab”, with more experience of working in English but otherwise of the same ilk as Libyans who had worked for the Italian colonial authorities before the war. Arab nationalist political narratives, meanwhile, would portray Makhoul and the workers he was overseeing as ethnic brothers. But Makhoul's letters suggest that he found himself in an archaeologically interesting but culturally barren environment, and that he felt isolated in north

⁸⁰ Benjamin Rivlin, “The Italian Colonies and the General Assembly,” *International Organization* 3, no. 3 (August 1949): 461–463.

⁸¹ Stephen Blackwell, “Saving the king: Anglo-American strategy and British counter-subversion operations in Libya, 1953–59,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 39:1 (2003): 2–4; Richard John Worrall, “The Strategic Limitations of a Middle East Client State by the Mid-1950s: Britain, Libya and the Suez Crisis,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 2 (2007): 312–316.

⁸² Said Husseini, “Black and White Photograph of Salem Abdulsalam al-Husein,” Palestine Museum digital archives, <http://palarchive.org/index.php/Detail/objects/9187>, accessed March 2019.

⁸³ Hamilton, *Occasional Archaeologist*, 131–132. Husseini stayed in touch with Hamilton, the last head of the Palestine Department, visiting him in Britain in 1977 (43).

⁸⁴ Whitcomb, “Dimitri Baramki,” 79.

⁸⁵ Carl Kraeling, *Ptolemais: City of the Libyan Pentapolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), v.

⁸⁶ Kletter, *Just Past*, 46–51.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 48.

Africa. Salem al-Husseini's opinions of his two decades in Cyrenaica are not a matter of record, but we can speculate that a Muslim may have found some common ground not available to Makhoully, whose Orthodox Christianity, so widespread in the Levant, was absent from Libya. One might also wonder how those Libyans employed by the Department of Antiquities felt about the Palestinians brought in by the British. Some went on to become noted archaeologists in their own right (such as Abdulhamid Abdussaid, who worked with Husseini⁸⁸ and who, with a father who worked for the Italian colonial authorities at Cyrene, had grown up among archaeological remains⁸⁹). Did they see the Levantines as fellow Arabs, or as adjuncts to the colonial system? And did that vary between men like Na'im Makhoully and Salem al-Husseini, shifting the focus of cultural diplomacy from a Christian to an Islamic milieu?

Stephan and Makhoully's post-Nakba careers, and the similarities and divergences between them, to some extent de-exceptionalise the Palestinian experience, highlighting the extent to which the Department of Antiquities in Palestine was part of a network of British colonial institutions which extended around the Mediterranean and beyond to other parts of the Empire. The movement of British, senior-level archaeologists within this is better acknowledged and understood, but the existence of a stratum of educated, professional men from colonised peoples for whom this network represented an opportunity for more or less willing mobility has been largely ignored, although its antecedents precede World War One. In the less institutionalised setting of the Late Ottoman Levant and Egypt, site supervisors (of whom the known examples are disproportionately Christian, although this may be an accident of the archives) moved between Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt on excavations funded by universities and exploration societies in Europe and America.⁹⁰ In the interwar period linguistic, state and therefore professional borders hardened, but while Stephan and Makhoully's displacement was part of the creation of a Palestinian diaspora, their employment circumstances was part of a professional scattering which mapped onto colonial institutions

⁸⁸John Griffiths Pedley, "The Archaic Favissa at Cyrene," *American Journal of Archaeology* 75, no. 1 (1971): 39.

⁸⁹Paul Bennett and Ahmed Buzaian, "Abdulhamid Abdussaid," *Libyan Studies* 48 (2017): 7–8.

⁹⁰Examples include the two Lebanese Christian overseers, Yusif Khazine and Yusif Kana'an, who worked for Frederick Jones Bliss and later Palestine Exploration Fund archaeologists between 1890 and 1913; Yusif Kana'an also worked for a German team digging at Baalbek around 1900 (Sarah Irving, "A Tale of Two Yusifs: Recovering Arab Agency in Palestine Exploration Fund Excavations 1890–1924," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 149 (2017): 223–236); Donald Malcolm Reid's *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) and *Contesting Antiquity in Egypt: Archaeologies, Museums, and the Struggle for Identities from World War I to Nasser* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2015) both chart the slow rise of professional Egyptian archaeologists despite the opposition of many colonial officials.

and their appropriation of cultural assets, as it also did for other Palestine Department of Antiquities staff such as Dimitri Baramki and Awni Dajani.⁹¹ Clearly this was not solely a path trodden by Christians, but they were certainly over-represented proportional to their numbers in the Palestinian population.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Antiquities of the British Mandate administration in Palestine was many things. It was, as Abu El-Haj stresses, a colonial entity which, through laws, the operations of a colonising regime, academic disciplinary rules, and orientalist and class assumptions detached middle-class participants in its operations from parts of their intellectual heritage and ordinary Palestinians from their immediate environments. Ruins, buildings and remains were reclassified according to separations of religious and secular, antique and modern which did not accord with local lived experience. They were then brought under legal regimes which removed access and control from the bulk of the population. But the Department was also a working space in which on the one hand, Palestinian Arabs were under-represented according to their share of the population and their knowledge probably under-valued but where, on the other, some did find training, employment and even an apparent sense of meaning. Stephan, in particular, seems even to have found ways in which he could subvert the ideas and intellectual production of his working environment to create narratives which reinforced the idea of a diverse culture and people which defied the monolithic nationalisms of both Zionism and some Arab nationalisms.

Among those Palestinians who worked for the department in professional-level roles, the majority were Christian, entangling this community more tightly in the Mandate administration's cultural enterprises. As employees with general portfolios, few would have had scope to integrate their identities into their excavation and inspection work, if indeed they wanted to; more overt political statements were also forbidden by the terms of public employment. Baramki, indeed, spent many years, and established his wider renown

⁹¹ Dimitri Baramki, who dug the famous 'Hisham's Palace' (Khirbet al-Mafjar) site in Jericho, spent a brief period after 1948 working for the Jordanian antiquities authority before leaving for Beirut, where he became Professor of Archaeology at the American University (Whitcomb, "Dimitri Baramki," 79). Much of his later work, and his fame outside the Levant, rest on his studies of the Phoenicians, which included a popular volume which appeared in both English and German; the subject matter could be interpreted as following a Christian Lebanese (specifically Maronite) concern with differentiating themselves from the Muslim Arab population of the region. Awni Dajani worked for the Jordanian Department of Antiquities after 1948, as director (1959–1968) he oversaw the first articles in Arabic in the department's journal (Maffi, "Emergence of cultural heritage in Jordan," 15); he is also known as the first Jordanian to earn a PhD in archaeology, having studied with Kathleen Kenyon in London (Miriam Davis, *Dame Kathleen Kenyon: Digging Up the Holy Land* [Abingdon: Routledge, 2016], 134, 163).

on, his excavations at the Umayyad site of Khirbet al-Mafjar (Hisham's Palace) in Jericho, while Makhoully, Husseini, Dajani and Saad all worked on sites and finds allocated to them by chance. Only Stephan, with some apparent leeway in his discretionary translation work, used his annotations and choices as the translator of Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* to make a statement about the specifically Palestinian identity of a territorial area and its inhabitants, and their diverse cultures and faiths. Outside official Mandate administration publications he had more freedom to articulate a national identity, but his guidebooks echo the cultural and religious diversity expressed in the Evliya translations; Stephan may in his guides choose to foreground his Christian faith, perhaps with an eye to his British readership, but this is still portrayed as irrevocably linked to the same Palestinian identity as his Muslim neighbours.

If any lesson can be drawn from Makhoully and Stephan's positions in the Department of Antiquities, it is that an overarching categorisation as Christian is of limited use in understanding their experiences. Access to missionary schooling and other forms of European soft power in the late Ottoman period may have helped both to enter civil service jobs, and may have made them more comfortable in this environment than a middle-class Muslim might have been. Being Christian may also have encouraged them to be interested in the diverse and ancient aspects of Palestinian history rather than its recent periods, more dominated by Islam. Despite the Mandate administration's orientalist enforcement of divisions between Christians and Muslims in Palestine, employees of the two faiths were united by the fact that they would never ascend beyond a certain professional status; under colonial rule, only British archaeologists would occupy the top positions in the Department. And, of course, it was as Palestinians, irrespective of denomination, that both Makhoully and Stephan became refugees in 1948. To disaggregate their influences, then, we must look perhaps to the dominance of Jerusalem in all things concerned with the Mandate administration, giving Stephan access to professional encounters, scholarly conversations and the infrastructure of publishers, radio, and printing presses; Makhoully seems distant from all of this in Akka and Nazareth, ironically more embedded in ordinary Palestinian Arab life than Stephan with his more nationalist outlook.

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Between Diplomacy and Science: British Mandate Palestine and Its International Network of Archaeological Organisations, 1918–1938

Mathilde Sigalas

The collaboration of the three victorious powers of World War One—Great Britain, France and the US—on archaeological issues during the inter-war period in Palestine can be told through the history of their respective archaeological organisations deployed on the ground.¹ Foreign archaeologists returned to the Middle East at the end of WWI to take over the digs they had been forced to leave and to start new excavations. An influential rivalry stood out between Great Britain and the US. The former was supposed to take over the role of decision makers over archaeology in Palestine, while the latter wanted to be involved in writing legislation and working on a shared digging method, specifically in support of biblical archaeology and linked to the Western Judeo-Christian traditions of the Jewish nationalist project.² The political aftermath of WWI and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire led

¹ Ève Gran-Aymerich, Jean Leclant, and André Laronde, *Naissance de l'archéologie moderne: 1798–1945* (Paris: CNRS éd., 1998), 360.

² Lawrence Davidson, “Biblical Archaeology and the Press: Shaping American Perceptions of Palestine in the First Decade of the Mandate,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 59.2 (June 1996): 104–105.

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to a revision of archaeological policies in the former provinces of Syria³ and Palestine. The Paris Peace Conference discussed a new set of regulations for archaeology and antiquities management in 1919, which was included into the official text of the Mandate in 1922. The newly designated mandatory powers, Great Britain⁴ for Palestine and France for Syria, collaborated with other member states of the League of Nations to supervise the archaeological field throughout the Middle East. The archaeological field came under the supervision of the British and French mandatory authorities in their zones of influence, with some benefits reserved for other League of Nations signatories. Although the US did not receive a mandate and shied away from any involvement regarding the political reorganisation of the region when its Congress refused to ratify the League of Nations Covenant in 1921, the US government established bilateral diplomatic relations with the British and French governments.⁵ American archaeologists suggested that the scientific delegations—designated by each country to discuss archaeological issues of the Middle East region at the Peace Conference—establish a common inter-allied scientific project in Jerusalem with the aim of associating themselves with British-French archaeological regulatory body which was already debating these issues.⁶ This work will mainly focus on Palestine, while Syria will be mentioned in order to compare British and French approaches to the archaeological field under their respective Mandates.

At the beginning of the 1920s, the British authorities founded new institutions in Palestine—a Department of Antiquities under the auspices of the League of Nations Mandate High Commission and a school of archaeology—both to develop archaeology as a scientific discipline and to protect antiquities.⁷ At the same time, scholars themselves created organisations and learned societies to promote international research dedicated to Palestine. In the 1920s, diplomats and Western scientific committees, in the new post-WWI political context, used the establishment of a new archaeological policy in Palestine as a way to renew their cultural diplomacy and to ensure political stability throughout the region.⁸ In the 1930s, however, economic issues related to archaeology began to take over and the Americans, with their

³I use the word Syria to refer to Greater Syria (both Syria and Lebanon) as this was the main usage in official texts at that time.

⁴In the archives, “Great Britain” is mainly used rather than “United Kingdom.”

⁵Lawrence Davidson, *America’s Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001), 58.

⁶La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. E-Levant. Direction des Affaires politiques et commerciales. Box 313. Section 18. Folder N°103. Syria. Leaf 61. Letter of April 9, 1919. Ministry of Public Education to Foreign Affairs.

⁷Shimon Gibson, “British Archaeological Institutions in Mandatory Palestine, 1917–1948,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 131.2 (July 1999): 115.

⁸Mark C. Donfried and Jessica C.E Gienow-Hecht, *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, Explorations in Culture and International History Series (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 6.

abundant funding and experts pouring into the region, established a kind of informal domination over the British mandatory institutions and influenced both archaeology and politics.

The new political order initiated under the Mandate system offers a comparative vision of the archaeology led by British and French administrations over Palestine and Syria.⁹ Until now, however, no in-depth analysis has been done on the role of their institutions which were established in the Middle East and the relationships between them. Previous literature concerning the history of archaeology in the Middle East during the interwar period tends to focus on Western powers' national agenda. It adopts a one-sided approach to the study of the archaeological field, by concentrating on the work of one country.¹⁰ In these works, archaeology is studied through national state and non-state actors such as ministries, scientific academies and delegations in the field.

The subject of field practice has generated a copious literature and many intensive case studies which are complementary to the main argument of this paper. This examines the practice of colonial archaeology in Palestine using the concepts of informal imperialism and cultural diplomacy by the countries involved. Bruce Trigger was the first to distinguish three types of archaeology, nationalist, colonialist and imperialist.¹¹ Nationalist archaeology refers to the combination of archaeology and history to glorify a common national past and regain the prestige of a declining power. Colonialist archaeology involves the practice of archaeology by a colonial power over another country, with the aim of better knowing the area's past for scientific purposes. Finally, imperialist archaeology is equivalent to historiographical superiority from the actors of the colonial power over a discipline that excludes ideas from local scholars writing the history of their own country. These concepts have been reused and refined by scholars such as Margarita Díaz-Andreu, who expanded the concepts of colonialist and imperialist practice of archaeology with an informal dimension. This can be found in situations when one or more nations try to dominate the same territory through implicit means, without

⁹Nadine Méouchy and Peter Sluglett, eds., *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden, The Netherlands and Boston, MA, USA: Brill, 2004).

¹⁰Nicole Chevalier and Jean-Louis Huot, *La recherche archéologique française au Moyen-Orient, 1842–1947* (Paris: Recherche sur les civilisations, 2004); Ann Perkins, "American Archaeology in the Near and Middle East," in *Background of the Middle East*, ed. Jackh Ernest (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952), 211–218; Jacques Thobie, "Archéologie et Diplomatie Française Au Moyen-Orient Des Années 1880 Au Début Des Années 1930," in *Actes Du Colloque Du 150e Anniversaire de l'Ecole Française d'Athènes* (Athens: École française d'Athènes, 2000), 79–111; Amara Thornton, "Archaeologists-in-Training: Students of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1920–1936," *Journal of Open Archaeology Data* 1.1 (2 February 2012): e1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/4f293686e4d62>.

¹¹Bruce G. Trigger, "Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist," *Man* 19.3 (September 1984): 355–370.

exercising official sovereignty.¹² She locates the characteristics of colonial archaeology in the establishment of three institutions on the dominated territory: a museum, a university and a governmental institution or branch dealing with archaeological issues.¹³ Her approach and the wider literature helps this work to characterise the British-American relationship in terms of archaeological supervision and diplomatic issues under the British Mandate in Palestine.

The present chapter is based on an archival analysis and comparison of six institutions' records. I collected data from the American School of Oriental Research (ASOR),¹⁴ the Archaeological Advisory Board (AAB),¹⁵ the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (BSAJ),¹⁶ the Department of Antiquities (DoA),¹⁷ the French École biblique et archéologique de Jérusalem (EBAF),¹⁸ and the Palestine Oriental Society (POS).¹⁹ I compared their Boards of Directors, their lists of members and their treasury reports to observe the scholarly networks and financial influences of each upon the others. This provides insights into the local networks operating in the broad field of archaeology in Palestine, and determines its key players within the sectors of government, business and academia.

This chapter will study the extent to which the regulation of archaeology during the interwar period was influenced by political and religious tensions

¹²Margarita Díaz-Andreu, *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology: Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 99.

¹³Díaz-Andreu, *A World History*, 404.

¹⁴*Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*, no. 1 (December 1919)–no. 76 (December 1939). 1919–1920: <http://www.jstor.org/journal/bullamerschoori2>. 1920s–1930s: <http://www.jstor.org/journal/bullamerschoorie>.

¹⁵Jerusalem, Israel States Archives. C.S.108 APM 51/0. Advisory Board Archaeology. 25 June 1920–19 October 1920. Carton 3/115.; BA/6/31/1. Archaeological Advisory Board. Constitution of 1929–1948.

¹⁶Kew, National Archives. FO 141/687/6. Antiquities in Ottoman Dominions, Palestine and the Near East: Proposed international control of antiquities, organisation of Antiquities Department at the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, Antiquities Ordinance for Palestine. 1918–1920. London, Palestine Exploration Fund. Minutes Book of the BSAJ, 1918–1946; Attendance Register of the BSAJ, 1920–1930. Oxford, Bodleian Library. Soc. 20604 d.50. Annual report, British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem. Annual Reports 1–18, 20, 21, for 1920 through 1941; Per. 20604 d.46. Bulletin—British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem. Bulletins 1–7.

¹⁷London, British Library. Palestine Blue Books, 1926–1938.

¹⁸Jerusalem, École biblique et archéologique française (EBAF). Fonds E - Fonds de l'École biblique et archéologique française [Fondation, directeurs, relations scientifiques, études, étudiants, publications, activités scientifiques (hors archéologie)].

¹⁹London, Palestine Exploration Fund. *Journal of the Palestine Exploration Society* vol. 1 1920–vol. 21 1948; Indices of the JPOS, 1920–1948. Some official documents were also classified in the National Archives of Kew and the Diplomatic Archives in France. Most of the archives of the Palestine Oriental Society remain at the archive centre of the American School of Oriental Research (USA) but I didn't get the opportunity to visit them during my Master so most of the analysis is based on the mention of the American presence in Palestine within British and French records.

as the interests of Western countries in Palestine changed from 1918 to 1938. The period of analysis opens in 1918 with the end of WWI and the introduction of collaborative archaeological projects by Western archaeologists in Palestine. It ends in 1938 with the opening of the Palestine Archaeological Museum mostly because after this the records of the different organisations are incomplete. I start my narrative by introducing the leading archaeological institutions in Palestine and Western powers' aims when designing these institutions. I then investigate the changes in archaeological policies brought about by American dominance. I argue that these changes were guided by the American actors' ideas of equality among the foreign parties and to include local elites in archaeological projects in order to advance Biblical archaeology, with the aim of settling diplomatic and political controversies.

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN PALESTINE IN THE EARLY 1920s

In 1917, the British army succeeded in conquering Middle East, giving Britain a diplomatic advantage in the negotiations over the former Ottoman provinces at the WWI Peace Conferences. From Egypt to Palestine, martial law was imposed as a transitional regime before the officialisation of the Mandate, to protect the Suez Canal and the shipping route to India.²⁰ This established military rule over the archaeological field, controlled by the British army. Subsequently, the Triple Entente powers started to worry about their archaeological interests in the face of British political dominance in the region. American and French intellectuals and diplomats worked together to establish international archaeological collaboration to slow down British exclusiveness over the Middle East,²¹ with the US administration in charge of the Middle Eastern affairs acting as a buffer between the British and French governments. In addition, from 1918, US scholars started to lead international scientific cooperation to expand archaeological research in the Middle East.²² The inter-allied initiative was first named the "American project" before the British requested involvement in it. It was then called the "Garstang Project" in reference to Professor John Garstang, an archaeologist from the University of Liverpool appointed by the British authorities as the representative of British archaeological issues in Mandatory Palestine. The US

²⁰Vincent Cloarec and Henry Laurens, *Le Moyen-Orient au 20e siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003), 35.

²¹La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. E-Levant. Box 313. Section 18. Folder N°106. Letter of March 2, 1919 [anon.] Note sur la question des fouilles dans les territoires ottomans libérés et plus particulièrement en Palestine.

²²La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. Série des Œuvres françaises à l'étranger. Levant. Box 172. Letter of June 21, 1920; Chevalier, *La Recherche archéologique française au Moyen-Orient*, 257.

and Great Britain submitted an invitation to the French ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Public Instruction for France to become the third founding member of the project. The renewal of archaeology in the Middle East—in terms of legislation for Western governments and in terms of practice for archaeologists, and the wishes from both of greater institutionalisation of the discipline—sketched a “shy diplomacy”²³ between the powers of the Triple Entente. Archaeologists, supported by their governments, suggested collaborative archaeological works with the equal involvement of other Western powers in the archaeological field and to avoid the hegemony of one country, which could destabilise their relationships on a diplomatic level. This “shy diplomacy” was, in fact, implemented to deal with diplomatic and political issues arising through the cultural and scientific level.²⁴ In Palestine itself, it was strengthened by religious concerns around Jerusalem’s holy places and the politics of the recent Balfour Declaration. This stated that Britain would support the foundation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. Such a decision had consequences for the archaeological field, as excavations in the Holy Land might well lead to discoveries of a controversial nature for the various communities living in Palestine. The aim of the Western powers was to use scientific and cultural diplomacy to promote collaboration,²⁵ and founding archaeological institutions aimed at maintaining cohesion between foreign and local elites and to spread tolerance within society.

An American archaeological institution had been present in Palestine since the beginning of the twentieth century with the foundation of the American School of Oriental Research (ASOR) in Jerusalem in 1900. The school was closed between 1914 and 1918. At its reopening in 1918, the American scholar Albert T. Clay, Assyriologist and annual lecturer at the ASOR that year, suggested the establishment of an inter-allied organisation based in Jerusalem.²⁶ When this project was submitted to the British and French authorities, one of the main conditions imposed by the Americans was the equal status as founding members and the local role of the future

²³French expression of “diplomatie timide” from: La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. Office du Levant. 1920–1945. Box 21. Section N°705. Organisation du Mandat. 1922. Letter of July 24, 1922 from M. Donon [Own translation].

²⁴Without using the specific term ‘shy diplomacy,’ Marianne Hagelstein insists on the role of external actors, who are not diplomats, on the implementation of cultural and scientific diplomacy. These actors work within civil society and use the indirect influence of public opinion to discuss political issues with official authorities. According to Hagelstein’s thesis, the archaeologists and archaeological organisations studied in this chapter could correspond to the external, or non-state, actors, as they deal both with diplomats and local elites with the aim of maintaining cordial relationships between foreign and local powers in Palestine. Marianne Hagelstein, ed., *Soft power et diplomatie culturelle: le cas de Taiwan*, Catholic University of Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium: Academia-l’Harmattan, DL 2014, 2014), 7–12.

²⁵Donfried, *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, 21.

²⁶“Introductory Notice,” *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* I, (1920): 2–3.

organisation within the archaeological scientific network of Palestine.²⁷ Their equal status meant that the British and French had to establish schools of archaeology, or at least a “permanent [archaeological] mission”²⁸ with an office in Jerusalem, parallel to ASOR.²⁹ The British government had already envisaged founding a school prior to the US’s request. The British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (BSAJ) opened its doors in 1919. The French already had a base in Palestine, the Dominican convent of Saint-Etienne, which had been a school for Biblical studies since 1890. Although not being recognised by the French government as an official archaeological delegation before the war, the work of missionaries from the French École biblique in Jerusalem on epigraphic deciphering was well known in Palestine and they were frequently invited by foreign archaeological missions to collaborate on excavations. Following the US offer of an inter-allied organisation, the French government decided—with the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres as coordinator—to add an archaeological branch to the École biblique which became in 1920 the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem (French Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem, EBAF) with a new syllabus including archaeological topics.³⁰ These three schools—ASOR, BSAJ, EBAF—were named the “Associated Schools”³¹ by the British Mandate administration in Palestine and led the renewal of the archaeological field in Palestine after the war in the framework of international collaboration.

With this proposal to establish an inter-allied archaeological organisation in Jerusalem, the Americans were certain to remain involved in all diplomatic, scientific and methodological discussions related to archaeology between the French and the British at the Peace Conference and during the Mandate meetings. From the beginning of 1919, victorious governments, with their diplomats and archaeologists, wrote proposals on the establishment of a common archaeological policy in the Middle East. The aims of this new policy were to give an easier access to the excavating field for international scientific standing and to authorise export of antiquities to build collections abroad.³² The policy was written to the benefit of Western archaeological research over the Middle East and it established a form of colonial

²⁷“The New Home of the Allied Schools,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 2 (February 1920): 2–3.

²⁸La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. E-Levant. Direction des Affaires politiques et commerciales. Box 313. Section 18. Folder N°103. Syria. Leaf 62. Letter of April 9, 1919. Ministry of Public Education to Foreign Affairs [Own translation].

²⁹Jerusalem, Israel State Archives. C.S.108 APM 51/0. Advisory Board Archaeology. 25 June 1920–19 October 1920. Box 3/115.

³⁰Jerusalem, EBAF. 2E/B-2-1. Activités de l’École biblique et archéologique française rapports, compte rendus, correspondance 1920–1960. Rapport sur l’exercice de l’année scolaire octobre 1920 à octobre 1921.

³¹Kew, National Archives. FO 141/687. Antiquities. Memorandum, April 1, 1919, 14.

³²Gran-Aymerich, *Naissance de l’archéologie moderne*, 361.

archaeology and domination by Western powers over the field, the local populations and their heritage. Sir Frederic Kenyon, Director of the British Museum and Chairman of the Joint Archaeological Committee,³³ submitted a memorandum on January 1919 to the British delegation designated to represent Great Britain at the Peace Conference. In this memorandum, Kenyon suggested that the British should lead the creation of an international commission to collaborate on archaeological issues at the Peace Conference under the aegis of the International Commission.³⁴ Americans, British, French and Italians were the leading actors in the negotiation and writing of new archaeological treaties,³⁵ while German and Austrian³⁶ scholars from the losing side in the war were not allowed to take part in the editing board and were also prohibited to dig until the end of the 1920s.³⁷ The first four persons appointed to the International Commission were David G. Hogarth, member of the British Academy and Director of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford; William H. Buckler, representative of the American Institute of Archaeology and other learned societies in the US; René Cagnat, member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres and professor at the Collège de France; and Roberto Paribeni, Director of the National Museum in Rome.³⁸ They would work on the archaeological clauses for the League of Nations Covenant, for the Treaty of Peace with Turkey and for the official text of the Mandates.³⁹

The British proposition of the International Commission offered the US a way to remain influential in the diplomatic management of archaeological issues in the Middle East. They were thus involved in some agreements which were supposed to be used only for signatories of the League of Nations Covenant.⁴⁰ This was ratified on April 28th 1919 and included a short mention of archaeological issues which would have to be inserted into the official

³³The Joint Archaeological Committee was an organisation gathering all the chairmen or representatives of the British learned archaeological societies and was based in London.

³⁴The commission has no official name, in the archives the authors sometimes referred to it under the names of the “International commission,” the “assisting Powers” or the “Commission of Powers.” The name “International commission” will be used in this chapter.

³⁵Ludovic Tournès, *Les États-Unis et la Société des nations: 1914–1946: le système international face à l'émergence d'une superpuissance* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2016), 2.

³⁶Ottoman archaeology was also prominent before 1914 but Ottoman archaeologists were on the losing side at the end of the war. Their status and right to excavate in the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire outside of Turkey are not mentioned in the archives of the Peace Conferences talks. Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik, and Edhem Eldem, *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914* (Istanbul: SALT, 2011).

³⁷Gran-Aymerich, *Naissance de l'archéologie moderne*, 408.

³⁸Kew, National Archives. FO 608/276/3. Archaeological research in Palestine and Persia, 1920. Leaf 173.

³⁹La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. E-Levant. Direction des Affaires politiques et commerciales. Box 313. Section 18. Folder N°103. Syria. Leaf 61. Letter of April 9, 1919. Ministry of Public Education to Foreign Affairs.

⁴⁰La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. Office du Levant. 1920–1945. Box 8. N°686. Textes de base 1922-1943. July 23, 1922.

text of the Mandate. From this time, the International Commission worked on two papers. First, the four representatives drafted the clauses which would be included in the Peace Treaty with Turkey—later ratified as the Treaty of Sevres in 1920. In this treaty, only two paragraphs of the second chapter dealt with archaeological issues: paragraph 11 focused on a new archaeological policy to revise the law implemented by the Ottoman Empire before 1914:

Chapter II. Paragraph 11. The Imperial Ottoman Government will within (12) months from the exchange of ratifications of this Treaty enact a new Law of Antiquities. The objects of such a law shall be to preserve existing monuments, partial excavations and sites, to renew existing rights of exploration and excavation on terms consistent with the provisions of this article, to encourage further exploration and excavations, to prevent illicit dating and smuggling in finds, and, by a prohibition of export except under license, to ensure an equitable distribution of finds between the country of the discoverer and the enactment be submitted to the Allied Governments, who shall have the right to make suggestions to the Imperial Ottoman Government for the improvement of its provisions.⁴¹

Paragraph 12 dealt with antiquities removed during WWI with a particular context for their assignment, but will not be analysed here.

Paragraph 11 explicitly mentioned the Allied governments as supervisors for the implementation of the law in Turkey so as to facilitate access to the archaeological sites and export of the antiquities, which was not allowed under Ottoman law. By doing this, the Western powers guaranteed a standardisation of archaeology between Turkey and the provinces they would receive as Mandates. The second paper was the articles for the Mandate declaration that Great Britain and France subsequently ratified on July 1922. Article 14 established the conditions for both Great Britain and France to organise the archaeological field and dealing of antiquities within their respective mandatory administrations:

Art. 14. The Mandatory power shall draw up and put into force, within a period of twelve months, an act on antiquities, in accordance with the following provisions. This law guarantees nationals of the States members of the League of Nations equal treatment in excavations and archaeological research.⁴²

In both papers, the clauses epitomised Western powers' ambitions in archaeological affairs in the Middle East. The Peace Treaty with Turkey and the Mandate declaration required the same conditions for the new Turkish government and the mandatory authorities to write their Laws of Antiquities.

⁴¹ Kew, National Archives. FO 141/687. Antiquities. 8703/11. Enclosure in No. 1. Antiquities Ordinance for Palestine. October 22, 1920.

⁴² La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. Office du Levant. 1920–1945. Box 8. N°686. Textes de base 1922–1943. July 24, 1922 [Own translation].

The League of Nations expected the mandatory authorities to establish a common law for both Syria and Palestine and to standardise the clauses with Turkey.⁴³

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSNATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL NETWORK IN PALESTINE

The British and French governments started to draft the law in 1920. The High Commission for the British Mandate in Palestine created the Department of Antiquities with the aim of having a referee organisation for the negotiations on the terms of the Law of Antiquities with the French authorities. The Department of Antiquities was divided into two decision-making branches, the Director and the Archaeological Council (see Table 1). Both supervised the other official positions; the Director was in charge of the Keeper of Museums and the Inspector in Chief, while the Archaeological Council was composed of the Keeper of Monuments and the Associated Schools. The Archaeological Council and Associated Schools, named after the Archaeological Advisory Board (AAB), was created to work in collaboration with the Director as an advisory entity, especially on archaeological practice and methodology on the field.

The AAB is particularly illustrative of the British government's attempt to establish an international consortium of scholars as a consultative entity on archaeological decisions, with the British government at the centre of this consortium with the Director of the Department of Antiquities acting

Table 1 Department of Antiquities' organisation (Kew, National Archives. FO 141/687. Antiquities. Memorandum of April 1, 1919, 14)

Secretarial Staff	Director	Archaeological Council (AAB)	
Keeper of Museums	Inspector in Chief	Keeper of Monuments Associated Schools	
Assistant. Photographer. Attendants.	3 inspectors. 9 Deputy Inspectors. Guards.	Draughtsman. Mechanics. Workmen.	Excavations. Libraries. Records. Publications.

⁴³Kew, National Archives. FO 608/116. Peace Conference British Delegation. Leaf 158–159. Note on archaeological desiderata of February 3, 1919.

as head of the AAB Committee. The Committee was composed of five persons: its President and one representative of each Western archaeological school in Jerusalem—ASOR, BSAJ and the École biblique.⁴⁴ In addition, the High Commissioner appointed four persons to represent Jewish and Muslim interests.⁴⁵

The organisation of the AAB Committee reflected the wish of the British administration to take into account the interests of every issue in an attempt to maintain stability. It seems that British authorities did not consider Palestinian Christians as a source of tension in the archaeological field.⁴⁶ The AAB could be read as a tool of cultural diplomacy, of both direct and indirect influence. As a mandatory institution, some decisions taken by the Committee followed the League of Nations' agenda. For example, it allowed German and Austrian archaeologists⁴⁷ to have a representative member at the AAB in 1926, the same year as they were allowed to go back to their excavations by the League of Nations.⁴⁸ It was also a way for the Jewish and Muslim representatives to implement their local influence and to collaborate with Western diplomatic entities. Moreover, the High Commissioner was involved in the appointment of the Committee members and as such, foreign and

⁴⁴The Franciscans were also influential in the field of archaeology in Palestine since the nineteenth century. In 1901, the Custody established a school in Jerusalem, named the *Studium Bibicum Franciscanum*. However, they are seldom mentioned in the archives of the interwar period. Masha Halevi contends that the Franciscans used archaeology to strengthen their presence and religious influence in Palestine. Masha Halevi, “Between Faith and Science: Franciscan Archaeology in the Service of the Holy Places,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 48.2 (2012): 262.

⁴⁵Jerusalem, Israel States Archives. C.S.108 APM 51/0. Advisory Board Archaeology. 25 June 1920–19 October 1920. Carton 3/115.

⁴⁶On the representation of Palestinian Christians, Albert Glock argues that they were employed within the Department of Antiquities as members of staff but they were not present within the organisations which dealt both with archaeological and diplomatic issues, which focused on Jews and Muslims (Albert Glock, “Archaeology as Cultural Survival: The Future of the Palestinian Past,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23: 3 (1994): 75–76).

⁴⁷Before 1914, Germany was one of the major powers in the archaeological field throughout the Ottoman Empire [Glock, 73–74; Alev Koçak, *The Ottoman Empire and Archaeological Excavations: Ottoman Policy from 1840–1906, Foreign Archaeologists, and the Formation of the Ottoman museum* (Istanbul, Turkey: Isis Press, 2011), 133–150]. In Palestine, they established the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology (*Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes*) in 1900, joined in 1908 by the Roman Catholic Görres Society to represent German archaeological interests in the Middle East. With the outbreak of WWI, archaeologists left the Institutes in Jerusalem and, because of their defeat, German and Austrian scholars were banned from digging until 1926. The Institutes were opened sporadically during the 1920s and their activities ceased completely from 1939 to the 1960s [Gabriella B Rodrigues, “German Biblical Archaeology: Retrospective of a Neglected Legacy. A Study of the German Contribution to the Archaeology of Palestine in Its Longue Durée, from 1871 to 1945” (PhD diss., Ruprecht-Karls-Universität-Heidelberg, 2016); ‘1914–1964—DEIAHL’, accessed 27 August 2019, <https://www.deiahl.de/en/about-the-gpia/history/1914-1964/>].

⁴⁸Jerusalem, Israel State Archives. BA/6/31/1. Archaeological Advisory Board. Constitution of 1929–1948. 2044/29.

local representatives were selected by the British authorities to be part of the AAB.⁴⁹ Through the AAB, the British authorities dealt with the expectations of the “Promised Land”.⁵⁰

In comparison, the French Mandatory authorities in Syria, subject to the same archaeological regulations from the League of Nations, founded a Department of Antiquities—the Service des Antiquités de Beyrouth—with the same internal organisation. It consisted of a Director, two Keepers and an Inspector. However, no international advisory board such as the AAB in Palestine was associated with the French mandatory archaeological institutions. Archaeology in Palestine dealt with many diplomatic and religious issues that Great Britain decided to deal with through the institution of the AAB. By expanding the membership of the AAB to the US and some representatives of religious communities related to the practice of archaeology, the British authorities went beyond the League of Nations’ regulations to lead mainly with the signatories. The whole supervision of the archaeology in Palestine relied on close collaboration between American, British and French diplomatic and archaeological organisations. This arrangement helped the US to become one of the most influential archaeological powers in Palestine, even though they were not supposed to have any diplomatic influence and advantages in the region at that time. For example, during the drafting process of the Law of Antiquities, started in 1920 by British and French administrations, the Director of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine, John Garstang, and the Archaeological Counsellor of the High Commission of the French Republic in Beirut, Joseph Chamondard, met and corresponded between Jerusalem and Beirut to work on the clauses. The texts were proof-read by the consuls of both countries and then sent to the organisations in Europe—the Joint Archaeological Committee in London and the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris. Diplomatic representatives were also involved in these discussions.⁵¹ For the British part, it was explicit that Britain wanted to satisfy foreign powers’ interests and especially American ones. This is shown in the fact that John Garstang was often accompanied by an American scholar, Albert T. Clay. He was in charge of drafting the clauses corresponding to the status of American archaeologists. As they were not members of the League of Nations, the law did not apply to them and archaeologists had to ask for special exemptions to claim the same rights.⁵² Through this, Americans were involved in diplomatic issues surrounding the renewal of archaeological legislation in the Middle East, where they planned to increase their scientific authority. To guarantee their interests and the same benefits as League of Nations’ members, US instituted bilateral treaties with

⁴⁹Jerusalem, Israel State Archives. BA/6/31/1. Archaeological Advisory Board. Constitution of 1929–1948. 2044/29.

⁵⁰Glock, “Archaeology as Cultural Survival: The Future of the Palestinian Past,” 73.

⁵¹La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. E-Levant. Box 312. Section 33. Letter of May 22, 1923.

⁵²La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. E-Levant. Box 313. Section 18. Folder N°106. Leaf 94.

the French and British Mandate authorities. These were ratified on July 13th 1924⁵³ and December 3rd 1925.⁵⁴ The content was almost the same for both treaties, except for some articles dedicated to the Balfour declaration and the Zionist project within the British one.

Albert T. Clay was involved from the initiation of the inter-allied project in 1918, which led to the establishment of an international organisation dedicated to scientific archaeological collaboration a few years later.⁵⁵ This institution was the Palestine Oriental Society and was founded by a consortium of scholars as a learned society on January 9th, 1920, with a focus on the archaeological and ethnographic study of Palestine. The Associated Schools were the founding members of the Society. To strengthen the collaborative characteristic of this initiative, it was decided that each school would have a specific task and, in this way, create dependency between them.⁵⁶ ASOR was designated to manage the common library, the BSAJ dealt with the archives produced by the society, and the EBAF was to supervise the publication of a review, the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society (JPOS)*.⁵⁷ The POS did not have a proper headquarters. It was decided at the beginning of the collaboration that the three schools would establish their buildings in the same neighbourhood, close to the Old City of Jerusalem.⁵⁸ Each of them had to provide accommodation for the society.

The Palestine Oriental Society became a triple-headed organisation administrated by three different archaeological schools which were supposed to maintain some autonomy (lectures, classes, excavations, etc.). The aim of the society was to share scientific progress with the international community of scholars based in Palestine. It was also to host archaeological expeditions which were not associated with an institution—as specified in a compulsory clause of the Law of Antiquities on requesting excavation permits from the Department of Antiquities.

The POS underwent two phases during the interwar period.⁵⁹ In the 1920s, the society expanded and asserted itself locally as an archaeological

⁵³Nantes, Affaires Étrangères. 1SL/1/V/748. Ministère des affaires étrangères. Beyrouth. Cabinet politique. Leaf 15.

⁵⁴Treaty Series No. 54 (1925). Convention between the United Kingdom and the United States of America, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1925 [Online: <http://treaties.fco.gov.uk/docs/pdf/1925/TS0054.pdf>. Last consultation on April 14th, 2018].

⁵⁵"Introductory Notice," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, 2–3.

⁵⁶Chevalier, *La recherche archéologique française au Moyen-Orient*, 257.

⁵⁷La Courneuve, Affaires Étrangères. E-Levant. Box 313. Section 18. Folder N°106. Leaf 26. September 6, 1919. Letter from John Garstang, University of Liverpool, to French Ministry of Public Education.

⁵⁸Thornton, "Archaeologists-in-Training," 199.

⁵⁹The sources on the inner organisation of the Palestine Oriental Society came from the meeting and treasury reports included in the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* and the analysis of Presidential addresses from 1918 to 1938.

actor. It was created with the aim of gathering together scholars and editing common publications. According to its official constitution,⁶⁰ the society was supervised by a quorum of eight, known as the Board of Directors (Art. 3). This board was composed of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary and a Treasurer who were appointed for a year (extendable) and also three directors appointed for three years (Art. 5). The Board was elected each year during an extraordinary general meeting, usually in October (Art. 6.). The administrative structure of the society was strategically designed to deal with the three-headed supervision and avoid any ambitions of one of the institutions. Scholars from other institutions or societies were also allowed to sit on the Board of Directors. The main peculiarity of the POS was its trans-national nature with members from various countries, communities and religious belonging.⁶¹ The core of the POS was composed of representatives of the founding schools—ASOR, BSAJ and EBAF—and representatives of the Jewish community, Palestinian (Christian and Muslim) society and later the Germans, all cooperating to establish a scientific community for Palestinian studies. At the beginning, Presidents of the three founding schools rotated to serve as the President of the Palestine Oriental Society. All of them served on the board in different positions until 1929 and they embodied the stability of the society. Within the Board of Directors and the Editorial Board of the *JPOS*, members tried to appoint scholars from each archaeological school or learned society established in Palestine and from the different communities and religious denominations. According to the publications of the journal, the Editorial Board encountered difficulties in finding a printer equipped with Greek, Arabic and Hebrew type, as they wanted to have at least one article of each language in addition to those in English or French, and sometimes German.⁶² Members mostly belonged to institutions abroad such as universities, archaeological institutes or museums, or they were temporarily affiliated to one of the Associated Schools during their stays in Palestine. Other members included Palestinian scholars from the Christian and Muslim communities who were present in their personal capacity; for them, the POS acted as their scientific institution of affiliation. For example, Omar Eff. El-Barghuthy, Tewfiq Canaan or Stephan Hanna Stephan held several positions in the POS between 1920 and 1938, as successively: President, Vice-President, Director and Secretary. They were all members of the Editorial Advisory Board for the *JPOS*. Some of them were also members of the AAB or worked for the Department of Antiquities. However, no learned society or scientific organisation from an Arab initiative was founded at the time. As Palestinians did not have their own institution, there was no official representation of a Palestinian

⁶⁰ “Introductory Notice,” *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, 3–4.

⁶¹ Glock, “Archaeology as Cultural Survival,” 76.

⁶² Jerusalem, EBAF. 5E/C-1. The Palestine Oriental Society: correspondence, programmes. 1920–1923. 16 March, 1921. St. George’s Cathedral, Jerusalem. “Editorial for the Palestine Oriental Society by Herbert Danby”.

scientific community of scholars. In comparison, Jewish scholars managed to develop local organisations integrated to the international network and to do archaeological research which could justify their presence in the Holy Land. The Jewish community established their own archaeological learned society in 1912—the *Jewish Palestine Exploration Society (JPES)*—and a Department of Archaeology was founded at the Hebrew University in 1935. Therefore, the Jewish scientific community in Palestine during the interwar period produced and kept their own written sources and archival funds. Whereas Palestinian views, scientific works and publications were diluted in the archives of the Western organisations they were involved in or hired by during the Mandate. Palestinians are the “missing voices” of the history of Mandatory Palestine.⁶³ Recently, research on Tewfiq Canaan and Stephan Hanna Stephan⁶⁴ has started to shed light on Palestinian scholars, on their involvement in international scientific networks and organisations, and on their contribution to the history of Palestine.

In the early 1930s, the POS encountered economic difficulties which weakened it and its influence. The work of the Society remained notable insofar as the major projects conducted during this period were mostly joint expeditions between different institutions. The archaeologists who led these missions were usually members of the Society. However, the name of the POS was eclipsed by the discoveries and the notoriety of the universities that carried them out. The POS acted as a tool of scientific and cultural diplomacy by connecting scholars, whose first ambition was to work together for scientific progress, even if nationalistic or religious issues remained underlying. The status of the POS did not include clauses related to political issues, in comparison with the Archaeological Advisory Board for which the appointment of members from Jewish and Muslim communities was compulsory.⁶⁵ The AAB was an organisation attached to the British Mandate, integrated into the Department of Antiquities, working with the High Commissioner, and thus dealing with some diplomatic issues. The Palestine Oriental Society, from an American initiative, did not belong to any single political or religious body and endeavoured to keep its neutrality both in its internal administration and in its works and publications. The three Associated Schools, the

⁶³On that topic, see: Laurence Gillot, “Towards a Socio-Political History of Archaeology in the Middle East: The Development of Archaeological Practice and Its Impacts on Local Communities in Syria,” *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* 20.1 (2010): 4–16; Roberto Mazza, “Missing Voices in Rediscovering Late Ottoman and Early British Jerusalem,” *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 53 (2013): 61–71; Stephen Quirke, *Hidden Hands: Egyptian Workforces in Petrie Excavation Archives, 1880–1924* (London: Duckworth, 2010).

⁶⁴Sarah Irving, “‘A Young Man of Promise’ Finding a Place for Stephan Hanna Stephan in the History of Mandate Palestine,” *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 73 (2018): 42–62; Chapter 9, Sarah Irving, “Palestinian Christians in the Mandate Department of Antiquities: History and Archaeology in a Colonial Space,” 161–185.

⁶⁵Jerusalem, Israel States Archives. C.S.108 APM 51/0. Advisory Board Archaeology. 25 June 1920–19 October 1920. Carton 3/115. No. 354/ATQ/636. July 17, 1920.

mandatory institution of the AAB and the scientific initiative of the POS were all founded with the aim of establishing a collaborative and productive background to the development of archaeology. Palestine in the wake of the WWI became a flourishing scientific environment, the laboratory of archaeological research in the Middle East during the interwar period.⁶⁶

EXCAVATION METHODS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOURISM AS DIPLOMATIC TOOLS

The effects of this collaboration can also be observed on excavation itself, as it caused methodological and institutional changes in the development of the discipline. These came with the Law of Antiquities of 1920 which forbade individual requests for excavation permits. It was a way for the mandatory powers to record archaeological resources, to prevent any undeclared diggings from taking place, and to better control the territory. This new clause led to the formation of scientific teams and helped to modernise archaeology, from being a hobby to an academical and scientific discipline with historical and religious issues to explore. Permits had to be requested by the institutions the team was representing.⁶⁷ It was easier to ask if scholars on the team were members of an Associated School, of the Palestine Oriental Society, or of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society.⁶⁸ If it was not, the institutional collaboration also ensured that an archaeologist from one of these institutions was appointed director of the expedition to guarantee collaboration with the Department of Antiquities. The request for the permit was first sent to the Department and then transferred to the Archaeological Advisory Board in which the scientific value of the excavation was discussed and the Board would decide whether or not to issue a permit. The benefits of sitting on the AAB for Western foreign powers included the ability to implement direct negotiations with the Directors and authorities for permits to excavate or to export antiquities. This clause from the law was useful to strengthen the scientific networks and some of the most famous archaeological excavations were led under joint expeditions with scholars from different countries, institutions and religions. For example, Jerash (Gerasa) campaign was supervised by the University of Yale and the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (1928–1934)⁶⁹ and that at Sebaste (Sebastia) by Harvard

⁶⁶Neil Asher Silberman, “Power, Politics and the Past: The Social Construction of Antiquity in the Holy Land,” in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, ed. Levy Thomas Evan (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 15.

⁶⁷Kew, National Archives. FO 141/687. Antiquities. April 1, 1919. Memorandum of John Garstang on the Law of Antiquities, 13.

⁶⁸The Jewish Palestine Exploration Society was founded in 1912 as a learned society and mainly focused its research on Jewish archaeological subjects.

⁶⁹Special to The New York Times, “Yale Gets Concession to Excavate, Jerash,” *New York Times*, February 3, 1928, 28.

University, the Palestine Exploration Fund, Hebrew University and the BSAJ (1931–1933).⁷⁰

The collaboration was also effective in terms of archaeological methodology at the beginning of the 1920s. The Presidents of the BSAJ, John Garstang (1920–1926), and of ASOR, William F. Albright (1920–1929/1933–1936), joined by a French scholar from the École biblique, Father Louis-Hugues Vincent, reflected together on a new dating method to classify antiquities.⁷¹ This classification was designated as that of the “Three Ages”⁷²; dating of the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Modern period was modified to adapt to recent discoveries and ethnographic information on Palestine. The three scholars submitted their method to the scientific community during meetings of the POS. Adopted in 1922, the classification was implemented in archaeological sites for antiquities registration and analysis. The political context was also a reason for the policy, in an attempt to avoid subjective interpretations in favour of a particular civilisation.

This classification is an example of the effects of international collaboration within a foreign intellectual knowledge network, which developed in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 1920s. The three scholars were from “the three archaeological Schools in Jerusalem”⁷³ and two were on the Board of Directors of the Palestine Oriental Society in 1922, Albright as President and Garstang as Director. The “New Chronological Classification of Palestinian Archaeology” was published in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (no. 7. October 1922) and the *Revue Biblique* (vol. 32. 1923) of the EBAF. This example demonstrates the openness of the scientific community based in Palestine and the shared aim of anchoring Palestinian archaeology as a scientific and formal discipline.

The atmosphere stemming from the international collaboration of foreign and local scholars led to increasing interest in archaeological research. It helped increase funding for the campaigns. In terms of funding, European and American archaeologists were sponsored differently. The British and French organisations (BSAJ, EBAF, archaeological delegations) were funded by state institutions or public actors such as ministries and academies (British Academy, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres) and from the revenues of their annual membership fees. Conversely, Americans were mostly financed by private institutions and philanthropic foundations which started to invest in the archaeological field. American archaeological organisations

⁷⁰Oxford, Bodleian Library, Soc. 20604 d.51, BSAJ, Supplementary Papers 4, February 1937, iii.

⁷¹Louis-Hugues Vincent, “L’année archéologique 1922 en Palestine. I.- Nouvelle classification des antiquités palestiniennes,” *Revue biblique* 32, no. 2 (1923): 273.

⁷²Augustin-Georges Barrois, *Manuel d’archéologie biblique. Tome I* (Paris: Auguste Picard, 1939), 9–13.

⁷³William F. Albright, “A New Chronological Classification of Palestinian Archaeology,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 7 (October 1922): 9.

added to their inner organisation a board of trustees dedicated to investment. In 1921, the American School of Oriental Research, for instance, established a branch to attract patronage titled the “Fund for Biblical and Archaeological Research”. American Board of Trustees members and philanthropists were mostly Protestant and they funded activities in the field in the hope that archaeological discoveries would support the scriptures.⁷⁴ Archaeological research therefore became subject to the political and religious interests of donors, many of whom were focused on biblical issues.

The collaborative relationships were challenged in the mid-1920s by the issue of funding and the unequal contributions of the institutions participating in the campaigns. While European funds for archaeology were declining significantly year on year due to a decline in interest and the post-war depression in many countries,⁷⁵ the American archaeological delegations increased in number and in their areas of engagement. With their financial means, Americans could experiment with modern, efficient excavating techniques, and multiply their campaigns, and thus dominate the field. In fact, they tried to introduce American modernity as the standardise form of knowledge in the field. New archaeological methods were developed by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (OIC) headed by James H. Breasted, in close relation with the Rockefeller family and their Foundation, which had funded the University of Chicago since the 1900s. This methodology was established by Clarence S. Fisher, an archaeologist associated with the OIC, in 1925, while working on the Megiddo excavation and writing a guide for “American universities, or other institutions interested in carrying out active field work”.⁷⁶ The aim of this new methodological sampling was to improve the excavating system, based on an American adaptation of the excavation process with ASOR involved in every enterprise as “the common center of activities, where the scientific material could be brought and prepared for adequate publication”.⁷⁷ Instead of improving scientific analysis tools such as dating, this method focused on archaeological practice in order to be as efficient as possible in the field. By applying this method during their excavations, archaeological delegations could apply to American institutions or philanthropic foundation funds.

⁷⁴William F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible* (New York etc.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1932), 10.

⁷⁵This decline was observed through a comparison of the treasury reports of the BSAJ and the ASOR, published in their Annual Reports from 1920 to 1938. The difference between their finances was disproportionate. In 1920, the BSAJ received more money, at £8739, whereas the same year ASOR received a smaller amount, at \$10,836, but this had been multiplied by ten four years later.

⁷⁶Clarence S. Fisher, “A Plan for the Systematic Coordination of Archaeological Research in Palestine and Syria,” *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 18 (1925): 15–17.

⁷⁷Ibid.

In the 1930s, American private stakeholders funded the lion's share of the budget of British mandatory institutions such as the BSAJ or the Department of Antiquities. This led to an asymmetrical relationship between the American donors and the British recipients as the former used their financial means to create a resource dependency as well as to establish American dominance among the institutions operating in archaeology.⁷⁸ One of the most striking donations was made by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in 1928 for the establishment of a museum of antiquities in Palestine. Rockefeller earmarked two million US dollars to construct the building and to constitute a collection of antiquities and artefacts.⁷⁹ The initiative of building the museum lay with the British authorities, while its fulfilment relied on an American donation.

During this period, the issue of the museum must also be considered in the context of Palestine's tourist sector. Western and local powers began to use specific tools, including museums, to make archaeology appealing to public opinion.⁸⁰ British rule of Palestine since WWI had helped to increase tourism in Palestine.⁸¹ The Holy Land was always an attractive place to pilgrims of the three monotheistic religions. During the twentieth century, the traditional religious pilgrimage was transformed into a travel itinerary through Palestine, including visits to archaeological sites in addition to the holy places. However, the increasing tourism also became a source of local tension between Muslim and Jewish communities who sought to promote their own traditions and sense of belonging to the area.⁸² Despite this tension and the rising costs of infrastructure projects, the British authorities saw benefits in opening archaeological sites to tourism. It appeared to them as a way to encourage sponsorship of an excavation if it aroused public interest. Moreover, charging tourist groups for their visits to archaeological sites helped to maintain the sites for the archaeologists.⁸³ The Palestine Archaeological Museum became one of the main stops on the tours after its opening in 1938, as tourists could see antiquities excavated from the sites they had visited.

To regulate tourist expansion in Palestine, the British authorities founded the Society for the Promotion of Travel in the Holy Land in 1921 and

⁷⁸James F. Goode, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919–1941*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 4.

⁷⁹"Rockefeller's Donation," *Falastin*, November 18, 1927, 3 [Own translation].

⁸⁰Kobi Cohen-Hattab, "Zionism, Tourism, and the Battle for Palestine: Tourism as a Political-Propaganda Tool," *Israel Studies* 9.1 (2004): 62.

⁸¹Doron Bar and Kobi Cohen-Hattab, "A New Kind of Pilgrimage: The Modern Tourist Pilgrim of Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 39.2 (April 2003): 134.

⁸²Rami K. Isaac, Colin Michael Hall, and Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, eds., *The Politics and Power of tourism in Palestine* (Abingdon, Oxon, UK and Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis and Routledge, 2016), 3.

⁸³Kew, National Archives. FO 141/687. Antiquities. February 19, 1919. 8703/1.

compelled every tour operator to declare their activities to the government. The aim of this society was to connect all the departments involved in the development of tourism, while considering the community and religious dimensions involved.⁸⁴ In 1927, an ordinance was published to oversee the professionalisation of tour guides. They had to sit an exam which consisted of memorising a list of monuments with their characteristics and histories. This list was composed of eighty places, including archaeological sites, with almost the same number of Christian, Jewish and Muslim places. Scholars of the Associated Schools or of the Palestine Oriental Society attended the meetings of the Society for the Promotion of Travel in the Holy Land to prepare the exhibition tours and share their knowledges on the sites. This initiative reveals that Great Britain continued to follow a politics of collaboration and harmonisation in the archaeological field, expanded to tourism and tried to avoid religious tensions between local communities by standardising the itineraries of the tour operators.

The French Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem and the American School of Oriental Research also organised their own tours. The EBAF mainly offered excursions to their students and local inhabitants to explain the monuments or the sites they saw every day, to understand their values and to encourage people to look after their heritage.⁸⁵ ASOR, meanwhile, organised two types of events. The first were tours planned in spring and autumn to visit current archaeological excavations and allow students to observe other fields. Those tours were open to all the members of the Associated Schools and learned societies of Palestine in the aim of the three-headed cooperation.⁸⁶ Another programme was a summer school in partnership with American universities. ASOR planned the event in collaboration with agencies in Jerusalem which prepared the itinerary from New York to Palestine and Syria. In 1925, a religious pilgrimage was added to the summer school with a programme dedicated to biblical history and archaeology.⁸⁷ Archaeological tourism thus became caught in a circular dynamic, starting with the influence of the public opinion which encouraged donors to invest in a field. If the travellers were satisfied by an itinerary, it generated deeper interest in archaeology from American visitors and invited philanthropists to invest in that area, which helped the research to continue in the fields in Palestine.

However, ASOR events were aimed at a specified public:

⁸⁴Jerusalem, EBAF. 5E/C-1. Society for the promotion of Travel in the Holy Land: comptes-rendus, correspondances. 1922–1923.

⁸⁵Jerusalem, EBAF. 2E/B-2-1. Activités de l’Ecole biblique et archéologique française rapports, compte rendus, correspondance 1920–1960. Rapport de l’Exercice de l’année 1934–1935.

⁸⁶Jerusalem, EBAF. 2E/B-2-1. Activités de l’Ecole biblique et archéologique française rapports, compte rendus, correspondance 1920–1960. Rapport de l’Exercice de l’année 1934–1935.

⁸⁷“Summer School at Jerusalem Combined with a Pilgrimage,” *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 17 (February 1925): 3.

The ending of this term marks the close of another successful year in the history of the school, which, although devoted mostly to archaeological work throughout the Near East, is also an institution for biblical research, receiving its support through the cooperation of Catholics, Protestants and Jews, both liberals and Fundamentalists.⁸⁸

From the mid-1920s, ASOR seemed to be increasingly concerned with biblical issues. As the Americans were dominant in the archaeological field in Palestine—with private donors and numerous institutions leading excavations—Mandate policy was also affected by those issues. Philanthropists were most of the time deeply religious, and by supporting Biblical archaeology and excavations dedicated to the Judeo-Christian past, they helped the Zionist campaign to legitimise the implementation of a Jewish national home in Palestine.⁸⁹ Archaeological tourism and archaeology in general could be used implicitly to convey political issues.⁹⁰ American and British interests shifted away from the idea of neutral, international bases for their collaborations. However, although the British institutions relied on American funds, the authorities tried until the end of the Mandate in 1948 to keep archaeology under an international consortium. For example, it was decided that the Palestine Archaeological Museum would be supervised by a Board of Directors with two members appointed by the High Commissioner, two representatives each of British and French institutions, two members appointed by the Arab League, two members from the Hebrew University and two representatives of American archaeological organisations.⁹¹ With a similar composition to the Archaeological Advisory Board founded in 1920, this Board of Directors established in 1948 marked the end of interwar archaeological research and embodied the long-term archaeological policies of the British institutions, even if some deviations occurred during this period.

This study of the archaeological institutions in Palestine during the interwar period leads to the conclusion that the history of archaeology, of cultural diplomacy and of international relations in the Middle East during this period cannot be fully understood if the role played by the Americans in the

⁸⁸Joseph M. Levy, “Jerusalem School in Its 30th Year,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1929.

⁸⁹Wireless to The New York Times, “\$50,000 aid to Jews by Rockefeller Jr.: Unsolicited, He Duplicates His Last Year’s Contribution to Federation,” *New York Times*, December 7, 1927, 1. The link that can be made between American philanthropists and the Jewish nationalist project in Palestine mostly ties into common religious and biblical ideas. It started with the influence American Jewish diaspora and Protestant millenarians had on public opinion which, in turn, increased interest and donations for archaeological excavations related to the Bible. The focus on the Judeo-Christian past revealed by the excavations indirectly influenced political issues at the end. Stephanie Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land: American protestant pilgrimage to Palestine, 1865–1941* (Landham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 12.

⁹⁰Donfried, *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, 21.

⁹¹“A league of nations for the supervision of the Museum of Antiquities,” *Falastin*, April 23, 1948, 3 [Own Translation].

politics of the British Mandate is not considered, even if they were not members of the League of Nations or the Mandate oversight committees. They were founding members of the Palestine Oriental Society, members of the Archaeological Advisory Board and in a way the major creditor of the archaeological field. American actors were also deeply involved with the British authorities over archaeological legislation in Palestine. The three-headed collaboration helped to create a network of scholars and organisations which established Palestine as one of the main archaeological research areas in the Middle East.

From a historiographic point of view, the characteristics of a colonial archaeology determined by Margarita Díaz-Andreu—with a museum, a university and a governmental institution or branch dealing with archaeological issues—could be reinterpreted.⁹² At first sight, this description corresponds to the British archaeological policy implemented in Palestine during the Mandate period, with the foundation of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem in 1919, then the Department of Antiquities in 1920, and finally the Palestine Archaeological Museum inaugurated in 1938. However, comparative analysis of these institutions and especially of their funding reports suggests a new historiographic reading in which financial power really led the archaeological field in Palestine. In fact, the BSAJ and the Department of Antiquities both received money from private American stakeholders, exemplified by the donation for the Palestine Archaeological Museum, renamed the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum⁹³ in gratitude to the philanthropist. Thus, the colonialist characteristics of archaeology in Palestine as conducted under the British Mandate could be reinterpreted as a form of informal imperialism from Americans over the institutions and, by extension, the archaeological field in Palestine.

This case study thus shows the deep connection between cultural diplomacy and archaeology, as both were intertwined throughout the entire time of the Mandate. At first, diplomacy was necessary to get archaeologists onto the ground and to negotiate permits to excavate. Then, archaeology became a tool through which to pursue diplomatic aims. The context in Palestine suggested that archaeology was used as a scientific tool to implement diplomatic ambitions from Western countries on political issues such as nationalist projects, mostly the Jewish rather than the Palestinian one.

Comparing the archives of different Western archaeological organisations also reveals two unexplored aspects of the history of archaeology in the Middle East during the interwar period. The first is the foundation of a three-headed supervision of the archaeological field instead of a British-French collaboration. The expansion from two to three state parties questions

⁹² Díaz-Andreu, *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology*, 404.

⁹³ The Palestine Archaeological Museum was renamed officially in 1967 but the name Rockefeller Archaeological Museum already appears in the archives of the 1930s.

some of the historiography of archaeology in Palestine. It suggests that foreign archaeology in Palestine was not a bilateral but, in fact, a multi-lateral project, framed within the international system of the League of Nations and implemented in the national contexts of the Mandates. Moreover, the historiography seems to have underestimated the role and effects of the increasing American influence on the archaeological field. US presence and use of financial capital within the field of archaeology can be explained with the fact that there was a strong belief within certain parts of the US policy that America should be involved in scientific and cultural diplomacy, and use this kind of diplomacy to impose their own diplomatic positions on the political issues of Palestine.

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Competition in the Cultural Sector: Handicrafts and the Rise of the Trade Fair in British Mandate Palestine

Nisa Ari

In the first week of July 1933, the First National Arab Fair opened in Jerusalem, filling the cavernous foyer and pristine rooms of the luxurious Palace Hotel on Mamilla Road (Fig. 1). Populating the first two floors of the hotel, the fair featured industrial, agricultural and artisanal wares from Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq, occupying approximately sixty rooms with nearly one hundred exhibitors selling handicrafts (textiles, pottery and woodwork), food stuffs (chocolate, candy, jam, salt and olive oil), home goods (soap, furniture, carpets and perfume) and clothing (socks, hosiery and shoes). The exhibitors hailed from cities in Palestine including Jerusalem, Nablus, Haifa, Bethlehem and Ain Karim, as well as those outside of Palestine, including Beirut, Jounieh, Tripoli, Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad, Cairo and Mecca.¹ Rather than be organised by country in separate pavilions or rooms, as was typical in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century world's fairs and colonial exhibitions, the exhibitors at the Arab Fair mixed with one another within each room, presenting a unified vision of Arab industry and

¹The Arabic-language newspaper *Al-'Arab* published a detailed description of the Arab Fair after it opened, including a full list of exhibitors and detailed floor plans. “The First Arab Fair,” *Al-'Arab*, 15 July 1933.

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Fig. 1 “Opening of the National Arab Fair, 7 July 1933”, *Falastin*, 16 July 1933; image courtesy of the Institute for Palestine Studies

culture. Within the hotel’s capacious first floor atrium, a central exhibition, entitled “The World’s Major Exhibition Products”, brought together products from across the fair, surrounded by interior gardens housing multiple cafes for rest and conversation (Fig. 2).

The organisers of the Arab Fair included ‘Issa al-‘Issa (the Christian founder of the newspaper *Falastin*) and Ahmad Hilmi Pasha (the previous general director of Muslim *awqaf* in Palestine and founder of the Arab National Bank), along with a cadre of other Palestinian Christian and Muslim businessmen who believed in economic development as the core of political development.² The First National Arab Fair (henceforth, “Arab Fair”) underscored the valued role of artisanal, agricultural and industrial production in this mission.

² In her study of Palestinian economic unions of the 1930s, historian Sherene Seikaly identifies al-‘Issa and Ahmad Hilmi, among others, as “men of capital,” Arab businessmen who positioned economic progress as crucial to constructing a “pan-Arab utopia of free trade, private property, and self-responsibility.” Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 1, 37.

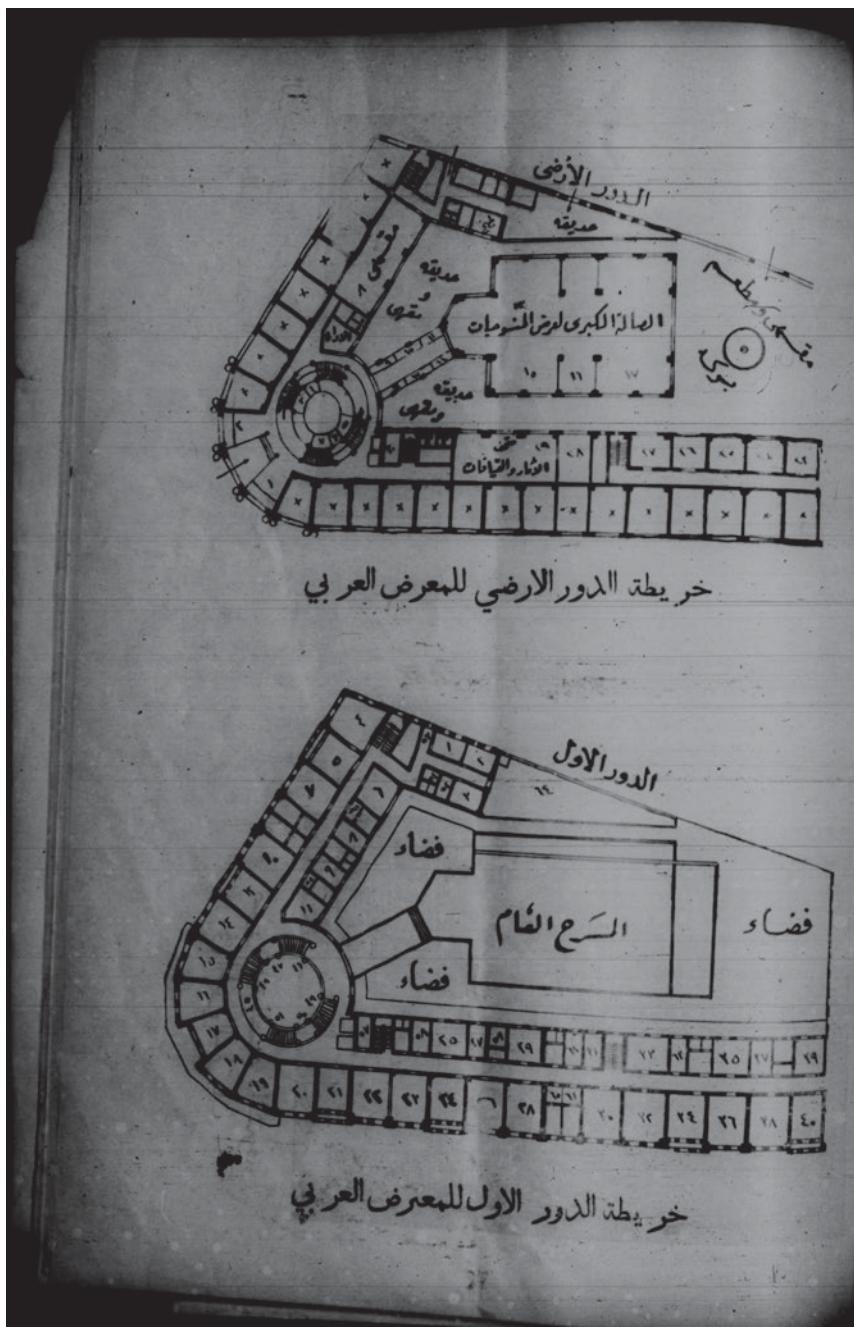


Fig. 2 “Exhibition Plan of the Arab Fair”, *Al-'Arab*, 15 July 1933; image courtesy of the Institute for Palestine Studies

Recent scholarship clarifies that the idea for an all-Arab Fair in Palestine was articulated as early as 1931, following a trip by al-'Issa to see the 1931 Paris Colonial Exhibition and a subsequent invitation to attend the 1932 Iraqi Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition in Baghdad.³ Yet, the stronger motive for staging an Arab Fair in 1933 came from a more direct impetus: as an aggressive response to the 1932 Levant Fair in Tel Aviv, organised by the Jewish trade organisation Mischar ve Taasia, and sponsored by the Municipality of Tel Aviv. Four smaller editions of the Levant Fair had occurred since 1924, but it was in 1932 that the Levant Fair organisers espoused their desire to become an “international” trade fair as a proof of concept for Zionist national ambitions.⁴ In that year, the Levant Fair garnered its official name, adopted the “Flying Camel” logo, and began to set its sights on building a permanent fairground in the space of 100,000 square metres on the Yarkon Peninsula, expanding the first Jewish city in Palestine to its most northwesterly point.⁵

The 1932 Levant Fair also greatly increased the number of international participants and included exhibitors from Egypt and Syria, neighbouring Arab countries under Mandate occupation. The presence of Arab businesses in a Jewish-organised trade fair stirred the Palestinian political elite to quick action. The organisers of the Arab Fair not only called for a boycott of the 1932 Levant Fair, which they saw as epitomising the economic and cultural colonisation of Palestine by Zionists, but they decided to stage their own trade fair by summoning a powerful internationalism of a different sort: pan-Arabism. The Arab Fair's catalogue, advertisements and signs were issued only in Arabic and only merchants from Arab countries were invited to exhibit their wares. While the Levant Fair extended its reach as a demonstration of the strength of the Zionist bureaucratic infrastructure and nationalist

³Nadi Abusaada, “Self-Portrait of a Nation: The Arab Exhibition in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–34,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 77 (Spring 2019): 124–125. For a more detailed discussion than this essay will provide on the origins of the First National Arab Fair, especially as it was represented and discussed in Palestinian newspapers of the period, see Abusaada’s full article as well as Nisa Ari, *Cultural Mandates, Artistic Missions, and “The Welfare of Palestine,” 1876–1948* (Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2019), 222–287.

⁴For example, at the ceremony to lay the foundation stone for the subsequent 1934 edition of the Levant Fair, Tel Aviv Mayor Meir Dizengoff extolled the union between the fair’s zeal to become an international centre for trade and its ability to represent Jewish progress toward nationhood in Palestine: “This change from a sterile expanse into a throbbing centre of commerce and cultural activity is symbolic of those wider endeavours in this country which have already been responsible for reconstructional achievements which may, I think, be said to equal those of any other colonising undertaking of our time.” Reinforcing (false) narratives which portrayed Palestine as barren — both socially and economically — before the mass migration of Jews to the region, Dizengoff’s sentiments emphasised the importance of agricultural, urban, and now also industrial and commercial developments for the fulfilment of the settler colonial Zionist mission in Palestine. “Speech delivered by Mr. M. Dizengoff, O. B. E., Mayor of Tel Aviv, President of the Fair Committee, At the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Levant Fair 1934 on August 16th 1933 [in English],” August 16, 1933, 2, L51\351, Central Zionist Archive.

⁵C.f. the 1932 Levant Fair Poster, designed by Esther Berlin-Joel; The Palestine Poster Project Archives, <http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/everybody-to-the-fair>.

ambitions, the Arab Fair intended to portray pan-Arab diversity as a marker of Palestinian unity and its own national future.

By 1933, then, the trade fair had become an effective site for the playing out of local, ethno-national politics within British Mandate Palestine. The purpose of this chapter is to sketch a lineage of trade fairs in Palestine in the decades immediately prior to the debut of the duelling “national” fairs of the 1930s—from one-room exhibitions hosted by Christian missionaries in the early 1900s to those assembled by British bureaucrats inside the Old City in the 1920s and 1930s—to investigate the roots of this typology. I contend that this history begins with the increase in religious missionary institutions in Palestine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Christian institutions, in particular, were among the first to encourage the production, exhibition and sale of Palestinian handicrafts in order to solicit international support for their missionary work as early as the 1840s, efforts which were then mirrored by some of the earliest Zionist-sponsored institutions active in Palestine at the start of the 1900s, such as the Evelina de Rothschild School for Girls and the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts, which hoped to foster the survival and growth of a Jewish community in Palestine. British bureaucrats, installed in Palestine once Britain was awarded the Mandate for Palestine in 1920, also adopted the format of the trade fair for political purposes, both abroad and at home. While their staging of Palestine’s handicrafts abroad sought to solidify Britain’s image as the harbinger of a modern Christian crusade in the post-Ottoman “Holy Land”, trade fairs organised by British bureaucrats within Palestine served a radically different end: namely, to draw together Palestine’s diverse ethno-religious, and urban and rural populations during a time of mounting political strife. By the time that the Levant Fair and the Arab Fair emerged as internationally-oriented trade fairs in the 1930s, in other words, the trade fair in Palestine was already coded as a space for garnering international support to enact local political change.

Undergirding this trajectory, I argue, was the formation of a “cultural sector” in Palestine—a conglomerate of institutions delimited by a distinct regional focus, furthering cultural development as part of both economic and political missions. My understanding of the cultural sector draws on its emergence following the Second World War as a UNESCO category, while questioning and assessing its historical evolution.⁶ As a ubiquitous, though often

⁶The UN formed after the Second World War in 1945 and established the specialised agency UNESCO in 1946. Initially, there were separate sections or divisions within UNESCO for the fields of libraries, museums, arts and letters. In 1948, these units were grouped under the newly created Department of Cultural Activities (CUA). In 1965 the units were reorganised into Sectors, thus creating the Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Culture Sector (SHC). UNESCO currently defines cultural and creative industries as “sectors of organised activity whose principal purpose is the production or reproduction, promotion, distribution and/or commercialisation of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature.” <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/culture/creative-industries/>. See also Diana Crane, *The Production of Culture: Media and the Urban Arts* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992).

perfunctory, term in the fields of art history, cultural studies, non-profit and humanitarian studies, and international relations, the concept of the cultural sector has yet to be historicised or positioned in relation to dominant frameworks of cultural diplomacy. Joseph Nye's definition of "soft power", which is predicated on nation-to-nation government relations, does not encompass those religiously-affiliated institutions which invested in promoting Palestine's cultural production for political action during the late Ottoman and British Mandate eras through trade fairs.⁷ Whereas "cultural internationalism", as distinguished by historian Akira Iriye, rests on the agency of individual cultural elites to promote "peace" and cross-national exchange through art and culture, the organisers behind trade fairs in Palestine kept their focus resolutely inward, to encourage change in the local politics around them.⁸

The concept of the cultural sector, on the other hand, makes space for understanding a variety of cultural institutions and actors, often in competition with one another, which engaged culture for immediate and localised political ends.⁹ Trade fairs and their organising infrastructures in British Mandate Palestine, as in the case of the Levant Fair and the Arab Fair, exemplify the type of institutions which contribute to a cultural sector. Moreover, this study's recognition of Christian missionary work, and religious charitable contributions more broadly, to the origins of the trade fair in Palestine and the Palestinian cultural sector contributes to historian Charlotte Faucher's recent call to investigate the historical relationship between cultural diplomacy and humanitarianism.¹⁰ By teaching and encouraging the production of handicrafts as a form of economic charity and humanitarian aid, and subsequently selling the objects as a way for donors to register their support for the religious mission, religious institutions created a new medium in Palestine through which to use culture as a form of diplomacy.

ARTISTIC MISSIONS

As precursors to the trade fair in Palestine, commercial displays of Palestinian handicrafts to support economic aims and particular ethno-religious communities originated among Christian missionary institutions in the 1840s and

⁷For Nye's construction of the term, see Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy* no. 80 (1990): 153–171.

⁸Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

⁹While the cultural sector is often considered alongside other putatively "soft" sectors in civil society, such as those supporting youth, women, education, and health, the cultural sector—like the financial sector or the business sector—tends equally to factionalise and receive funding for activities sponsored by local or international allies in support of particular politics.

¹⁰Charlotte Faucher, "Cultural Diplomacy and International Relations in Twentieth-Century Europe," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 381.

permeated Jewish philanthropic activities by the early 1900s. The first craft workshops to be set up by religious pilgrims in Palestine may date as far back as the year 1347, when the Franciscan “Terra Sancta” mission in Bethlehem taught the arts of intaglio, wood carving and mother-of-pearl ornamentation, in addition to the Italian language, and liturgical and theoretical subjects to the Arab orphans under their care.¹¹ While the records of the monastery show the Franciscans largely ceasing such handicraft production during the long duration of Ottoman rule, they revived their practices in the mid-nineteenth century as the surge in Euro-American religious tourism created a fresh market for their products.¹² In addition to practicing these handicrafts among themselves for the practicality of furnishing monasteries with their own wares, the Franciscans taught their arts to many of Palestine’s Arab Muslims (including orphans), with the hope of inspiring Catholic conversion while generating saleable handicrafts.

The Franciscan workshops were joined in the mid-nineteenth century by several new Christian missions to Palestine that were established under looser Ottoman laws.¹³ The German Protestant Templers, who had arrived in Palestine in the late 1860s, for instance, claimed not to use “traditional proselytism and denominational propaganda” to encourage conversions, but believed that by leading by example in work and trade they would be able to “influence the natives and stimulate them to imitation”.¹⁴ By

¹¹P. Bellarmino Bagatti O. F. M., “L’Industria Della Madreperla A Betlemme (“The Mother-of-Pearl Industry in Bethlehem”),” in *Custodia Di Terra Santa, 1342–1942* (Jerusalem: Tipografia dei Padri Francescani, 1951), 135.

¹²The workshops experienced a few resurgences prior to that time: first, under the supervision of Father Bernardino Amico from 1593–97 and again, in 1740, when the Franciscans opened an “Arts and Trades” school in Jerusalem to complement the workshops in Bethlehem. P. Bellarmino Bagatti O. F. M., “L’Industria Della Madreperla A Betlemme”; “Handicrafts in Bethlehem,” *Custodia Terrae Sanctae*, accessed September 13, 2018, <http://www.bethlehem.custodia.org/default.asp?id=453>; “The First Schools in the Shadows of the Sanctuaries,” *Custodia Terrae Sanctae*, accessed September 13, 2018, <http://www.custodia.org/default.asp?id=506>.

¹³The 1839 Gülhane Edict, which recognised the basic rights of Ottoman citizens, was followed by a second edict, the 1856 Reformation Edict, extending those rights to non-Muslims and foreigners living in the Ottoman Empire. With this legal change in status, investors, bankers, and merchants began settling in the Ottoman territories in larger numbers, and in 1867 foreigners were granted the right to hold property. In Palestine, foreign missionaries especially purchased land and built structures, significantly altering the landscape after 1867.

¹⁴The Temple Society, *The Temple Society in Palestine: To Interested Visitors of the Stand of the Society at the British Empire Exhibition Wembley* (London: The Temple Society, 1924). The Templers were a group of Protestant families from southwest Germany. Their first settlement was in Haifa (1868) and they established additional communities in Jaffa (1869), Sarona (1871), Jerusalem (1873), Wilhelma (1902, today known as Bnei Atarot), and Bethlehem (1905). For more on the history of the German Templers in Palestine, see Alex Carmel, “The German Settlers in Palestine and Their Relations with the Local Arab Population and the Jewish Community, 1868–1918,” in *Studies on Palestine During the Ottoman Period*, ed. Moshe Ma’oz (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 442–465.

excelling at all forms of handicrafts, from carpentry to baking, the Templers trusted that they could both sustain themselves in Palestine and provoke Jews and Muslims to turn towards Christianity, avoiding any direct proselytising to Muslims which was forbidden under Ottoman law.

More common among Christian missionaries in Palestine, however, was the opening of workshops for artisanal handicrafts as centres for conversion, similar to the Franciscan workshops.¹⁵ Most notable among them was the “House of Industry” opened by the Anglican Protestants of the London Jews’ Society (LJS) in 1843.¹⁶ The LJS derived its name from the target of its conversions (as it hoped to convert Jews to Christianity), and the House of Industry was intended to combine their supreme mission with practicality. Originating in Ireland to discourage indiscriminate almsgiving, “houses of industry” and “workhouses” combined religious charity with the provision of training and a vocation to the destitute.¹⁷ Based on this model, the LJS’ House of Industry similarly recruited poor Jewish men to train in carpentry, shoemaking, printing, and the production of popular souvenirs, such as olive-wood boxes, tables and carved wooden covers for photograph albums, as seen in a photograph of the workroom from the late 1800s (Fig. 3).

While the House of Industry focused on training men, the LJS engaged Jewish women through “visiting societies” and “working parties”, socially

¹⁵ While my focus for this section will be on the LJS and the Evelina de Rothschild School for Girls, several other Anglican missionary and Jewish schools operated in Jerusalem at the same time, offering a combination of academic and artisanal training. Most notable among them were the woodworking workshop inside the Schneller Orphanage (established 1860 by German Protestants), the trade school of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (established 1882 by French Jews), and the embroidery and dress-making workshops inside Schmidt’s Girls College (opened in 1886 by German Protestants for Arab Muslims and Christians). For more on these schools and others, see Paul Silberman, “An Investigation of the Schools Operated by the Alliance Israelite Universelle from 1862 to 1940” (PhD diss., New York University, 1973); H. L. Murre-van den Berg, ed., *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006); Norbert Friedrich, Uwe Kaminsky, and Roland Löffler, eds., *The Social Dimension of Christian Missions in the Middle East: Historical Studies of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010); Seth Frantzman, “Education and Empowerment: Lessons and History of the Christian Education Network in Israel and Palestine,” *Digest of Middle East Studies* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 186–201.

¹⁶ The British consulate was the first European consulate to open in Jerusalem in 1838–39, when Palestine was still under the control of the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali Pasha (from 1831–40). The LJS’s inaugural project in Palestine was to erect Christ Church, the first modern church to be built in Palestine since the Crusades. Reflecting the importance of artisanal training in the overall mission of the LJS, the second major project was the establishment of the House of Industry, opened soon thereafter, in 1843. Kelvin Crombie, *For the Love of Zion: Christian Witness and the Restoration of Israel* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), 4, 61–62.

¹⁷ Catherine Cox, “Health and Welfare, 1750–2000,” in *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland*, eds. Eugenio F. Biagini and Mary E. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 262.

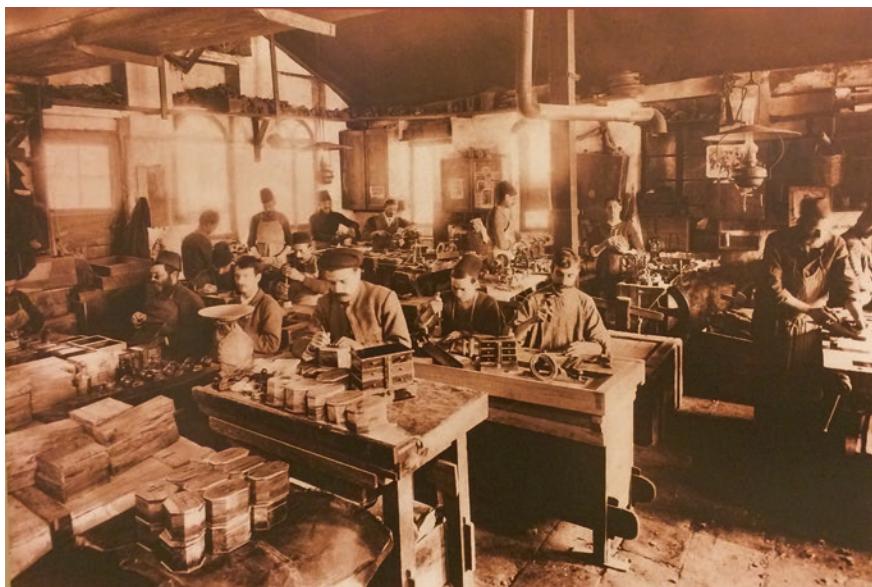


Fig. 3 Photographer unknown, “Interior view of the LJS’ House of Industry”, c. 1890–1914; image courtesy of the Conrad Schick Library and Archive

acceptable forms of female charity imported from Britain.¹⁸ Visiting societies, which aided indigent Jewish women in the privacy of their own homes, were sensitive to cultural notions of propriety which discouraged female presence in public space.¹⁹ Similar to the House of Industry, visiting societies combined evangelisation (Bible reading, distribution of religious texts and sermonising) with customary female work, such as sewing, weaving, and embroidery. The Jewesses Institute established in 1848 by Caroline Cooper, a Protestant missionary in Palestine, became the most visible and successful of these ventures.²⁰ Hosting “working parties” for women outside the home, Cooper’s innovative enterprise separated women’s work from the patriarchal

¹⁸ Structured to avoid creating dependent clients, the LJS’ House of Industry and women’s visiting societies also targeted the Jewish community’s historic reliance on diasporic Jewish money, otherwise known as *chaluka*, which had been financing parts of the *yishuv* in Palestine for decades. For more on charity as a central concept in Judaism, see Gregg Gardner, *The Origins of Organised Charity in Rabbinic Judaism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁹ At the same time, these societies manifested Christian ideals of “visitation,” humility, and service. Billie Melman, *Women’s Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 180.

²⁰ Other protestant visiting societies in Palestine included the Dorcas Society (1849), the Sarah Society (founded by the British Consul James Finn’s wife, Elizabeth Ann Finn, in 1854), and the Benevolent Society for the Relief of Poor Jewish Women in Child Birth (1865). *Ibid.*, 180–182.



Fig. 4 Lucy Matilda Cubley, “Plate 5: Jewesses at Work”, printed in Lucy Matilda Cubley, *The Hills and Plains of Palestine* (London: Day & Son, 1860)

household environment.²¹ An illustration of the Jewesses Institute by Lucy Matilda Cubley for her published travelogue *The Hills and Plains of Palestine* (1860) shows women arranged in a semi-circle in a domed room, employed in several stages of yarn production and embroidery: picking, spinning, and stitching²² (Figure 4).

The open book featured in the front left corner of the drawing is perhaps a set of sermons to be read to the women while they work, or maybe a pattern book or instructional aid. For Protestant missions in the Middle East, where due to cultural conventions “women could only be reached by women”,

²¹I have not yet been able to pinpoint the precise location of Cooper’s Jewesses Institute. Melman’s account of the Jewesses Institute states that the meetings took place outside of domestic homes, but she does not describe the location. Yaron Perry’s book on British missionaries in Palestine describes meetings of the Jewesses Institute as taking place in Church society buildings inside the Old City in 1891, but this was long after Cooper’s death and therefore does not strongly correlate to where she may have hosted meetings during her lifetime. Ibid., 184; Yaron Perry, *British Mission to the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Palestine* (London: Routledge, 2003), 149.

²²Lucy Matilda Cubley, *The Hills and Plains of Palestine* (London: Day & Son, 1860).

female missionaries played a vital role in the evangelical movement.²³ Cooper's career underscored the secondary, and arguably much more successful, role such female missionaries played in intensifying handicraft production and in the modernisation of the domestic economy for Jewish women.²⁴

A fundamental component of both the LJS' House of Industry and Caroline Cooper's Jewesses Institute was the operation of stores to sell their wares within Palestine—forerunners to the trade fairs which would come to dot Palestine's terrain throughout the first decades of the 1900s. While well-established Palestinian family workshops and souvenir shops existed throughout Palestine's major cities, like the Zachariah family souvenir shop in Jerusalem and the Zoughbi family mother-of-pearl workshop and store in Bethlehem, the proceeds from those sales were a direct exchange of money for goods, where the money supported the community of artisans and the further production of handicrafts.²⁵ In the case of the early showcases for handicrafts made within Christian missionary workshops, there was an additional, explicit exchange of money not just for goods, but for the ideological support of Christian efforts in Palestine. Through this aspect of the interaction, one can glimpse the emergence of a cultural sector.

The House of Industry store was initially placed within a stone building abutting the entrance gate of the LJS compound, opening out towards the main street which proceeded into the Old City from Jaffa Gate (Fig. 5). Marketing itself as the “L.J.S. Industrial Depot”, the hand-painted sign above the store's entrance advertised the “carpentry, turnery, printing, and book-binding workshops” within, promising a variety of wares for sale. The proceeds from the sales would, in large part, directly finance the work of the LJS. Both physically and figuratively, the LJS' House of Industry store was the initial conduit through which travellers would come to know—and, ideally, financially support—the missionary work of the LJS in Palestine. Similarly, Caroline Cooper opened a small store to support the vocational programme of the Jewesses Institute. Cooper gained notoriety especially among female missionaries and tourists for the significant inroads her institute made in bringing Palestine's Jewish women into contact with Christian mores.

²³Inger Marie Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure: Anglican Mission, Women, and Education in Palestine, 1888–1948* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002), xxii.

²⁴Melman, *Women's Orients*, 184.

²⁵The collector and historian George al Ama has made several recent discoveries of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artworks and handicrafts sold by the late Farah Zacharia, owner of the Zacharia souvenir shop in the vicinity of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City. For more on Bishara and Yousef Zoughbi's mother-of-pearl and olive-wood workshop in Bethlehem, which opened in 1876, see Enrique Yidi Daccarett, Karen David Daccarett, and Martha Lizcano Angarita, *El Arte Palestino de Tallar el Nácar: Una Aproximación a Su Estudio Desde el Caribe Colombiano - “The Palestinian Art of Mother-of-Pearl Carving: An Approach to Its Study from the Colombian Caribbean”* (Bogotá: Panamericana Formas e Impresos, 2005).



Fig. 5 Photographer unknown, “Exterior view of the LJS’ House of Industry Store”, c. 1930; image courtesy of the Conrad Schick Library and Archive

The Jewesses Institute became, according to historian Billie Melman, “a showcase of missionary work, a tourist attraction, on the map of every evangelical traveler”, as Cubley’s description and illustration of the institute in her popular travelogue attested.²⁶ Cooper bequeathed her institute and small store to the LJS upon her death in 1859, where it continued to run with its own vocational school, a girls’ day school, and a commercial bazaar, described as “a small enterprise which employed Jewish women in handicrafts, the products being sold in Palestine and in countries abroad”.²⁷ Through the efforts of Palestine’s nineteenth-century Christian organisations, commercial displays of Palestinian handicrafts—at home and, increasingly, abroad—acquired an underlying ideological aspect.

Exhibitions staged abroad by Jewish philanthropic societies in the early 1900s further highlighted how handicrafts could function as repositories for international charitable givers—specifically, donors who hoped to contribute to the survival of poor Jews in Palestine during the precarious period of late Ottoman-era instability and the increasing persecution of Jews in Europe and Russia. The Evelina de Rothschild School for Girls—supported through the charity of the Jewish-German Rothschild family—excelled at marketing the

²⁶Melman, *Women’s Orients*, 185.

²⁷Perry, *British Mission to the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Palestine*, 119.

students' handicraft products in Jewish trade fairs abroad and provides an apt example. The Evelina School's headmistress from 1900–1945, Annie Landau, adamantly opposed the *chaluka* system, viewing it as a "degrading charity...a cancer eating away at the vitals of Jerusalem".²⁸ Her creation of a lacemaking atelier and, later, millinery and dress workshops in the school provided job opportunities for the Jewish girls, where they were paid "five to twenty francs per month and received one hot meal a day as well as additional lessons in various subjects".²⁹ To increase sales within Palestine, the Evelina School had adapted its designs to local needs, for instance by gaining commissions from the officers of the Turkish garrison in Jerusalem to make epaulettes with the embroidered words of *al-Quds es-sharif* ("The Holy, Noble place", the name for Jerusalem in Islamic texts) in Aleppine pure silver thread on red cloth.³⁰

For sales abroad, the school focused on producing fancy embroidered articles as fashionable export goods for European buyers and as religiously themed Jewish goods for Jewish buyers all over the world. By 1910, the Evelina School's embroidery and lace works had been shipped out for sale in a Parisian shop, commissioned by Berlin department stores requesting "lace-trimmed handkerchiefs and dress trimmings", and were coveted in Amsterdam where the city's clientele desired simple dresses designed "to be comfortable, healthy, and beautiful".³¹ By 1914, the Evelina School's workshops had also produced ornamental synagogue curtains and Torah mantles for Jewish communities from Australia to Hungary and continued to receive individual lace orders from wealthy female clients in France, England, Switzerland and the US.³² The Evelina School's products not only included traditional Palestinian patterns or religious symbols, but likely incorporated popular Euro-American designs in order to appeal to a wide buying public outside Palestine.

By the early 1900s, the Evelina School contributed its wares to exhibitions hosted by European and American Jewish charities in order to expose the world to the needs of Palestine's Jewry and raise funds for its survival. Such exhibitions, like the one hosted by the Anglo-Jewish Association in Vienna in 1904 and an exhibition of Jewish handicrafts from Palestine in the Hague in 1907, were met with financial success. All articles of embroidery

²⁸ Annie Landau quoted from Anglo-Jewish Association, *Thirty-Third Annual Report, 1903–04*, 57–59 in Laura S. Schor, *The Best School in Jerusalem: Annie Landau's School for Girls, 1900–1960* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2013), 61.

²⁹ Ibid., 62.

³⁰ Ibid., 70. As a by-product of such training in missionary schools, providing needlework and embroidery services for soldiers continued to be an activity of women and girls in Palestine after the war. Charles Robert Ashbee, upon arrival to Palestine in 1918, reported that Arab women and girls were often found "hanging about the camps after the [British] soldiers" looking for work and materials. C. R. Ashbee, "Report by Mr. C. R. Ashbee on the Arts and Crafts of Jerusalem and District" (August 1918), 28, CRA/21/1, King's College Archives.

³¹ Schor, *The Best School in Jerusalem*, 70.

³² Ibid., 76–77.

and handmade lace sent by the Evelina School to the 1904 Vienna exhibition, for example, sold immediately to an eager public, and Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands was evidently so impressed with the school's display in the Hague that she purchased some items for her own collection.³³

In promoting the work of specific communities (in this case, the Jewish community) in Palestine, such exhibitions began to take on more explicitly political dimensions. The 1907 exhibition in the Hague, for instance, occurred as part of the meeting of the eighth Zionist Congress. That Queen Wilhelmina purchased an object made by the young Jewish students of the Evelina School may have indicated a diplomatic gesture of support for the Zionist movement in Palestine.³⁴ The "Palestine Exhibition and Bazaar" held in London in 1912, another example of an exhibition hosted by the Anglo-Jewish Association, also articulated goals in line with Zionism. While on the surface the exhibition was a fundraiser to directly benefit the Evelina School and the newly formed Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts, the organisers' stated aim also included the more broad desire "to secure...the attention and active support of the Jewish community in England" for Jewish activity in Palestine.³⁵ Within the delicate items on display, made of lace, copper, wool and silver filigree, was thus embedded a rallying cry to prompt English Jews to nurture the communal—and increasingly political—advancement of their brethren in Palestine. While the term "Zionism" was not used explicitly in the exhibition's promotional materials, the primary organisers of the 1912 exhibition, Cecil Franklin, Cyril Picciotto, and Leonard Stein, as well as many of the exhibition's patrons, were active members of London's Zionist associations.³⁶ Moreover, the exhibition's organisers hoped that the status of the handicraft objects themselves would transform from religiously themed export goods to symbols of the Zionist movement in order to strengthen a

³³Ibid., 59. In a pamphlet produced for the 1912 fundraiser exhibition for the school hosted by the Anglo-Jewish Association in London, Annie Landau reported: "I have received letters from Holland telling me that Queen Wilhelmina, when visiting the Palestinian Exhibition at the Hague, expressed her admiration of the lace and embroidery sent by us, and that she purchased some of it." For reference, see *The Committee of the Palestine Exhibition and Bazaar, Awakening Palestine* (London, 1912), 5.

³⁴For more on the relationship between the Jewish community in the Netherlands and Dutch royal attitudes towards Jews, see Bart Wallet, "Dutch National Identity and Jewish International Solidarity: An Impossible Combination? Dutch Jewry and the Significance of the Damascus Affair (1840)," in *The Dutch Intersection: The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, ed. Yosef Kaplan (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008): 319–330.

³⁵The Committee of the Palestine Exhibition and Bazaar, *Awakening Palestine*, 3.

³⁶For a discussion on Zionism in Picciotto's own words, see for example Jacob Alexander, Cyril M. Picciotto, and Leon Simon, *Zionism and the Western Jew: A Symposium Read before the London Zionist League, on the 24th December, 1908* (London: Ginzburg, 1908). Stein, in particular, went on to serve in high-ranking positions in the World Zionist Organisation and the Jewish Agency for Palestine during the British Mandate period. For a brief biography on Stein, see "Stein, Leonard Jacques (1887–1973), Scholar and Zionist," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/31717>.

Jewish ethno-national identity in Palestine: “Whether that art [the handicrafts of the Evelina School and Bezalel on view] is to be *truly national* depends upon the warmth of the encouragement it will receive when its aims and achievements are properly understood”.³⁷ In this context—one that would presage future trends—handicrafts, initially created to support Jewish “livelihood” through the auspices of a religious charitable institution, later existed to sway the opinion of donors towards the goals of a particular political movement, which in this case was Zionism.³⁸

THE TRADE FAIR DURING THE BRITISH MANDATE

From the Jewesses Institute’s commercial store launched in 1850s Jerusalem to the 1912 “Palestine Exhibition and Bazaar” in London, exhibitions galvanised financial giving to religious and increasingly political causes in Palestine through the purchases of handicrafts. These early exhibitions positioned the space of display as one of sectarian solidarity and handicraft objects as objects of political persuasion. The Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts, which received its initial financial support through German and Russian Jewish charities, frequently staged exhibitions abroad featuring its handicrafts to raise money for the school and support for the Zionist cause. From the US to Austria and South Africa, Bezalel’s carpets, silver filigree work, copper inlay and woodwork were sold to solicit support for the Jewish Zionist movement in Palestine until the onset of the First World War temporarily halted their journey.³⁹

³⁷The Committee of the Palestine Exhibition and Bazaar, *Awakening Palestine*, 8. Emphasis mine.

³⁸The use of exhibitions as Zionist fundraising efforts aligns with cultural historian Michael Berkowitz’s conclusions regarding the relationship between Jewish fundraising and Zionism during this time: “In large part Zionism owed its surprising success to constructively integrating fundraising into the movement, which provided a means for Westernised Jews – those who were not conceived as Palestine’s ‘pioneers’ – to participate in, and feel a full part of, the national movement.” While in principle Zionism denigrated the idea of a Jewish diaspora, European and American Jews were needed to “bankroll” the movement, and such exhibitions and trade fairs provided a vehicle for their financial support. Michael Berkowitz, “Toward an Understanding of Fundraising, Philanthropy and Charity in Western Zionism, 1897–1933,” *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations: Official Journal of the International Society for Third-Sector Research* 7, no. 3 (1996): 247, 253–254.

³⁹Proposed by the Lithuanian Jewish artist Boris Schatz at the Seventh Zionist Congress in Basel in 1905, Bezalel was an explicitly Zionist project that existed well before Zionists built their first kibbutz (Degania, 1909) or first university (Hebrew University, 1918) in Palestine. For more on the founding of Bezalel, its funding bodies, and the history of its exhibitions abroad see Nurit Shilo-Cohen, ed., *Bezalel: Crafting a Jewish Style—The Art of Bezalel, 1906–1996* (New York: Jewish Museum, 1996); and Inka Bertz, “Trouble at the Bezalel: Conflicting Visions of Zionism and Art,” in *Nationalism, Zionism and Ethnic Mobilization of the Jews in 1900 and Beyond*, ed. Michael Berkowitz (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 247–284.

The trade fairs which emerged in Palestine during the British Mandate, under the direction of British bureaucratic agents, further defined the trade fair as a tool of cultural politics. After defeating Ottoman forces and occupying Palestine in December of 1917, British agents orchestrated exhibitions of regional handicrafts and industry, attaching a cultural component to their mission of redeeming and vivifying the so-called Holy Land. The earliest such exhibitions were guided by the Pro-Jerusalem Society (PJS), founded in 1918 by Jerusalem's first military governor Ronald Storrs and directed by Charles Robert Ashbee, a pioneer in the British arts and crafts movement.⁴⁰ A short-lived cultural crusade of Storrs' design, the PJS' original charter stated that the society aimed to be the "creative" and "pacific" arm of the pre-colonial British military government.⁴¹ Maintaining its efforts through matching grants with private contributors, the PJS promised its international supporters that it would advance the welfare of Jerusalem's inhabitants through a dual focus on architectural preservation and the establishment of art galleries and cultural centres.⁴²

While primarily remembered as the entity which altered the face of Jerusalem through requiring the use of blush-coloured "Jerusalem stone", the PJS also hosted the earliest trade exhibitions within the Old City. Making use of a few empty rooms within the Citadel inside Jaffa Gate, the PJS orchestrated three exhibitions of Palestine's handicraft industries between the years 1921–1922 to "help in the education of the community" and to stimulate the three major handicraft industries—weaving, ceramics, and glass—which Ashbee and Storrs hoped would contribute to the PJS's planned architectural restoration and building projects.⁴³ More importantly, Ashbee clarified, he intended the exhibitions to pose significant questions regarding the future of Palestine's Jewish residents:

⁴⁰For more on the life of C. R. Ashbee and his involvement in the British Arts and Crafts movement, see Alan Crawford, *C. R. Ashbee: Architect, Designer & Romantic Socialist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁴¹C. R. Ashbee, "Pro-Jerusalem," *The American Magazine of Art* 12, no. 3 (1921): 99.

⁴²While the term "matching grant," like "cultural sector," was not in use until several decades later, Ashbee described the Society's finances as such: "The Administration gives to the Society pound for pound of what it receives in subscriptions and donations...so that the income, exclusive of special grants for education or fresh subscriptions and donations, will for the current year be double that sum." Charles Robert Ashbee, ed., *Jerusalem, 1920–1922: Being the Records of the Pro-Jerusalem Council during the Period of the British Military Administration* (London: J. Murray, Published for the Council of the Pro-Jerusalem Society, 1924), 31.

⁴³In addition to nurturing these crafts for restoration and other architectural works, Ashbee posed a political dimension to the PJS' encouragement of handicrafts: "This re-establishment of the crafts, even if looked at merely from the political point of view, is of vital importance in Palestine. [...] Work with the hands, the creative work, the work of the imagination applied to a man's personal labour, keeps men from empty political speculation. For every craftsman we create, we create also a potential citizen; for every craftsman we waste, we fashion a discontented effendi." Ibid., 29.

The whole Zionist problem is involved in this, for it means the life of the Jewish colonies. Are they going to continue to be dependent on outside support? Will they develop mechanical power intelligently? Will they practise [agricultural] by-crafts, as the Palestinian peasant has done for thousands of years? Here are not only vital problems in the theory of civics, the Zionist question itself is involved, and the Mandate for Palestine.⁴⁴

Ashbee's anxious questioning referenced the mandate's responsibility towards fostering a Jewish national home in Palestine, as outlined in the 1917 Balfour Declaration.

The organisation of the PJS' inaugural trade exhibition reflected Ashbee's concern, which was a display "in part town planning and the crafts encouraged by the Society, in part ancient Moslem art, in part modern Palestinian effort".⁴⁵ The section on "modern Palestinian effort" was primarily devoted to Jewish industrial and artistic advancements in Palestine, whereas Arab handicrafts were limited to displays of "ancient Moslem art" and the handcraft industries explicitly nurtured by the PJS, such as ceramic tilework for restorations to the Dome of the Rock, and weaving as part of Ashbee's "Jerusalem Looms" project. A total of 260 paintings and drawings, primarily from the recently formed Hebrew Union of Artists, joined the nearly 4000 handicrafts and utensils on view.⁴⁶ The uneven display prompted Palestine's High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, to express regret that the Muslim works were displayed mainly as "antiques". However, he used the occasion as an opportunity to speak on the perceived laggardly progress of Arab handicrafts when compared with the "modern" Jewish displays: "I hope our Muslim friends will not hesitate to follow suit [making modern furniture and housewares], and will participate more vigorously in future exhibitions".⁴⁷

Intended as a showcase of the PJS' early progress, the Citadel exhibitions simultaneously reinforced a vision of Palestinian handicrafts that equated Arab industry with Palestine's past and Jewish industry with Palestine's future. The second PJS exhibition, staged in 1922, underscored this impression by neatly dividing its displays into two categories: a traditional department and a modern department. The traditional section included home goods, ceramics, metal work, textiles, glass work and women's costumes from Ramallah, Hebron (al-Khalil), Bethlehem and Jerusalem. These were mainly the work of Arabs, with a small section for carpets made by a subsidiary workshop of the Bezalel School. The traditional section was seemingly the focus of the

⁴⁴Ibid., 31.

⁴⁵Ibid., 30. A newspaper report on the exhibition clarified that there were specific sections devoted to Islamic art, architectural plans, international art, and a section for the recently formed Hebrew Union of Artists. Yigal Zalmona, *The Tower of David Days: First Cultural Strife in Israel Art* (Jerusalem: Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem, 1991), 73.

⁴⁶Zalmona, *The Tower of David Days*, 73.

⁴⁷Ibid.

exhibition's poster, a romantic image of a lone potter designed by the Jewish artist Ze'ev Raban.⁴⁸

The modern department, on the other hand, favoured Jewish handicraft production, including soap from Haifa, brushes, leather goods from Jaffa, books and graphic works by the Jewish designer Yihieh Yedidia, and displays of wicker furniture by Arabs from the German Protestant Schneller Orphanage in Jerusalem and the Abu-Sheikh workshop in Beersheba.⁴⁹ Despite Raban's poster marketing traditional handicrafts and the PJS' stated intention of balance among the Jewish and Arab displays, the teleological narrative within the exhibition's design suggested it was Jewish industry and handicrafts which were to dominate Palestine's future.

Perhaps it was unsurprising, then, when at the British Empire Exhibition of 1924 held in Wembley, London, the Palestine Pavilion hardly incorporated Arab-made Palestinian handicrafts. The British Empire Exhibition celebrated the reach of the Crown following World War I—"the British Empire in microcosm" as the official guide stated—and Palestine was featured in its own pavilion among those of the empire's many colonies and dependencies.⁵⁰

While the primary emphasis of the colonial trade fair was on the "unbounded potentialities" and economic prowess created through the industrial, agricultural, cultural, and even ethnic bounty of the empire, the focus of the Palestine Pavilion was decidedly more reverent.⁵¹ "The country has not been annexed to the British Empire; we hold it as a trust", wrote High Commissioner Samuel in the pavilion's handbook. Noting the empire's conviction to afford equal rights to "all races and creeds" and remarking how the British found Palestine "derelict after centuries of misrule", the Palestine Pavilion was intended to convey how British rule in Palestine provided Christian redemption of the Holy Land from Ottoman neglect.⁵²

The displays inside the Palestine Pavilion, which included British but also Zionist companies monetising Palestine's natural resources of oil, salt, stone, tobacco and other minerals and agricultural produce, conveyed the region's assets, but, as the handbook made clear, were meant primarily to indicate and enlist British support for "the progress which has been made since the

⁴⁸Cf. poster for the 1922 Palestine Crafts and Industries Exhibition, designed by Ze'ev Raban, published by the Jerusalem Municipality; The Palestine Poster Project Archives, <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/palestine-crafts-and-industries>.

⁴⁹Ibid., 72–73.

⁵⁰*British Empire Exhibition 1925 Official Guide* (London: Fleetway Press, 1925), 23, Brent Archives.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Further text in the Palestine Pavilion handbook underscores the British desire to remake Palestine in its ancient, pre-Islamic image: "Here is evidence of the many-sided activities of the Government, of corporations, and of individuals...in revealing the ancient Palestine and in building the new." Sir Herbert Louis Samuel, "Introduction," *Palestine Pavilion Handbook* (London: Fleetway Press, 1925), 21–22, Brent Archives.

British Government assumed responsibility”.⁵³ The handicrafts and ephemera on view—intricate wooden models of the Jewish Temple and drawings of the Dome of the Rock, pottery, toys, glassware, furniture, weaving, embroidery and unique souvenir boxes filled with Palestine’s “sacred soil” (containing Palestinian wildflowers, water from the Jordan River, and earth from Mount Moriah)—covered a wide field of handicrafts and industries purportedly flourishing under mandate rule.⁵⁴ The official guide located the origins of these crafts in a pre-Islamic period, “still maintained by both Arab and Jew in their primitive form, dating back in many cases to a remote antiquity”, and presented the mandate government’s desire to “promote in Palestine both an Arab and Jewish revival”.⁵⁵ In this spirit of parity, both Arab glassblowers from Hebron and Jewish filigree workers from Yemen, who had recently settled in Palestine, were scheduled to travel to Wembley to be on view and “at work” in the exhibition. However, due to financial constraints only the Yemenites managed to be on display, owing to Zionist sponsorship.⁵⁶

Thus, in the end, the Palestine Pavilion at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition presented Palestine as a land touched most significantly by British and Zionist development, despite the handbook’s pronouncements of equality and ethno-religious harmony. As the historian Nicolas Roberts underscores in his study of the Palestine Pavilion’s organising committee, “the pavilion, like the country itself, was dominated by British and Zionist officials, the exclusion of the Arab population was not only inevitable but easy”.⁵⁷ The relative invisibility of Palestine’s Arab-run industry on a world stage was made more stark by the continued prolific displays of Zionist activity in international trade fairs, which skyrocketed following the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. The most large-scale of these endeavours included the 1925 Palestine Vienna Exhibition, the 1933 Anglo-Palestine Exhibition in London, and Palestine pavilions at the 1934 Chicago World’s Fair, and the 1939 New York World’s Fair. The products for sale at the fairs—from Jaffa’s oranges to

⁵³Ibid., 109.

⁵⁴Ibid. and Nicholas E. Roberts, “Palestine on Display: The Palestine Pavilion at the British Empire Exhibition of 1924,” *Arab Studies Journal* 15, no. 1 (2007): 72.

⁵⁵*Palestine Pavilion Handbook*, 116, 21.

⁵⁶Yemenite jewellers, sent as representatives of the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts, were lauded in the Palestine Pavilion handbook for having “extended their outlook with more modern, but Jewish ideas...The result was a new style of art, which can no longer be described as purely Yemenite, but rather as Palestinian.” Archival letters reveal that the jewellers were initially to be joined by Arab glassblowers from Hebron for the “Native Craftsmen at Work” display within the pavilion: “I take this opportunity to remind you that 2 Yemenite Jewellers are being sent to London for working during the whole period of the exhibition. They will leave for London together with the 3 Arab glassmakers of Hebron.” Without Zionist financial support, however, bringing the glassblowers was “found impracticable.” Ibid., 116; “Letter from the Secretary for Trade and Industry to Leonard Stein, WZO” 6 February 1924, S25\11024-9-12, Central Zionist Archive.

⁵⁷Roberts, “Palestine on Display,” 73.

the “oriental” rugs and silver-filigreed Judaica produced by the workshops of the Bezalel School—were marketed to consumers as investments towards furthering the Jewish national movement in Palestine. Palestine, in these displays, was self-consciously and solely presented as a Jewish entity.

However, the history of the trade fair in British Mandate Palestine includes at least one attempt to reorient the format of the trade fair towards creating political and ethno-religious harmony between Jews and Arabs, rather than sowing disparity. In the 1930s, the British Mandate government appointed a Director of Technical Education, William Arnold Stewart. Stewart hoped to revive the use of the Citadel for exhibitions of artisanal handicrafts, with an approach reflective of the administration’s need to quell the heightened tensions between Jews and Arabs in the wake of the watershed violence of the 1929 Wailing Wall Riots/al-Buraq Uprising. Stewart negated the widely held belief among British officials that Arabs lacked the skill or desire to excel in industry and handicraft production.⁵⁸ He framed the immediacy of his efforts in Palestine not in terms of the threat of the arrival of mechanised European industrial commodities, as was the case for instance in British-controlled India, but in terms of the competing Jewish labour force in Palestine⁵⁹:

The Arabs are up against very stiff competition with the Jewish Artisans, and they have every right to demand that Technical Training, of a high standard, shall be provided for them. [...] The theory that the Arab is not fitted for highly skilled technical work must be disproved by actual achievement.⁶⁰

While several Arab-run political, commercial and educational institutions were in their incipient stages, there was no equivalent to the Zionist Organisation’s centralised planning or financial support from abroad at that point, nor a school devoted to the study of traditional handicrafts or new industries.⁶¹ As expressed throughout his unpublished manuscript, *Creative*

⁵⁸Given the jaunty nickname “Arts and Crafty Stewart,” Stewart first arrived in the Middle East as the inspector of arts and crafts with the Egyptian Ministry of Education and later, became principal of the School of Arts in Crafts in Cairo (1911–1927) before arriving in Palestine. Trained primarily as a painter at the Royal College of Art in London, Stewart embodied the ethos of the arts and crafts movement as it had manifested in England and as it had developed and mutated through British colonial projects in the Middle East. Like Ashbee, Stewart believed that traditional processes of craft production and ancient workshop and guild structures were still active in these regions and viewed the Middle East as the ultimate example of and most fruitful landscape for enacting an arts and crafts pedagogy. For a biographical summary of Stewart’s life, see Jaromir Malek, “Stewart, William Arnold (1882–1953),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

⁵⁹Arindam Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of Its Global Reproducibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 19.

⁶⁰W. A. Stewart, “Creative Work in Palestine: Technical and Crafts Education, 1918–1946” (n.d.), 129–130, Oxford University, Griffith Institute.

⁶¹The Arab Executive Committee (founded 1920), the Supreme Muslim Council (1922), and the Arab Higher Committee (1936) represented the main political bodies emerging out of rival family factions in the 1920s and 1930s. While these organisations helped to fund schools

Work in Palestine, Stewart felt duty-bound to balance the scale in regard to Arab success in the handicrafts and technical industries.

In setting his task to equalise the handicraft industries between Jews and Arabs, Stewart identified two problems hindering his goal: the lack of technical education in government-run Arab schools and the purportedly inadequate space for the egalitarian display and sale of handicraft objects. Stewart complained about Jerusalem's limited exhibition spaces in his manuscript:

Some examples of craftswork were to be seen in the Store of the American Colony and in one or two shops in the Jaffa road, but in none of these was there a really representative selection of all Arab and Jewish crafts.⁶²

Beyond the more enterprising souvenir shops along Jaffa Road, the Bezalel School also hosted frequent exhibitions of its work and Stewart hosted small displays of handicrafts from the government schools.⁶³ However, following the few PJS attempts in the early 1920s, there had been no further effort to gather such disparate undertakings under one roof.

Like a local version of a world's fair, Stewart set about organising a local trade fair that would display handicrafts from every possible school, village and individual around the country he could find:

We collected carpets from Gaza, silk stuffs from Mejdal hand looms, cotton stuffs from the Alliance Israelite workshop, copper work from Nazareth, Bethlehem pearl and olive wood work, Yemenite Basket work and Embroideries, lace, jewelry, in fact anything and everything we could find that was useful and attractive. Peasant women brought in embroidered head shawls and could not understand why my wife selected those of old traditional stitch and design and rejected others decorated with swans, cupids, and harps taken from French cross-stitch pattern books.⁶⁴

and religious institutions, and Arab-founded banks and business unions also formed during this period, there was no real equivalent to the Jewish Agency's comprehensive planning and institutional prowess, including the formation of special departments such as those for Economic Research or Agriculture. Roza El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape: British Imperial Rule in Palestine, 1929–1948* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 22.

⁶²Stewart, "Creative Work in Palestine," 57.

⁶³In addition to graduation exhibitions for high schoolers and some small exhibitions of works by teachers, Stewart created a hybrid exhibition-competition for boys in the government Arab elementary schools. Each year, Stewart circulated the subject of the exhibition to the schools and the submitted entries were exhibited and judged by a set of officials from the architectural section of the Department of Public Works. The subjects ranged from the creation of objects, such as "a small Arabic table to be enriched with veneered inlay" (to be submitted alongside complete working drawings), to drawing tests, such as "a study in colour of Palestinian wild flowers" or "an illustration to the story of Joseph and his Brethren." Ibid., 120.

⁶⁴Ibid., 57.

Stewart brimmed with excitement over the local diversity of the artisans and the variety of media he was able to exhibit in a unified manner. Stewart's listing of the participants in the trade fair reveal his bias towards works with "traditional" designs and those produced in regionally specific media. Collecting "anything and everything", Stewart hoped to stimulate a local interest in and a market for all of Palestine's handicrafts, produced by Jews *and* Arabs. After hosting the exhibition for four years in a single room inside the Citadel, Stewart concluded that the exhibition's visibility successfully stimulated the migration of handicrafts from exhibition space to store window: "The object had been served; we had made a market for them and there seemed to be no further reason for competing with the shops".⁶⁵

The Arts and Crafts Exhibition highlighted the guiding principle behind Stewart's most public endeavour in Palestine, to create a space—through the framework of the trade fair—in which Jews and Arabs could find common ground. He reflected on this position towards the end of his lengthy memoir, writing, "If Jews and Arabs could agree to work together, to be Palestinians and work for Palestine, they might succeed".⁶⁶ The proclamation of this ethos illuminates the double meaning behind the title of Stewart's manuscript *Creative Work in Palestine*. Not only did he believe a strong technical education would serve as a form of labour, or "creative work" for Palestine's rural communities in financial need, but he harboured hope that culture, potentially through the format of an economically motivated trade fair, could labour for the soul of Palestine, could do the *work* of solving the mounting gulf between Palestine's Arab and Jewish communities during the British Mandate.

FAIR COMPETITION

Stewart's efforts in the 1930s and the earlier efforts of the PJS were, however, both idealistic and short-lived. While Stewart conceived of the cultural sector as a territory for consensus-building and pushed for the use of the trade fair as a unifying site for Jews and Arabs, the cultural sector and specifically the typology of the trade fair, came to be a space for political debate in the hands of Palestinian and Zionist actors. With an awareness of how soliciting economic and political engagement through international and local trade fairs could be used to move the needle on local politics, as had been modelled by both religious charitable institutions and the British colonial administration, Jews and Arabs staged trade fairs featuring artisanal handicrafts, agricultural products and industrial wares to promote their concurrent, conflicting bids for national agency in Palestine.

Leaders of the Zionist movement in Palestine had long recognised the trade fair's profound potential as a way to advance Jewish development while

⁶⁵Ibid., 59.

⁶⁶Ibid., 195.

nurturing international support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Building on the successful staging of Zionist-led trade fairs in Europe and America prior to the First World War (as described in this chapter's first section), a group of local businessmen launched a Jewish trade fair in Palestine—no longer in Palestine's political and religious centre of Jerusalem, but rather in Palestine's distinctly *Jewish* centre, Tel Aviv. The first, embryonic exhibition of the Levant Fair in 1924, under the name "Palestine & Near East Exhibition and Fair", was held in the same year as the British Empire Exhibition and displayed Jewish goods in two small rooms in a house on Rothschild Boulevard. When the exhibition's trio of founders, Alexander Ezer (Everserov), Abraham Eilon (Idelson), and Shlomo Jaffe had the idea of presenting a consolidated view of Jewish industrial progress in Tel Aviv, Palestine's first Jewish urban enclave was host to only 18,000 inhabitants.⁶⁷ The factories on display numbered a meagre sixteen. Its mission was to present a survey of industrial progress in the *yishuv*—which, at that point, consisted primarily of its main export industries of wine, soap and sesame—to mark the community's progress towards self-sufficiency.⁶⁸

Two years later, when the founders organised a second edition of the fair, the goal was no longer "so much in showing what industrial activity was already taking place ('and that the participants were real industries by then'), but in revealing what was still lacking".⁶⁹ In other words, the first exhibition took stock of the current Zionist landscape—what had the union of external capital investments and internal labour achieved together so far?—while the second edition asked a slightly more strategic question: If a Jewish nation were to come to fruition, could its internal industries sustain it? What still needed to be done? In emphatically linking the mission of the early editions of the trade fair to the *yishuv*'s internal, autarkic ambitions, the founders managed to increase international support and ignite further economic development. By the fourth edition in 1929, the founders reported that "practically every branch of industry and some branches of agriculture" were represented at the *yishuv*'s premier trade fair.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the fair had achieved enough success that the Zionist trade organisation Mischar ve Taasia and the municipality of Tel Aviv (chaired by Mayor Meir Dizengoff) came on board to join in the responsibility of the fair's administration. The once-modest trade fair was now a touchstone for the *yishuv*'s economic advancement, a strategic agent in the bid for Jewish nationhood in Palestine.

By the fair's fifth edition in 1932 its tenor had expanded from trumpeting Jewish national independence and economic growth to professing international ambitions. In addition to adopting a new "Flying Camel" logo,

⁶⁷ "The Troika and the Flying Camel," n.d., 1, A458/9, Central Zionist Archive.

⁶⁸ Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine: British Economic Policy, 1920–1929* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 161.

⁶⁹ "The Troika and the Flying Camel," 3.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

designed by the fair's resident architect Ariel El-Hanani, and selecting its official and lasting name, the "Levant Fair", the organisers expanded the fair-ground site, located next to the railway station in the eastern part of Tel Aviv, to host cafes, a nighttime amusement park and to host more exhibitors—including pavilions dedicated to the fine arts and handicrafts. The organisers established permanent fair bureaus in nine countries and appointed short-term fair representatives in twenty-four countries to recruit foreign exhibitors and consumers.⁷¹ Foreign business participation in the fair increased by almost seven-fold between the 1929 and 1932 fairs, from 121 to 821 foreign firms.⁷² Along with the transformative vigour expressed by the change of name and logo, the Levant Fair organisers carved themselves a fresh image as unifiers of the industries of the Levant and as the exemplary connection point linking eastern and western markets.⁷³ As Dizengoff articulated, foreign competition would raise the city's international profile and have the intended by-product of forcing the advancement and expansion of Jewish industry at home:

Our country which is becoming the key to the economic movement in the Near East will bind by means of these Exhibitions and Fairs the Western producers to the Eastern consumers, will improve the quality of Palestinian products and will provide markets for new labour and creation.⁷⁴

Seizing an opportunity to orchestrate international trade and promote market competition as an economic centre cemented the *yishuv*'s transformation from agricultural silo to international crossroad.

Politically active members of Palestine's Arab community resisted the Levant Fair's heroic narrative by developing their own, all-Arab trade fair in Palestine. Until the 1930s, Palestine's trade fairs both at home and abroad had been orchestrated by Zionist or British organisations, deployed as strategic tools to promote their respective political agencies in Palestine, and

⁷¹ Permanent fair bureaus existed in Austria, Belgium, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Poland and Romania. Honorary fair representatives were appointed in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Switzerland, Syria and the US "Report of the Fair Committee," 1932, 4, L51\352, Central Zionist Archive.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³"The Levant Fair, in which His Excellency has taken so much interest, is intended to serve not only the twin cities of Tel Aviv and Jaffa or even Palestine alone. It is there to serve the needs of the commercial communities of the entire Middle East by offering them an unequalled opportunity for coming into contact with the latest developments in Western industry and assisting in the expansion of outlets for the produce of Middle Eastern territories." Meir Dizengoff, "Speech delivered by Mr. M. Dizengoff...At the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Levant Fair 1934 on August 16th 1933," 2.

⁷⁴"Mayor M. Dizengoff's Speech delivered at the Opening Ceremony of the 1932 Levant Fair [in English and Hebrew]," quoted in "Report of the Fair Committee," 1932, 4.

featured limited, if any, engagement by Arab businesses. The Arab Fair marked the first occasion when Palestine's Arab polity used this particular instrument of cultural, international engagement in order to serve its ethno-national, political interests.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the Arab Fair came to fruition following the launch of a boycott against the 1932 Levant Fair. Through opinion pieces and editorials in local newspapers, politicians and journalists encouraged the Arab countries participating in the Levant Fair (in 1932, Egypt and Syria) to rescind their commitments and commanded Arab consumers to stay home. Ragheb Al-Nashashibi, in his role as chairman of the Palestinian Islamic Nation Conference, painted the boycott in nationalist terms, speaking as much to pan-Arab currents as Arab political ambitions inside Palestine: "The Arab nation's interest lays in abstaining from participation in order to persist on the nation's own plan towards the holy nationalist purpose".⁷⁵ The head of Palestine's Arab Executive Committee, Musa Kazim Al-Husayni, promoted the boycott for its ability to protect Arab Palestinian commercial interests: "The executive committee asks the public of this dignified nation to boycott the Tel Aviv exhibition, through both participation and visiting, in order to prevent the intended damage to our nation's plan of promoting our own national manufacturing and trade".⁷⁶ Amidst the rallying cries, shouted by Palestine's most established leaders, one affluent citizen, Yusuf Abdu, had the temerity to question the utility of performing a boycott alone: "Boycott is the first weapon for fighting Zionism. If a Fair is established by the Arabs, it will be boycotted by the Jews immediately. Why not treat them reciprocally?"⁷⁷ An equal and opposite reaction, a blow for a blow, would require no less than the staging of a parallel trade fair in Palestine, Abdu declared.

The newly formed executive committee of the Arab Fair, those who heeded Abdu's call to establish a trade fair representing Arab "national interests" (*al-maslahat al-wataniyya*), embodied the non-sectarian strain of Arab politics in the early 1930s which worked to effect politics through economics. Individual photographs of each member of the Arab Fair Committee graced the front page of *Falastin* on 8 July 1933, with portraits of al-'Issa, the Arab

⁷⁵"Appeals Against Arab Participation in the Levant Fair," *Falastin*, 7 April 1932. This, and all subsequent quotations from the newspaper *Falastin* have been translated from the Arabic by the author with assistance from Manal Yousef.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Yusuf Abdu, "Zionists and the Tel Aviv Exhibition: About Holding a National Exhibition," *Falastin*, 31 March 1932. I have, as of yet, been unable to uncover detailed biographical information on Yusuf Abdu. However, he is mentioned in Khalil Sakakini's diaries (an entry dated 20 March 1948), indicating Abdu was likely a member of the affluent Arab Christian community in Palestine, and perhaps a member of the family of Sakakini's wife, Sultana Abdu. Khalil Sakakini, *The Diaries of Khalil Sakakini: Diaries, Letters, Reflections. Volume 8: Exile from Qatamon, 1942–52*, ed. Akram Mousallam (Ramallah: Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, Ramallah, and The Institute of Jerusalem Studies, 2010).

Fair's Director, and Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, the Arab Fair's President, poised at the very top, flanking an exterior view of the Palace Hotel, the location of the Arab Fair and also current headquarters of the Supreme Muslim Council⁷⁸ (Fig. 6).

The Arab Fair Committee was a joint grouping of Muslim and Christian businessmen, all of whom served on local business councils.⁷⁹ Moreover, the businessmen on the Arab Fair Committee were almost exactly the same men who constituted a recently formed “National Fund” (*Sanduq al-Umma*), established by the joint Muslim-Christian Arab Executive Committee in 1932. The National Fund was a fundraising body, which provided the Arab Executive Committee with money for making land purchases, an institution to act as counterpart to the Jewish National Fund, which had been buying land for Jewish settlement since the late Ottoman period.⁸⁰ Ahmad Hilmi Pasha was largely in control of the fund and was joined by members such as ‘Omar al-Bitar (the mayor of Jaffa) and Ya‘qub Bey Al-Ghusayn (leader of the nationalist Youth Congress Party) on the committee of the Arab Fair. As the group in charge of the Arab Fair, these men assured that the event would be dedicated towards furthering Palestinian political interests through non-sectarian cooperation. They also brought their interest in promoting consumption to the sphere of the cultural sector as part of the trade fair.

The Arab Fair hoped to benefit from the industrial and economic advancements of neighbouring Arab communities and make progress towards building internal industry strong enough to sustain an Arab nation in Palestine. As expressed by Yusuf Abdu,

Palestine is in great need of a national exhibition in order for the Palestinians to see the products of the neighboring countries and to have their needs covered through them. Let the relationships be strong and the commercial deals be reciprocal. This would help to realize the meaning of Arab unity.⁸¹

⁷⁸Ahmad Hilmi Pasha achieved financial success as the head of the Kraman-Dik-Salti “industrial group,” which ran mills and factories producing tobacco and ice, in addition to being the previous director of Muslim *awqaf* in Palestine and a founder of the Arab National Bank. In his business as in his politics, Ahmad Hilmi, like ‘Issa al-‘Issa, was considered a true “man of the nation.” Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 37.

⁷⁹The full Arab Fair committee, as represented by their photos, included Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, ‘Issa al-‘Issa, Musa Kazim Pasha al-Husayni, Mahmoud al-Da‘oudi al-Dajani, ‘Omar al-Bitar, Yusuf Ashur, Yusuf Talib, Ya‘qub Bey al-Ghusayn, Hasan Arafah, ‘Aziz Miqati, George Sabbagh, and Hamdi Bey al-Nabulsi. Historian Nadi Abusaada also reports that as early as 14 June 1932, the Arab exhibition was registered as a private corporation with an appointed temporary Board of Directors, which at that time included Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, ‘Issa al-‘Issa, Hamdi Bey al-Nabulsi, Shukri al-Taji, Hasan Arafah, ‘Aziz Miqati, Hajj Taher Qarman, and Admon Rock. Abusaada, “Self-Portrait of a Nation,” 127.

⁸⁰For more on the formation of the National Fund, as well as its revival after the Arab Revolts of 1936–39, see Issa Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine: Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939–1948* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 98–104.

⁸¹Abdu, “Zionists and the Tel Aviv Exhibition.”



Fig. 6 *Falastin*, front page, 9 July 1933; image courtesy of the Institute for Palestine Studies

The Arab Fair organisers thus only promoted the industry of Arab countries. Their stance echoed the “Encourage National Production” campaign which placed advertisements for Palestine’s “national” products side by side with advertisements soliciting buyers for “Arab” products, as in the case of an advertisement for Syrian cement published in *Falastin*, which read,

The cement, was made of ‘good Arab soil,’ was ‘made exclusively by Arab labor,’ all stocks were owned by Arabs and there was ‘no foreign (*ajnabi*) involvement in the firm’s management.⁸²

Such advertisements generated enthusiasm for “Arab” products among Palestine’s consumers, just as the Jewish economic separatist campaign slogan, “buy only *totseret ha-arets!*”, encouraged Palestine’s Jews to “buy Jewish”, as seen for example in an advertisement for the “Hebrew Banana”.⁸³

The Arab Fair’s organisers predicted the trade fair would not only do the work of enhancing Arab Palestinian industry, but would also further stimulate neighbouring Arab industry and the Arab national movement at large.

Five hundred visitors attended the first day of the Arab Fair, which included visiting dignitaries from Egypt, Syria and TransJordan.⁸⁴ Fittingly, the Arab Fair’s opening day maintained a firm Arab presence, to the neglect of any Zionist or British administrative representation, as was reported by *The Palestine Post* with some dismay:

At 9 a.m. on Friday at the former Palace Hotel which was decorated with Arab colours, the Exhibition was declared open by Muza Kasim Pasha, head of the Palestine Executive. There was a noticeable absence of Government and Municipal representatives, and the only Consul present was the Egyptian, Sadiq Bey. From Syria there came Jamil Bey Mardam, once Minister of Finance and Shubri Bey, of the Nationalist Party; from Trans-Jordan, Hussein Pasha Tarawani, and several members of the Legislature; from Palestine, the Mayor of Tulkeram, Amin Bey Tamimi, and Jamal El Husseini. Only Arabic inscriptions hung outside the hotel....an Arab hymn was played inside, and then outside, the building. After Ya’qub Bey Ghussein had opened the proceedings, a speech by Issa el Issa, editor of the ‘*Falastin*,’ was read by his brother, who stressed the fact that the Exhibition, and what it represented was the fruit of their own effort, unaided by the Government.⁸⁵

⁸²This advertisement appeared in the newspaper *Falastin* on 12 January 1937 and is re-printed and translated in Deborah Bernstein and Badi Hasisi, “Buy and Promote the National Cause?: Consumption, Class Formation and Nationalism in Mandate Palestinian Society,” *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 1 (2008): 142.

⁸³For more on the *totseret ha-arets* movement, see Hizky Shoham, “‘Buy Local’ or ‘Buy Jewish?’ Separatist Consumption in Interwar Palestine,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (2013): 469–489.

⁸⁴“First National Arab Fair,” *Falastin*, 9 July 1933.

⁸⁵“Arab Exhibition Opened, Non-Arab Press Barred, Palestine Poorly Represented,” *The Palestine Post*, 9 July 1933.

A uniform message of Arab pride characterised the opening ceremonies, from the welcome speech prepared by al-'Issa to the politicians gracing the stage and the banners and music greeting visitors outside the hotel. Throughout the duration of the month-long fair, newspapers made frequent mention of visiting Arab youth groups, such as "the Moslem Scouts of Beirut" and the "Moslem boy scouts from Cairo and Alexandria", as well as Arab entertainers and athletes making appearances at the fair, such as when "Madame Asia, the Egyptian film star" came to screen two of her most recent films or when a "group of Egyptian boxers" visited the fair after competing with Tel Aviv champions in Jaffa.⁸⁶ Political leaders and heads of commercial clubs from all the major neighbouring Arab countries, including Egypt, Syria, TransJordan, the Hedjaz (Saudi Arabia) and Iraq sent messages of support throughout the Arab Fair and were notable visitors, continuing the visible presence of outside Arab interest in Palestine's all-Arab Fair.⁸⁷ While no precise records of attendance or revenue for the 1933 trade fair has been located, the First National Arab Fair was considered successful enough to warrant a second edition in 1934, whose opening reportedly drew in a crowd of 2000 and whose organisation, exhibits and political delegates largely mirrored the 1933 fair.⁸⁸

International in its scope, the Arab Fair acted as a litmus test to evaluate the strength and welfare of the proposed Arab union. Through the establishment of the Arab Fair came a vision of an alternative political union and sphere of economic exchange to challenge the "internationalist" Euro-American paradigm furthered by British and Zionist agendas in Palestine—so publicly displayed at previous local and international trade fairs. Expressing his high hopes for the value of the boycott and Arab Fair, the Head of the Arab Executive Committee, Musa Kazim Al-Husayni, wrote: "We hope that the Arab Palestinian nation, affected now, will be an example of unity to the Arab nation. We hope for full unity ... to ensure the wellbeing of the whole Arab nation".⁸⁹ However, by the conclusion of the both the 1934 Levant Fair and the 1934 Arab Fair, tensions between Jews and Arabs had begun

⁸⁶These events were announced in *The Palestine Post* on the following dates in 1933: 4 July (Madame Asia), 16 July (Egyptian boxers), 17 July (Moslem Scouts of Beirut) and 26 July (Moslem boy scouts from Cairo and Alexandria).

⁸⁷For example, *The Palestine Post* reported on 9 June 1933 that, "The Directors of the Arab Exhibition report that they have received letters from King Ibn Saud and his son, the Crown Prince, in which they wish the Exhibition success and express the wish that Hedjaz should contribute to the exhibits..." On 24 July 1933, the paper reported, "The Arab Exhibition in Jerusalem is to be visited by Ibrahim Hananu, the Syrian Nationalist member," as well as, "Hassan Shoukhri, the Mayor of Haifa, and members of the Haifa Municipality were among the visitors on Saturday to the Arab Exhibition."

⁸⁸"Arab Fair in Jerusalem Opened with Booming of Guns and Fireworks," *The Palestine Post*, 12 April 1934.

⁸⁹"Appeals Against Arab Participation in the Levant Fair," *Falastin*.

to boil. Despite both fairs' initial successes, the Arab Uprising of 1936–1939 guaranteed the imminent collapse of both.⁹⁰

CONCLUSION

By surveying the rise and historical prevalence of trade fairs in Palestine directly prior to and during the British Mandate in Palestine, the dramatic narrative of Palestine's competing trade fairs of the early 1930s—the Levant Fair and the Arab Fair—can be interpreted as almost predictable, rather than anomalous. Trade fairs, a hallmark of European cultural diplomacy during the age of colonial expansion, were not reserved only as tools of vast empires nor did they come only in the aggrandised form of the world's fair. As the case of Palestine demonstrates, trade fairs could also be employed by religious, political and economic associations as instruments to stimulate more fine-grained, localised change. In order to compete in the increasingly polarised topography of Palestinian politics during the British Mandate, the Levant Fair and the Arab Fair both adopted the typology of the trade fair to speak loudly of their respective national aspirations in an increasingly raucous, uncertain, and violent terrain. Just as British Mandate officials Charles Ashbee and William Stewart had experimented with trade fairs in Palestine to control or quell local political tensions, the Levant Fair and Arab Fair organisers adopted the exhibition type in order to call government attention to and provide a forum for international support of their respective political goals.

In locating the origins of the explicitly political displays of Palestinian handicrafts in the commercial stores and international displays of Christian missionary institutions in the late 1800s, the link between Christianity and the Palestinian cultural sector comes into sharper focus. The trajectory of handicrafts' incorporation into religious missions in Palestine, outlined in the first part of the chapter, registers the integral role handicrafts played as symbols of religious charity, and later international politics. Not only did religious organisations in Palestine teach handicrafts as a form of economic charity, they also provided international religious donors with a new vehicle through which to funnel their support to Palestine and its inhabitants—a tactic which

⁹⁰ Both trade fairs, however, rose again. The Arab Fair ceased operation during the Arab Uprising, after the two successfully staged events in 1933 and 1934. However, in April 1945 many of the same businessmen behind the original Arab Fair staged an "Arab Industrial Fair," this time in Jaffa. The Fair was supported by the British Council and directed by Hassan Dajani. The Levant Fair was held once more, in 1936, but ceased its operations thereafter. The international involvement the Levant Fair so hoped to foster became untenable as internal tensions between Arabs and Jews increased. The Levant Fair was not revived until more than a decade after the formation of the Israeli state, in 1959. *Arab Industrial Exhibition Jaffa—Palestine, April 1945, Catalogue [Arabic and English]* (Jaffa: Palestine United Press, 1945), Institute for Palestine Studies Archive; Mordecai Naor and Batia Carmiel, *The Flying Camel: 85 Years of Exhibitions and Fairs in Tel Aviv [Hebrew]* (Tel Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum Tel Aviv, 2010), 176–235.

became increasingly conspicuous in its use by Jewish philanthropic societies. In this way, late nineteenth-century religious missions and charities became drivers of Palestinian cultural production and, thereby, contributed to the Palestinian cultural sector. This new cultural sector joined the educational, agricultural and trade sectors as an equally legitimate area for international associations and political organisations to invest their efforts regarding Palestine's political future. Moreover, and as would become increasingly apparent by the time of the Levant Fair and the Arab Fair, such investments in handicraft production and display carried the potential to sway political realities on the ground.

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Influencing the Other: European Private and Governmental Actors



Introduction Part III European Soft Power and Christian Cultures at the Crossroads in Mandate Palestine

Heather J. Sharkey

SETTING THE STAGE

This volume examines how European actors—ecclesiastical authorities, missionaries, scholars, diplomats and others—tried to assert cultural influence among Christian people or in Christian institutions in Palestine during the Mandate period, from 1918 to 1948. Two events bookended this period. The first event was the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the wake of World War I. The second was the debut of Israel and the concurrent displacement of the region's Muslims and Christians, whom we would now simply call Palestinians.

Recall the political contours of this era: From 1918 to 1948, Britain governed Palestine in a state of late colonial trusteeship. Palestine was one of the pieces of the vanquished Ottoman Empire, which the League of Nations ceded to Allied powers amid the post-war settlements. In Palestine as in Syria (under the French mandate) and Iraq (under another British mandate), the League of Nations granted stewardship over “peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world”.¹ Yet, Palestine’s situation was special. There Britain also adhered to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, by which it had lent support to establishing a Jewish

¹League of Nations, “The Covenant of the League of Nations” (including amendments adopted to December, 1924) The Avalon Project: Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp. Accessed 31 May 2019.

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homeland in the region. In this way, Britain endorsed the Zionist movement, a Jewish nationalist response to the accumulated European history of anti-Semitism. By the terms of the charter that confirmed its hold on Palestine, Britain made a vague and sweeping commitment to “ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population [would] not be prejudiced”.² By “other sections of the population”, Britain signalled the ninety percent or so of the population that was not Jewish by 1918—the eighty-percent Muslim, and ten-percent Christian, part of the whole.³ Britain ultimately proved unable to reconcile promoting Jewish immigration and settlement with protecting the interests of the Muslims and Christians who were already there.

THE CHRISTIANS OF PALESTINE, AND THE EUROPEAN DEPLOYMENT OF HARD AND SOFT POWER

The political circumstances of the Mandate placed the Christians of Palestine in an awkward position. They found themselves stuck between Zionist Jews, who held aspirations for full-fledged statehood, and local Muslims, members of the religious group that had enjoyed political and legal dominance for centuries under successive Islamic dynasties (excluding periods of Crusader control during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries). The organisers of the conference from which this volume arose suggested that, amid mounting tensions, Britain became so caught up with trying to manage Jews and Muslims in Palestine that they largely neglected the Christians. Ignored by the Mandate authorities, the organisers hypothesised, local Christians responded by “over-proportionally invest[ing] in culture as a cornerstone of their identity” even as they observed unfolding events in Palestine with the same bewilderment and dismay that their Muslim neighbours were experiencing.

As the mandate-holder in Palestine, Britain claimed hard power: the theoretical monopoly over forms of violence that the sociologist Max Weber identified as the *sine qua non* of a state.⁴ But Britain was not the only European power vying for influence in Palestine. Other European actors continued ventures like mission schools and archaeological expeditions that they had begun in the late Ottoman era. These actors aimed to wield forms of what political analysts call “soft power”—non-military power—and to engage in what the organisers of this project have described as “cultural diplomacy”. They formed international organisations and local societies; opened new Christian

²League of Nations, “The Palestine Mandate,” The Avalon Project: Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmand.asp. Accessed 31 May 2019.

³Edward Hagopian and A. B. Zahlan, “Palestine’s Arab Population: The Demography of the Palestinians,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 3, no. 4 (1974): 34.

⁴Andreas Anter, “The Modern State and Its Monopoly on Violence,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Max Weber*, Oxford Handbooks Online, eds. Edith Hanke, Lawrence Scalf, and Sam Whimser, February 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190679545.013.13>.

and secular schools; published newspapers and scholarly journals; and more. Meanwhile, just as local Christian people found themselves in awkward positions under the mandate, so did churches and other institutions that foreign Christians led. Paolo Maggiolini considers in his chapter, for example, the career of Luigi Barlassina, Roman Catholic patriarch in Palestine from 1920 to 1947, who spent his tenure worrying about the future of Catholic institutions relative to the British, the Zionist Jews, the local Muslims, and assorted Christians... in short, relative to every political actor that had a stake in the region. Barlassina tried, *inter alia*, to cultivate international Roman Catholic support for interests in Palestine, by establishing a news centre in Belgium that sent dispatches to Catholics all over the world, as far afield as Korea.⁵

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN COMPETITION: BATTLING FOR INFLUENCE

Together the articles in this section suggest another factor that helps to explain the marginalisation or relative invisibility of Arab Christians in this period—a factor wholly apart from the issue of British neglect. This was competition among Europeans for claims to Christian patrimony and influence—a competition so intense that it often obscured the needs and concerns of Palestinian Christians. British, French, and Russian powers competed with each other; the Vatican and the Orthodox patriarchates competed, too. Within the ranks of Christian groups that shared common theologies and doctrines, rivalries ruptured along national lines. French and Italian Catholic entities competed; Russians vied against Greeks (and vice versa) despite or because of their common Orthodoxy; Protestant Britons resentfully eyed the rise of American influence even as Anglo-American collaborations continued. On top of this were cross-sectarian permutations of Catholic-Protestant, Protestant-Orthodox and Orthodox-Catholic manoeuvres. Foreign Christian organisations, governments and interest groups were often so busy competing with each other that they seemed to forget that local Christians were there. An exception, as Inger Marie Okkenhaug suggests in her article here, was the Swedish school of the missionary Signe Ekblad, which involved local Arabs—and especially Arab women as schoolteachers—while cooperating closely with British Mandate authorities.

Complicating the story in the mandate era was the fact that foreign groups increasingly differed in their degree of Christian identification. Some were only what we might call “culturally” Christian (from historically Christian societies), while others were secular to the point of atheistic. Along these lines, Roberto Mazza considers in his article the outreach efforts of Mussolini’s government—with its brew of Christian anticlerical, anti-Semitic

⁵ Paolo Maggiolini noted the connections to Korea in his oral presentation at Leiden on March 27, 2019, and later, in an email to the author on October 3, 2019, cited the likely source of the news as [Alessandro] Mombelli, the Swiss priest and journalist who was active in Palestine during the 1930s.

and Islamophobic elements—and its use of radio programming. Idir Ouahes cites, in his study, the new French schools of the *Mission Laïque*, an avowedly secular organisation that promoted French, but not Christian, culture. The Russian case was even more dramatic, as Lora Gerd shows: the Soviet era initiated the near-complete retraction of Russian-led ecclesiastical activity in Palestine. Protestant organisations followed a different model: many of them proved adept at remaining sufficiently vague in their Christianity as to attract non-Christians as members or users of services. One example, again, was Signe Ekblad's Swedish school, which made no effort to convert Muslim students or even to woo other kinds of Christians to its sponsoring (Lutheran) church. Another example, cited in the article by Idir Ouahes, was Near East Relief, an American organisation that began from Protestant impulses but that evolved into a non-sectarian provider of humanitarian aid.

Idir Ouahes's epilogue is the only contribution to this book who discusses American actors. We may be tempted to exclude Americans from this chronicle of European engagement. And yet, most Americans in the Middle East were of not-so-distant European heritage, and used European cultural affinities—especially their use of the English language—to their advantage. And while many of the Americans had English, Scottish, and Irish forebears, others, like the famous Arabic Bible translator and author of Arabic scientific textbooks in Beirut, Cornelius Van Dyck, claimed Dutch Protestant roots—attesting to earlier routes of migration from the Netherlands to New Amsterdam (now New York) and its hinterlands.⁶

PALESTINE AT THE CROSSROADS

The essays in this section may ultimately tell us more about the history of Christians *in* Palestine than about the history of the Christians *of* Palestine. The long-term implications of the Russian, Swedish, Italian and other ventures covered here for the history and culture of Palestinian Christians remain uncertain and ambiguous.

Meanwhile, many European cultural agents used Palestine as a stage for their own performances of power and influence, and for their own constructions of national glory or ecclesiastical selfhood. Even a figure like Mussolini, for whom the Holy Land appears to have held little spiritual or devotional allure, inevitably gravitated to Palestine as a stage for Italian assertion, as Roberto Mazza shows in his study. Palestine's prestige as the cradle of Christianity was simply too strong to resist.

In sum, these studies offer potential for tracing transnational and supranational histories that illuminate the place and the idea of the Holy Land in global Christian cultures. They show, too, how Palestine featured as a forum

⁶The American missionary Samuel M. Zwemer, who lived for many years in Arabia and Egypt, had even stronger familial connections to the Netherlands: as the son of Dutch immigrants born in Michigan, he spoke Dutch, not English, as his first language.

in what I have elsewhere called the “off-stage making” of national histories.⁷ Consider, again, the Russian example, as Lora Gerd has presented it. By examining the fate in Palestine of Russian Orthodox churches, scholarly institutes, pilgrimage-facilitating organisations, and more, we can see clearly from afar trajectories of Russian culture—and of Russian religious politics—before and after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Palestine has indeed been a crossroads, where for centuries European Christian people have met, ideas have circulated, and institutions have formed and reformed. Centred on the 1918–1948 period, the articles here point to the intersection of multiple European organisations and actors as they engaged with the region during a period of shaky British domination. This period witnessed dramatic upheaval in the land where Christianity was born and ended by leaving many of the local Christians of the land—the Palestinian Christians—uprooted and scattered.

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⁷Heather J. Sharkey, “Innocents Abroad? American Missionaries and the Off-Stage Making of American Culture,” for an invited panel on the United States as “A Nation of Emigrants,” Organization of American Historians (OAH), Atlanta, April 10, 2014.

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Diaspora-Building and Cultural Diplomacy: The Greek Community of Jerusalem in Late Ottoman Times and the Mandate

Konstantinos Papastathis

This chapter elaborates on the history of the Greek diasporic community of Jerusalem in late Ottoman times and the formative years of the British Mandate. In particular, it focuses on the creation of the Greek Colony, with the so-called Greek Club at its centre, as well as the role of Greek cultural diplomacy in its development. Overall, this chapter highlights the relationships between the Greek state, the Orthodox Patriarchate and the establishment and development of the Jerusalem Greek diaspora. By relying mainly on Greek sources, such as the state archives or the journal *Nea Sion*, published by the Jerusalem Patriarchate, this chapter particularly foregrounds the diaspora community's own worldview, understanding of their place in Jerusalem and Palestine, and cultural relations with the Greek state.

The members of the Greek Jerusalem community might be divided in two subgroups: emigrants from Greece itself, and those emigrants who came mainly from within the Ottoman Empire, including refugees from Turkey after the First World War. The basic feature of their social status within the Ottoman period was the *millet* system, which was effectively maintained during the British Mandate. According to the *millet* system, each religious community was under the supervision of its religious head (for example, the

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Orthodox/Rum *millet* under the Jerusalem patriarch). This system, however, did not imply a national grouping, but rather had a religious meaning indicating the Eastern Orthodox/Rum congregation per se.¹ The Greek residents of Jerusalem, therefore, were not identified with the lay congregation. This is because its members were ethnic Arabs, closely related to the Palestinian national cause from the first stage of its building process (late Ottoman times) and with strong bonds with the Muslim majority as well.² In short, the common religious identity did not work as the cohesive element of the group. If this were the case, the local Greeks would have integrated into the dominant Arab Orthodox community. Rather it was the language and the perception of an imagined history and shared cultural matrix which formed the criteria for defining the “in-group” versus the “outgroup”. Within this framework, the national identity was not equated with the Greek nation state, but with the so-called “Ecumenical Hellenism”³ more broadly.

Greece, as the “kin state” followed an inclusionary policy, aimed at reproducing the existing national affiliation of the Jerusalem Greeks in order to block their integration into the dominant national groups. To this end, it instrumentally articulated a discourse of “openness” and national homogeneity, and institutionalised preferential treatment for the Greek diaspora members, for instance, proffering the opportunity for dual citizenship to diaspora members. It also recognised qualifications from the Jerusalem high school as of equal status with its counterparts within the Greek state.⁴ However, Athens neither insistently claimed the right to officially administer the affairs of the Greek nationals of Palestine under *protégé* status by the British, which might indirectly challenge the political status quo; nor did it establish autonomous communal structures for the reproduction of national loyalties and cultural bonds, following the example of the Western countries, but kept major the functions of Jerusalem diasporic life under the traditional control of the Church. This might be explained by the small size of the community, the lack of financial resources and the secondary importance for Athens of developing a dependent relationship with the Greek community in Palestine compared to that of Constantinople or Smyrna (the basic aims of Greek irredentism

¹ Benjamin Braude, “Foundation Myths in the Millet System,” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), 69–89; Paraskevas Konortas, *Othomanikes theoriseis gia to Oikoumeniko Patriarcheio, 17os–arches 20ou aionou* (Ottoman Vetting Concerning the Ecumenical Patriarchate, from the 17th to the Beginning of the 20th Century) (Athens: Alexandreia, 1998).

² Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

³ Lina Ventouras, “Deterritorialising” the Nation: The Greek State and “Ecumenical Hellenism”, in *Greek Diaspora and Migration Since 1700: Society, Politics and Culture*, ed. Dimitris Tziovas (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 125–140.

⁴ “Decision of the Greek Ministry of Education and Cults,” *Nea Sion* 11 (1911): 908.

at the time, the so-called *Megali Idea* (Great Idea), for the accomplishment of which the British support was imperative). Such a policy would, anyway, have been barred by the fact that London would never allow foreign powers to interfere in the affairs of their Mandate, i.e. the continuation of the capitulations regime. Within this framework, foreign state powers had been granted the right to protect their subjects residing in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the affiliated clergy.⁵ The creation of an *imperium in imperio* within the boundaries of its Mandate completely unacceptable by the new Administration, as the British Prime Minister Lloyd George made clear in the London Peace Conference of February 1920.⁶

Except for the diasporic community, the main Greek pillar in Jerusalem was the Orthodox Patriarchate, the administration of which has been in the hands of Greek and Cypriot clergymen, practically to the exclusion of other Orthodox national groups. Overall, the “politicisation” of the religious sphere in the late Ottoman period entailed a gradual transformation of the Patriarchate’s organisational structures from non-national sectarian representation to nationally based communal affiliation.⁷ Greek control was the outcome of a Hellenisation process of the institution from the nineteenth century onwards on the basis of the ethno-phyletist narrative of *Helleno-Orthodoxia*. In short, this myth advocates the primordial and essentialist equation of Orthodoxy with the Greek nation. The one presupposes the other: Greek means Orthodox and vice versa.⁸ The imagined self-fulfilment of the Church, therefore, lay in promoting the alleged national “good”. Within this context, Athens as the nation’s centre should be the political agent, with which every Orthodox subject (and thus Greek) should identify itself. The hegemony of *Helleno-Orthodoxia* within the Jerusalem Brotherhood meant that the definition of the “us” vs. “them” distinction was made along ethnic lines; thus, the other Orthodox nations as “out-groups” formed an “enemy”, and their claims over the common religious framework were more or less demonised and treated as an attempt to corrupt religious purity. In effect, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem must as a matter of principle remain in Greek

⁵ Catherine Nicault, “La fin du protectorat religieux de la France à Jérusalem (1918–1924),” *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* 4 (1999): 7–24; Roderick H. Davison, “‘Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility’: The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered,” *Slavic Review* 35, no. 3 (1976): 463–483.

⁶ E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, *Documents on British Foreign Policy (1919–1939)*, First Series (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1958), vol. 7, 103–111.

⁷ Konstantinos Papastathis, “Religious Politics in Mandate Palestine: The Christian Orthodox Community Controversy in the Thirties,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 3 (2016): 265.

⁸ Paraskevas Matalas, “To Patriarcheio Ierosolimon kai I ellino-orthodoxia,” (“The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and helleno-orthodoxia”) in *Orthodoxia, Ethnos kai Ideologia (Orthodoxy, Nation and Ideology)* (Athens: Moraiti School, 2007), 116.

hands, while the Arabs, Russians, Georgians, etc. had to accept their inferior status within the institution.⁹

This Greek “invented tradition” was contested by the indigenous Arab Orthodox, who viewed it as cultural imperialism. According to the Arab Orthodox side, the dominance of the ethnic Greek element at its expense had to end. The Arab laity followed with Russian support the example of other Orthodox ethnic groups within the empire (the Bulgarian Exarchate, Orthodox Arabs in Antioch) and demanded the laicisation of communal power structures, the gradual removal of the foreign Greek hierarchy and the subsequent takeover of ecclesiastical power by the indigenous Arabs.¹⁰ This question was also linked to the management of the communal finances and property, which were under the exclusive control of the Greek clergy. For the Arab Orthodox, the Greek establishment was the hostile *other* that had usurped local religious patrimony and property.¹¹ Because this type of cultural and economic imperialism was viewed as unacceptable, the Arab Orthodox community demanded co-administration of finances and control of the sale of land through the establishment of a joint community body, the so-called Mixed Council. However, this question was not only a matter of gaining access to key sources of revenue; as part of the Arab-Zionist rivalry for domination over Palestine, it also affected the political position of the indigenous Arab Christians.¹²

As regards the patriarchate, the strategic aim of Athens was the preservation of its Greek national character. Greece’s political positioning vis-à-vis this institution can be divided into two stages during the Mandate. The first, which roughly covers the period 1917–1920, was characterised by Athens’ vigorous intervention into the affairs of the patriarchate. For Athens, regime change was seen as an opportunity to establish the national centre’s direct rule over the patriarchate. However, the British blocked this attempt due to domestic as well as international considerations. Despite this, Greece

⁹ Konstantinos Papastathis, “Secularizing the Sacred: The Orthodox Church of Jerusalem as a Representative of Greek Nationalism in the Holy Land,” in *Modern Greek Studies-Yearbook 2014/15* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2016), 37–54.

¹⁰ Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914: Church and Politics in the Near East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Theophanes G. Stavrou, *Russian Interests in Palestine, 1882–1914: A Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1963); Abdul Latif Tibawi, *Russian Cultural Penetration of Syria-Palestine in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Luzav and Co., 1966); Elena Astafieva, “La Russie en Terre Sainte: le cas de la Société Impériale Orthodoxe de Palestine (1882–1917),” *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 24 (2003): 41–68.

¹¹ Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, “The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Its Congregation: Dissent over Real Estate,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005): 509–534; Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, “The Church and Landed Property: The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 43 (2007): 383–408.

¹² Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, “Colonialism and Religious Power Politics: The Question of New Regulations within the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem During the British Mandate,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 4 (2014): 589–605.

maintained its central importance in religious administration throughout the rest of the Mandate period, but local authorities held primacy in decision-making. Greek diplomats followed developments within the institution, and got involved in various individual cases, but did not claim the right to fully control its affairs.¹³

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREEK DIASPORA COMMUNITY

From the mid-nineteenth century, a wave of Greek emigrants from both the Ottoman Empire and Greece settled in Palestine in search of employment. In particular, we find the first Greek merchants and other professionals, such as doctors and pharmacists, in Acre and Jaffa.¹⁴ The Greeks who settled in Jerusalem around the same period were not only professionals, but also pilgrims and the relatives of the church officials. However, the loose bonds between them, or the absence of an organised structure administered by the Greek state for their unity, did not make for the effective establishment of a diasporic community with a clear national character. On the contrary, in this early phase of the Greek communal presence in Palestine (in the mid nineteenth century), a significant proportion of its members was gradually acculturated into the Arab dominant group.¹⁵

This development was further fuelled by the fact that not all members of the community had as their spatial point of departure the Greek state, but belonged to the wider social context of the Rum Orthodox group of the Ottoman Empire, the nationalisation process of which was in its early phase. In short, the Rum Orthodox emigrant in Palestine was not by definition identified with the Greek “imagined community”; because of this volatile identity, he/she was more prone to an identity shift process which involved integrating into the dominant Arab group, especially at a time when the Greek national community was small. To sum up, the Greek nationals did not form at that period a cohesive group or at least a solidarity network like the other national communities. On the other hand, another possibility might be that some “arabised” Greeks could have been in reality indigenous Arabs, who had taken the Greek citizenship on the grounds of their religious affiliation, due to the financial and diplomatic privileges provided in the Capitulation Treaty of Kalitza between Greece and the Sublime Porte in

¹³Konstantinos Papastathis, “Greece in the Holy Land During the British Mandate: Diplomacy and Religion,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 71 (special issue ‘History of Diplomacy in the Holy Land’, ed. R. Mazza) (2017): 30–42.

¹⁴Diplomatic and Historic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter GFOA): File 104. Subfile. 6, 1946, Directorate for Studies. Note of Konstantinos Ch. Mavrides, Note on Palestine (Communities, Education and Greek Schools, Church, Greek Press, Greek Residents in Palestine), 2.

¹⁵Ibid., 3.

1855. In short, part of this group, considered by the highly regarded secretary of the Greek Consulate in Jerusalem Constantinos Mavridis to be “Arabised” Greeks, might have actually been Arabs who had taken up Greek citizenship in order to profit from the new commercial links, as it happened in Egypt.¹⁶

On the other hand, this is not the case for late nineteenth century, when the Greek nation-building process was crystallised, and especially after the establishment of the Mandate. The Greek emigrants in Palestine shared the same language, collective cultural consciousness and common sense of ethnic belonging. In effect, they did not integrate into the dominant community, despite its close contact with the local Orthodox Arabs, but kept their separate Greek identity and loyalty to the new national centre,¹⁷ but not towards the Patriarchate of Constantinople as the old non-national sectarian representative of communal authority within the empire, but towards the political structure of the Greek nation state. On the one hand, the two groups had a common religious identity and in some cases shared the same churches, where both languages were used in religious ceremonies. On the other, a large proportion of the Greek residents spoke their mother tongue as their everyday language, and attended mass, where Greek was exclusively used; many of them were settled in a delimited area of Jerusalem (the so-called Greek Colony), sent their children to different schools and frequented different social clubs. In short, the fact that the two groups had close links did not signify their fusion into a cohesive communal whole, for they actually remained separate from one another.¹⁸

According to the census of 1922 the Greek-speaking population in Palestine numbered 1230 persons, among whom 700 lived in Jerusalem.¹⁹ The community grew further during the Mandate. In 1945 Greek speakers

¹⁶Katerina Trimis-Kyrou, “Endoparoikiaka Kinitra kai to Opsimo Elladiko Endiaferon gia tous Michanismous Sygkrotisis kai Empedosis tis Ellinikis Ethnikis Tautotitas stis Paroikies tis Aigypou” (“Intra-Diaspora Motives and the Late Greek Interest in the Formation and Consolidation Mechanisms of the Greek National Identity in the Egyptian Diaspora”), in *To Ethnos peran ton Synoron (The Nation Beyond the Borders)*, eds. Lina Ventoura and Lampros Mpaltsiotis (Athens: Vivliorama, 2013), 258.

¹⁷Merav Mack, Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire, “Matrimony and Baptism: Changing Landscapes in Greek (Rum) Orthodox Jerusalem (1900–1940),” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 3 (2018): 448–451.

¹⁸Merav Mack, “United by Faith, Divided by Language: The Orthodox in Jerusalem,” in *Arabic and Its Alternatives: Religious Minorities and Their Languages in the Emerging Nation States of the Middle East (1920–1950)*, eds. Heleen Murre-van den Berg, Karène Sanchez Summerer and Tijmen Baarda (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Konstantinos Papastathis, “Arabic vs Greek: The Linguistic Aspect of the Jerusalem Orthodox Church Controversy in Late Ottoman Times and the British Mandate,” in *Arabic and Its Alternatives: Religious Minorities and Their Languages in the Emerging Nation States of the Middle East (1920–1950)*, eds. Heleen Murre-van den Berg, Karène Sanchez Summerer and Tijmen Baarda (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

¹⁹J. B. Barron, *Palestine: Report and General Abstract of the Census of Palestine, 1922* (Jerusalem: Greek Convent Press, 1922), 57.

in Palestine numbered around 2000, 1500 of whom resided in Jerusalem. This number does not include Jewish emigrants from Greece, estimated at around 3000 persons.²⁰ In the end of the Mandate, the value of their immovable property was estimated at around two million English pounds, while their movable property reached the sum of twelve hundred thousand English pounds. The Greek funds invested amounted to five hundred thousand English pounds, while more than a hundred companies and firms (café, restaurants, drag stores, cinema, etc.) were in Greek hands. Last but not least, the Greek shipping business was very active in the Haifa port, the hub of economic and industrial activity under the Mandate.²¹

The Greek community in Jerusalem was institutionally established around an organised diasporic structure from 1902, in the form of an Association named “I Eypoia” by the initiative of the general Consul of Greece I. Alexandropoulos. It seems, however, that the Association was more grounded in the activities of a pioneering middle- and upper-class group of Jerusalem Greeks who wanted to create a national solidarity network within a foreign social environment, rather than being the outcome of a well-structured cultural diplomatic strategy of Athens. The initial was the unity of the Greek nationals, and then the creation of the infrastructures necessary to acquire the status of a national community; the transformation of its character from “Greek-Orthodox”, to properly “Greek”, independent from the Patriarchate’s control. However, paradoxically, it was actually the Patriarchate that indirectly supported this project, via the financial backing of the sacristan of the Holy Sepulchre archimandrite Euthymios.²² This is because the Patriarchate did not have, according to the Ottoman legal system, the necessary recognition as a legal entity and was thus not eligible to purchase rural (*miri*) and private (*mulk*) land. To tackle this problem, the Patriarchate could practically register *miri* property only as a *wakf* (religious endowment), and had to register the title deeds of *mulk* property under the name of a religious official as a proxy, who afterwards endowed their use and the revenues coming from it (e.g. rents) to his religious institution, as a *wakf*.

²⁰GFOA: File 104. Subfile. 6, 1946, Directorate for Studies. Note of Konstantinos Ch. Mavrides, Note on Palestine (Communities, Education and Greek Schools, Church, Greek Press, Greek Residents in Palestine), 37.

²¹GFOA: KY 1948, File 25, Subfile 4, Greek Diaspora, I.A.K. Tziras (Director of Financial Affairs/Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to the Church and Diaspora Directorate (10 March 1948), reg. num. 2013.

²²Although Euthymios never became a patriarch (he actually lost the See by Damianos in 1895) he was probably the most important religious official in Jerusalem Church, due to his financial capabilities and his charitable work. Particularly, he administered the purchase of large tracks of land where buildings and markets were constructed. In fact, the current real estate portfolio of the Patriarchate was to a large extent built by Euthymios. Moreover, being an open-minded clergyman, he established the School of Holy Cross and influenced important figures of the Jerusalem Church, such as Meletios Metaxakis and Chrysostomos Papadopoulos. In short, he left his imprint in the contemporary history of the Jerusalem Church.

To facilitate the use of this legal device, many religious institutions, such as the Jerusalem Patriarchate, were structured according to the *idiorrhymic* pattern of monastic function. This means that each monk had the right of private ownership, which was compulsorily donated or bequeathed to his institution.²³ Within this legal context, it seems problematic that Euthymios' donation to the Greek community did not have the approval of his institution. Besides, it was common practice for the Patriarchate to support the Greek emigrants, providing properties to reside within the Walls of Jerusalem or leasing real estate for building outside the Old City. For instance, Nicholas Spyridon, president of the Greek Club in 1920s, lived in the 1890s in the Old City in a property of the Patriarchate and later moved to another in Mamilla, which was also lent by the Greek Convent.²⁴

Euthymius contributed in the first place a loan of three thousand gold francs, which was added to the initial capital of ten thousand francs collected by the Greek Association. With the sum of thirteen thousand golden francs, the Association bought from the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Katamon a hundred thousand square pics (according to the Ottoman unit of area metric system 1 sq. pic=approximately 0.574 sq. metre) in the area between the German Colony and the Monastery. This property was divided into eighty parcels, and distributed to the Association's members on the condition that they should build a house on their share.²⁵ The distribution of the plots was made by drawing lots and the construction of the buildings was made on extremely advantageous terms. In particular, the houses were in the first place funded by the Association, and the equivalent sum was afterwards repaid by the owner in small instalments with a low interest rate. In this way, it was possible to create a stable and dynamic community in Jerusalem, the members of which resided in the same district, the so-called Greek Colony. The first twenty homes were designed by architect Spyros Houri.²⁶ At a later stage, Euthymios donated another property of a hundred thousand square pics closer to the Katamon Monastery. The Greek Colony was divided into two neighbourhoods, not far from one another: the old "lower" district and the new "upper" district in Baq'a. The new parcels of land and the houses constructed there were allocated to the Greeks of Jerusalem on the same terms and conditions as the previous ballot. Moreover, Euthymios funded

²³ Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "The Politics of Church Land Administration: The Case of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 40, no. 2 (2016): 264–282.

²⁴ Rochelle Davis, "Ottoman Jerusalem: The Growth of the City Outside the City Walls," in *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighbourhoods and Their Fate in the War*, ed. Salim Tamari (Jerusalem: The Institute of Jerusalem Studies & Badil Resource Centre, 2002), 19.

²⁵ GFOA: File 39. Subfile 3. 1923. Part 1, Greek Association of Jerusalem to the Greek General Consul, 26 January 1923, reg. num. 9.

²⁶ Ruth Kark and Michal Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarter, Neighbourhoods, Villages, 1800–1948* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 173.

the construction of a building, the so-called Greek Club (*Leschi* in Greek) of Jerusalem, serving as a centre of the community with a central hall, a library, a small museum and two more rooms that served at a later stage as a kindergarten and an apartment for the teacher.²⁷ Concerts, plays and film screenings were often organised in the Greek Club. It also served as an everyday meeting place for families and children.²⁸ The affairs of the Greek Colony were administered by a five-member permanent committee, appointed by Euthymios, together with the Greek consul.

THE JERUSALEM GREEK DIASPORA IN THE MANDATE

The flourishing of the Jerusalem diaspora halted with World War One, when the Ottomans considered Greeks to be “fifth column” and kept the community leadership in custody. Despite the efforts of the Patriarchate to protect them, intervening with the authorities on their behalf, a number of Greeks were exiled to Aleppo in Syria and Maras in Cilicia. Their return to Jerusalem found them in a very financial bad state, as a result of which they were forced to sell their properties. Almost three-quarters of the estates of the Greek Colony were sold at this time, reducing the Greek properties to around a quarter of the original plus those properties belonging to the community as an institution, such as the Greek Club.

The British Mandate marked a shift in the administration of communal affairs. From the quasi-oligarchical rule of the permanent five-member committee, a new community charter was put into force in mid-March 1922, drawn up by a twelve-member committee under the supervision of the Greek General Consul Demetrios Mpenetas.²⁹ The Greek national character of the Colony, as well as the institutional lacuna with regard to its administration, was further covered by the Special Regulation of the Greek Colony enacted by the General Assembly of the Club together with the new Charter. According to it, the basic aims of the Club were the unity of the Jerusalem Greek population; the maintenance and expansion of the Greek Colony; and the establishment and maintenance of charitable institutions and schools to serve the needs of the community. The five-member permanent committee would continue to exist in a quasi-titular capacity, maintaining responsible only for administering the equity capital donated by Euthymios for the Greek Colony. On the other hand, the administration of the general affairs and finances of the Greek Club and the Colony would be managed by an elected

²⁷GFOA: File 39. Subfile 3. 1923. Part 1, Greek Association of Jerusalem to the Greek General Consul, 26 January 1923, reg. num. 9.

²⁸Rochelle Davis, “The Growth of the Western Communities, 1917–1948,” in *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighbourhoods and Their Fate in the War*, ed. Salim Tamari (Jerusalem: The Institute of Jerusalem Studies & Badil Resource Centre, 2002), 57.

²⁹GFOA: File 104. Subfile. 6, 1946, Directorate for Studies. Note of Konstantinos Ch. Mavrides, Note on Palestine (Communities, Education and Greek Schools, Church, Greek Press, Greek Residents in Palestine), 4–6.

seven-member Committee. The competent body for electing its members was the General Assembly of the Community.³⁰

The central features of the Charter were two. One the one hand, it had an “exclusionist” character, in the sense that it aimed to foster national homogeneity within the community, restricting the enrolment of members to a single ethnic criterion, despite the fact that many properties within the Colony were already sold to non-Greek nationals. On the other hand, the Charter institutionally established the indirect control of the Community by the Greek Consulate. The Community was no longer an independent public body, but was officially under the influence of a foreign country. The request to the Athens Government to recognise the Club as a legal entity under public law should be viewed within this framework.³¹ In short, the Club effectively became a branch of the Greek Administration. Certain clauses of the Charter point to this conclusion. In particular, all the adult Greeks of Jerusalem could become a due-paying member of the Club, while non-Greeks could enrol only on condition their registration was approved by the Club’s Council. The Greek Consul of Jerusalem was *ex officio* the president-emeritus of the Club, and responsible for supervising and controlling its Council and administration. As far as the Greek Colony was concerned, the Club’s Charter stipulated that three-quarters of the annual fees should be allocated for the construction of new buildings. Moreover, to avoid the sale of properties to non-Greeks, as had happened during and immediately after the Great War, the Charter prohibited the owner of a property from selling it, and defined the Club’s Council as the competent authority for any transaction of real estate within the Colony.³²

Contrary to the expectations of Jerusalem Greeks, Patriarch Damianos was against the establishment of an organised diasporic community. He did not support either the creation of a communal structure, nor its naming as “Greek”, because he considered the Patriarchate and himself as its head to be the sole representative of Hellenism in the Holy Land. In brief, he regarded the institutionalisation of the diaspora community as a legal body representing the Greek national identity to be against the patriarchate’s interest.³³ Another reason might be that Damianos did not enjoy the support of the community in his dispute with the other members of the Brotherhood, who were backed by the Greek consul Benetatos. The Club’s Council considered Damianos’ policy to be damaging to national interests, “reprobate and

³⁰ *Charter of the Greek Association of Jerusalem, 1902–1922* (Jerusalem: Holy Convent Printing Press).

³¹ GFOA: File 39. Subfile 3. 1923. Part 1, Greek Association of Jerusalem to the Greek General Consul, 26 January 1923, reg. num. 9.

³² *Charter of the Greek Association of Jerusalem*.

³³ GFOA: File 104. Subfile. 6, 1946, Directorate for Studies. Note of Konstantinos Ch. Mavrides, Note on Palestine (Communities, Education and Greek Schools, Church, Greek Press, Greek Residents in Palestine), 5–6.

unpardonable”, as well as for his indifference to education and the endemic corruption within the institution.³⁴ Why, therefore, would Damianos be in favour of the establishment of a body that would not only control, but actually operate against, his power? Another reason for Damianos’ refusal might be the potential threat that the Greek “community” might claim co-administration of church finances, following the example of the Arab Orthodox. This case would further complicate the position of the Patriarchate. For these reasons, the new institution was actually named “the Greek Club” instead of “Greek Community”, as the intention of the organisers had initially been. It was only after Damianos’ death in 1931 that the “Greek Club” was finally entitled “Greek Community of Jerusalem”.

In effect, two camps were created among the Jerusalem Greeks in the early twenties. On the one hand was Patriarch Damianos and the majority of the Greek hierarchy. On the other, the Greek diplomatic representatives together with the Greek diasporic community and some clergymen of the Brotherhood. It should be noted that the existence of the ethnic Greeks in Jerusalem was not directly related to the controversy between the Arab congregation and the Greek religious establishment, because the diaspora group did not work as a pool from which to recruit members for the Brotherhood, nor did the hierarchy plead its authority or base its claim of the patriarchate’s Greek character on the basis of the city’s Greek diaspora. In short, any equation between the Brotherhood and the ethnic Greek community in Jerusalem is not historically substantiated. Of course, this does not exclude interaction between the two actors, which was always very close. However, the Greek Brotherhood/Arab congregation divide was an affair strictly of the hierarchy. It was not the Greek diaspora’s war.

To address the hegemonic tendencies of Damianos, who perceived his power as absolute within the Greek community, the Greek Club adopted a policy of diversifying the institution away from the Patriarchate. The community asked for direct funding from Athens, without the mediation of the patriarchate, and demanded the creation of a school network under communal supervision, excluding church control.³⁵ The Patriarchate was the main pillar of Greek education in Palestine, but in the 1920s it was in a state of severe financial crisis, with debts that had reached the sum of five hundred thousand Egyptian pounds.³⁶ Its power, therefore, to properly finance the communal schools was limited. The reduction in 1923 of the Jerusalem Greek High School teachers’ salaries by up to one-third of their initial income

³⁴GFOA: File 39, Subfile 3, 1923, part 1, Jerusalem Greek Association to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 July 1923, reg. num. 20.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Anton Bertram and Charles H. Luke, *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire into the Affairs of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921).

is indicative.³⁷ Because of the patriarchate's poor state, Greece contributed from time to time to its operation, and the Club fundraised as well.³⁸ The working language of the Orthodox schooling network was Arabic, while basic Greek was taught in some classes. Greek was the teaching language of at least some courses in the Greek High School of Jerusalem, and of two girls' schools in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Since the school network at that time was in the hands of the Patriarchate, the Greek community was not institutionally involved in the administration. A major reason for this was the Arab Orthodox demand to participate in managing communal education. In short, if the small Greek diasporic group had a say in educational affairs, the large Arab congregation would have demanded at least the same status. In effect, the Greek religious establishment would have to give away its absolute power in this important sphere with major impacts on its overall conflict with the Arab Orthodox. Neither Athens nor the Greeks in Jerusalem were in favour of such a development.

The rejection of the community's proposal to open a Greek school under its direct supervision was both financial and political. Athens could not fund the community of Jerusalem on a permanent basis. The huge refugee wave from Asia Minor due to the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey, as well as the financial condition of the Greek State, made this difficult. Moreover, it would have created tensions with the British Administration, which might view Athens' intervention as part of a hidden agenda to establish protégé rights within Palestine. Furthermore, it would have widened the rift between the Patriarchate and the Greek Club, as well as between the Greek and the Arab Orthodox.³⁹ It should be noted that until the late thirties, the funding of the Orthodox school network depended upon the decisions of the Financial Commission, managing all the financial affairs of the Patriarchate. In effect, the education of Greek youth was an open question within the power game between the Patriarchate, the Arab congregation and the British Administration.

In particular, a sub-commission was established to manage the funds for the Orthodox schools, comprised of two patriarchal representatives, two representatives from the Arab congregation, a member of the Financial Commission and a representative from the Directorate of Education of the British Administration. The Arab representative, Elias Moushabek, openly demanded that the Greek Orthodox High School of Jerusalem should focus on Arab students. He argued that it was not rational to expend so many resources on a few Greek students, when there were so many Arabs without a proper education. For him, the Greek State should be responsible for the

³⁷ GFOA: File 39, Subfile 3, 1923 part 2, Mpenetatos to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 20 October 1923, reg. num. 32600.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ GFOA: File 39, Subfile 3, 1923 part 1, Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Mpenetatos, 29 August 1923, reg. num. 23979.

education of ethnically or nationally Greek students, not the Patriarchate, as it was the case for French or Italian students, whose institutions were established by their countries of origin. The British were not against this formula, but it was blocked by the Greek hierarchy on the grounds that the sub-commission was exceeding its responsibilities, which were not to administer the school network, but to find resources to fund its operation.⁴⁰ In other words, if Athens were to fund the establishment of Greek schools under its direct supervision or the supervision of the Greek community, independent of the existing structures under the control of the Patriarchate as requested by Moushabek, the existing school network under patriarchal supervision would have been gradually “arabised”; a development considered to be a step towards the overall loss of the supposed Greek character of the Jerusalem Orthodox Church, the aversion of which was actually Athens’ central strategic aim in Mandate Palestine.

The only ethnic-centred education establishment created was the kindergarten set up within the Greek colony in 1907.⁴¹ It was closed during the war and reopened for just one year afterwards, but closed again due to the lack of funds, estimated at between fifty and eighty pounds per year. Neither the community nor the Patriarchate could provide this amount, and Athens at that time had other priorities.⁴² However, in 1923, Athens sent 400 Egyptian Pounds to the community with which a communal grocery store was established, the revenues from which were used to run the communal kindergarten.⁴³ Moreover, Athens financially supported the primary school of the Greek Community in Haifa (an annual sum of 25 Egyptian Pounds), as well as the Greek section within the Arab Orthodox school of Jaffa, established in 1930 by the local Greek community “Omonoia” (the annual sum of 25 Egyptian Pounds).

Besides the Greek Club, the Jerusalem diasporic community administered other institutions operating under its umbrella. These were a music association; the Greek Charity Association of Jerusalem; The Odigitria Greek Ladies Club (the Charity Association and the Ladies Club were unified in 1938); the Greek Scouting Association; and the Heracles Sports Club (unified with the Scouting Association in 1934). In 1945 the Olympiakos Football Club was established, despite the objection of the communal leadership, which

⁴⁰GFOA: File 39, Subfile 3, 1923 part 1, Mpenetatos to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14 July 1922, reg. num. 378.

⁴¹GFOA: File 104. Subfile. 6, 1946, Directorate for Studies. Note of Konstantinos Ch. Mavrides, Note on Palestine (Communities, Education and Greek Schools, Church, Greek Press, Greek Residents in Palestine), 6.

⁴²GFOA: File 39, Subfile 3, 1923 part 1, Mpenetatos to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 May 1922, reg. num. 334.

⁴³GFOA: File 104. Subfile. 6, 1946, Directorate for Studies. Note of Konstantinos Ch. Mavrides, Note on Palestine (Communities, Education and Greek Schools, Church, Greek Press, Greek Residents in Palestine), 6.

was not involved in its management. The first newspaper of the Greek diaspora in Jerusalem, entitled *Palestine*, was established in 1908 and published weekly. However, because of the Arab Orthodox uprising against the Greek Church elite in 1908, the newspaper's print shop was destroyed, allegedly by Arab Orthodox extremists. It was later re-established in Cairo by its original publisher Michalis Eustathiades, but this was a short-lived enterprise. The Gazette of the Patriarchate, *Nea Sion*, was created four years earlier in 1904. It had a religious character, but also contained much information about the affairs of the local Greek community. In 1940 the weekly newspaper *KYRIX* was established but closed within a short time. Finally, the newspaper *Elliniki ZOI* was founded in September 1945 under the management and editorial supervision of the Greek community of Jerusalem.

CONCLUSION

During the period under examination, interactions between the Jerusalem Greek diaspora and the local Patriarchate were very close. The Patriarchate as an institution had political power, exercised judicial authority, controlled the school network and funded the activities of the Greek diaspora, such as the establishment of the Greek Colony. However, the existence of the ethnic Greek group in Jerusalem did not intervene in church administration as it did elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. For this reason, it was not directly related to the controversy between the Arab congregation and the Greek religious establishment. As far as the policy of Athens was concerned, it tried after the First World War to exercise protective powers in Palestine over both the Patriarchate and the Greek ethnic community but without any success, due to the intervention of the British authorities. The Greek consulate was an important actor in communal affairs, but was not the central one. From an institutional perspective, the British did not allow Greece to acquire rights of protection over the Greek nationals. Athens could not therefore create the forms of political dependency within the framework of a give and take, clientelist relationship, which would have allowed Greek diplomacy to become a necessary mediator for dealing with the administrative and financial affairs of Greek nationals. Moreover, Athens did not support the community and its various institutions financially and on a regular basis. As such, it could not control decision-making within the community. It seems, therefore, that its influence depended more on ideology, i.e. the national loyalties of the diaspora, rather than on its actual capacity to play the role of effective agent for the material and political well-being of the Greeks in Palestine.

This article, of course, by no means comprehensively treats the theme of the Jerusalem Greek diasporic history in the period under discussion. Much new research must be done to understand more fully the diverse aspects of this broad thematic, such as relations between the Greek diaspora of Palestine and Egypt, or the disinclination of Greece to adopt an "inclusionary" diplomatic policy towards social groups which might have been

open to integration into the national body, or at least to interaction with it, such as the indigenous Orthodox population or the incoming Jews from Greece. The disclosure and digitisation of documents, and especially access to the Orthodox Church archives, would be significant steps in facilitating this research. This article aspires to contribute some initial steps towards this development.

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The Palestine Society: Cultural Diplomacy and Scholarship in Late Tsarist Russia and the Soviet State

Lora Gerd

The Holy Land has been a crossroads of interests from Christian countries since the Crusades. In the nineteenth century, it became a centre of concurrence between the European great powers and an important object of the so-called Eastern Question. Till the 1910s Russia was one of the most powerful agents in the Holy Land, thanks to its Orthodox faith, shared with the local population, well organised mass pilgrimage, and network of institutions supported by regular donations. The history of the Russian presence in Palestine goes back to the Middle Ages, when pilgrims started visiting the Holy Land.¹ After the fall of the Byzantine Empire the Russian princes and tsars regarded themselves as supporters of Orthodoxy in the East and donated big sums of money to the Eastern churches and monasteries.² The donations

¹Theofanis Stavrou and Peter Weisensel, *Russian Travellers to the Orthodox East from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 1986).

²On the tradition of donations in the seventeenth century see: N. F. Kaptrev, *Kharakter otnoshenii Rossii k pravoslavnому Vostoku v XVI I XVII stoletiiakh* (Sergiev Posad: M. S. Elov editions, 1914); V. G. Chentsova, *Ikona Iverskoi Bogomateri (Ocherki istorii grecheskoi tserkvi s Rossii v serедине XVII v. po dokumentam Rossiiskogo Gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Drevnikh Aktov)*

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were regulated in the eighteenth century, but the Russian government still did not have any permanent representative in Palestine to control their distribution; this function was partly carried out by the consul in Beirut. Till the 1830s the Russian government did not see any difference between the Orthodox Greeks and other nations of the Orient, classifying all of them as “Eastern Orthodox”.

PORPHYRII USPENSKII AND THE FIRST RUSSIAN MISSION IN JERUSALEM

The first attempt to gather systematic information about the Orthodox Church in the Middle East was made only in the early 1840s, when the learned archimandrite Porphyrii Uspenskii was delegated there. According to the instructions, received from the Ministry of Foreign affairs, the task of Porphyrii’s mission was more political than ecclesiastical: he had to exercise control over the spending of Russian donations to the Holy Sepulchre, and to influence if possible, the activities of the Patriarch. One of the central targets was supporting Orthodoxy in Palestine and counteraction to Catholic and Protestant proselytism.³

Summarising the results of his first journey to the East Porphyrii addressed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a note (January 7, 1844) where he stressed

(Moscow: Indrik, 2010); N. P. Chesnokova, *Khristianskii vostok I Rossiiia. Politicheskoe I kul'turnoe vzaimodeistvie v seredine XVII veka* (Moscow: Indrik, 2011).

³A general review of Russian activities in the Palestine region: Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914: Church and Politics in the Near East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Most of Porphyrii’s papers are published: P. V. Bezobrazov, ed., *Materialy dlja biographii episkopa Porphyrija Uspenskogo*. Vol. I. Official Papers; vol. II. Correspondence (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences Editions, 1910); N. N. Lisovoi, ed., *Rossija v Sviatoj Zemle. Documenty I materialy*, vol. I, II (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2000); N. N. Lisovoi, ed., *Rossija v Sviatoj Zemle. Documenty I materialy*, vol. II (Moscow: Indrik, 2017). About Porfirii’s activities in the Holy Land see: A. A. Dmitrievskii, *Episkop Porphyrii Uspenskii, kak initsiator I organizator pervoi russkoi dukhovnoi missii v Jerusalime* (St. Petersburg: Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, 1906); Idem, *Russkaia Dukhovnaia missia v Jerusalime* (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Oleg Abyshko, 2009); Archimandrit Innokentii (Prosvirnin), “Pamiati Episkopa Porphyrija (Konstantina Alexandrovicha Uspenskogo). 1804–1885,” *Bogoslovskie Trudy* 26 (1985): 315–325; Theophanis G. Stavrou, “Russian Interest in the Levant, 1843–1848: Porfirii Uspenskii and the Establishment of the First Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem,” *Middle East Journal* 17, nos. 1/2 (1963). The inedited part is preserved in St. Petersburg Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences: St. Petersburg Department of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Fund. 118. See: Polykhronii Syrku, ed., *Opisanie bumag episkopa Porphyrija Uspenskogo, pozhetvorannyh im v Imperatorskiju Akademiju nauk po zaveshchaniu* (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences edition, 1891). See: Lora Gerd and Yann Potin, “Foreign Affairs through Private Papers: Bishop Porfirii Uspenskii and His Jerusalem Archives,” in *Open Jerusalem. Vol. 1. Ordinary Jerusalem. 1840–1940. Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City*, eds. Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018): 100–117.

that a Russian mission in Jerusalem should be established, aiming at: (1) real intercommunion between the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch with the Russian Church; (2) inspection over the using of the money donated from Russia; (3) inspection over the Russian pilgrims; (4) supplying all churches of Syria and Palestine with icons, and organisation of a school of icon painting at the mission. Finally, in 1847 he was sent to Jerusalem as head of the first Russian ecclesiastical mission. Porphyrii's participation in the reorganisation of the Holy Cross school and the starting of an Arab typography can be regarded as main results of cultural diplomacy in this period.⁴

The ideas and projects elaborated by Porphyrii during his stay in the Orient were taken as a basis for the future Russian activities in Jerusalem and Palestine. In fact, Porphyrii's main idea was the creation of an "Orthodox House" of all East Christian nations, a kind of commonwealth, where Russia would take the first place as the only Orthodox great power, able to support politically and materially the Ottoman Christians.

Russian Institutions in Jerusalem After the Crimean War

After 1856, the religious policy and shared Orthodox faith with the Christians of the Near East were regarded by the Russian government as a priority lever of influence in the region, and a measure against growing Catholic and Protestant proselytism. The diplomatic and material support of the Arab majority of Christians in Syria and Palestine as opposed to Greek domination, and organising schools for the Arab Orthodox Christians were an essential element of the "Russian presence", the so-called "soft power" in Syria and Palestine until WWI.

In the frames of this general trend, several new Russian organisations were founded: the Russian Shipping and Trade Society (1856); the Palestine Committee (1859); the Russian consulate in Jerusalem (1858); the Palestine Commission (1864–1889).⁵ Before 1882, these organisations, along with the ecclesiastical mission and the Russian consulate in Jerusalem, represented Russian interests in Palestine. Their combined activities were focused more on strengthening the positions of Russia in the region and promoting Russian pilgrimage than at cooperation with the Arab population and clergy (Fig. 1).

⁴Porphyrii Uspenskii, *Kniga bytiia moego. Dnevniki I avtobiograficheskie zapiski episkopa Porfirija Uspenskogo*, Vol. I (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences editions, 1894), 359–360.

⁵N. N. Lisovoi, *Russkoe dukhovnoe I politicheskoe prisutstvie v Sviatoj Zemle I na Blizhnem Vostoke v XIX-nachale XX veka* (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), 109–126; O. V. Anisimov, *Rossija I Napoleon III: bor'ba za Sviatye mesta Palestiny*. (Moscow: Indrik, 2014); Ja. E. Zelenina and J. G. Belik, *Pervye russkie khramy v Jerusalime. Troitskii sobor I cerkov' muchenicy Alexandra. Istorija sozdaniia. Khudozhestvennoe ubranstvo* (Moscow: Indrik, 2011); Elena Astafieva, "Fonder et acheter, étudier et s'approprier, construire et reconfigurer. Les trois temps de la transformation du «domaine copte» en église Saint Alexandre Nevsky à Jérusalem (1856–1896)," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 22 (2016): 1–21.



Fig. 1 The Russian hospital in Jerusalem. Beginning of the twentieth century (<https://www.ippo.ru/historyippo/article/vozvrashchennoe-nasledie-v-v-simakov-201657>)

The Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society (1882–1914)

A new period of Russian-Arab contacts started with the foundation of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society in 1882.⁶ A non-state organisation, it nevertheless enjoyed the direct patronage of the Tsar's family, and the membership of many high officials, starting with the Tsar himself. At first, the Palestine Society was supported by private donations, and only after 1912 did it receive financial support from the state budget. According to its regulations, the Society was founded for scientific and philanthropic purposes, principally: (1) research work concerning Palestine and the Near East, mainly in history and archaeology, edition of sources, and popularising this information in Russia; (2) supporting, organising and promoting pilgrimage in the Holy Land; (3) supporting Orthodoxy in the East, i.e. organisation of schools and hospitals for the local population and providing material assistance to the local churches, monasteries and clergy.⁷

This third objective was an implementation of Porphyrii's projects concerning the support of the Orthodox Arabs of Palestine (Fig. 2).

⁶Lisovoi, *Russkoe duchovnoe*, 160–224; L. A. Gerd, “Zadachi Palestinskogo Obshestva (Neizdannaja rech V. N. Khitrovo na pervykh chtenijah Poltavskogo eparkhial'nogo ot dela IPPO),” in *Pravoslavnyj Palestinskiy Sbornik* 106 (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), 288–297; Elena Astafieva, “La Russie en Terre Sainte: le cas de la Société Impériale Orthodoxe de Palestine (1882–1917),” *Christianesimo nella storia* 1 (2003).

⁷A. A. Dmitrievskii, *Imperatorskoe Pravoslavnoe Palestinskoe Obshestvo I ego dejatel'nost' za istekshuju chervart' veka, 1882–1907* (St. Petersburg: Kirshbaum typography, 1907).



Fig. 2 The Russian school in Beit Jala, 1892 (<https://www.ippo.ru/historyippo/article/shkolnaya-deyatelnost-ippo-v-palestine-nn-lisovoy-200369>)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Palestine Society was maintaining about 100 schools in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria (rising from 84 in 1902 to 101 in 1917), where more than 11,100 children (both girls and boys) studied. They were divided into three categories: (1) seminaries for teachers (in Nazareth and Beit Jala); (2) primary schools where the Russian language was taught; (3) schools in villages with one Arab teacher. The programs of the schools more or less followed that of the Russian primary schools; the teachers were both Russians and locals. The education was in Arabic, and the best Russian manuals were translated into Arabic (Fig. 3).

Arab literature and history were also among the subjects. The Russian educational institutions did not aim at creating Arab nationalism, but at raising cultural self-consciousness.⁸ For this reason, the effect of the Russian educational system was reciprocal: the best pupils later became teachers in Russian and Arab schools, translators from Russian and writers, deeply influencing their genuine culture. One of them was Khalil Baydas, who translated Pushkin's works into Arabic.⁹ The Arab students of the Russian seminaries and later teachers Klaudia Ode-Kulsum (Vasilieva), Panteleimon Zhuze and Taufik Kezma moved to Russia before the First World War. Later they worked as

⁸A. G. Grushevoi, *Iz istorii russkikh shkol na Blizhnem Vostoke* (St. Petersburg: Kontrast, 2016).

⁹Spencer Scoville, *The Agency of the Translator: Khalil Baidas' Literary Translations* (inedited dissertation, University of Michigan, 2012). See also: Id., “Reconsidering Nahdawi Translation: Bringing Pushkin to Palestine,” *The Translator* 21 (2015): 2.



Fig. 3 The pupils of a Russian school of the IPPO (<https://www.ippo.ru/historyippo/article/aggrushevoy-o-proektah-preobrazovaniya-shkol-pales-402141>)

professors of Arabic language and literature in the universities of Kiev, Baku, Moscow and Leningrad. One of the favourite sentences of Klaudia Ode-Kulsum (Vasilieva) was the following: “The Arabs need Russia, and Russia needs the Arabs”. One hospital in Jerusalem and six outpatient clinics for the local Palestinian population were also organised and maintained by the Society.

The organisation and promotion of pilgrimage was, however, the primary task of the society. Annually more than 6000 Russian pilgrims, mainly peasants, could visit the Holy Land thanks to the subventions from the Palestine Society (Fig. 4).

The research work of the Society, meanwhile, put it on a par with the strongest European schools of Palestine studies (such as the British Palestine Exploration Fund, or the Deutsche Palästinaverein). The excavations in Jerusalem near the Holy Sepulchre in 1882–1883 resulted in the discovery of the Judgement Gate and the foundations of the basilica of Constantine the Great. Supported by the society, Professor A. A. Tsagareli carried out research in Palestine and Sinai and published his book “Monuments of Georgian Antiquity in the Holy Land and Sinai”.¹⁰ In 1886, the Society organised excavations

¹⁰A. A. Tsagareli, *Pamiatniki gruzinskoi stariny v Sviatoi Zemle I na Sinae* (=Pravoslavnyi Palestinskii sbornik, vyp. 10) (St. Petersburg: Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society Editions, 1888).



Fig. 4 Russian pilgrims in Jerusalem (<https://www.ippo.ru/historyippo/article/byt-i-nuzhdy-russkih-pravoslavnnyh-poklonnikov-na-s-201684>)

at Jericho and in 1891 an expedition to Syria, Palestine and Transjordan was equipped, exploring old Christian monuments; this work resulted in an exhibition and a fundamental edition with many photos. In 1898, another expedition to Palestine and Syria took place, this time in cooperation with the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople. In 1901, the society financed research in Sinai and Jerusalem by Nicolai Marr, later its active member. The editorial work of the society embraced a series of academic editions of sources (lives of saints, descriptions of pilgrimages, documents, catalogues of manuscripts). The prominent Greek scholar Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus arrived in Petersburg in 1890 on the invitation of the society and worked for it for 22 years. A book on the Old Testament Temple was published by Professor A. Olesnitskii; research on Palestine under the Arabs—by N. A. Mednikov. Since 1886, the society edited a Journal, called “*Soobshcheniia Imperatorskogo Pravoslavnogo Palestinskogo Obshestva*”, with both scholarly articles and reports on the practical work of the Society in Palestine.¹¹

¹¹A. Olesnitskii, *Vetkhozavetnyi khram v Ierusalime*. (St. Petersburg: Imperial Palestine Society editions, 1889); N. A. Mednikov, *Palestina ot zavoevaniia ee arabami do Krestovykh pkhodov po arabskim istochnikam* (St. Peterburg, Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society editions, 1897) (=Pravoslavnyi Palestinskii Sbornik, vol. 17, 2). On the scientific work of the Palestine Society see: Lisovoi, *Russkoe duchkovnoe i politicheskoe prisutstvie*, 206–224; A. G. Grushevoi, “Imperatorskoe Palestinskoe Obshestvo (po peterburgskim arkhivam).” in *Arkhivy Russikh vizantinistov v Sankt-Peterburge*, ed. I. P. Medvedev (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1995), 134–156.

It would be a simplification to claim that the Russians in all cases supported the Arabs against the Greek clergy of the Holy Sepulchre and other Patriarchates of the East. In fact most documents demonstrate a flexible Pan-Orthodox imperial concept of Russian policy in the Near East during the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. The policy was in general aimed at reaching a balance, pacifying the Orthodox Church of the Orient and preserving the *status quo*, which coincided with Russian interests in the Near East. Moreover, many diplomats and ecclesiastics doubted the practicability of promoting Russian pilgrimage and investing huge sums of money in institutions outside of Russia; some of them even found it harmful for the spiritual state of the Russian people. There were diplomats and statesmen who proposed to invest money in churches and monasteries inside Russia instead of sending it abroad and purchasing estates which could be lost one day.

THE PALESTINE SOCIETY AND RUSSIAN MISSION DURING WWI AND IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

World War I

Turkey started hostilities against Russia in October of 1914. Already at the beginning of 1915, the success of the Allies and the first months of the Gallipoli operation brought an incredible rise of patriotism and dreams about an imminent and successful end to the war. A great number of articles in journals and separate editions, full of nationalistic hysteria and fantastic messianic dreams of unification of the Christian East under Russian dominance, were written.

Two questions were mainly under discussion: (1) the future political status of Palestine and in this regard the administration of the Patriarchate and the Holy Places; (2) the administration of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem itself and the Greek-Arab controversy. The third item, closely connected with the first one, was the future of the Russian real estates in Palestine. Discussions took place in the press, one of them in the popular newspaper "Birzhevye Vedomosti". In the beginning of 1915, it published an interview under the general title "The Liberation of the Holy Sepulchre". Among the interviewees were the rectors of the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant theological academies, professors and diplomats. Most of them leaned towards the neutralisation of the Holy Land under the condominium of the Allies; others claimed the desire that the Holy Sepulchre should be administrated by Russians. Some also expressed doubts concerning the possibility of peaceful coexistence of different confessions in Palestine. The discussions were picked up by the public speech of Senator Eugenii Kovalevskii to the Slavonic Benevolent Society on 9 February, 1915. The main idea of his speech was the necessity of granting equal rights to all Orthodox peoples—Arabs, Greeks and Russians—in worship at and administration of the Holy Places.

In March 1915, a secret treaty between Britain and France on one side, and Russia on the other was signed, intended to activate the Russian navy in the Black Sea towards the Bosphorus. Russia was promised that she would receive Constantinople and the adjacent territory. During the spring months of 1915, along with nationalistic claims, a number of serious analyses were written. It was in these secret notes, composed as political suggestions for the government and the Palestine Society, where the questions under discussion received a comprehensive study. The most detailed and reasoned among them was authored by Pavel Riazhskii, who had spent 11 years in Palestine as an inspector of the schools of the Palestine Society (his final report was dated May 1915).¹² He supposed that the question of granting greater rights to Russia in possessing the Holy Places was very complicated. In his opinion this breach of the status quo, the balance of relations between denominations and powers in the Holy Land, which had been established after years of struggle, was not possible. Riazhskii informed his readers that the Palestine Society possessed 28 land plots, 26 of them situated in Palestine; on most of them buildings had been constructed. One-third of these estates were officially confirmed as Russian property, while the rest were regarded as private plots, the property deeds having been issued in the names of Russian or Ottoman subjects.¹³ After the end of the war, he continued, Russia should secure its right of patronage over the Orthodox church in the East, regardless of nationalities. The second condition of the programme presented by Riazhskii was the practical implementation of the principle of religious tolerance, proclaimed by the Ottoman constitution of 1908. Third, was the restitution of capitulations, and recognition of the autonomy of the Palestine Society in administering its institutions. The most difficult question, according to Riazhskii, was how to solve the problem of Greek-Arab opposition within the Orthodox Church and to defend Russian interests at the Holy Sepulchre and other holy sites in Palestine. Only by creating a strong union of all Orthodox nations could the church oppose the Catholic and Protestant offensive. The best solution was that the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre become a pan-Orthodox institution without serving the national interests of Hellenism or using Russian donations for anti-Russian propaganda. Thus local communities could receive their desired autonomy, the Russian donations would be better used for the needs of the local Arab Christians and, finally, the Holy Liturgy at the Holy Sepulchre could be administered not only in Greek, but also in Arabic and

¹²Several printed copies of this document are preserved: Archives of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AVPRI), fund Russian Imperial Palestine Society (RIPPO), op. 873/1, d. 6; Russian National Library (further after: RNB), Manuscript department, f. 253, d. 62.

¹³On the Russian dependencies in Palestine during WWI see: V. Jushmanov, "Russiie uchrezhdenniia v Palestine I Sirii pered nachalom voiny s Turtsiei," *Sooobshcheniia Imperatorskogo Pravoslavnogo Palestinskogo Obshchestva* 25 (1914): 436–464; Id., "Russkie uchrezhdenniia v Palestine I Sirii vo vremia voiny s Turtsiiei," *Ibid.* 26 (1915): 147, 181, 373–408; (1916): 267–288. See also: M. Palma, "Russian Landholdings in Palestine 1917–1948" (Diss., University of Arizona, 1992).

Slavonic. The final subject of the text presented concerned the rights, privileges and economic and juridical position of the Palestine Society.

Among the numerous topics discussed in his next note (the future territorial division of the Near East, the Greeks and the Catholics, etc.), Riazhskii paid special attention to the Arab question. As the final target of the Arabs was replacing the Greeks in administration of the Holy Places in Palestine (as they had managed in Syria), Russia should be ready to express positions on a number of topics. These included whether the Arabs could be supported in organising their national hierarchy, i.e. creating their national church in Palestine; whether they could be admitted to the incomes and the treasury of the Holy Sepulchre; and finally, whether they should share with the Greeks the administration of the Holy Places.¹⁴ In fact, here Riazhskii puts forward the question of whether the principle of international church organisation in Palestine (like the Catholic one) was more advantageous for Russia.

Another paper of the Palestine Society, dated 1915, takes us once more back to the main questions concerning Palestine, those of whether the political status quo antebellum would be preserved and, if not, whether a condominium of the Allies (Britain, France, Russia and Italy) could be established, and what the place of Russia as a supporter of Orthodoxy in Palestine would be. Alongside these were the questions of how Palestine would be related to the Sultanate of Egypt or the Sultanate of Arabia; how Russian institutions in Syria would be preserved if it came under a French protectorate; whether the head of the Russian mission in Jerusalem should be a bishop, equal to the heads of other churches; and finally whether the status quo in the Holy Places would be preserved. In all cases the question of the Russian institutions and their rights was the Society's main concern.

The last pre-revolutionary years brought new trends in the research work of the society and its perspectives in Palestine. Previously, the image of the Palestine Society as a church and royalist organisation kept many intellectuals who did not want to identify themselves with the political mainstream of Tsarist Russia apart from it. In 1914–1915, a group of Petersburg academics and officials with Senator E. P. Kovalevskii at its head started discussing the creation of a special Committee on Palestine, either at the Academy of Sciences, or at the Palestine Society. After the end of the war, this Committee could be transformed into a Russian Archaeological Institute in Jerusalem (similar to the one in Constantinople and the existing American and French institutions in Palestine). This idea found support from some Palestine Society members, such as the archaeologist Vasilii Latyshev. The secretary of the Society Alexei Dmitrievskii wrote a detailed outline of the future institute.¹⁵ On the eve of the February Revolution of 1917, the head

¹⁴RNB, f. 253, d. 64.

¹⁵“Russian Historical-Archaeological Institute in Jerusalem”. RNB, f. 253, d. 61.

of the old regime board of the Society, Alexei Shirinskii-Shikhmatov, invited Feodor Uspenskii, the ex-Director of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, to participate in its sessions.¹⁶ In case this project had worked, surely wider cooperation between the Russian scholars and the local intellectuals could have been reached in the region.

Some new ideas are expressed in that years even by the most conservative Society leaders. On 2 March 1915, its secretary, Alexei Dmitrievskii, delivered a long public speech at the Slavonic Benevolent Society in Petrograd, where he tried to summarise Russian activities and policy in the Holy Land and Russia's new tasks during and after the war.¹⁷ After an ample excursus into the history of the Western European and Russian presences in Palestine, he focused on the future of the Holy Land. With some elements of romance he described a future for Palestine in which Russian interests and the integrity of Russian estates would be preserved. Dmitrievskii envisioned all the possible outlooks, one by one: that of a protectorate of the three powers (Russia, Britain and France, in his mind doubtful), and then of each of the powers separately. As a pure Russian protectorate did not seem very realistic either, he viewed the possibility of a French protectorate, and found it quite unfavourable for the Orthodox, taking into account the sharp competition between Catholic and Orthodox institutions in the Holy Land. Compared to the French, a British protectorate was, in Dmitrievskii's opinion, preferable. He reminded his listeners of the cautious and respectful attitude of the Anglican bishop towards Orthodox locals. The Anglicans, he continued, were not inclined to convert Orthodox Arabs to Protestantism, especially taking into account that the reasons for such conversion might be just temporary and not serious. Concerning the policy of the Palestine Society, he openly claimed that it had been a mistake to have supported for years only the Arab population. More attention should be paid in the future to establishing a good relationship with the Greek clergy, who had been the keepers of Orthodoxy in the East during centuries of alien rule. In fact in this speech Dmitrievskii does not go beyond the frames of the traditional colonial conception: he is still discussing the variants of French or British domination without taking into account any possibility of a Zionist state in Palestine.

Another Byzantologist, Professor of St. Petersburg Theological Academy Ivan Sokolov, was less optimistic about a future British rule in Palestine. He supposed that only a Russian protectorate could put an end to the competition between nations. Sokolov was known for his neo-Byzantine political romanticism and sympathies towards the Greeks and in his note from March 1915 he took the opportunity to express his admiration for the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and stressed its merits in preserving Orthodoxy.

¹⁶ Letter from January 2, 1917. Archive of the Institute of Oriental manuscripts (hereafter: Arkhiv vostokovedov), f. 120, op. 1, d. 169.

¹⁷ RNB, f. 253, d. 37.

All these opinions and projects, though written by serious professors and experienced employees of the Palestine Society, did not go beyond the notions of traditional imperialistic colonial ideology; none of the authors could imagine a different organisation of the Near East in the twentieth century. Against this background, fresh ideas were expressed by the professor of mathematics from Kazan, Nikolai Bobrovnikov. Raised in the family of Nikolai Il'minskii, who had worked for years to organise schools for the Tatars and other non-Russian peoples of the Volga region, Bobrovnikov was familiar with the needs of modern Muslim society. After analysing a range of points of view on the future of Palestine, he stressed that Russia should not create obstacles to the independent Arab states which would be formed out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. Palestine, he continued, should not be regarded as a special territory, separate from the rest of the Arab world. The schools of the Palestine Society, instead of being Russian-centric, had to meet the needs of the developing Arab culture and social movement. Integration into the life of the Arab population should be the first task of the educational activities of the Society. Concerning scientific perspectives on the Near East, Russia, in his opinion, should go beyond its narrow orientation of research exclusively to church history, and the development of Oriental Studies inside Russia should be promoted by the Ministry of Education. Bobrovnikov proposed the creation of a Russian Institute of the Arab World, based in Beirut and not in Jerusalem.

These progressive views of a person living in an area with a large Muslim population, however, did not find much understanding among people swept up by nationalist enthusiasm. Professor Sokolov was dreaming about the restoration of the Byzantine Empire and wrote projects on Russian Constantinople, and the famous theologian, Bishop Antonii Khrapovitskii, was convincing himself and his audience that Syria and Palestine could become Russian territory as well.

Once it is done, in ten years all Palestine and Syria will turn into Vladimir and Khar'kov provinces. Our people will rush to install themselves in the country where our Lord, as well as His Most Pure Mother, the Apostles, Prophets and Martyrs, lived. There will be a place for pure Russian culture, for the Russian language, for Russian trade and industry; the last two branches will freely float along the Volga and Caspian through the Caucasus and back. The desert will flourish again, as "a flowing and honeyed land".¹⁸

While experts in Russia discussed their various utopias, the situation for the Russian properties in Palestine and the people associated with them was undergoing dramatic change. Contacts with them were interrupted in

¹⁸ Antonii Khrapovitskii, Archiepiskop "Chei dolzhen byt' Constantinopl?" (Khar'kov, 1915) (=N. N. Lisovoj, ed., Russkaja tservov' I patriarchaty Vostoka (Tri tservovno-politicheskie utopii XX v.), in *Religii mira. Istorija I sovremennost'* (Moscow: Institute of Russian history RAN, 2002): 204.

October 1914. Most employees of the Palestine Society, as well as pilgrims, left Ottoman territories by the end of 1914. The Russian properties were entrusted to the Italian consulate, and the remaining Russian subjects, particularly the men, were arrested as prisoners of war. As the expected end to the war did not come during the spring of 1915, on 12th May, the secretary of the Society Alexei Dmitrievskii sent a request for information on the current state of affairs to the Russian consul in Alexandria, Alexander Petrov. A detailed answer followed on 23rd June. First, Petrov reported receiving a sum of 100.000 francs from the Society and transferring it via the American consulate to its Russian employees in Jerusalem and Damascus. Already at the end of 1914, the male employees had been deported from Jerusalem, first to Damascus and on 18th May, to the town of Urfa near Diyarbekir. There they were kept in awful conditions, 12 persons in one room, and some had to sleep in the open air, in the Armenian cemetery.

The Russian nuns and female pilgrims who had remained in Jerusalem during the first months of the war received supplies from the Greek Patriarch; for reasons of safety they were installed in the Elisabeth dependence (*podvor'e*). The Sergius, Mariinski and Nikolaevski dependences were used as military hospitals and military headquarters, as well as the building of the Beit Jala seminary. Some of the buildings were sealed by Italian diplomats before being occupied by the Turkish authorities.¹⁹ At the end of November 1915, eighty-five Russian nuns and pilgrims were transported from Jerusalem to Alexandria and installed in a house rented by Consul Petrov with money sent by the Palestine Society.²⁰ Some of the women found jobs in private houses in Alexandria; the money sent from Russia obviously was soon finished, as we can judge from two letters of the chief of the mission, Archimandrite Leonid Sentsov, addressed to Dmitrievskii (October 23, 1916, from Alexandria, and November 22, 1917, from Moscow).²¹

After the failure of the Dardanelles operation, the discussion on Palestine disappeared from the Russian press. In 1916, it again attracted the attention of the deputies of the Duma (the Russian Parliament). Deputy Markov repeated the same idea that after signing the peace treaty Palestine should become neutral, a condominium of the three Allies. A few weeks before the February Revolution of 1917, a conference on the Russian cause in the

¹⁹Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, op. 1, d. 97. More information can be found in the letter of the secretary of the Italian consulate Senni to A. Dmitrievskii, dated 25 August, 1915 and written immediately after leaving Jerusalem. He reported sealing part of the Russian buildings and the poor state of the pilgrims and nuns. The 4000 francs given to him by Dmitrievskii were left with the American consulate. At least 20,000 francs more were needed to support the Russians. "Palestine is completely out of resources, and Jerusalem being under terror and starving, looks worse than a dead town", he finished his letter (RNB, f. 253, d. 615).

²⁰"The Holy Land and Our Compatriots in Syria and Palestine During the Present War". Speech delivered by Alexei Dmitrievskii before the Slavonic Benevolent Society in April 1916. Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, op. 1, d. 168.

²¹RNB, f. 253, d. 510.

Holy Land after the end of the war took place. Alexey Dmitrievskii gave one more speech about the tasks of the last, Fifth Crusade. Other speakers still expressed the hope that Greek Orthodoxy in the Holy Land would be absorbed by the Russian variant.

The October Revolution of 1917 put an end to both practical projects and messianic dreams. In fact, already in March 1915 the Russian government had agreed to give way to British and French aspirations concerning Palestine and Syria in exchange for the acquisition of Constantinople. This was confirmed by the Sykes-Picot agreement (May 16, 1916), signed also by Sergei Sazonov, the Russian minister of foreign affairs, when Russia was promised the Eastern Turkish territories as well as Constantinople and the Straits in exchange for relinquishing any territorial interests in Syria and Palestine. Only the so-called “brown zone” of Palestine remained a subject for future discussions. With the collapse of the tsarist regime in Russia in February 1917 and the Bolshevik revolution of October the same year, Russia lost its position in the division of the Ottoman heritage. A few days before the October Revolution, Dmitrievskii wrote a text concerning Russian interests in the future Zionist state which the British were planning in Palestine. The Russian government, he stressed, should insist on the ex-territorial rights of all its properties, not only on free pilgrimage.²² Meanwhile in December 1917, British troops entered Palestine (Fig. 5).

The Russian Palestine Society, which by that time had already lost its first two titles, “Imperial” and “Orthodox”, was not slow to respond to the turbulent changes. An undated letter (probably from the beginning of 1918) addressed to the British embassy in Petrograd, reminded the British about the Russian properties in Palestine, expressing at the same time the hope that their rights would be respected by the new authorities.²³

The Russian Mission during World War I

As soon as the Soviet government was recognised by the European states, it attempted to state its claims for the Russian properties in Palestine. On 18 May, 1923, the Russian ambassador in London, Leonid Krasin, handed Lord Curzon a note in which all properties of the former Russian institutions in Palestine, Syria and elsewhere were designated as belonging to the Russian government. The British side, however, did not hurry to recognise these claims, and for many years the question of the properties remained unresolved. The main reason of the British authorities’ intransigence was that the religious and philanthropic character of the Russian institutions did not correlate with the atheistic policy of the Soviet government. As the old regime Russian institutions did not exist anymore, the British preferred to deal with the Russian Church Abroad.

²²RNB, f. 253, d. 38.

²³Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, d. 94.



Fig. 5 The parade of the British army in front of the Russian St. Trinity church in Jerusalem. March 1917; image courtesy of The Library of Congress, [https://www.ippo.ru/news/article/sergievskoe-podvre-imperatorskogo-pravoslavnogo-p-201667](https://www.ippo.ru/news/article/sergievskoe-podvore-imperatorskogo-pravoslavnogo-p-201667)

During the 1920s the Russian properties were constantly at risk of confiscation. However, the Russian Church Abroad, being in strict opposition to the Soviet government and the Patriarchate of Moscow, managed to preserve the real estates of the Ecclesiastical mission in Palestine and even received in 1934 from the British authorities 10.000 square metres at the right bank of the Jordan river.²⁴ Very little was known in Russia about that

²⁴See more details on the economic situation of the Russian properties, and of the Russian mission during the 1920s in: L. I. Aliekhina, “Kogda net bole pravoslavnoi Rossii, oso-benno tiazhel krest nachal’nika missii,” in *Sviataia Zeml’ia. Istoriko-kul’turnyi illustrirovannyi al’manakh. K 165-letiu Russkoi dukhovnoi missii v Ierusalime* no. 1 Part 2. (Jerusalem: Russian ecclesiastical mission, 2012): 6–29; A. K. Klement’ev, “753 dn’a Arkhimandrita Kipriana: Dni I dela nachal’nika Russkoi dukhovnoi missii v Ierusalime: 1928–1930,” Ibidem: 50–54; T. A. Bogdanova, “Nas 2-4 cheloveka, b’emsia kak ryby ob led,” Ibidem: 76–84. Detailed report (with publication of documents) on the damage caused to the Russian properties during WWI see: Ibidem: 29–36; Report on the state and finances of the mission in the second half of the 1920s: Ibidem: 63–67. Andrei Psarev, “Vladenie Russkoi Zarubezhnoi Tserkov’u dorevolutsionnym tserkovnym imushchestvom: iuridicheskii I moral’nyi aspect” (“The Pre-Revolutionary Church Estates in the Hands of the Russian Church Abroad: Juridical and Moral Aspects”), *RPCZ: Obzor* <http://www.rocorstudies.org/2012/02/22/a-v-psarev-vladenie-russkoj-zarubezhnoj-cerkovyu-dorevolucionnym-cerkovnym-imushhestvom-yuridicheskij-i-moralnyj-aspekt/?fbclid=IwAR3SYkIWksUAETH7G8gkujGJbSG31YpeuumL0z5xr6BktlbazS8Cs9Pyu0A> (appeal: 2 December 2019).

state of affairs. Some information was received via private letters addressed to Alexei Dmitrievskii, who, after returning to Petrograd in 1923, retired from the work of the Palestine Society. In a letter, dated 6th December, 1926, Ivan Ivanovich Spasskii (former inspector of the schools of the Palestine Society, at that time an employee of the British administration in Jerusalem), gave a detailed report on his work on systematising the papers of the Russian Mission. Spasskii complained that the documents were completely mixed and it took him several months to classify them. Between August and November 1925 he managed to organise the papers into about 1000 files; 2 or 3 months more would have been needed to finish the work. The letter was sent from a ship heading to America: Spasskii was delegated by Archbishop Anastasii Gribanovskii (chief of the Ecclesiastical Mission 1924–1934) to go to New York for approximately a year to gather money for the needs of the Mission.²⁵ Suffering from lack of money and having lost their political significance, the Russian institutions in Palestine in the interwar period could not have any significant cultural influence on the local Arab population.

The estates and buildings of the Palestine Society, meanwhile, were rented out by the British authorities and the money was used mainly for supporting of the Russian monks and nuns who were living in Palestine. While composing an answer to the claims of the Soviet government, the British appealed to Article 13 of the Mandate on Palestine, which enhanced all the administration of the religious foundations to the British authorities. Article 14 of the same document, however, called for the creation of a special commission which should have determined the rights over the properties. This commission was never created.²⁶ With the crash of the Tsarist regime, Russian ambitions in the Middle East were neutralised, and thus the old aim of the British policy in the frames of the Eastern Question was achieved. The refusal of the British to hand assets to the Soviet state was on one hand, based in their general opposition to Communism, and on the other hand, excluded any claims of the old rivals for possessions in Palestine. The British official

²⁵RNB, f. 253, d. 630. See an edition of some letters of Spasskii sent from the US: Inokinia Magdalina (Kornilova), “Missia neotstupno prosit vas vsekh priiti ei na pomosh: Pis’ma I. I. Spasskogo iz Ameriki”, in *Sviataia Zeml’ a. Istoriko-kul’turnyi illustrirovannyi al’manakh*: 36–49. The relationship between the Society members who remained in Palestine and the Russian ecclesiastical mission during the Mandate period remained rather difficult, mainly for property and financial reasons. See the letter of the chief of the Mission Archimandrite Kiprian Kern addressed to the President of the Palestine Society Prince A. A. Shirinskii-Shikhmatov from 1929 or 1930, where he demanded that the Society shares its incomes with the Mission: *Sviataia Zeml’ a. Istoriko-kul’turnyi illustrirovannyi al’manakh*: 67–71. Due to these complications and the split of the Society in the mid-1980s the Jerusalem archives of the Palestine Society are still inaccessible for researchers.

²⁶Steven Batalden, “Sud’ba russkogo zemlevladeniia v Ierusalime vo vremia Palestinskogo mandata” (The Russian Land Properties in Jerusalem during the Palestine Mandate), *Palestinskii Sbornik* 94 (1992) <https://www.ippo.ru/historyippo/article/sudba-russkogo-zemlevladeniya-v-ierusalime-vo-vrem-201658> (appeal 2 December 2019).

propaganda stressed the liberating role of their army as a Crusader. In the San-Remo conference Lloyd George proclaimed that the UK had undertaken the patronage over the Orthodox Patriarchate instead of Communist Russia.²⁷ The British thus appropriated the function of Tsarist Russia and at the same time eliminated the claims of the Russian Church Abroad and its representatives, who tried to rent out the buildings on their own.²⁸ For decades the real estate of the Palestine Society were still of uncertain status (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6 The Russian St. Trinity church in 1946. A view from Jaffa street; image courtesy of The Library of Congress, [https://www.ippo.ru/news/article/sergievskoe-podvre-imperatorskogo-pravoslavnogo-p-201667](https://www.ippo.ru/news/article/sergievskoe-podvore-imperatorskogo-pravoslavnogo-p-201667)

²⁷E. B. Yosef, “The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestinian Campaign, 1917–1918,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 1 (January 2001): 87–109; K. Papastathis, “Finances in the Colonial Age: The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem under British Control, 1921–25,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 49 (2013): 724.

²⁸The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission (subordinated to the Russian Church Abroad) remained the only active Russian institution in Palestine in the interwar period. On its complicated relationship with the Greek Patriarch and the Mandate authorities see: Archimandrite Nikodim Rotov, *Istoria Russkoi Duchovnoi missii v Ierusalime. Zakliucheniie*, <https://rusdm.ru/history/38> (appeal 5 December 2019); Archimandrite Kiprian Kern, *Vospominaniia o mitropolite Antonii (Khrapovitskom)*, https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Kiprian_Kern/vospominanija-o-mitropolite-antonii-hrapovitskom-i-episkope-gavrile-chepure/1 (appeal 5 December 2009). See also the general overview of the history of the Russian institutions in Palestine after WWI: Alexander Zanemonets, *Sviataia Zemlia I Russkoe Zarubezh'ye* (St. Petersburg: Aletheia, 2019).

In 1948 the Soviet government managed to reclaim part of them with the support of the Israeli state. Some of the properties passed to the Patriarchate of Moscow, and the majority of them were sold by the Soviet government to Israel in 1964.²⁹

THE RUSSIAN PALESTINE SOCIETY IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Compared to the history of the Society before the revolution, this period is less known.³⁰ From the Russian side there are two archive collections, that of Alexei Dmitrievskii (in the manuscript department of the Russian National Library in St Petersburg) and of the Archives of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in Petersburg (Archiv Vostokovedov), in which the protocols of the sessions and other documents between 1918 and the mid-1930s are preserved.

In the years after the revolution the Society completely changed its profile: already in 1918 it was clear that it could survive only as a purely scientific organisation, concentrated on research in the history of Palestine. Many new members joined the Society, mainly specialists in the Christian East, who regarded it as an important institution with glorious traditions in which scientific work could be continued. At the same time, the board of the Society did not abandon the hope that it could coordinate its activities with state interests and return to at least some of its research work in the Middle East. The post-revolutionary history of the Palestine Society embraces three main topics, namely the organisational and administrative efforts focused on its survival as an official institution; the research work and editions it continued to produce; and attempts aimed at the reacquisition of its possessions abroad.

During 1918, with the Russian civil war followed by ruin and hunger, no sessions of the Palestine Society took place. The first one after the revolution was held on 26 January, 1919. After a commemoration of those members who had died during the revolutionary years (Jacob Smirnov, Pavel Bezobrazov, Nikolai Mednikov, Chrysanth Loparev), the members submitted their proposals for further research work. This work however did not last very long. From the participants in this session some died during the 1920s (Ivan Troitskii, Boris Turaev, Ivan Pal'mov), others emigrated abroad (Alexander

²⁹The so called “orange deal”, the agreement No. 593 “About selling of the properties belonging to USSR by the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the government of the state of Israel”, signed on October 7, 1964 by Golda Meir and Pinhas Sapir on one side, and Ambassador Mikhail Bodrov on the other. 22 real estates were sold for the sum of 3,5 million Israeli lyras (4,5 million US dollars). The money was partly paid out by Israel in oranges and knitwear. The building of the Ecclesiastical mission, St. Trinity church and Sergius dependency were not sold. <https://www.ippo.ru/historyippo/article/apelsinovaya-sdelka-201663> (appeal: 3 December 2019).

³⁰See: A. G. Grushevoi, “Imperatorskoe Palestinskoe obshchestvo,” 134–156.

Vasiliev, Nikolai Glubokovskii), and only one survived the communist terror and continued working in the 1930s, Nikolai Marr (linguist and creator of the theory of Japhetic languages, popular in the Stalin period). Already at this session a project to draw up new regulations for the Society was presented to the Commissariat of Education through the Academy of Sciences.

The membership of the Society radically changed; unsurprisingly, in the protocols of the 1920s no officials from the former regime can be found. With the passing of many of the old members, new ones were invited. Little by little, the Society became a concentration of the best scholars of the 1920s. In its papers, we see the names of prominent academics: the specialist in Classical archaeology Boris Farmakovskii (since 1920), the Orientalists Pavel Kokovcev and Vasilii Struve (joined on December 9, 1921), the Assyriologist Vladimir Shileiko (since May 1922), the Byzantinists Dmirii Ainalov and Alexander Vasiliev. An active member of the Society, and one of its secretaries, Vladimir Beneshevich was a specialist in Byzantine canon law and professor at the university. In 1921, academician Feodor Uspenskii was elected President of the Society, and it was his authority that saved it during the 1920s. Judging from the list of the active society members made in December 1922, there were still 47 scholars who wanted to take part in its work.³¹

According to the new strategy elaborated by the administrative board of the Society, it should have embraced research not only in history and culture, but in the geology and the natural history of Palestine as well. In 1921, academician Alexander Fersman, the famous geologist, was invited to join and at the end of the 1920s a professor of botany, V. Markovich, was invited, and reported on his expedition to the Middle East in 1926–1928, showing a collection of pictures depicting the life of the inhabitants of Palestine.³²

The Soviet government seems for a long time to have had no certain opinion on the Palestine Society. On one hand, for them it was a relic from the Tsarist past, an extreme right-wing royalist and ecclesiastical organisation, potentially dangerous for the new regime. On the other hand, protected by influential academics and declaring itself as a purely research institution, it could not be liquidated just by one announcement. In fact one has the impression that the Society, like some other relict institutions inherited from the Tsarist regime, was regarded by the Soviet officials as an annoying hindrance, moreover it was clear that it could not help at all in the issue of the real estates in Palestine. As a result time passed, and the official status of the Society remained uncertain. In December 1921, after long discussions, the Society was transferred to the patronage of the Academy of Sciences.³³ At the same time, the Soviet authorities pretended to confiscate its building at 10 Mytninskaia Street under the pretext that it was not used. Already in

³¹ Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, d. 182.

³² Ibid., d. 42.

³³ Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, op. 1, d. 182.

December 1921, the rooms of the Society, including its library, archive and collections, were sealed, and for some months the sessions were held at the Academy of Sciences.³⁴ On 3rd May, 1922, the seals were removed from the rooms of the Society, and the session of May 15 took place in its building. But just a few days later, on 22nd May, the next offensive was undertaken by the authorities. The secretary of the Society, Vladimir Jushmanov, was arrested, the archive confiscated, the collections and library again sealed. A few months were needed before Academician Feodor Uspenskii managed to achieve a favourable decision from the courts.³⁵ Nevertheless, the building was confiscated and the archive was never returned to the Society. It was later transported to Moscow, where it joined the Archives of Foreign Affairs, and the rooms were finally lost. Some church items were offered to the Metropolitan of Petersburg and were probably transported to the lavra (monastery) of St Alexander Nevskii. After this attack by the authorities, the Academy of Sciences “for financial and other reasons”, as was officially stated, refused to protect the Society any longer. From November 1922 onwards, its sessions took place in the rooms of the Academy of Material Culture (the future Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences), at that time located in the Marble Palace. By that time the library and museum of the Society had also been moved there.³⁶ All this “misunderstanding” between the Society members and the Soviet governmental authorities clearly demonstrates that the Soviet state did not see any perspectives in cooperation with them for influencing the society and politics in the Middle East. First, any religious policy was completely denied by the Communist state; second, the Society members were regarded as ideologically unreliable persons in view of their “bourgeois” background. Thus, their services could not be used even in establishing pure scientific links with Palestine.

Meanwhile, the struggle for survival continued. In his report, read at the session of the Society on May 19, Professor Beneshevich clearly stated the urgent need to reorganise it according to the new conditions, to elaborate new regulations and elect a new administrative board. Thus the Society, officially recognised by the Soviet authorities, would have authority in the eyes of foreign scientific organisations as well as politicians in Palestine. Under its President Feodor Uspenskii, the board was completed by Boris Farmakovskii and Nikolai Marr, with secretaries Akimov and Jushmanov.³⁷ In June 1922, Beneshevich was delegated to Moscow to meet senior officials in the ministries of foreign affairs and education, as well as at the Academy of Sciences,

³⁴Ibid., d. 45

³⁵Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, op. 1, d. 180.

³⁶About five hundred volumes of the library of the Palestine Society are preserved in the library of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, other part in the Museum of the History of Religion. The collection of coins was brought to the Hermitage. The fate of the rest of the museum is unknown.

³⁷Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, op. 1, d. 179.

to plead for the defence of the society. He was well received, and some promises of support were given; in practice, however, this did not change anything. On 20 June, 1923, the Society was officially closed by a rescript of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs. The reason was probably the note of the Narkom (Minister) of Foreign Affairs Georgii Chicherin to the British Foreign Office from 18 May, 1923, declaring that all properties in Palestine belonged to the Soviet State. In Autumn of 1925, the Society was restored, but still did not receive any definite official status.

The Question of the Properties: Contacts with Palestine

Its isolation from Palestine and a lack of information about what was happening there was a matter for discussion at almost all sessions of the Society. Regular contact with the members and employees who remained in Palestine were cut in the Autumn of 1914. The administration of the Russian properties was left to the doctor of the Russian hospital, V. Severin, and after his departure from Jerusalem in 1915, to Corniliu Petropoulo (an Ottoman subject, former accountant of the dependencies) and Nikolai Seleznev. It was known that before leaving Jerusalem, Severin made an inventory and converted some of the money into gold currency, but after this the Society did not have any information about the state of affairs. It was also known that in November 1918, the Russian consul in Alexandria, Petrov, obtained a sum of about 10.000 rubles (belonging to the Society) to support Russians who remained in Turkey. Since then the Society had no information about this money. In 1922, a letter from Nikolai Seleznev (dated March 8) was received from Jerusalem, asking for instructions. The outline of an answer was prepared by May 1922, but after the state's attempt to liquidate the Society at the end of May, the letter was postponed and a new redaction of the text was made by August of 1922.

In the nearest future, (*crossed out*: after securing a certain and stable position in the Soviet Republic) the Society intends to delegate a member (*crossed out*: commission) for acquaintance with the state of the Russian estates in the East and for establishing contacts with those persons who could have information about the Russian properties in Jerusalem and Palestine between 1914 and 1922 (*crossed out*: from this commission you will receive direct instructions concerning your further activities for defending the Russian interests in Palestine).

For the moment, the Society will be very grateful to you if you find an opportunity to write in details about everything which is connected with its interests in the East (*crossed out*: equally present a report on the state of finances and administration from 1919 to 1922).

On behalf of the President,
Secretary of the Palestine Society,
Afanasii Akimov.³⁸

³⁸Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, op. 1, d. 165.

As no delegate from the Society arrived in Jerusalem, Seleznev was not called upon to present any report on his work. Three years later (in 1925) in a letter to Dmitrievskii, Seleznev gave some more information:

I returned to my service in 1919, and since then I stay in Jerusalem, defending myself from “friends” who are stretching their arms from all sides towards the properties of the Society. All buildings are safe, repaired from the outside and partly from the inside. The movables have been plundered, their remains have been gathered and preserved. The order in the Society is restored, we are paying taxes and helping the poor. We are living from the rent of the properties (...) The libraries in Jerusalem and Beit Jala are saved, in Nazareth it has been plundered. The book storage in Jerusalem is safe, but very poor in terms of the editions of the society.³⁹

At the end of his letter, Seleznev informed Dmitrievskii about sending 70 dollars, for him and for Professor Ivan Sokolov. Nikolai Seleznev, who regarded himself representative of the Palestine Society and at the same time tended to keep close to the Russian Church Abroad, as seen, was rather critical about the claims of the “friends” (the Mandate authorities and the Russian ecclesiastical mission) to handle the Russian properties.

In his answer, dated 16th May, 1925, Dmitrievskii gave information about the editions of the Society, which had survived after the confiscation of the properties of the Society in Petrograd in May 1922. Most of the scientific library was saved, though part of it, as well as the popular brochures, were destroyed. In the same letter, Dmitrievskii expressed little hope about the restoration of the Society in Russia: the initiative belonged to people who had nothing in common with the old members.⁴⁰ This letter was returned: Seleznev had died that year.

The political situation in Palestine was one of the first worries of the Society’s members. This is why, despite the extreme difficulties of the year 1922, on the 15th May, Uspenskii, instead of a traditional scientific paper, delivered a report on the current state of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The financial crisis and the permanent discord between the Greek and Arab parties forced the British authorities to appoint a special commission on the affairs of the Patriarchate. Selling part of the Patriarchate’s estates was seen as the only way out of the financial crisis. In religious affairs, the commission was inclined to support Hellenism against either Catholicism or Moscow Orthodoxy, Uspenskii concluded.⁴¹ Indeed, after the cutting of incomes from Russia after the revolution of 1917, by the start of the British Mandate the Patriarchate of Jerusalem had gone bankrupt. The two possible ways to receive a loan (either from the Greek government, or from Britain) were rejected for political and

³⁹RNB, f. 253, d. 612.

⁴⁰RNB, f. 253, d. 317.

⁴¹Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, op. 1, d. 45.

economic reasons. The only way out remained, that of selling of the church real estates to the Zionist state. This was strongly opposed by the Arab party, and could not be favoured by the Mandate authorities who avoided any reasons to create instability in the country. In this deadlock a commission under Sir Anton Bertram and Harry Charles Luke started its work in September 1921. As Konstantinos Papastathis wrote, “it was a ‘give and take’ agreement through which Damianos consolidated his authority within the church”, allowing the commission to handle all the affairs of the Patriarchate.⁴² The further course of events led to the enhancing of a list of demands to the British authorities by the Congress of the lay community in Haifa (1923) and the establishing of a new commission, of Bertram-Young in March 1925, which was expected to elaborate regulations towards the “Arabisation” of the Patriarchate.⁴³

A project of an expedition to Palestine was discussed at many sessions of the Palestine Society. Alongside scientific research, the expedition would observe *in situ* the state of the Society’s properties (Session of March 10, 1926). At the session on 14 April, 1926, three society members were appointed for this expedition: Vladimir Beneshevich, Pavel Riazhskii and Leonid Korobov.⁴⁴ Riazhskii, who at that moment was in Riazan province, agreed with enthusiasm, though he expressed some doubts whether they would receive British and French visas and be allowed to visit all the places where Russian properties were situated. He himself would have liked to find his personal objects (books, documents, etc.) which he had left in Palestine in 1914. A budget for this expedition (4000 dollars, for a period of at least two months) was made, and a detailed application sent to the authorities.⁴⁵ Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that it was refused. Beneshevich’s visit to Moscow in June 1926 also brought no serious results. He could not meet with the head of the Central Political Administration Evgenii Tuchkov and received nothing but some more uncertain promises about financing from the Academic centre. Trying to attract the attention of the Soviet government to the Russian properties in Palestine, the Society made a detailed list of them, including 26 areas of estates (154,972 square m and 11 dunums) as well as property in Bari in Italy.⁴⁶

Still regarding itself as responsible for the estates in Palestine, in 1925 the board of the Society authorised a lawyer at the Ministry of Foreign

⁴² Papastathis, “Finances in the Colonial Age,” 715.

⁴³ See: K. Papastathis and R. Kark, “Colonialism and Religious Power Politics: the Question of New Regulations within the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem during the British Mandate,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 4 (2014): 589–605.

⁴⁴ Arkhiv vostokovedov, f. 120, op. 1, d. 43. The third personality seems a bit strange: he was the only Communist Party member in the society, without carrying out any research. Probably he was included in the list in the hope that his presence would make the expedition easier for the authorities to approve.

⁴⁵ Ibid., d. 44.

⁴⁶ Ibid., d. 174.

Affairs (Semen Chlenov) to intercede on behalf of the Russian properties in Palestine. The procuration was officially prolonged in 1928.⁴⁷ This misunderstanding, so to say, continued for some years: the board of the Society did not stop sending letters and petitions to the government, explaining the importance of the properties for Russia, and no reaction from the government followed. The uncertain status of the Society's properties in Palestine lasted for several more decades, while in Italy it was resolved in the 1930s. After a long trial, in 1933 the Soviet government decided to relinquish its ownership of the plot in Bari. As the Italian authorities still recognised the Palestine Society as a legal owner, two official papers were drafted indicating that the Society was granting its rights to the Soviet commissioner in Italy.⁴⁸ On the 31st October 1933, the society drafted a procuration to the French agent in Hebron, Raoul Ginzbourg, to observe any estates and properties in that region. It is not clear why it was needed at that moment; probably it was made at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, trying to negotiate with the British authorities.

Research Work of the Palestine Society, 1919–1930

The most fruitful aspect of the Society's work in the 1920s was its scientific research. At every session (they were regularly held once every month or two) a serious paper was presented. More than 20 titles of these are preserved in the papers of the society, among them: "El — the name of the God of Sun" (V. Shileiko, 1922); "Israel in Egypt according to Hebrew sources" (S. Lourie, 1923); "The culture of the Philistines according to the latest excavations" (A. Zakharov, 1926); "The latest excavations in Mesopotamia and Palestine" (N. D. Flittner, 1928).

Constantly suffering from a lack of finance, the Society could hardly continue its editorial activities. For 10 years, only one volume of the Journal (No. 29) was published; No. 30 was fully prepared, but never edited. At the session of 22 April, 1929, the question of the liquidation of the Society was put forward for discussion; it was postponed for some months thanks to a grant of 1000 rubles given by the Academic centre.

At one of the last meetings, on 1st July, 1929, a resume of the decade was made.⁴⁹ For 15 years the Society had been cut off from its object of research, and was forced to use only written or secondary sources. It therefore lost its place among the leading institutions in exploration of Palestine, which it had maintained for 40 years. The lack of money and isolation did not allow the society to buy books from abroad; the exchange with foreign academic institutions was also profoundly difficult after the establishment of the Soviet state. The old members of the society were gone: in 1929 Feodor Uspenskii

⁴⁷Ibid., d. 42.

⁴⁸Ibid., d. 42

⁴⁹Ibid., 42.

and Ivan Gavrilovich Troitskii died, in 1928 Beneshevich was arrested. Given the difficulties listed, attracting younger researchers to Palestine studies was hardly possible.

At the close of this period we have two more documents. The first is a brief note on the history of the Society composed in 1927 by a young member, Prozorov, and a project of research in Arabic sources written by Julian Krachkovskii and dated 3 December, 1930. After a sad preface about the inaccessibility of Palestine for Soviet scholars, Krachkovskii called upon his colleagues to concentrate on written texts, first of all to continue Mednikov's *Palestine from its conquest by the Arabs till the Crusaders*, which needed a serious update using newly discovered and published sources. The second task he envisaged was the preparation of a database of the Arab language and folklore. Finally, the third task was exploring modern Arabic culture and social life. Here Krachkovskii hoped to cooperate with those Arabs among the Society's members who lived in the territory of the Soviet Union: Vasilieva in Leningrad, Kezma in Kiev and Zhuze in Baku.⁵⁰ Against this sombre background of complete decline, suddenly the visit of a foreign fellow took place: on 4th July, 1930, Robert Blake, a professor from the United States and a former student of Marr at Petrograd University, made a report about his expeditions to Jerusalem in 1923 and Sinai in 1927 and 1930. The last scientific session of the Society was held on 18 January, 1931, with a paper by Klavdia Ode-Vasilieva on the events of 1929 in Palestine.⁵¹

The Palestine Society was restored in 1952 on the initiative of the Orientalists Nina Pigulevskaia and Karen Juzbashian as part of the Leningrad Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences; it edited a scientific journal, and organised sessions where papers were read. After 1990, it was revived in Moscow, shifting its activities to archival research on nineteenth century papers.

CONCLUSION

From the mid-1840s Russia established organisations in Palestine: the ecclesiastical mission, the Palestine Committee, the consulate and the Palestine Society. All of them were aimed at strengthening Russian political and cultural influence in the Holy Land. Supporting the local Arab population, transferring donations to the Greek Patriarchate, organising schools and pilgrimage—these were the elements of a complicated system of political “soft power” of Russian imperialism, as well as cultural and religious diplomacy. The Revolution in Russia put an end to these activities, and the few remaining Russian institutions in Palestine lost their political significance.

⁵⁰Ibid., 172.

⁵¹Ibid., 42.

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Continuities and Discontinuities in the Austrian Catholic Orient Mission to Palestine, 1915–1938

Barbara Haider-Wilson

Austrian relations to Palestine have a long historical tradition.¹ “Even though our Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was shattered by the Great War, our glorious history could not be taken from us. Great and holy memories link us to the Holy Land, too”.² However, the parameters within which they shifted during those decades between the end of the Habsburg Monarchy and the years of a visible Near East policy under the Socialist Chancellor Bruno Kreisky in the 1970s have seldom been the subject of historical analysis and consideration.³ The concept of Austria had changed fundamentally: from the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, which ranked as one of the European

¹The author wishes to thank Stephan Kurz, Walter Lukaseder, Robert Rill, Jonathan Singerton, Edward Wilson, and Helmut Wohnout for their support.

²*Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* 3 (April–June 1934), 10.

³This is due not least to the traditional ‘internal’ orientation of Austrian contemporary historiography. For a summary of relations in the inter-war years, see Robert Rill, “Österreich und das Heilige Land in der Ersten Republik,” in *Mit Szepter und Pilgerstab. Österreichische Präsenz im Heiligen Land seit den Tagen Kaiser Franz Josephs*, ed. Bernhard A. Böhler (Vienna: Katalogbuch, 2000); Rolf Steininger, ed., *Berichte aus Jerusalem II: 1927–1938*, eds. Rolf Steininger and Rudolf Agstner (Munich: Olzog Verlag, 2004). These volumes contain interesting photographs.

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Great Powers, to a small nation at the heart of Europe, whose inhabitants only learned to accept this state without reservations after 1945. In view of the unclarified relationship with Germany,⁴ the initially hesitant establishment of a new Austrian consciousness after 1918 primarily occurred by emphasising landscape, history and culture from the outset.⁵ To this extent, a certain way of thinking in large spaces remained, although the young republic still had to find its place on the international stage. The fact that Austria's foreign situation and policy between 1918 and 1938 were largely determined by others affected this process for a long time.⁶

The Austrian First Republic did not have any colonial and imperialist past in the classic sense and certainly not a colonial present. As regards Palestine, Consul General Walter Haas spoke repeatedly during his tenure in Jerusalem (1927–1933) of the “triviality of Austrian political interests”⁷. From 1920 to 1938 a member of the League of Nations, Austria was far removed from the powerful political influence of a mandate state, but not uninterested in maintaining old spheres of influence in the Middle East.⁸ Therefore, it stood aside from the “two sides of the Janus-faced mandate state – on the one hand, the language of tutelage and accommodation; on the other, that of stark violence”.⁹ The Republic of Austria, whose politicians immediately focused on economic issues because of the prevailing hardship, was in Palestine rather the inheritor of the Orient mission of the Catholic Habsburg Monarchy. This mission branch embraced an abiding mentality, expressed in an observation by the Viennese General Commissioner for the Holy Land Father Pirmin Hasenöhrl in 1933: work for the Holy Land was “not simply a matter of

⁴Until the Treaty of Saint Germain, the republic initially called itself ‘German Austria’ (*Deutschösterreich*). The Geneva Protocols (1922) and the Treaty of Lausanne (1932), which both provided indispensable aid from the League of Nations, prohibited the unification of Austria and Germany.

⁵See Ernst Bruckmüller, “Kleinstaat Österreich – Ablehnung und (langsame) Akzeptanz,” in *Österreich. 90 Jahre Republik. Beitragsband der Ausstellung im Parlament*, eds. Stefan Karner and Lorenz Mikoletzky (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2008), 607, 605.

⁶See Arnold Suppan, “Österreich und seine Nachbarn 1918–1938,” *ibid.*, 499.

⁷No. 34, 26 June 1929: Walter Haas (Jerusalem) to Ernst Streeruwitz (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 218–221, here 220; also No. 31, 6 March 1929: Walter Haas (Jerusalem) to Ignaz Seipel (Vienna), *ibid.*, 211–214, here 213.

⁸This awareness permeates the first book, written by a diplomat, providing insight into the history of relations between Austria and the Levantine area: ‘Institutions, foundations, and gifts of the most varying kinds, then the masses of pilgrims from Austria, then high and supreme visitors, all of this gave Austria a strong moral position in the Holy Land. Not suspect of any imperialist or colonialist intentions, our weight increased as the Christian power maintaining the best relations to Turks and Arabs and that has also done a lot of good for the Jews.’ Arthur Breycha-Vauthier, *Österreich in der Levante. Geschichte und Geschichten einer alten Freundschaft* (Vienna and Munich: Verlag Herold, 1972), 59.

⁹Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan, “Introduction,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, eds. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015), 1–23, here 5.

material things, but rather of the holiest assets of our holy faith and the most precious legacies of the early Church".¹⁰

For however dramatic the political and social changes—from the disintegration of Austria-Hungary there emerged Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, Romania, the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (Yugoslavia after 1929), and Poland—they had not been able to change the Catholic nature of the Austrian Alpine lands. Despite the secular trend observable during the interwar years, according to the first Austrian-wide religious statistics, which were compiled as part of the 1934 census, the share of Catholics in the Republic of Austria came to just over 90%. So, Austria was in line with countries such as France and Italy, as was stressed at the time.¹¹ The old alliance between the throne and the altar had come to an end with Habsburg rule. In the context of the political Catholicism of the interwar years, the traditional symbiosis of church and state had shifted to the strong Christian Social Party, founded in 1891/1893 and dissolved in the autumn of 1934. A governing party even at the time of the monarchy, it understood itself to be “the worldly arm of the Catholic Church, whose social hegemony used to be protected by the ruling dynasty”.¹²

ACTORS, STRUCTURES, AND GOALS IN THE LATE HABSBURG MONARCHY

The fact that the multi-confessional Habsburg Monarchy was perceived internally and externally as a Catholic Great Power had major repercussions for its international position.¹³ Due to its direct proximity, the Habsburg Monarchy had always had a multi-faceted relationship with the Ottoman Empire. This included the conclusion of capitulation treaties, in which the Austrian religious protectorate in the region was laid down in international law. In the first half of the nineteenth century, under State Chancellor Metternich,

¹⁰P. Pirmin Hasenöhrl, O. F. M., “Ein Blick in das General-Kommissariat des Heiligen Landes in Wien,” *300 Jahre Generalkommissariat des Heiligen Landes in Wien. Jubiläumsnummer der Österreichischen Pilgerbriefe* (April–June 1933), 60–71, here 66.

¹¹See Andreas Weigl, “Katholische Bastionen. Die konfessionellen Verhältnisse vom Vorabend des Ersten Weltkriegs bis in die frühen 1920er-Jahre,” in *... der Rest ist Österreich. Das Werden der Ersten Republik*, eds. Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Maderthaner, vol. 1 (Vienna: Carl Gerold’s Sohn Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2008), 381. Regarding Italy and France, see the contributions of Roberto Mazza and Dominique Trimbur in this volume.

¹²Helmut Wohlnout, “Bürgerliche Regierungspartei und weltlicher Arm der katholischen Kirche. Die Christlichsozialen in Österreich 1918–1934,” in *Christdemokratie in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Michael Gehler, Wolfram Kaiser, and Helmut Wohlnout (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2001), 186.

¹³“How a state sees itself affects the ways in which it relates to other states [...] and how it comes to understand its interests and objectives.” Andrew J. Rotter, “Culture,” in *Palgrave Advances in International History*, ed. Patrick Finney (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 269.

Austria took part in the “rediscovery” of the Holy Land, positioning itself behind France as the second Catholic power in the intensifying European competition for influence.¹⁴

The Austrian Orient mission in Palestine was always headed by differing protagonists and did not produce any central mission society. It depended on enclaves of institutional and personnel embeddedness on the spot, on the one hand, and on the mobilisation of the population of the Habsburg Monarchy, on the other. Both components were already present in the sphere of activity of the oldest link to the Holy Land: the Vienna General Commissioner’s Office for the Holy Land, still located in the Franciscan Monastery in Vienna. It was founded in 1633 as a liaison to the Franciscan Custody and re-established in 1843 under the protectorate of the archbishop of Vienna. The responsibilities of the general commissioner were manifold, ranging from forwarding alms and recruiting missionaries from the Order of Saint Francis, maintaining interests in the mission of the Holy Land and the holy sites, to organising pilgrimages.¹⁵

Besides this office, a few institutions existed in the Holy Land from the nineteenth century onwards. The most prominent was the Austrian hospice, opened in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1863. It has visibly represented Austria up to this day. The prestige object of a “national homestead in the Holy Land”¹⁶ under the aegis of the archbishop of Vienna was run by secular priests. Only one other institution, the Maltese infirmary in Tantur near Bethlehem, was under Austro-Hungarian protection. Tantur was the life-long project of Consul Bernhard Count Caboga-Cerva, to which the Bohemian grand priory of the Order of the Knights of Malta made substantial financial contributions. Nevertheless, the administration of the house, opened in 1876/1877, was taken over by the Order of St John of God in 1879. After 1882/1884, monks of the Order also worked in Nazareth, and the destinies of both institutions remained closely linked until 1920. Despite many efforts, the hospital in Nazareth and the mission station in Gaza—founded in 1879 by the Tyrolean secular priest Georg Gatt and in the wake of the Great War surrendered to the Latin Patriarchate—were never placed under Imperial and Royal protection.

All the Austrian institutions in Palestine were given support by the consulate in Jerusalem, which was established as a vice-consulate in 1849 and elevated to the status of a consulate in 1852. The vast majority of persons receiving protection from the I. (&) R. consulate were Jews. During the First World War, when Vienna was focusing on regaining influence on Jewish institutions in Jerusalem, Consul Friedrich Kraus rendered outstanding services to the distressed Jewish population. At the same time, Austro-Hungarian troops

¹⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, see Barbara Haider-Wilson, *Österreichs friedlicher Kreuzzug 1839–1917* (in preparation).

¹⁵ See Hasenöhrl, O. F. M., “Ein Blick in das General-Kommissariat,” 64–65.

¹⁶ *Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* 4 (April–September 1935), 21.

also displayed compassion. When a cholera epidemic broke out in the area of Bir as-Saba' (Be'er Sheva) in the autumn of 1916, with additional isolated cases of typhoid, the I. & R. reserve hospital in Jerusalem immediately dispatched a medical detachment to the endangered region. Aid for the civilian population was regarded as a major assignment, particularly in the form of vaccinations. In Bethlehem, excess bread baked by Austro-Hungarian military cooks was distributed to the poor in the town. Aged residents mentioned this episode even in the final decade of the twentieth century: "When the Austrians were here, we always had bread!"¹⁷

The history of relations between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Holy Land was characterised by the commitment of state protagonists (foreign ministers, diplomats, consuls) and non-state actors. The establishment of spheres of influence in the Holy Land was closely linked to issues of prestige as a Catholic Great Power. Regardless of political vicissitudes, it was supported by the Catholic population. The different options to express support for what was called the "peaceful crusade" included going on pilgrimages, later undertaken also in larger groups. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Heinrich Himmel von Agisburg developed in Tyrol the concept of so-called people's pilgrimages, whose tight organisation and low price enabled groups of 500 pilgrims to visit the Holy Land. These journeys were national demonstrations, making a great impression on the local population.¹⁸

Due to its protagonists, the Austrian share of mission work in the Holy Land largely consisted of contributions to infrastructural projects assigned to the so-called medical mission. They provided healthcare for members of all confessions, reaching all segments of the population. This was the agenda of the Order of St John of God.¹⁹ Thus positioned, it was evidently relatively easy to build up a relationship of trust with the (rural) populace. With the exception of the one-man activities by Georg Gatt in Gaza, participating in the school system in Palestine was not up for discussion. However, long before Gatt the Austrian Orient mission was already making a contribution towards the "education" of the populace, as the first institution in Jerusalem funded by Austrian money was a printing house in the Franciscan monastery of St Salvator. In a cooperation between the Austrian Franciscan missionary Father Sebastian Frötschner and the general commissioner at the time, it had been set up in 1846²⁰ as a response to the active Protestant mission.

¹⁷ Peter Jung, "Die Präsenz Österreich-Ungarns „Bewaffneter Macht“ im Heiligen Land bis 1918," in *Mit Szepter und Pilgerstab. Österreichische Präsenz im Heiligen Land seit den Tagen Kaiser Franz Josephs*, ed. Bernhard A. Böhler (Vienna: Katalogbuch, 2000), 325.

¹⁸ The sources repeatedly show the assessment that the "Orientals" attached special significance to external appearances. Therefore, in the eyes of the Europeans, they were easily impressionable.

¹⁹ See Friedrich Läufer, ed., *Die Barmherzigen Brüder. Ein Buch über Entstehen, Werden und Wirken des Ordens der Barmherzigen Brüder. Allen Menschenfreunden dargeboten* (Vienna: Selbstverlag des Provinzialates der Barmherzigen Brüder, 1931), 4.

²⁰ According to the Austrian Franciscan sources. In contrast, see the chapter of Maria Chiara Rioli and Riccardo Castagnetti in this volume.

Equipped with Arabic and Latin letters, it was meant to print mainly Arabic schoolbooks and other religious works with Catholic content. After years of conflicts concerning competences, the printing house, which did not fit in with the pattern of national institutions, was finally taken over by the Custody in 1876.

It was only in the early twentieth century that the economic interests of the Habsburg Monarchy came to the fore in relations with Palestine. Then, discussions concerning the religious protectorate were revived in Vienna, fuelled by the First World War, above all the expulsion of missionaries hailing from the Entente Powers and the brotherhood of arms with the German and Ottoman Empires. The mission was dear to the heart of the Prince Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Friedrich (Gustav) Piffl. In November 1915, he convened a mission conference, representing the climax of the joint proceeding of church and state, of mission and foreign policy. The theologian and founder of Catholic Mission Science in Münster, Joseph Schmidlin, was one of the German participants in the conference. He was the driver behind the accelerated mission efforts prior to and during the First World War. The meeting in the Archiepiscopal Palace in Vienna signalled the launch of the so-called Orient Action. Partly also due to the desired joint approach with Germany, it soon faced failure, as a special competition had developed between the allied Habsburg Monarchy and German Empire during the course of the war.²¹ During the years of the war, even Austro-Hungarian diplomats emphasised the, in their view, more tactful Austrian behaviour towards the local population.

In 1917, the Austro-Hungarian War Office also participated in plans for the Orient and Catholic aspirations with the so-called Orient Mission. The group dispatched to the Near East at the time, which was in Jerusalem in October, was headed by a young Habsburg archduke and the Orientalist and prelate Alois Musil. Musil, another participant in Piffl's mission conference in 1915, was Austria's "bond to the Arab world".²² A professor at the Theological Faculty of Vienna University since 1909, but employed in Prague after the war, he had studied Oriental languages in Jerusalem in 1895, later acquiring a reputation as an Arabian specialist with several expeditions and diverse publications under his belt. As a close confidant of the imperial family,

²¹A look through the *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, founded by Schmidlin in 1911, proves the partition of the Austrian and the German Orient missions after 1918. The years before illustrate the transnational Austro-German proceeding in the Catholic Orient mission. See *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 8 (1918)–27 (1937).

²²Breycha-Vauthier, *Österreich in der Levante*, 44. 1918 saw the publication of the relatively unknown treatise by Alois Musil, *Zur Zeitgeschichte von Arabien* (Leipzig and Vienna: Verlag S. Hirzel—Manz-Verlag, 1918), in which Musil analysed: "By years of targeted activity, Syria and Palestine have been transformed into volcanic areas for politics. In no other Ottoman province has there been as much British and French political propaganda as in Syria and Palestine, although both countries are completely immature for autonomous political activity." Ibid., 92.

he influenced Austro-Hungarian Oriental policy, sometimes becoming the adversary of T. E. Lawrence.

Strikingly few documents are available about the “Orient Mission” of 1917, but those extant reveal the significance attached to cultivating the image of the Habsburg Monarchy in the region. While visiting, inspecting and motivating Austro-Hungarian troops and charitable institutions were the ostensible tasks, the Viennese Catholic propaganda behind the operation was to be concealed. In the course of the journey, more than 200 awards were bestowed on soldiers and civilians. In the Holy Land, not only the Austro-Hungarian pool of missionaries was taken into account, but also the local population, above all meritorious employees of the I. & R. consular offices. In this operation, initiated shortly before the demise of the Habsburg Monarchy, an early form of “cultural diplomacy” can be identified. Conceived, planned and executed by state and dynastic agencies under the influence of Musil, it was quite deliberately aimed at the population on the spot.

FROM TURMOIL TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE REPUBLIC—A NEW BEGINNING IN PALESTINE?

From 1849 to 1917, the Habsburg Monarchy was represented with its own (vice-)consulate in Jerusalem, and there were other offices in Acri-Caiffa (Akko-Haifa) and Jaffa. The closure of the consulate in Jerusalem was followed by a provisional period of ten years. Business was initially conducted by the Spanish consul, and in 1922 the physician Oscar Stross in Alexandria was appointed Austrian honorary consul for Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. However, in 1927 a professional consulate was again set up in Jerusalem, after the Austrian ambassador in London had already sent a corresponding inquiry to the Foreign Office in London on 17 December 1924.²³ So, Austria was again present in the international game of politics and religion taking place on the territory of Jerusalem. The Christian Social Chancellor Prelate Ignaz Seipel could interpret Austria’s changed position positively in that he saw in two points a special significance for missions operated by small and poor states or states without any colonies: their missionaries enjoyed more confidence among the local people, and in the event of an outbreak of war between the Great Powers, they would not have to leave.²⁴ Seipel placed a clear accent on foreign policy and was elected in 1928 as one of the vice-presidents of the League of Nations. His participation in the pilgrimage by Austrian graduates was planned for 1928, but it was only in the year of his death (1932) that

²³See Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 19–20; Rudolf Agstner, “Österreichs Konsulate im Heiligen Land,” in *Mit Szepter und Pilgerstab. Österreichische Präsenz im Heiligen Land seit den Tagen Kaiser Franz Josephs*, ed. Bernhard A. Böhler (Vienna: Katalogbuch, 2000).

²⁴See [Ignaz] Seipel, “Mission und Weltpolitik,” *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 20 (1930): 44–46, here 45–46.

Seipel really arrived in the Holy Land—albeit privately and only for one day.²⁵ Public excitement about this matter underlines once more that pilgrimages by high-ranking personalities always had a political and propagandistic dimension, causing an international stir.

After November 1918, the disbanding of I. & R. diplomacy took two years. Of the 433 civil servants of the I. & R. Ministry of External Affairs, about half were retired, 105 were accepted into the Foreign Service of the Republic of (German) Austria and another quarter by other successor states. The reduction in representation abroad illustrates the scale of the change: of 29 embassies and missions and 112 consulates in 1914, only 14 embassies, five consulates general, six consulates, two passport offices and one authorised representation remained in 1924. In the following years, six more embassies and the consulate in Jerusalem were set up.²⁶ The application to re-establish a professional consulate in Jerusalem with the agreement of the British government was made in the council of ministers on 3 March 1927 “for political and economic reasons”.²⁷ By contrast, the instructions for the first Imperial Royal vice-consul stated that the establishment of a vice-consulate in Jerusalem “lacked a commercial reasoning, but seemed all the more advisable for political and religious considerations”.²⁸

Despite the sizeable Austrian Jewish community, in the self-understanding of the Habsburg Monarchy it would have been impossible to appoint a Jew as the Austrian representative in Jerusalem. Not least because of the position taken by the Vatican, continuity prevailed into the interwar years.

²⁵ See Rill, “Österreich und das Heilige Land,” 347; No. 929: Gesandter Egger to Bundeskanzler Seipel, Rome, 18 June 1928, No. 932: Generalsekretär Peter to Gesandten Egger (Rome), Vienna, 23 June 1928, in *Außenpolitische Dokumente der Republik Österreich 1918–1938 (ADÖ)*, vol. 6: *Jahre der Souveränität 16. Juni 1926 bis 11. Februar 1930*, eds. Klaus Koch, Walter Rauscher, and Arnold Suppan (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik – R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004), 334–336, here 334–335, 338–339, here 339; No. 25, 30 August 1928: Walter Haas (Jerusalem) to Ignaz Seipel (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 198–199. The pilgrimage of Austrian graduates in 1928 comprised 183 persons. Whilst 69 priests embarked on the journey to the Holy Land, Seipel was kept away by an intervention by the Pope. See *Mit Akademikern ins Heilige Land. Die erste Pilgerfahrt österreichischer Akademiker ins Heilige Land* (Vienna: Verlag Akademische Rompilgerschaft, 1928), 5, 12, 11.

²⁶ See Walter Rauscher, “Struktur und Organisation des österreichischen Auswärtigen Dienstes 1918 bis 1938,” in *Außenpolitische Dokumente der Republik Österreich 1918–1938 (ADÖ)*, vol. 1: *Selbstbestimmung der Republik 21. Oktober 1918 bis 14. März 1919*, eds. Klaus Koch, Walter Rauscher, and Arnold Suppan (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik – R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1993), 17, 26–27.

²⁷ See No. 483 (3 March 1927), in *Protokolle des Ministerrates der Ersten Republik, Abteilung V, 20. Oktober 1926 bis 4. Mai 1929, vol. 1: Kabinett Dr. Ignaz Seipel, 21. Oktober 1926 bis 29. Juli 1927*, ed. Eszter Dorner-Brader (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1983), 276–298, here 280.

²⁸ No. 5: Stürmer to Pizzamano (Constantinopel, 9 January 1849), in *Österreich und das Heilige Land. Ausgewählte Konsulatsdokumente aus Jerusalem 1849–1917*, ed. Mordechai Eliav in collaboration with Barbara Haider (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 107–110, here 107.

The Austrian ambassador to the Holy See from 1920 to 1928, Ludwig von Pastor, only faced great indignation once, when in 1922 rumours emerged about the possible appointment of a Jew as Austrian consul in Jerusalem. State Secretary Pietro Gasparri made it unmistakably clear that a Catholic state might never take a step contributing towards strengthening the Zionist movement.²⁹

The first consul was finally Walter Haas, who could draw on experiences from his years at the I. & R. consulate general in Beirut (1911–1914).³⁰ In Jerusalem, he encountered an influential member of the Catholic Church, who hailed from Upper Austria. Franz Fellinger³¹ not only acted as the rector of the Austrian hospice again after 1913 but also as an experienced mission priest of the Latin Patriarchate. He repeatedly headed the Catholic Church in Jerusalem, which was given a new patriarch in 1920 with Luigi Barlassina. The first time was during Allenby's entrance in 1917 as the pro-vicar general and then as suffragan bishop after 1929. From the outset, the relationship between Haas and Fellinger was not devoid of friction, but the consul did not hesitate to see Fellinger's selection as suffragan bishop as "undoubtedly a prestige win for which not only the main interested parties, i.e. Great Britain, France, and Spain, envy us, but also the 'new Catholic' powers Poland and Czechoslovakia".³²

Haas' work was always concerned with the few Austrian cultural institutions in the Holy Land: the hospice in Jerusalem and the branch of the Order of St John of God in Nazareth, but also with the latter's hospital in Tantur, which had in the meantime been lost. At the same time, the question arose as to the legacy of the Catholic Habsburg Monarchy in the Holy Land. The Czechoslovak consul in particular exploited the straitened material situation of the two existing institutions to proceed pro-actively.³³ Regarding

²⁹See Andreas Gottsmann, "Ludwig von Pastor und Enrico Sibilia – Diplomatie im Dienste des katholischen Österreich," in *Italien und Österreich im Mitteleuropa der Zwischenkriegszeit / Italia e Austria nella Mitteleuropa tra le due guerre mondiali*, eds. Maddalena Guiotto and Helmut Wohnout (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2018), 282.

³⁰For the years 1927 to 1933, see Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 19–29. For the biography of Haas, see Rudolf Agstner, Gertrude Enderle-Burcel and Michaela Follner, *Österreichs Spitzendiplomaten zwischen Kaiser und Kreisky. Biographisches Handbuch der Diplomaten des Höheren Auswärtigen Dienstes 1918 bis 1959* (Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes, Österreichische Gesellschaft für historische Quellenstudien, 2009), 218–219.

³¹See Helmut Wohnout, "Franz Fellinger – ein österreichischer Kirchenmann im Jerusalem des Ersten Weltkrieges," in *Von der Kunst der Sprache. Aus dem Alltag eines Kirchenhistorikers. Festschrift für Rupert Klieber*, ed. Markus Holzweber (Vienna: danzig & unfried, 2019), 365–381.

³²No. 31, 6 March 1929: Walter Haas (Jerusalem) to Ignaz Seipel (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 211–214, here 213.

³³For the growing influence of Czechoslovakia, see also Rill, "Österreich und das Heilige Land," 342–344; Archiv der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz, Vienna, Bischofskonferenzen 1920–1930.

the hospice, Haas wrote to Chancellor Seipel in 1927 “that it would be profoundly regrettable if we had to lose this final remainder of political weight as a Catholic power in the Holy Land to the Czechs”. While the Czechs were vainly attempting to become popular, Austria “was still being judged according to the values of the past”.³⁴ According to the consul, the local discussions showed “how stubbornly people here still regard the new Austria as the champion of the traditions of the old empire, but also how much it enjoys in general sympathy precedence over other pretenders”.³⁵

Following the British conquest of Palestine, the fate of the Austrian hospice in Jerusalem was chequered, but mitigated by the preferential treatment given to Fellinger.³⁶ But in February 1918, the hospice was confiscated by the British administration and converted into an orphanage for up to 200 local children from the “Syria and Palestine Relief Fund”, which was subordinate to the Anglican bishop of Jerusalem. A personal visit to the military governor Ronald Storrs, during which Fellinger stressed the religious nature of the hostel, contributed to the return of the house on 29 August 1919. The interior of the building had largely been devastated by the Palestinian children, “to whom Western lifestyle and hygiene were largely alien”, as the rector wrote to Vienna, and the house was also bug-ridden. In public opinion, the transformation of a well-known Catholic institution into a Protestant orphanage had not created a good impression.

To gain revenue for the house, rector Fellinger used the building as a guest house for British civil servants and officers. When pilgrimages resumed in the course of the 1920s with more but smaller groups than in the final years of the monarchy, he successively reduced the number of permanent boarders. To maintain operations, numerous service staff was hired again in addition to the four German Borromean sisters. With the help of the patriarch, Fellinger managed to maintain the hospice as an Austrian institution, even against the claims made by different successor states to Austria-Hungary. The fact that the vice-rector was to continue to come from a diocese in one of the successor states in a two-year rotation system gave young theologians the opportunity to deepen their Bible studies in the Holy Land. At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, the hostel had more than 40 beds for visitors and ten for permanent boarders. In 1929, in the year when Fellinger was consecrated suffragan bishop to the surprise of the public, the rector’s plans concerning building reconstruction entered a concrete stage, but it was only in January 1931 that the mandate authorities gave permission to build a second

³⁴No. 14, 28 December 1927: Walter Haas (Jerusalem) to Ignaz Seipel (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 180–183, here 183.

³⁵No. 27, 31 October 1928: Walter Haas (Jerusalem) to Ignaz Seipel (Vienna), ibid., 202–203, here 203.

³⁶On the following, see Helmut Wohnout, *Das österreichische Hospiz in Jerusalem. Geschichte des Pilgerhauses an der Via Dolorosa* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2000), 123–134 (citation 125).

storey. Because of the precarious economic situation in Austria Fellinger had to travel home to raise the necessary funds, so that construction could commence in 1932.

By contrast, the years following the First World War had not been at all positive for the institution in Tantur. Like the hospice used for members of the armies of the Central Powers during the Great War, the Knights of Malta had to watch Tantur's slow decline—the Austrian Hospitallers of St John of God, beloved by the population, departed in 1920, replaced by Italians.³⁷ In 1931, the historiography of the order described the subsidiary in Tantur, a small hospital with a focus on an outpatient clinic and pharmacy, as abandoned. Tantur had “to be closed for different reasons, primarily economic ones”.³⁸ About the hospital in Nazareth, however, there is a report of a fine, one-storey building with 30 beds that for some years had been granting board to pilgrims from all countries, preferentially Austria. The statistics for 1930 show the admission of 38 sick persons (560 boarding days) and 583 people seeking rest and relaxation (1,562 boarding days); of the sick, 29 could be cured and the condition of eight more improved.³⁹

This institution had also been requisitioned during the war and even plundered. Orphaned until 1920, it was then taken over by the Austrian brethren from Tantur. Brother Norbert Hirczy, who served a total of 47 years in the Holy Land, has gone down in the annals of post-war history as the head of the hospital. The Arabs in Nazareth knew him by the name of Abuna Saliba.⁴⁰ When the hospital in Nazareth had to restrict its activities to the function of a hospice in the 1920s, this was originally due to the British mandate government. Nevertheless, the brethren remained active in the field of medicine within a modest framework, with a house in town used as a dispensary and outpatient clinic, where the history of the Brethren of St. John of God in Nazareth had once commenced.⁴¹

³⁷ See Thomas F. Stransky, “Das österreichische Hospital am Tantur,” in *Mit Szepter und Pilgerstab. Österreichische Präsenz im Heiligen Land seit den Tagen Kaiser Franz Josephs*, ed. Bernhard A. Böhler (Vienna: Katalogbuch, 2000), 277; also Thomas F. Stransky, “The Austrian Hospital at Tantur (1869–1918),” in *Austrian Presence in the Holy Land in the 19th and early 20th Century: Proceedings of the Symposium in the Austrian Hospice in Jerusalem on March 1–2, 1995*, ed. Marian Wrba (Tel Aviv: Austrian Embassy Tel Aviv, 1996), 114; No. 163, 24 March 1937: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Guido Schmidt (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 449–451.

³⁸ See *Die Barmherzigen Brüder* 167–168 (citation 167), 189.

³⁹ Ibid., 189–194.

⁴⁰ ‘Abuna’ means ‘our father’ and is a term by Arab Christians for a church dignitary; the name ‘Saliba’ derives from the Arabic word for ‘cross’. I thank Kamel Bader for this information.

⁴¹ See Norbert Schwake, “Das österreichische Hospital in Nazareth,” in *Mit Szepter und Pilgerstab. Österreichische Präsenz im Heiligen Land seit den Tagen Kaiser Franz Josephs*, ed. Bernhard A. Böhler (Vienna: Katalogbuch, 2000), 287; also Norbert Schwake [!] “The Austrian Hospital in Nazareth,” in *Austrian Presence in the Holy Land in the 19th and early 20th Century: Proceedings of the Symposium in the Austrian Hospice in Jerusalem on March 1–2, 1995*, ed. Marian Wrba (Tel Aviv: Austrian Embassy Tel Aviv, 1996), 89–90.

In Vienna, the General Commissioner's Office for the Holy Land survived the turmoil of the post-war years not least to the commitment of Father Melchior Lechner, who held the office of the general commissioner from 1902 to 1927. The Tyrolean witnessed the years of the great people's pilgrimages as well as the demise of the Habsburg Monarchy. This coincided with the most crucial reduction of his scope of activities. What had to be endured were periods of paper shortages and major losses of money and securities in times of inflation. The Southern Tyrolean Father Mauritius Bossi-Fedrigotti held the office from 1927 to 1931. This general commissioner advocated assigning more importance to the Good Friday collections in favour of the Guardians of the Holy Sepulchre and breathing new life into the "Army of the Holy Cross" which had been founded at the beginning of the 1890s.⁴²

Then, with Father Pirmin Hasenöhrl, previously an Apostolic missionary in Brazil, a member of the Franciscan province in Tyrol again became the General Commissioner for the Holy Land in Vienna.⁴³ As the personification of personnel continuities, he worked for the Orient mission with great commitment in both the First and Second Republics. Standing in the tradition of his predecessors, this man with mission practice published the first edition of *Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* in 1932. He entertained great sympathy for the Habsburg family as significant benefactors of the Holy Land. In 1932/1933, within one and a half years he held 65 slide lectures and about 20 sermons on the Holy Land.⁴⁴ As a result of the strict currency regulations, by 1932 it had become difficult to send money to the Holy Land, and for this reason precedence was given to dispatching goods, including shoes for fathers, brethren, and orphans to St Salvator in Jerusalem, but also oak wood for oil and wine barrels. The two following years, 1933 and 1934, were to be more than eventful.

AUTHORITARIAN AUSTRIA AND PALESTINE

In the spring of 1933, the so-called self-elimination by the Austrian parliament was exploited by Engelbert Dollfuß' government for a veritable coup d'état and a departure from the political system of democracy. Austria's bishops were convinced of the legitimacy of the action and were initially full of exuberant praise and enthusiasm for the new authoritarian government.⁴⁵

⁴²See P. Rigobert Wasner O. F. M., "Geschichte des General-Kommissariates von Wien," 300 Jahre Generalkommissariat des Heiligen Landes in Wien. Jubiläumsnummer der Österreichischen Pilgerbriefe (April–June 1933), 4–24, here 21–24. The Good Friday collections had been reintroduced in the dioceses of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1842.

⁴³Ibid., 24; Hasenöhrl, O. F. M., "Ein Blick in das General-Kommissariat," 60.

⁴⁴Ibid., 69–70.

⁴⁵See Michaela Sohn-Kronthaler, "Von der Stütze der Monarchie zur Mitgestalterin des demokratischen Staatswesens – Katholische Kirche und Republik in Österreich (1918–2008)," in *Österreich. 90 Jahre Republik. Beitragsband der Ausstellung im Parlament*, eds. Stefan Karner and Lorenz Mikoletzky (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2008), 351.

Even the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem was interested in the responsibilities and successes of the new Austrian government.⁴⁶

In the light of its ideological background it is hardly surprising that authoritarian Austria sought to place some emphasis on its relations with Palestine. This found expression, for example, in the use of the cross potent, widely known as the Jerusalem Cross. Already employed under Seipel in the 1920s on the reverse of coins and as Order of Merit for services rendered to the Republic of Austria, in the 1930s the cross potent became the official symbol of the Fatherland Front, the united party of the so-called corporative state. The politician shaping the Austrian “chancellor’s dictatorship” (Helmut Wohlnout) saw in it “a symbol of Christianisation”.⁴⁷

In the autumn of 1933, the 300th anniversary of the Viennese General Commissioner’s Office for the Holy Land was celebrated at the General German Catholic Congress, which took place in Vienna from 7th to 12th November and stood under the sign of the crusade. The jubilee ceremony of the Viennese General Commissioner’s Office has been overlooked in secondary literature, because so many events took place simultaneously: the 250th anniversary of the expulsion of the Turks, the 500th anniversary of the completion of St. Stephen’s Cathedral, the 80th Catholic Congress and the Holy Year proclaimed by Pius XI.⁴⁸ The celebration was held in the midst of the world economic crisis, but after the second loan by the League of Nations to Austria. It was to commemorate Austrian good deeds in favour of the Holy Land, pay tribute to the work of the Franciscan Guardians of the Holy Sepulchre, awaken interest in the Holy Places in Palestine, and not least arouse the thought of pilgrimage and bring the pilgrims to Jerusalem together.⁴⁹ General Commissioner Hasenöhrl arranged church and extra-church events for all the friends and patrons of the Holy Land. The play *Gott will es* by Maria Pokorny, set at the time of the Third Crusade, was performed three times. Moreover, near the Franciscan Monastery, but only in one room, the Holy Land Museum was opened, which was to be a future branch of the General Commissioner’s Office. There, a large camel carved of olive wood gave testimony “to the high standard of Arab popular art”.⁵⁰

⁴⁶See No. 68, 2 January 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 289–290.

⁴⁷The words of Federal Chancellor Dollfuß in the meetings concerning the new constitution, in which the issue of the national coat of arms was also discussed: No. 930 (20/21/24/26/27/28/29 March 1934), in *Protokolle des Ministerrates der Ersten Republik, Abteilung VIII, 20. Mai 1932 bis 25. Juli 1934, vol. 6: Kabinett Dr. Engelbert Dollfuß, 23. Februar 1934 bis 18. April 1934*, ed. Gertrude Enderle-Burcel (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1985), 140–292, here 142.

⁴⁸See Pia Janke, *Politische Massenfestspiele in Österreich zwischen 1918 und 1938* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 289.

⁴⁹See *Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* 2 (July–September 1933), 1.

⁵⁰Ibid., 2–3; ibid. (October–December 1933), 1–7 (citation 6).

A list of the patrons and of the local groups of the “Army of the Holy Cross” in the parishes shows that this organisation continued to exist despite economic hardships. Accordingly, in the jubilee year 1933 there were 333 patrons. The number of members came to about 15,000.⁵¹ After his assassination in the course of the National Socialist Putsch of 1934, Chancellor Dollfuß was accepted as a permanent member, which implied that the Franciscans at the Holy Places read a mass for him every day.⁵² In general, old traditions were taken up once more. After 1935, masses “Pro Natione Austriaca” were celebrated every third Thursday in the five main churches of the Custody; an annual High Mass “Pro Praesidente Austriae” (1935) or “In Festo Rei Publicae Austriae” (after 1 May 1936) was held in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—even during the years when Austria did not exist.⁵³ The Austrian Consul General Jorda commented on the revival of this tradition by pointing out “a certain political significance, as it again completes a step in the re-acquisition of the historical Austrian status in the Near East for the Republic of Austria, when the effects of such church acts in the Near East and on the other foreign representations here are taken into account”.⁵⁴

After Walter Haas’ sudden death in 1933, a change took place at the head of the Austrian consulate in Jerusalem. The interim direction was assumed by Anton Jedek, who remained as agency secretary after Ivo Jorda’s appointment as consul. Shortly afterwards, Jedek became the provincial head of the Fatherland Front, and in 1938 he was taken over by the German Consulate General. Jorda himself held office until 1938, when Austria disappeared from the map with the so-called Anschluss to Germany.⁵⁵ The new consul insisted that his office, which looked after about 4,000 citizens (the majority of them Jewish), be elevated to a consulate general. This rise in status, a unique event in the history of the Austrian consulate in Jerusalem, was authorised by the council of ministers on 9 October 1934 in view of the fact that a number of other nations, apart from the Great Powers, were maintaining consulates general in Jerusalem. Another argument was the size of the administrative region. The Austrian honorary consulates in the French mandate of Syria (Aleppo, Beirut, and Damascus) were subordinate to the consulate in Jerusalem.⁵⁶

⁵¹ See Hasenöhrl, O. F. M., “Ein Blick in das General-Kommissariat,” 66–69.

⁵² See *Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* 3 (October–December 1934), 15.

⁵³ See Breycha-Vauthier, *Österreich in der Levante*, 56.

⁵⁴ No. 153, 2 May 1936: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 435–436. Regarding the initial objection of the Latin Patriarch, see No. 158, 29 October 1936: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to BKA,AA, ibid., 442–443.

⁵⁵ For the years 1933 to 1938, see Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 30–38. For the biography of Jorda, who was considered a friend of Dollfuß, see Agstner, *Österreichs Spitzendiplomaten*, 266–267.

⁵⁶ See No. 970 (9 October 1934), in *Protokolle des Ministerrates der Ersten Republik, Abteilung IX, 29. Juli 1934 bis 11. März 1938, vol. 1: Kabinett Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg, 30. Juli 1934 bis 26. Oktober 1934*, ed. Gertrude Enderle-Burcel (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1988), 400–433, here 401.

Jorda's reports mirror domestic events in Austria, for example, in the form of Arab-Jewish reactions to the events of February 1934, as well as conditions in Palestine. The increase in clashes between Arabs and Jews also had implications for the employees of the consulate. This can be seen, for instance, in the request expressed by the Arab kavass to be allowed to wear the badge of the Fatherland Front so as to be safer with his headdress, a tarboosh, on errands to the Jewish quarter.⁵⁷ In 1943, a book would be published by Jorda about the events, *Arab Uprising. Experience and Documents*, which he understood to be a factual report.⁵⁸

The reports from Jerusalem also relate the significance accorded to Austrian exports to Palestine. Furthermore, the Austrian image campaign aimed at tourism also intended to strengthen the Austrian economy. When Jorda did promotion in Jerusalem, he was astonished that he "often encountered amazing knowledge about Tyrol on the part of British officials as well as the strong inclination to connect the future holiday to a lengthy sojourn in Austria, whereas the Jewish celebrities, usually from the East, can only be set on this track with difficulty".⁵⁹ Not only the wonderful countryside and hospitable inhabitants of the Alpine Republic were emphasised, but the image of Austria as a musical world power was deliberately transported. When Jorda reported about the outbreak of the Austrian civil war in February 1934, he initially did not see himself in a position to assess to what extent these events "will affect our imports in Palestine". But he found it symptomatic "that I was able to organize a concert by a Viennese Jewish quartet here in Jerusalem on 17th of this month without any bother, whilst the concert projected for the quartet in Tel Aviv on 18th was cancelled".⁶⁰ The Salzburg Festival, founded in 1920, also radiated as far as Palestine. In 1937, with a concert in Haifa on 5th January, Arturo Toscanini ended his tour to Palestine, which "indirectly also represented effective propaganda for the Salzburg Festival".⁶¹

That there was no cultural one-way street from Austria to Palestine can be gleaned from Jorda's reports about news in the Arab press. In December 1933, for instance, the paper *Falastin* covered the intentions of

⁵⁷ See Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 35–36.

⁵⁸ Iwo Jorda, *Araber-Aufstand. Erlebnisse und Dokumente aus Palästina* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1943), here XIV.

⁵⁹ No. 69, 5 January 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 290–292, here 292. See also No. 95, 3 July 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), No. 97, 7 July 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), ibid., 344–345, 349–350.

⁶⁰ No. 74, 19 February 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), ibid., 304–305, here 305. See also No. 76, 2 March 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), No. 78, 10 March 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), No. 82, 24 March 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), ibid., 307–308, 310–311, 318–319.

⁶¹ No. 161, 8 January 1937: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to BKA,AA, ibid., 446–447, here 446. For the Salzburg Festival, see Janke, *Politische Massenfestspiele*, 187–208.

the *Heimwehren* “to transform Austria into a Christian empire in pursuit of Austrian traditions and not to confine themselves to today’s borders, i.e. to abolish the peace treaties. The inclination is to re-establish the Holy Roman Empire on a modern basis, so it covers Germany and today’s Austria as well as the regions that used to belong to it”. The report in the Arab paper closed with the question as to how this movement was related to the issue of reunification (Anschluss).⁶² Arab sympathies for National Socialist Germany can probably not be separated from the viewpoint common in the Arab press “that Austria will ultimately be merged into National Socialist Germany”, which also made an impression on Jewish circles there.⁶³

Like Haas, Jorda also championed support for the Austrian hospice and the Brethren of St John of God in Nazareth, at which Czech aspirations were still directed. After the branch in Nazareth was granted a subsidy amounting to 200 pounds by the Austrian government in 1929, on the personal request of Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg a one-time payment of 1,500 Shillings was authorised in 1935. Then, a new request for money by the prior a year later was felt as an affront by the chancellor’s office. A few months later, the hospice in Nazareth was transferred from the Graz to the Vienna province.⁶⁴ When Jorda presented the request for a subsidy by the Brethren of St John of God in 1935, he argued the loyalty and the patriotism of the brethren, who had never lost close contact to their homeland. So, it would be “very welcome, if it were possible somewhat to ease their struggle for existence and thus consolidate an Austrian position in the Holy Land, such as other nations like Italy, France, Poland etc. are accustomed to doing for their institutions here with very rich subsidies”.⁶⁵

Two events made the political dilemma of the Austrian brethren in Nazareth evident. When the German war cemetery was consecrated on the premises of the hospital in 1934, ardent speeches were held in the manner of National Socialist Germany. But the brethren cherished great sympathies for Chancellor Dollfuß, who had been assassinated that year and who, in their view, was to be regarded as a heroic Catholic antagonist of National Socialism. In his honour, they held a large-scale commemoration service on their premises, in the course of which Consul General Jorda planted an

⁶²No. 66, 21 December 1933: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to BKA,AA, in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 286.

⁶³From Jorda’s report on the occasion of Dollfuß’ death: No. 100, 27 July 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to BKA,AA, ibid., 352–354, here 353. To Dollfuß Jorda had stated: “A strongly pro-German hue can constantly be observed in Arab circles, at least in their press [...].” No. 78, 10 March 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), ibid., 310–311, here 311.

⁶⁴Summarised in Rill, “Österreich und das Heilige Land,” 345–346.

⁶⁵No. 119, 9 January 1935: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 383.

oak tree in memory of Dollfuß, representing the beginning of a “Dollfuß Wood”. However, in 1937 a German citizen was appointed prior of the Austrian house, to be joined by a further Silesian. The latter was the physician Leonhard Konitzer, who had previously worked in the Graz order’s hospital and was known to the Arab population of Nazareth for 20 years as “the Austrian doctor”. After the Anschluss in 1938, the British military authorities took over the Austrian hospice in Nazareth initially by renting it, then, after the outbreak of war, by confiscating it.⁶⁶

But Tantur, too, became a topic again in 1934. When Jorda visited the hospice in Nazareth, which was suffering from the loss of tourism and decline in pilgrimages, for the first time, Father Norbert Hirczy, “whose monastery is of refreshing Austrian disposition”, also confronted him with the issue of Tantur.⁶⁷ The prior from the Burgenland described the events surrounding the surrender of the hospital there, behind which, in his view, there had been an Italian intrigue. Nevertheless, at that juncture Hirczy deemed it possible for the Styrian province to re-acquire the house, if the earlier subsidies were again granted by the Knights of Malta. Ivo Jorda defended this request to Dollfuß, stressing that the excellent relations with the Holy See would decisively support such an action. A return to Tantur would not just gratify the Austrian Brethren of St John of God, but also impact on Austria’s prestige in Palestine. Jorda’s presentation did not lack a reference to the associated economic relations. With 200 to 300 patients a day in the outpatients’ clinic and 30 to 60 beds, the Brothers Hospitallers “had led the hospital to a remarkable peak” between 1894 and 1920. By virtue of the great popularity of the Austrian brethren, the populace of Bethlehem had been prepared violently to prevent their enforced withdrawal, which only the prior of the time had been able to stop. The residents still yearned for them to return, for the fact that Italian sisters were now running a kind of recreation home was in keeping “neither with the purpose of the house, nor with the earlier cultural and religious significance of the institution”.⁶⁸

In 1934, the year in which the Viennese General Commissioner’s Office officially headed a pilgrimage for the first time since the Great War,⁶⁹ the

⁶⁶See Schwake, “Das österreichische Hospital in Nazareth,” 288; also Schwacke [!], “The Austrian Hospital in Nazareth,” 90–91. For the memorial service for Dollfuß, see in particular No. 149, 3 March 1936: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Vienna), No. 150, 15 March 1936: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Wilhelm Miklas (Vienna), No. 151, 17 March 1936: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 428–429, 429–430, 431–434.

⁶⁷No. 71, 17 January 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), ibid., 293–298 (citation 293), 94.

⁶⁸No. 73, 18 January 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), ibid., 302–303.

⁶⁹See *Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* 3 (July–September 1934), 10.

Austrian hospice in Jerusalem was well occupied with more than 350 guests. But the conflicts between Jewish immigrants and the Arab population immediately put a stop to visitors to the Holy Land. Overall, the 1930s involved a number of changes for the hospice. Following Cardinal Piffl's death in April 1932, the curator of the hospice, Theodor Innitzer, became the new archbishop of Vienna. In 1933, the three Borromeans working in the hospice were replaced by five Vöcklabruck school sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis and a kitchen help. This underlined the character of the hostel as an Austrian institution. In 1933, too, new hospice statutes were passed in view of the privileges for the successor states to the monarchy laid down by Cardinal Piffl in 1924. Finally, in 1935 Franz Haider, an Orientalist by training who had already spent several years in Beirut, was appointed the new rector.⁷⁰ Haider reports intercultural contacts during a long stay by the former Persian Prime Minister Tabatabai in his house. On the last day before Ramadan, Tabatabai cooked for his guests, among whom was Mufti Husseini, according to Haider the respected leader of the Palestinian Muslims. “[...] as chance had it, the mufti came to sit under the cross [...] in the dining room”.⁷¹

In August of 1935, the largest pilgrimage from Austria to the Holy Land during the interwar years took place with 165 pilgrims. The occasion was the consecration of the Austrian donation of an altar to the Dormitio Church, which was celebrating its 25th jubilee.⁷² The Austrian committee for this first Austrian donation in Jerusalem in a long time—following the example of the Hungarian Catholics—compiled a “Who’s Who” of Austrian Catholicism and was under the patronage of President Wilhelm Miklas.⁷³ Interesting here is the location. The German Benedictine Abbey on Mount Sion is part of the congregation of Beuron. It united German-speaking Benedictine monasteries since the 1860s. Therefore, it had a meaning beyond politics.

The following years (1936–1939) were marked by the “Arab Uprising”, to which the servant Karl Breitinger, a member of the Austrian hospice, also fell victim. To be safe in the Old City, Breitinger, who had been born in Vienna, wore Arab headdress. He was shot dead while wearing it on his way to the Jewish New City in May 1936. Seen by the Arabs as a martyr for their cause,

⁷⁰See Wohnout, *Das österreichische Hospiz*, 135–138.

⁷¹See Franz Haider to Theodor Innitzer, Jerusalem, 22 February 1936, in: Archiv der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz, Vienna, Bischofskonferenzen 1935–1937.

⁷²See Wohnout, *Das österreichische Hospiz*, 138; an illustration of the altar, which reflects the aesthetics of the time in Rill, “Österreich und das Heilige Land,” 341. See also *Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* 4 (January–March 1935), 13–15; ibid. (April–September 1935), 14–15; ibid. (October–December 1935), 7.

⁷³See Archiv der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz, Vienna, Bischofskonferenz 1934–1955 and Bischofskonferenzen 1935–1937.

the hospice employee's funeral at the Catholic cemetery on Mount Sion turned into a political demonstration. Despite the adverse effects, the mood in the hospice was in favour of the Arabs, as Rector Haider and the nuns held the policies of the British Mandate power responsible for the bloodshed. However, the fact that Arab violence was increasingly turning against British targets was also economically worrying for the hospice.⁷⁴ Generally speaking, Austria positioned itself as a neutral power in the Arab-Jewish conflict, which even involved an offer by an Arab official to redevelop Transjordan economically.⁷⁵

If we examine Austria's Catholic press,⁷⁶ the example of Palestine shows how the public viewed issues of the outside world. Usually, more press attention was given to Jewish immigration and the development of Zionism (closely associated with Vienna) than to the resident Arab population. Although anti-Semitism—the traditional Christian anti-Judaism had long taken on racist and biological components—and a certain pro-Arab stance occasionally mingled, contemporary judgements strikingly often remained undecided. This can be seen in the *Österreichische Pilgerbriefe*: "It is understandable that the Arabs are rising up against the powerful Jewish invasion. It is a question of the ownership of the land and rule in Palestine; but, basically, Zionism is less dangerous to us Christians than the pan-Islamic movement!"⁷⁷ In the background, there was always the worry that the rights of Catholics to the Holy Places might be marginalised. Although relief had prevailed that Ottoman rule over the Holy Land had finally been shaken off in 1917, now clear criticism was expressed of the British Mandate government. Who would have thought that in retrospect the Catholics felt better off under Ottoman administration than that of a Christian and European power?

CONCLUSION

Both Austria and Palestine experienced dramatic upheavals as a result of the First World War. The demise of the Habsburg Monarchy and the proclamation of the Republic of (German) Austria could be foreseen just as little as

⁷⁴Nonetheless, the economic situation of the hospice was also good in 1937, with 498 guests. See Wohnout, *Das österreichische Hospiz*, 139–140. See also Franz Haider to Theodor Innitzer, Jerusalem, 4 June 1937, in: Archiv der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz, Vienna, Bischofskonferenzen 1935–1937. Here Haider's assessment of the political situation includes the statement: "The Arabs are adamant regarding their demands and refuse any kind of division of the country."

⁷⁵See No. 90, 18 June 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to BKA,AA, No. 96, 3 July 1934: Ivo Jorda (Jerusalem) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Vienna), in Steininger, *Berichte aus Jerusalem*, 333, 345–348.

⁷⁶The search was carried out with ANNO (AustriaN Newspapers Online), the online portal of the Austrian National Library for newspapers and journals.

⁷⁷*Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* 4 (October–December 1935), 15.

a future of Palestine outside the Ottoman Empire and under a mandate of the League of Nations. The Mandate entered the stage of world history as a special form of colonialism, in the constellations of which minor states like Austria held marginal positions. Nevertheless, the inclusion of minor states in the multi-faceted history of the Mandate period in Palestine expands historiographical perspectives in a profitable way, especially under the aspect of European cultural diplomacy and the system of missions. For the Mandate period, it must be borne in mind that “the sheer diversity of missions, in terms of national background and multifarious arrangements with colonial governments” make it very difficult “to offer neat generalisations”.⁷⁸

In terms of the Orient mission, the interests of the Austrian First Republic followed the course that had been set in the monarchy. In this field, Austria saw itself very clearly as the legitimate successor to the Habsburg Monarchy, whose Catholic ruling dynasty had founded traditions going far back into the past through its commitment to the Holy Land. In the late nineteenth century, the Austrian contribution to the Catholic Orient mission had been comparably small. However, against the background of specific mentalities and political events, a “Jerusalem milieu” developed in the monarchy featuring a variety of actors. Once the support of the dynasty and Austrian participation in the hospital of the Knights of Malta in Tantur, as well as in Georg Gatt’s mission station in Gaza, had disappeared, there remained the search for a position among the Catholic nations. With the Austrian hospice in Jerusalem and the settlement of the Brethren of St John of God in Nazareth, two institutions of the Austrian sphere of influence continued to exist. The old institution of the Viennese General Commissioner’s Office for the Holy Land also survived the time of upheaval. In view of this “estate management” in economically straitened times, Dominique Trimbur’s view that several rivals withdrew from the field in the course of the First World War must be supplemented. “Austria-Hungary’s Catholic ambitions ended with the collapse of the Dual Monarchy”,⁷⁹ but during the interwar years, Austria and other successor states were still parties interested in accepting the legacy of the Habsburg Monarchy.

⁷⁸ Michael Gladwin, “Mission and Colonialism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*, eds. Joel D. S. Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, and Johannes Zachhuber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 295.

⁷⁹ Dominique Trimbur, “Introduction II: History in Fast Motion: An Overview,” in *Europa und Palästina 1799–1948: Religion – Politik – Gesellschaft / Europe and Palestine 1799–1948: Religion—Politics—Society*, eds. Barbara Haider-Wilson and Dominique Trimbur (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 51.

Palestine has always been entangled with the world beyond. From the nineteenth century on, this involvement has been intensified through processes of internationalisation and globalisation. Hence, the Middle Eastern Mandates “have a prominent part to play in broader debates in colonial, imperial, international, transnational, and global history”.⁸⁰ As could be read in Austrian newspapers, Palestine was seen as “a matter interesting not Jews and Arabs alone, Palestine is the joint cultural property of the entire civilized world”.⁸¹ This statement refers not least to its religions and missions. It remained a characteristic of the Orient mission that it had only marginal prospects of success regarding the conversion of Jews and Muslims and that over the decades its focus had been on building up a social infrastructure in the region,⁸² a presence that found its first expression in the form of buildings. In 1934, the “conversion of Jews and Mohammedans” was only in the penultimate position of seven prayer suggestions recommended to the members of the “Army of the Holy Cross”.⁸³

Following the erosion of the European concert of powers in the Armageddon of the First World War, the Austrian Orient mission in Palestine experienced a reduction in its resources, but the representation of Austrian interests on the state consular and on the non-state and church levels was not completely terminated. The more restricted options of joint proceedings on the part of the church and the state in the Holy Land basically had something to do with the abolition of the capitulation treaties (1914/1923) and hence of the religious protectorate. For this reason, the conflicts occurring in the Holy Places were still worthy of being reported, but did not involve political and diplomatic steps, as in the times of the Habsburg Monarchy.

After the end of the First World War and up to the final years of the abortive attempt to assert statehood towards Germany, large sections of the Austrian population did not have a sustainable awareness of Austria and supported the idea of Anschluss. Nevertheless, at that time the first foundations

⁸⁰ Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan, “Preface,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, eds. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015), XVII–XVIII, here XVII.

⁸¹ “Der Judenstaat in Palästina,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 3 April 1925, 1.

⁸² For this aspect, see Norbert Friedrich, Uwe Kamiinsky, and Roland Löffler, eds., *The Social Dimension of Christian Missions in the Middle East: Historical Studies of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010).

⁸³ See *Österreichische Pilgerbriefe* 3 (October–December 1934), 15. However, the following year the “conversion of Jews and Mohammedans to Jesus Christ” appeared as the second of five “prayer suggestions”; the “return of the Orientals to Catholic unity” remained at the top. Ibid., 4 (April–September 1935), 25.

were laid for later pillars of Austrian cultural identity, as the history of relations with Palestine shows. The clear emphasis placed on economic policies in comparison with the period of the monarchy concentrated on the field of tourism, which the official Austria endeavoured to increase among British, Jewish and Arab elites. If Austrian cultural diplomacy in Palestine managed to trace an arc from the “Orient Mission” of 1917 to the propagation of Austria as a holiday destination or the land of classical music in the 1930s, two other components remained constant: first the accent placed on cultivating Austria’s Catholic image among the international community and on gaining sympathy among the local population and, secondly, the cultural influence that was exerted by the missionaries working in the Holy Land.

The activities of the Viennese General Commissioner’s Office for the Holy Land illustrate the significance attached to the home mission and hence public relations in the homeland. At that time, the main emphasis of the Orient mission was perceived to be on the “mission subject”.⁸⁴ The so-called mission objects hardly appear in the Austrian sources, a circumstance that was probably encouraged by the existence of European parallel societies in the Holy Land. Attention was focused rather on the mission supporters back home, who were to be mobilised to finance missionary endeavours. In times of political and social upheaval especially, personnel continuities were most significant in the case of non-state protagonists. Although the sojourn of pilgrim groups in the Holy Land was too short to establish intercultural contacts, the Austrian missionaries and local employees of the Austrian institutions provided completely different possibilities of exchange.

During the Habsburg Monarchy, foreign policy, which was shaped by 17 foreign ministers for seventy years after 1848, remained an imperial prerogative. In only twenty years of the First Republic and authoritarian Austria, an almost identical number of persons (18) shaped foreign policy.⁸⁵ Even with due respect paid to the role of civil servants, this circumstance could not remain without consequences on the issue of continuities. The Great Power status of the Habsburg Monarchy was permanently damaged after 1866, but this only increased the importance of prestige on the international stage. In the consular reports from Palestine between 1927 and 1938, the word “prestige” still appears repeatedly.

⁸⁴See [Adolf] Rücker, “Aus der Orientmission,” *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 14 (1924), 165–176, here 165.

⁸⁵See Rauscher, “Struktur und Organisation,” 25.



Fig. 1 I. & R. officers taking a cultural stroll through Jerusalem (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Kriegsarchiv)

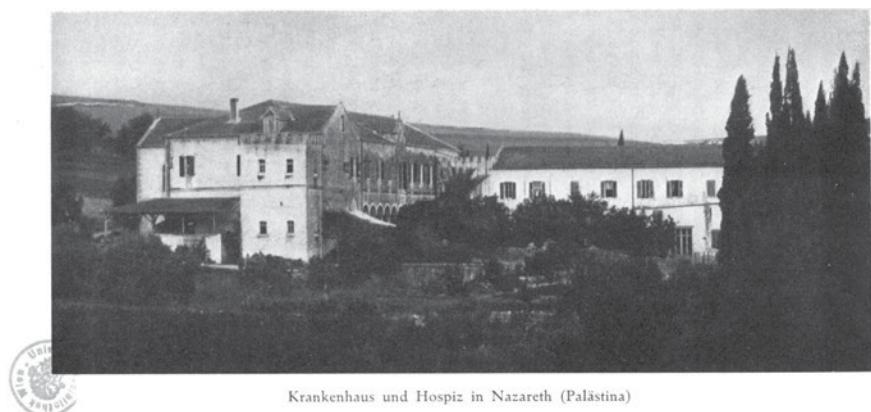
What remained important for the Jerusalem protagonists of the Austrian First Republic and those in the years of authoritarian Austria, who found different forms to express the Dollfuß cult, was to cultivate the image of Catholic Austria with insistence on the grandeur of its past in the locations of the Christian history of salvation. Austrian influence in Palestine primarily aimed at attracting local inhabitants to Austria in order to demonstrate its presence in the Holy Land to the international community. In this light, the Arab population was certainly not the primary target audience of the Austrian state, and further research should be encouraged on the different representatives of the Austrian church working as missionaries in Mandate Palestine. Austrian state and church commitment in the Holy Land was ultimately still influenced by the manifestations of Austrian Catholicism. The break with this connection was to be reserved for later decades, when the processes of secularisation observable in society reached completely new dimensions (Figs. 1, 2, 3, and 4).



Fig. 2 The Austrian hospice in the Arab quarter of Jerusalem (Österreichisches Hospiz Jerusalem)



Fig. 3 A group of Austrian pilgrims in front of the Austrian hospice in Jerusalem. The bishop sitting second from the right is Franz Fellinger (Österreichisches Hospiz Jerusalem)



Krankenhaus und Hospiz in Nazareth (Palästina)

Fig. 4 The hospital and hospice of the Order of St. John of God in Nazareth (Die Barmherzigen Brüder, edited by Friedrich Läufer)

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A Coherent Inconsistency: Italian Cultural Diplomacy in Palestine, 1918–1938

Roberto Mazza

A recent report of the Italian NGO COSV (Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario) suggests that “it was not until the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Conference that Italy began to take on a prominent role in the Mediterranean region”.¹ It is possible Italy lagged behind other countries in the development of cultural diplomacy, nevertheless Italian cultural influence in the Mediterranean, and in Palestine in particular, certainly predates 1995. Studies of European cultural policies in Palestine have often focused on Britain, France and occasionally Germany, however very little scholarship has been dedicated to Italy. The works of Nir Arielli, Daniela Fabrizio, Lucia Rostagno and Arturo Marzano shed light on some aspects of early Italian cultural diplomacy and relations in Mandatory Palestine.² Yet the literature available, but more importantly the research currently carried out on this topic, is rather scant and often unclear on how cultural diplomacy should be defined. The lack of sources has certainly been one reason behind

¹Organisation for the coordination of volunteering services; last modified May 9, 2018, <http://www.cosv.org/>.

²Nir Arielli, *Fascist Italy and the Middle East 1933–40* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Daniela Fabrizio, *Identità' Nazionali e Identità' Religiose* (Rome: Studium, 2004); Arturo Marzano, *Onde Fasciste. La Propaganda Araba di Radio Bari 1934–43* (Rome: Carocci, 2015); Lucia Rostagno, *Terrasanta o Palestina? La Diplomazia Italiana e il Nazionalismo Palestinese (1861–1939)* (Rome: Bardi, 1996).

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this shortage of studies, however the problematic definition of cultural diplomacy has also kept scholars away from potential complications. Nevertheless, as the material of the Italian consulate in Jerusalem from its opening in the 1860s to the 1940s has been made accessible, it will be possible to add important contributions and preliminarily assess Italian cultural diplomacy in Palestine, its effectiveness and legacy—if any—over the local population: Arab and Jews in their multiplicity of identities and organisations.

What role did culture play in the policies of European agents—governmental and non—regarding the Arabs and Jews of Palestine? With this chapter I will try to answer this question looking at the work of Italian diplomacy in Palestine from 1918 to the mid-1930s, essentially from the establishment of British rule to the outbreak of the Arab Revolt which marked a major shift in the local and international political atmosphere. Looking at the material of the Italian consulate in Jerusalem and its subsidiaries throughout Palestine, this chapter will attempt to reconstruct Italian cultural activities particularly designed to promote linguistic and cultural agendas. Italians followed similar paths to their French rivals in the establishment of educational institutions.³ More importantly, from the establishment of the Fascist regime in 1922, Mussolini attempted to support Arab nationalism and Zionism at the same time with the purpose of challenging British rule in Palestine and creating a stronger Italian presence and influence in the region. Italian cultural diplomacy was then used as a proxy in order to create support for Italian expansion, rather than producing genuine cultural relations.

In this chapter I look at consular records in order to highlight several case studies with the purpose of seeing how Italian cultural diplomacy developed in the region, its transformations, inconsistencies and ultimate failure. Italian cultural policies, however, cannot be understood and analysed in a vacuum; they must be contextualised within the broader cultural activities promoted by “Italian” religious institutions. While the Italian State and the Catholic Church were not just officially separated, but in a state of conflict, their relationship was much more blurred and entangled outside the borders of Italy. In other words, often the distinction between Italian and Roman Catholic was rather indistinguishable, allowing the secular cultural diplomacy of the state to mingle with the religious-cultural activities of Italian Catholic institutions in Palestine, producing a hybrid form of cultural diplomacy.

While this chapter will mostly rely on the material of the Italian consulate in Jerusalem, I will also integrate evidence from religious institutions including the Latin Patriarchate and the Custody of the Holy Land. As secondary literature is rather thin, I will attempt to introduce a model for studying Italian cultural diplomacy which must take into account the general diplomatic leverage. For instance, considering that from 1919 to 1926 seven

³A good work showing the various French activities is Dominique Trimbur and Ran Aaronsohn, *de Bonaparte à Balfour. La France, l'Europe occidentale et la Palestine, 1799–1917* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2008).

different consuls led the Italian consulate, we understand that Italian leverage was minimal. However, with the appointment of Mario Zanotti Bianchi, and later of Orazio Pedrazzi and Mariano de Angelis—covering the period from 1926 to 1936—Italian diplomacy became more relevant and visible. While Italian cultural activities may have become more regular, they did not necessarily prove to be effective. Retrospectively we know that Italian influence did not break through as desired, nevertheless it cannot be underestimated or neglected: it is not the outcome that matters here, but the journey.

IN SEARCH OF A WORKING DEFINITION OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

According to Michael Waller, cultural diplomacy is a kind of soft power that includes the “exchange of ideas, information, art, language and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding”.⁴ In the contemporary world cultural diplomacy is a rather loose term defining a set of practices by nation states in their relations.⁵ The purpose is ultimately to influence a foreign audience with the hope of achieving different goals including cooperation between nations, prevention of conflict and building positive views of one another’s countries. Though cultural diplomacy is a fascinating concept, one that may be very useful in understanding contemporary relations between Israel, Palestine and the rest of the world, I believe it is a concept that cannot be easily applied to the historical case presented in this chapter. Cultural diplomacy is based on a two-way dialogue, maybe an unbalanced one, yet it presumes a form of dual exchange between peers.

In order to problematise and contextualise Italian diplomacy in Palestine within a theoretical framework I believe the concept of *soft power*, coined by Joseph Nye, better frames the policies adopted by the Italian government and executed at a local level by the Italian consuls in Jerusalem. In a nutshell *soft power* is the ability to shape the preferences of others: this is not merely a form of influence, but more a method of persuasion or a way to move people by argument.⁶ Culture is indeed a form of soft power, however, as noted by some scholars, cultural attractiveness is not soft power on its own, it is a resource deployed in order to achieve defined objectives.⁷ In other words

⁴Michael J. Walter, “Cultural Diplomacy, Political Influence, and Integrated Strategy,” in *Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda, and Political Warfare*, ed. M. J. Waller (Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics Press, 2009), 74.

⁵A good summary on the state of the research is provided by Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried, “The Model of Cultural Diplomacy,” in *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, eds. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 13–16.

⁶Joseph Nye, *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics* (Cambridge: Perseus Books, 2004), 5–6.

⁷Ien Ang, Yudihishthir Isar, and Philip Mar, “Cultural Diplomacy: Beyond the National Interest?” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 4 (2015): 368.

opening Italian schools in Palestine or producing pro-Arab propaganda may have been a form of cultural attraction but unless it reached the goals set by Italian policymakers, it was not soft power per se. It will be argued later that this was the limit of Italian cultural diplomacy in Palestine: the deployment of cultural resources was contingent on the inconsistency of the proposed goals, therefore they never converted into visible forms of soft power. Essentially, Italians confused cultural resources with the behaviour of attraction and, as Joseph Nye argued, “excellent wine and cheese do not guarantee attraction to France”, so good schools and entertaining broadcasts on Radio Bari did not give the Italians the edge over the British.⁸

At this point, it is quite clear that in order to frame Italian cultural diplomacy in Palestine, the given definitions are not entirely useful, and they must be adapted to the context. Italian attempts at influencing Palestinians were indeed a form of one-directional cultural diplomacy: Italians were not interested in cultural exchange. This is not to dramatically diminish the value of the attempts made, but as we will see later, the range of cultural tools employed were never consistently coordinated or arranged in order to achieve the goals set. My belief is that there were no clear goals in the first place, and in turn this inconsistency produced a random set of cultural policies that may have influenced individuals but never reached the potential to impact upon a larger community.

More radically I would even question the nature of cultural diplomacy in this context as I am not entirely sure this is diplomacy at all; it looks more a form of covert imperialism than anything else. If we look at the question of agency it is not clear “who is in charge”: the state, the Church, individuals, consuls or others? However, for the lack of a better term, in this chapter I refer to cultural diplomacy, bearing in mind its intriguing usefulness and limitations. The examples discussed in this chapter show that Italian cultural diplomacy was reactive instead of pro-active. For instance, the Alliance Française, established in 1883, was created with the purpose of teaching French as a language that would inspire in other people an affinity for France and above all for the values of the enlightenment; on the other hand the Dante Alighieri Society established in 1889 was designed to promote Italian culture and language around the world, especially among the expatriate Italian community.⁹ The substantial difference is that while the first pro-actively sought to influence foreign communities, the latter was instead created as a reaction to Italian migration and the potential loss of national identity. While it would be impossible to make a more substantial contribution to the

⁸Nye, *Soft Power*, 12.

⁹Gienow-Hechth and Donfried, “The Model of Cultural Diplomacy,” 18; Daniela Fabrizio, *Fascino D’Oriente. Religionie Politica in Medio Oriente da Giolitti a Mussolini* (Genoa: Marietti, 2006), 282–283. On the Dante Alighieri see also T. Van Kessel, *Foreign Cultural Policy in the Interbellum: The Italian Dante Alighieri Society and the British Council Contesting the Mediterranean* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

debate over cultural diplomacy and policies, I suggest that in the end, Italian cultural policies were enacted with the purpose of strengthening Italian national identity rather than projecting national power abroad.¹⁰

THE ITALIAN CONSULATE IN JERUSALEM: A SHORT HISTORY

An Italian presence has been visible for centuries in Jerusalem in the form of clergy and pilgrims; however, the size of this community did not match its political relevance, which was overshadowed by British and French consulates and communities, echoing the relative unimportance of Italy on the international stage. The Italian presence in Palestine has been mainly analysed through three lenses: the history of Italian religious institutions and personnel operating in the Holy Land; the attitude of Italian governments towards Palestine and, after 1948, their relationship with Israel and the Arab countries; lastly some scholars have looked at Italian relations with the Yishuv.¹¹ Few works have been devoted to the study of the political, economic, social and religious networks established by the Italian state in Palestine and the connections between the consulate and the complex system of power in Jerusalem and the region.¹² The lack of historiographical research in Italian and other languages is not only a reflection of the absence of primary sources before the inventory of the consulate records, but also of the tendency—particularly evident in the historiography on Jerusalem and Palestine—to differentiate and separate the subjects of study into a fragmented picture rather than providing an interconnected and wider portrait.

In the only work dedicated to Italian diplomacy in Palestine, Lucia Rostagno was right to suggest that we should bear in mind that from Italy, Palestine was hard to reach and not included in the colonial dreams of the new Italian state, and certainly not a destination for Italian migrants.¹³ At the end of the nineteenth century, Italian interests towards Palestine were mainly devotional. In fact, it can safely be said that little was known of the

¹⁰J. P. Singh, “Global Cultural Policies and Power,” in *International Cultural Policies and Power*, ed. J. P. Singh (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 11.

¹¹See Giuseppe Buffon, *Les Franciscains en Terre Sainte (1869–1889). Religion et politique: une recherche institutionnelle* (Paris: Cerf, 2005); Paolo Pieraccini, *Cattolici di Terra Santa (1333–2000)* (Florence: Pagnini e Martinelli, 2003); Andrea Giovannelli, *La Santa Sede e la Palestina: La Custodia di Terra Santa tra la fine dell’impero ottomano e la guerra dei sei giorni* (Rome: Studium, 2000); Arturo Marzano, *Una terra per rinascere: Gli ebrei italiani e l’emigrazione in Palestina prima della guerra (1920–1940)* (Genoa: Marietti, 2003); Luca Riccardi, *Il “problema Israele”: Diplomazia italiana e PCI di fronte allo stato ebraico (1948–1973)* (Milan: Guerini e Associati, 2006); Sergio I. Minerbi, *Il Vaticano, la Terra Santa e il Sionismo* (Milan: Bompiani, 1988); Silvio Ferrari, *Vaticano e Israele dal secondo conflitto mondiale alla guerra del Golfo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1991).

¹²Rostagno, *Terrasanta o Palestina?*; Andrea Gabellini, *L’Italia e l’assetto della Palestina (1916–1924)* (Florence: Società per gli studi sul Medio Oriente, 2000).

¹³Rostagno, *Terrasanta o Palestina?* 12.

country: Italian Catholics and Jews did not share the same interest in the Holy Land as their British, French, or American coreligionists.¹⁴ The re-establishment of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1847 might have had triggered a renewed interest, although available evidence does not suggest this, and in any case the *Terrasanta* was an entity to pray for, not to conquer.¹⁵ Italy had no connection whatsoever with the local Eastern Catholic churches—a field left open to the French. The Italian governments saw indigenous Catholics as a catalyst to promote and defend the Italian character of the Latin Patriarchate and the Custody of the Holy Land (both the Patriarch and the Custos were in fact Italian subjects).¹⁶ The Salesians had a substantial impact in Palestine, working with local inhabitants. Similarly, the Franciscans, by far the largest Catholic group in Palestine, provided jobs and services to local Christians, Muslims and Jews alike. Politicians and diplomats were still far away.¹⁷

In 1843, Consul Lenchantin from the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia was sent to Jerusalem to protect the interests of its subjects and to challenge the French protectorate over Catholics.¹⁸ The material available at the state archives in Turin has barely been perused by scholars and, together with the material recently uncovered at the archives of the Italian foreign ministry, may paint a different picture; however, it is safe to say that until 1849—when the consulate was “temporarily” closed—Italian diplomatic presence had limited influence.¹⁹ Adolfo Castellinard, the second Sardinian-Piedmontese consul, left Jerusalem in 1849. The seat remained vacant and was filled again only a decade after the Italian unification process was completed.

The newly created Kingdom of Italy could not afford a wide and sophisticated diplomatic network. The lack of trained and trusted diplomatic officials was paired with the imperative on Minister of Finance Quintino Sella to avoid

¹⁴ It is important to highlight that though Italians were not interested in relocating to Palestine, attention to the Holy Land was voiced through Vatican publications. It is often hard to differentiate between Vatican and Italian sources as both were written in Italian and Catholics were split over loyalty to the State or the Church. See also Paolo Maggiolini’s chapter in this volume.

¹⁵ See Paolo Pieraccini, *Il ristabilimento del patriarcato latino di Gerusalemme e la custodia di Terra Santa. La dialettica istituzionale al tempo del primo patriarca mons. Giuseppe Valerga (1847–1872)* (Cairo: Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies, 2006).

¹⁶ See Giovannelli, *La Santa Sede*.

¹⁷ Simonetta della Seta, “La Presenza e l’Opera dei Salesiani in Palestina,” *Storia Contemporanea* 20, no. 1 (1989): 81–101.

¹⁸ Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (ASDMAE) Consolato Gerusalemme, Pacco 1 (old catalogue), note written in 1897 with a short history of the consuls in Jerusalem. Details of Lenchantin can be found in Giuseppe Alessandro Piola Caselli, *Cronache Marinare (1843–1883)*, ed. Federico Adamoli, www.piolacaselli.altervista.org/cronache-marinare/Cronache%20Marinare%20con%20Indice.pdf.

¹⁹ Material related to the Consulate of the Kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont in Jerusalem can also be found in ASMAE, Consolato Gerusalemme, Pacco 9 (old catalogue).

a deficit in the budget of the nascent state. However, members of the Italian parliament were fully convinced of the necessity of opening a consulate in the holy city.²⁰ Eventually, an agreement was made, and Vice-Consul Alessandro de Rege di Donato was appointed consul in Jerusalem on 15 November 1871. Like his seven successors until the outbreak of the First World War, di Donato had no deep knowledge of the region, or its languages, religions and peoples. It must be said, however, that the earliest Sardinian consuls had more experience in the region, as both Lenchantin and Castellinard had served as consuls in the Ottoman Empire before their appointment to Jerusalem.²¹ It was only in 1911, with the impeding Italian invasion of Libya, that the Italian Orientalist Leone Caetani passionately petitioned the Italian parliament and the foreign ministry to support the Oriental Institute in Naples as a place to forge young diplomats serving in the East.²² Rostagno suggests that the existing consuls had no interest in local society, which never featured in their reports; however, new material may readdress this view and paint a more nuanced picture. A local dimension seems to emerge in the registers of correspondence with Constantinople, as many letters deal with local issues, particularly complaints against petty crime committed by local inhabitants.²³

A major change occurred with the appointment of Carlo Senni in May 1907. Though not an Orientalist, the young consul was a careful observer and, in his reports, gathered increasing amounts of information about the local communities and their intra- and interrelations.²⁴ Senni reported on indigenous religious communities at length, offering suggestions on how to engage with them. Some of his comments may look naïve or poorly informed, as he did not possess a deep knowledge of local politics. However, the fact that he was not involved in any major local dispute or in any major scheme to control one or more groups provides a perspective that can contribute nuance to what we know of local politics and dynamics.²⁵ Senni also provides invaluable information about Jerusalem during the First World War, as he remained in the city until the spring of 1915, reporting on a variety of

²⁰Rostagno, *Terrasanta o Palestina?* 22–23.

²¹See Adamoli, *Cronache Marinare*.

²²Rostagno, *Terrasanta o Palestina?* 27.

²³ASDMAE, Consolato Gerusalemme, Pacco 3 (old catalogue), Register Correspondence with Constantinople 1872–1892. Some miscellaneous registers in the same folder suggest a growing interest in the local economy, as more Italians became interested in opening businesses or dealing with local businessmen. However, the scope of this commercial activity at the end of the nineteenth century was small compared to other European countries.

²⁴Details of Carlo Senni can be found at: notes9.senato.it/web/senregno.nsf/d973a7e868618f05c125711400382868/ea6b98faa6aaa56a4125646f0060866f?OpenDocument, last modified March 21, 2017.

²⁵See ASDMAE, Consolato Gerusalemme, Pacco 8 (old catalogue), Local and Foreign Religious Communities.

subjects.²⁶ As Senni left Jerusalem upon the Italian declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire, it is possible to say that he made the Italian presence in the region more relevant and at the same time brought Jerusalem and Palestine closer to Italy and Italians.

With the end of the war, Senni returned to Jerusalem for a short time, but everything had changed. Now the British were in control and the Italian government was involved in redrawing the Middle East. Despite the increased role of Italian diplomacy in Palestine, both the British and French marginalised Italy, which they saw more as a nuisance than a challenge.²⁷ Italian diplomacy, meanwhile, was unable to react quickly to the changes occurring in Palestine. Between 1919 and 1926, seven different consuls led the Italian consulate. Copies of the reports sent to Rome show the lack of diplomatic initiative and a generally superficial understanding of events unfolding in Palestine and Jerusalem, including the emerging national struggle between Arabs and Zionists. This diplomatic weakness was a reflection of Italian politics, as the fascist regime was slowly taking over. It is in 1926, with the appointment of Mario Zanotti Bianchi, that Italian diplomatic efforts became more substantial and visible.²⁸

Jerusalem and Palestine came to play a more important role for Italian diplomacy and politics. As Mussolini aimed at extending Italian influence over the Mediterranean as part of his dream to make Italy an empire, Palestine became a battleground against British influence in the region.²⁹ One of the most interesting consuls yet to be fully analysed is Orazio Pedrazzi. Appointed in February 1927, Pedrazzi was not a diplomat by profession, but a journalist and an expert on Middle Eastern politics. He probably had a direct line to Mussolini and in his short tenure he emphasised the necessity of working with the Zionists, as they were going to dictate the future of Palestine. Though he was an anti-Zionist and Arabophobe, his main concern was to challenge British rule and thus he lost his job rather quickly. After Pedrazzi left, on the eve of the Western Wall riots of 1929, Mussolini changed direction and his support for the Arab-Palestinian cause became more visible in terms of propaganda and help for local Palestinian elites. It would be interesting to discover in the papers of the consulate in Jerusalem the extent and quality of Italian-Zionist relations, which certainly did not altogether cease.³⁰

The man who helped bring some local Arabs to the Italian side was Mariano De Angelis. Appointed consul in 1932, De Angelis served until

²⁶See ASDMAE, Consolato Gerusalemme, Pacco 10 (old catalogue), various correspondence in relation to the outbreak of the First World War.

²⁷Gabellini, *L'Italia e l'assetto della Palestina*.

²⁸Rostagno, *Terrasanta o Palestina?* 136.

²⁹Arielli, *Fascist Italy*.

³⁰Arielli, *Fascist Italy*, 20–21.

1936 and worked publicly and secretly to transform anti-Italian sentiments among the Arabs into feelings of sympathy. At the same time, De Angelis looked with favour on Jabotinsky and his hard-line Zionists. Though Mussolini never met Jabotinsky, it would be interesting to discover more about this relationship.³¹ Many works have dealt with the emergence of the alliance between Mussolini and the Mufti of Jerusalem, al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, and it is clear that Mussolini had to adopt different policies in Libya and show a stronger commitment towards Arabs and Muslims in order to gain his friendship and to transform anti-Italian sentiments. By 1933, De Angelis had a good relationship with the Mufti, and we hope the papers available in Rome may give us more details about the ways in which the shift occurred. De Angelis also wrote extensively about the possibility of an agreement between the Arabs and the Zionists and he hoped to see Mussolini become a peacemaker.³²

De Angelis left on the eve of the 1936–1939 revolt and Quinto Mazzolini succeeded him until the consulate was closed with the outbreak of the war between Italy and Great Britain. The years of the Revolt marked strong Italian support for the Palestinian cause, but Italian propaganda was ultimately unsuccessful in turning the Palestinians against the British. The example of Radio Bari is illuminating: Arabic-language radio broadcasts targeting Palestine and Transjordan were heavily criticised by the British, who feared the local population's rebellion against colonial power. But though Arab listeners enjoyed programs in Arabic, it is also true that Radio Bari was not effective in its political mission, as we will see later and in more detail.³³

PRE-FASCIST ITALY CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN PALESTINE

In 1920 Chaim Weizmann, writing to Lord Curzon, noted that "in Palestine the Vatican and the Secular Italian Government seem to be identical. The cleavage that exists in Rome is not apparent in Jerusalem".³⁴ Weizmann's observation was indeed right, for decades Italy struggled to establish a more permanent foothold in Palestine through Catholic institutions and clergy. By 1905, with Tommaso Tittoni as Foreign Minister, Italy officially adopted the same approach employed by the French that anticlericalism would never

³¹ASDMAE, Ap, Palestina, Busta 13, Roma, 4 November 1935. Jabotinsky was refused a meeting with Mussolini several times, however De Angelis wrote a memo suggesting that it was important to assist and favour Zionist revisionism as it was in the interests of the Italian government to support a form of Zionism clearly opposed to the official Zionism sponsored by the British government.

³²ASDMAE, Ap, Palestina, Busta 8, Gerusalemme, 21 Mach 1934.

³³Andrea Stanton, *This Is Jerusalem Calling* (Austin, TX: University Texas Press, 2013), 94–101. The history of Radio Bari is also discussed by Marzano, *Onde fasciste*.

³⁴Weizmann to Lord Curzon, 2 February 1920, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, Vol. IX (Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1977), 297–298.

become *un article d'exportation*.³⁵ In 1911 Senni suggested joining the concession to build a railway between Jerusalem and Beisan. His intention was to support the possible establishment of Italian agricultural settlements in Palestine; however, the proposal was not followed through because of the outbreak of the Italian-Ottoman war on Libya.³⁶ The post-unitarian state did not have the funds or the expertise to really invest in Palestine as the British and the French did. Foreign policy in the region was an example of the rare collaboration between the Italian state—highly anticlerical—and pro-Catholic sectors within Italian society and politics. Italian diplomats in Jerusalem, regardless of their expertise and political affiliation, had a vested interest in the Catholic institutions operating in the region as they all recognised that the only way to establish a relevant presence was through Catholic institutions and Italian clergy. The idea was to undermine the traditional French position as protector of Catholics in the Holy Land.³⁷

Italian consuls in Jerusalem operated in two ways: first they provided legal assistance required by Italian institutions, and secondly tried to financially support educational institutions and to facilitate the establishment of private Italian businesses. However, the reality was that a lack of funding and of an organic plan to develop an Italian presence in Palestine set the consuls on a collision course with the Italian government. As noted by Pieraccini and Fabrizio, the success of the Italian schools in Palestine was minimal, not only because of the lack of students but also because of the lack of clear knowledge of the region and support from Rome. The largest Italian community in Palestine, for instance, was to be found in Haifa, yet it was forgotten in favour of Jerusalem and Jaffa.³⁸ This was indeed one of the limits of Italian diplomacy in Palestine, as its association with religious institutions did not allow Italian officials to see the potential for soft power where it was more likely to succeed.

Not much changed with the establishment of the Fascist regime in 1922. Mussolini was still as interested in building an empire in Africa as his liberal

³⁵ Paolo Pieraccini, “The External Cultural and Linguistic Policy of the Italian Government in the Mediterranean Region and the Issue of the National Association for Aid to Missionaries (1886–1905),” in *Linguistic and Cultural Foreign Policies of European States: 18th–20th Centuries*, eds. Karène Sanchez-Summerer and Willem Frijhoff (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 110.

³⁶ ASDMAE, Busta 745, Ap. Miscellaneous, Senni to Di San Giuliano, Jerusalem, 30 May 1911.

³⁷ A good summary of the French work to protect and foster its position in Palestine is given by Dominique Trimbur, “Les Lieux Saints Chrétiens de Palestine comme Préoccupation de la Politique Extérieure Française (1917–1948),” in *Diplomatie et Religion. Au Coeur de l’Action Culturelle de la France au XXe Siècle*, eds. Gilles Ferragu and Florian Michel (Paris: Publication de la Sorbonne, 2016), 173–189.

³⁸ In 1923 a petition was sent to Mussolini by the members of the Italian colony in Haifa suggesting they were a ‘gregge senza pastore’ (a people without a leader). ASDMAE, Affari Politici, Palestina, Pacco 1458, Fasc. 6292, petition of the Italian Patriotic Association Haifa, Haifa, 28 August 1923.

predecessors. Rumours were circulating about the possibility of Rome taking over the Palestine Mandate, a notion supported by Catholics and nationalists, but there is no evidence suggesting Mussolini endorsed the idea, if the British would have ever thought of relinquishing their hold.³⁹ The appointment of Orazio Pedrazzi as consul in Jerusalem in 1927 suggests a change of course in the Italian attempt to influence Palestine. Pedrazzi, who was a journalist and a so-called expert in Middle Eastern affairs, told Mussolini that there was a new Palestine emerging after the Great War: it was the Zionists who were going to change the country. Pedrazzi believed it was imperative for the Italians to deploy cultural diplomacy, and indeed economic measures, in order to work with the Jews “whether we like it or not”.⁴⁰ In the material perused so far, it is interesting to note that Pedrazzi essentially ignored Palestinian nationalism. Pedrazzi demonstrated the inconsistency of the Italian approach to Palestine: while openly supporting Zionism, he supported the Latin Patriarch Barlassina—openly anti-Zionist—but criticised the Pope and his approach towards the local Christian Churches. The Italian consul believed that the Vatican policy of supporting the local clergy and the Arabisation of the Church was an open challenge against the Italian character of Catholic institutions in Palestine.⁴¹ How, then, could a set of cultural policies be developed and implemented in light of this inconsistency? Liberals and early Fascists were all trapped into a loophole that limited any form of cultural diplomacy.

In order to show the limits and potential of Italian cultural diplomacy I present two small examples. The first case illustrates that despite the attention paid to cultural institutions like schools, consuls were better trained to care for the legal necessities of the same institutions. The second example shows the failure of the first fully funded and developed operation of cultural diplomacy through the opening of the Italian hospital in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, due to the war against the Ottomans over Libya in 1911 and later the outbreak of the First World War, the hospital never functioned as such and changed hands through the decades. Yet its architecture is still a visible sign of the attempt to influence Oriental culture.

“La Strada Delle Suore”

While perusing the papers of the Italian consulate in Jerusalem for the early years of the twentieth century it is striking to note how legal and other petty issues kept Italian officials busy. In 1901 the Italian government supported the opening of two colonial schools, one in Jaffa and one in Jerusalem. In order to avoid Ottoman restrictions on national institutions, Fr. Giannini,

³⁹ Arielli, *Fascist Italy*, 20.

⁴⁰ ASDMEA, Affari Politici, Busta 1460, Pedrazzi to Mussolini, Jerusalem, 19 May 1927.

⁴¹ See Giorgio del Zanna, *Roma e l’Oriente. Leone XIII e l’Impero Ottomano* (Milan: Guerini e Associati, 2003), 290–330.

the Custos of the Custody of the Holy Land, collaborated with the secular authorities in order to open these schools.⁴² While the school in Jerusalem never opened, the one in Jaffa was quite successful. The Italian authorities were hoping to create a school for Italians, but eventually the largest number of pupils were subjects of other countries, mainly local Ottomans.⁴³ In 1912 consul Senni requested Italian flags for the schools in Palestine. The ministry eventually sent ten.⁴⁴ These are indeed small examples of policies aiming at culturally influencing the region, yet the largest file in the same box is dedicated to a legal matter that may have compromised access to the Italian female school in Jaffa. In a sense this mirrors the weaknesses of Italian attempts at cultural diplomacy. Consular attention shifted often towards those areas in which they were most likely to be successful.

On 10 November 1910 Sister Maria Rufina, the superior of the Italian girls' school in Jaffa, contacted the Italian consul in Jerusalem reporting on a matter of urgency. This related to the attempt by Osman Nashashibi to close the road where the school was located in order to expand his property.⁴⁵ The question was a legal one that included decisions taken by the municipality and the *Meclis Idare* (administrative council).⁴⁶ The consulate provided Sister Rufina with legal and monetary help, yet Senni came to realise that the question was becoming a religious issue since the majority of the personnel at the administrative court in Jaffa was Muslim. Senni and the consular agent in Jaffa, Alonzo, also realised that there were internal political battles between the various administrative units and the Nashashibi family. The story is rather long and tedious but revealing of the low-level priorities of Italian officials in Palestine. Daniela Fabrizio is right to remind us that the Italian consuls until the end of the 1920s fully applied the principles of prudent initiatives and realistic ambitions: not exactly what was needed for the successful development of cultural diplomacy.⁴⁷

The Italian Hospital (Building)

While busy with the “strada delle suore” in Jaffa, the Italian consul was also occupied with one of the most visible forms of cultural diplomacy employed

⁴² ASDMAE, Pacco 11 (old catalogue), Italian Foreign Office to Italian Consul Scaniglia, Rome, 20 August 1900. More details about this are to be found in Fabrizio, *Fascino D'Oriente*, 285–290.

⁴³ ASDMAE, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Busta 11, Fasc. 75.

⁴⁴ ASDMAE, Pacco 11 (old catalogue), Senni to Italian Foreign Office, Jerusalem, 16 December 1912. The reply from Tittoni to Senni, Rome, 7 March 1913.

⁴⁵ ASDMAE, Pacco 11 (old catalogue), Suor Maria Rufina to Carlo Senni, Jaffa, 10 November 1910.

⁴⁶ Details of the administrative Ottoman structure can be found in Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem 1872–1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

⁴⁷ Fabrizio, *Fascino D'Oriente*, 36.

by the Italians: the construction of a hospital in the shape of a renaissance building, very similar to Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.⁴⁸ This was a major diplomatic operation that required the consulate to deal with the Ottoman administration and with the *Associazione per Soccorrere i Missionari Italiani all'Estero* (The National Association for Aid to Missionaries) that operated in lieu of the consulate. The history of the Italian hospital is a complicated one as its erection was first paused due to the Italian-Ottoman war over Libya in 1911, and later by the outbreak of the First World War. The hospital had been designed by the famous Italian architect Antonio Barluzzi, together with his brother Giulio, and was meant to bring a flavour of Italy to Palestine.⁴⁹ Senni, writing to the Italian Ambassador in Constantinople in March 1915—just a few weeks before Italy joined the war—noted that the inauguration of the hospital had been postponed as a result of the war.⁵⁰ Eventually the hospital changed hands several times before becoming part of the Israeli Ministry of Education after 1948. The virtual absence of information about this building and of literature dedicated to it is a sign of the failed attempt of the Italians to establish a health institution which was not only meant to provide medical attention to the local population and Italian residents, but through its design was meant to symbolise a visible Italian presence and influence.

FASCIST CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN PALESTINE 1934–1939

On 18 March 1934 Mussolini, while delivering a speech to the Fascist Party assembly in Rome, stated: “of all the great Western Powers of Europe the nearest to Africa and to Asia is Italy. A few hours by sea, fewer still by air, suffice to join Italy to Africa and to Asia It is not a matter of territorial conquests ... but of a natural expansion which should lead to collaboration between Italy and the nations of the Near and Middle East”.⁵¹

This is generally understood as the watershed of Italian activity in the Middle East: from reactive and limited intervention, to pro-active, visible and tangible forms of propaganda and direct involvement. Scholars, however are divided over the general assessment of Italian intervention in the Middle East in the 1930s. Italian academics tend to suggest that Arab nationalism and local Arab forces—as in the case of the Mufti of Jerusalem—were used as pawns in order to reach a general understanding with the British over

⁴⁸ASDMAE, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Busta 17, Fasc. 79, Ospedale di Gerusalemme.

⁴⁹Masha Halevi, “A Pious Architect and an Italian Nationalist: Antonio Barluzzi and His Activism in Promoting the Italian Interests in the Holy Land,” *Cathedra* 144 (2012): 75–106 (Hebrew).

⁵⁰ASDMAE, Pacco 11 (old catalogue), Senni to Marchese Garroni, Jerusalem, 20 March 1915.

⁵¹India Office Record (IOR), L/PS/12/107/2629, ‘Mussolini’s speech at the Quinquennial Fascist Assembly,’ Rome, 18 March 1934.

control of the Mediterranean. More recent Italian scholarship and Anglo-Saxons historians, on the other hand, argue that Mussolini had real imperial aspirations in the Mediterranean, seeking to make Italy a hegemonic power in the Middle East.⁵² While I cannot here engage in the interpretation of Fascist policies in the region, I believe Mussolini certainly tried to reach a general understanding with the British, but in the end Fascism was an imperialist ideology as suggested by the implementation of a series of cultural policies with the intent of favouring Italian imperial expansion. The major shift that occurred between 1933 and 1934 saw Mussolini and Fascist Italy supporting Arab nationalism and the rise of pro-Muslim policies. It is important to remember that this change has to be contextualised within the Fascist attempt to reconquer and legitimise rule over Libya. Since 1934 the Italian governor of Libya, Italo Balbo, pursued pro-Muslim policies in order to pacify the country and effectively gain consensus. These ranged from opening new mosques to maintaining high levels of hygiene in Islamic schools. Essentially these policies were designed to turn Libya from a source of embarrassment to source of pride for Italy.⁵³ The link between Libya and Palestine was a loose one and interests were different as Libya needed to remain calm, while Palestine should be “set on fire” in order to challenge the British. Yet, pro-Muslim policies in Libya certainly had the effect of showing Palestinian Muslims Italy’s goodwill and different colonial style.

The inconsistency of this approach, however, was of a greater magnitude. In 1934, while Mussolini began to flirt with Arab nationalists, including Hajj Amin al-Husayni in Jerusalem, he also met the leaders of the Zionist Movement including Chaim Weizmann. At some points Mussolini had no problems calling himself both the protector of Islam and the protector of the Jews.⁵⁴ However, throughout the 1920s Italian cultural activities also focussed on winning the hearts of local Christians in order to showcase “the new Italy” created in the post-war era.⁵⁵ This might have been true in general, but looking at Palestine we can certainly see a total lack of understanding, knowledge and relationships with the Melkite Church. Despite representing the largest local Arabic-speaking Catholic community, they were largely ignored. While defending the Italian character of the Catholic Church in Palestine, Italians essentially missed an opportunity to develop forms of cultural influence which might have found fertile ground. While this chapter cannot present a full analysis and assessment of Fascist cultural policies in

⁵²A good summary of this debate is in Arielli, *Fascist Italy*, 1–3.

⁵³Arielli, *Fascist Italy*, 96–97.

⁵⁴Claudio Segré, “Liberal and Fascist Italy in the Middle East, 1919–1939,” in *The Great Powers and the Middle East 1919–1939*, ed. Uriel Dann (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), 207.

⁵⁵M. G. Pasqualini, *Gli Equilibri nel Levante* (Palermo: Edizioni Associate, 1995), 146; M. Tedeschini Lalli, “La Propaganda Araba del Fascismo e l’Egitto,” *Storia Contemporanea* 7, no. 6 (1976): 722.

Palestine, I briefly show two examples demonstrating the weakness of Italian cultural propaganda, bearing in mind that the failure of Italian Fascist cultural diplomacy was not a weakness on its own but part of the larger failure of Fascist foreign politics. The first example is Radio Bari and the second one Italian relations with Zionism and the Jewish community in Palestine.

Radio Bari

Radio Bari was established in 1932 during the third Levant Fair, with an original purpose of broadcasting in Albanian and Greek, showing a clear interest in the Balkans.⁵⁶ Broadcasts in Arabic began only in 1934 as a result of the changing attitude of the Fascist regime towards North Africa and the Middle East. The purpose of these broadcasts was to increase Italian influence in the Mediterranean and throughout the Middle East and secondly to strengthen the ties between Italy and the Arab people.⁵⁷ These radio shows certainly fall into the category of cultural propaganda, as Italians were trying to restore their image in the Arab-Islamic world following the Senussi massacres, and secondly they wanted to show their interest in the region despite the attempt by Britain and France to overshadow Italy and the Fascist regime.⁵⁸ The newscast aired on 24 May 1934, for instance, included a discussion of the Arab Fair in Jerusalem, emphasising its positive results and large attendance—a clear attempt to gain local attention.⁵⁹ There is a good body of literature on Radio Bari, however the only full analysis has been provided in Italian by Arturo Marzano who argued that we should think about Radio Bari and its broadcasts in terms of soft power.⁶⁰ Radio Bari became the flagship of Italian propaganda in the Middle East and crucially in Palestine which was getting closer to a major outbreak of violence. The lack of competition, as noted by scholars discussing Radio Bari, essentially enabled Italians to reach large audiences. Is this a good criterion to look at the level of influence? Obviously not. For instance the popular Palestinian newspaper *Filastin* in an article published in 1938—when the Arab Revolt was already raging in Palestine—suggested that Arabic-language programs were welcomed, yet “the worst that we ate of this propaganda is the allegation that Radio Bari [has] all that influence over the movement in Palestine”.⁶¹

⁵⁶Marzano, *Onde Fasciste*, 44.

⁵⁷Callum A. MacDonald, “Radio Bari: Italian Wireless Propaganda in the Middle East and British Countermeasures 1934–38,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (May 1977): 195.

⁵⁸MacDonald, “Radio Bari”, 195.

⁵⁹Marzano, *Onde Fasciste*, 45; on the Arab Fair in Jerusalem see the chapter by Nisa Ari in this volume and Nadi Abusaada, “Self-Portrait of a Nation: The Arab Exhibition in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–34,” *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 77 (2019): 122–135.

⁶⁰Marzano, *Onde Fasciste*, 19.

⁶¹*Filastin*, “We Do Not Need This or That,” January 7, 1938. (Arabic).

In the end Radio Bari does not appear to have played a key role in turning Palestinians against the British.⁶² While from 1935 broadcasts became more and more anti-British in nature, possibly causing the audience to turn away from Italian propaganda, Radio Bari did not lose its appeal as the cultural shows aired were still favoured by Arab listeners.⁶³ These broadcasts included lectures from al-Azhar scholars on the history of Islam and legal topics. A number of conversations, in Arabic, discussed Italian and Arabic literature. The largest audience was probably captured through music as Radio Bari played a mix of Italian, classical and Arabic music, including numerous hits by Umm Kulthum.⁶⁴ These broadcasts were part of the pro-Muslim policies enacted in Libya and the Islamic world in order to gain support by showing the good face of Italian colonialism. Broadcasts were also followed by the activity of local Italian officials. For instance the Italian consul Quinto Mazzolini, in December 1936, was able to avoid the publication by *Al-Jamayya al-Islamiyya*—published in Jaffa—of a special issue attacking Italian colonialism in Abyssinia.⁶⁵ In 1937 Mazzolini tried once again to win the hearts of the Palestinians by suggesting free access to the agricultural and crafts schools in Italian Africa for Palestinians.⁶⁶ The response was negative as the governor of Libya, Balbo, believed that bringing Palestinians to Libya might have inflamed local nationalism, showing that political propaganda was a dangerous business.⁶⁷

While political propaganda essentially failed, cultural broadcasts proved to be very successful. The high standard of entertainment and the attention to the Arabic used proved to be very effective for Radio Bari. The British, as they themselves admitted, were simply not capable of keeping up with the quality of the shows.⁶⁸ Italy was indeed succeeding in presenting its new image as a positive one. Radio Bari was able to air programs that would merge Italian and Arabic culture together, yet we need to remember that Italians looked at Arabs with a sense of Orientalism that often, as noted by Marzano, blended the various broadcasts: in other words cultural diplomacy was once again a one-way direction.⁶⁹ Italy embarrassed London as their

⁶² Stanton, *This Is Jerusalem Calling*, 100.

⁶³ MacDonald, “Radio Bari,” 195–207.

⁶⁴ See Marzano, *Onde Fasciste*, 181–197.

⁶⁵ ASDMEA, Affari Politici, Palestina, Busta 30. Mazzolini to Foreign and Propaganda Ministries, Jerusalem, 4 December 1936.

⁶⁶ ASDMEA, Affari Politici, Palestina, Busta 15, Mazzolini to Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 27 May 1937.

⁶⁷ ASDMEA, Affari Politici, Palestine Busta 15, Ciano to Mazzolini, Rome, 29 October 1937.

⁶⁸ TNA PRO FO 395/560, ‘BBC: Overseas Intelligence Department’ and TNA PRO FO 395/561, ‘The British Broadcasting Corporation: The Arabic Broadcasts’, London, September 1938.

⁶⁹ Marzano, *Onde Fasciste*, 180.

programs were better and more successful, yet I would argue that focussing on “la bella figura”—the appearance rather than the impact—did not bring any positive result. While their broadcasts may have been indeed very good, they never scratched the surface and Italy was never seriously considered to replace Britain in Palestine.

The Protector of the Jews

As mentioned above, in the early years of the Fascist regime Mussolini looked upon Zionism with some favour. He met the leading figures of the Zionist movement and several times made statements suggesting Italy was in favour of the establishment of a Jewish entity in Palestine.⁷⁰ Things obviously changed in 1938 with the adoption of racial laws against the Jews, but more importantly in our context with the massive increase of anti-Semitic propaganda spread through Radio Bari.⁷¹ Anti-Semitism was not unknown in Italy before 1938, but it often remained within Catholic circles.

In this section I want to show the attempts made by the Italian government to create a cultural nexus with the Jewish-Zionist community in Palestine. As we saw earlier the major shift occurred with the appointment of Orazio Pedrazzi as consul in Jerusalem. The Zionist press believed Pedrazzi to be anti-Zionist as proven by the large number of articles published in several languages upon his appointment.⁷² Pedrazzi, as mentioned earlier, realised the importance of collaborating with the Zionists if the Italians were to have some sort of influence in the region. The idea of establishing a network of Italian Jewish institutions around the Mediterranean, with an Italian school in Jerusalem, predates the arrival of Pedrazzi.⁷³ However Italian Jews were not well organised, and these ideas remained as such.

The material in the archives of the Italian consulate in Jerusalem offers us a snapshot of various cultural operations designed by the Italians to strengthen their position in Palestine through the Zionist movement. For instance the Italians participated with a pavilion at the Levant Fair in Tel Aviv between 1934 and 1939.⁷⁴ In 1935 Consul De Angelis and the President of the

⁷⁰An interesting chapter on Mussolini and Zionism has been written by De Felice who argued that Mussolini distinguished between Italian Zionism and International Zionism, the first was to be mistrusted, the latter to be supported. Renzo de Felice, *Il Fascismo e l'Oriente* (Padua: Luni Editrice, 2018), 125–186 (reprint).

⁷¹Marzano, *Onde Fasciste*, 209–232.

⁷²For Instance: *Palestine Bulletin*, “Signor Pedrazzi Defines His Attitude Towards British Mandate and Zionism,” Jerusalem, 15 April 1927; *Israël*, ‘L’Italie et la Palestine’, 6 May 1927; *The Sentinel*, “Italian Fascism and its Attitude to Zionism,” 13 May 1927.

⁷³Fabrizio, *Fascino D’Oriente*, 374–376.

⁷⁴ASDMAE, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 190, Busta 28, ‘Fiera del Levante a Tel Aviv 1935–1939.’

Italian Chamber of Commerce in Jerusalem, Ruffo, argued that Italy should invest in a visible presence considering that Jewish Palestinian industry was going to be present at the Levant Fair in Bari.⁷⁵ Eventually Italy did not participate in 1936 as a result of the international sanctions following its invasion of Ethiopia, yet Italians were still very much interested and in 1937 once again displayed their products.⁷⁶ One may wonder why this participation was important for the Italian regime. Perhaps this was part of the larger effort to expand Italian influence; besides, Mussolini, while visiting the Levant Fair in Bari in 1934, “displayed deep interest in the exhibit of Palestine products and asked for detailed information on the development of Tel Aviv, the new harbour at Haifa and on the situation of the German Jews in Palestine”.⁷⁷

While economic activities followed the international context, cultural diplomacy was much more unrestricted. Unsolicited, Professor Chaim Wardi wrote on 25 June 1931 from Turin to the Italian consul in relation to the possibility of opening an Italian cultural centre in Tel Aviv. The same idea was expressed by Nahum Labunsky.⁷⁸ The initiative was also supported by the mayor of Tel Aviv, Dizengoff. It is quite obvious that the Italian government was trying in some way to tap into the Zionist movement, however it was also clear that this was part of a larger effort to develop forms of Italian cultural penetration in Palestine.⁷⁹ While De Angelis investigated Wardi and Labunsky, he was able to gather the necessary funds to open an Italian Library in Tel Aviv. On 30 December 1932 the Circolo degli Amici della Cultura Italiana was officially established in Tel Aviv, including a small library in 46 Jona Hanovi Street.⁸⁰ A year later De Angelis acknowledged the success of the operation, however he also asked for more material to be sent to the Italian library as it would be beneficial to the circulation of Italian culture and fascist ideology in Palestine.⁸¹ While the extent of the success of the *Circolo* and the library is not clear, we may speculate it had some impact on the Jews of Tel Aviv considering the various activities promoted, ranging from academic lectures to entertainment like music and dances. In 1938 the

⁷⁵ ASDMEA, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 190, Busta 28, De Angelis to Foreign Office Rome, Jerusalem, 21 August 1935.

⁷⁶ ASDMEA, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 190, Busta 28, De Angelis to the Direction of the Levant Fair, Jerusalem, 15 May 1936.

⁷⁷ *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, New York, September 7, 1934.

⁷⁸ ASDMEA, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 415, Busta 53, Chaim Wardi to Italian Consul, Turin, 25 June 1931. See also Labunsky to Italian Consul, Rome, 27 June 1931.

⁷⁹ ASDMEA, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 415, Busta 53, ‘Circolo degli Amici della Cultura Italiana’ 1931–1934.

⁸⁰ ASMAE, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 415, Busta 53, Report on the opening of the ‘Circolo degli Amici della Cultura Italiana,’ Tel Aviv, 30 December 1932. Honorary president was the Consul, Vice President Yakir Behar, Secretary Nahum Labunsky and Treasurer Chaim Wardi.

⁸¹ ASMAE, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 415, Busta 53, De Angelis to Foreign Office Rome, Jerusalem, 24 January 1933.

Circolo degli Amici closed as a result of the racial laws: funding and material were diverted to the opening of the Dante Alighieri Cultural Institute.

Parallel to the activities of the *Circolo* is the offer made by Israel Heller, a Palestinian-Jewish student at the University of Pavia, who contacted the secretary of the Fascist Student Organisation in Milan in 1932.⁸² Heller was offering to spread cultural propaganda to the Jews and non-Jews of Palestine, in order to disseminate fascist values and to make Italian fascism known abroad through the creation of “circoli” (clubs). The proposal was evaluated at the highest levels of the fascist government, yet the Italian vice-consul in Haifa, D’Acunzo, and the general consul in Jerusalem, Gabrielli, while praising Heller, acknowledged the complex divisions emerging in Palestine. Gabrielli made it clear that considering the demographics, it was important for the Italians to influence the Zionist movement, but at the same time not to show clear support for it.⁸³ While Gabrielli believed the action of individuals was important, the consul insisted that Italian cultural propaganda should be developed through the existing institutions—including the Circolo degli Amici della Cultura Italiana—but more importantly through Jewish schools where fascism could be spread while teaching Italian. Gabrielli openly acknowledged that it was important to link fascism with the revisionist ideas of Jabotinsky. Italians indeed invested a considerable amount of money and efforts in teaching Italian in Jewish schools, however in 1938 with the promulgation of the racial laws the relationship between the Italian government and Zionist-Jewish organisations and institutions in Palestine ceased, showing once again the inconsistency of Italian cultural diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

From the 1930s onwards Italian cultural efforts and propaganda in Palestine created a lively buzz among Arabs and Jews: Italy was talked about a great deal. Movies, newsreels, magazine, newspapers, cultural events and Radio Bari broadcasts reached a vast audience, yet, as Claudio Segré argued “to be talked about is not necessarily to be respected or admired”.⁸⁴ Italian cultural activities were not well organised nor well supported despite the various claims made by Italian politicians both in the liberal era and later under the aegis of Fascism. The years between 1936 and 1939 are a good case study as Italian diplomacy certainly worked hard to support the Palestinian Revolt both financially and through propaganda, yet back in Italy the Catholic press published angry articles against the Revolt, which was described as an example of Islamic fanaticism. It is not a surprise, then, that this inconsistency eventually led to

⁸²ASDMAE, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 417, Busta 54, ‘Proposte Propaganda Fascista dello Studente Israel Heller,’ 1932. Letter to Andrea Ippolito, Milan, 3 February 1932.

⁸³ASMAE, Italian Consulate Jerusalem, Fasc. 417, Busta 54, Gabrielli to Foreign Office Rome, Jerusalem, 27 May 1932.

⁸⁴Segré, “Liberal and Fascist Italy,” 209.

the failure of Italian support for the Palestinian Revolt. Besides, despite many believing that Palestinians were supporting Italy, the reality was that this was a myth, as proven by the numerous articles published by the Palestinian press against Italian political activities. It is fair to say that from 1935 onwards some newspapers adopted a more positive attitude towards Italy, yet this was dictated more by the principle of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” than a genuine support for Italy and its Fascist regime. *Filastin* in 1936 argued: “The Arabs do no trust Italy and even hate it. However, it is certainly possible to negotiate with Italy and to reach an agreement”.⁸⁵

While political influence proved to be a failure, I would argue that the deployment of soft power may not have produced the desired outcomes as a result of the visible inconsistencies and lack of appropriate support. However, the failure of Italian cultural diplomacy in the 1930s did not mean its full demise both in the short and long term. For instance, Italian is still a dominant language among the Catholic institutions in Palestine, and both the Custos and Latin Patriarch are still Italian. However, Italian cultural institutions cannot be compared to the quantity and quality of their British, American and French counterparts. Italians still rely on the work of EU institutions rather than their own. The concept of “bella figura” mentioned earlier seems to be still the leading principle of Italian cultural diplomacy in Palestine as shown by the amazing restoration of the Is’af al-Nashashibi Villa in East Jerusalem by the University of Pisa, now hosting Dar Issaf Nashashibi for Culture and Literature.⁸⁶ While the restoration is certainly visible, Italian influence remains limited.

Lorenzo Medici in 2008 argued that: “Italian cultural policy had remarkable success in this region. After the birth of the Italian Kingdom, particular attention had been paid to the Mediterranean, where, because of the presence of important Italian communities and, later, Fascist imperial ambitions, Italy improved relevant cultural relations”.⁸⁷ I am not entirely sure how he might have reached this conclusion, as if any success was achieved, it was the consistent inconsistency of Italian cultural policies throughout the decades and political regimes.

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⁸⁵ *Filastin*, November 7, 1936.

⁸⁶ See <https://librarianswithpalestine.org/featured-projects-members/family-libraries/issaf-nashashibi-center-for-culture-and-literature/>, last modified March 1, 2019.

⁸⁷ Lorenzo Medici, “Western Cultural Policy in the Mediterranean during the 20th Century,” in *Mediterranean Europe*, ed. Marta Petricioli (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 317.

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The International Centre for the Protection of Catholic Interests in Palestine: Cultural Diplomacy and Outreach in the British Mandate Period

Paolo Maggiolini

The establishment of the International Centre for the Protection of Catholic Interests in Palestine was one of those events in the history of institutions that begin with great ambitions and under the brightest auspices, but soon show their limitations, eventually erasing their traces and disappearing from memory. Nevertheless, its foundation provides a valuable source of information on the development of the views of local Catholic hierarchies of the condition of Christians in Palestine and the role of ecclesiastical and missionary institutions. In particular, it shows that the Latin Patriarchate did not simply operate within the strict limits of religious and missionary activities, but also concentrated on the field of cultural outreach, locally and internationally. With all the limits of the case, the International Centre can be considered a missing tile in the mosaic of the numerous activities undertaken by the Latin Patriarchate during the Mandate to position and develop the local Catholic community.

Although this initiative mainly emanated from the will of the Latin Patriarch, Luigi Barlassina, and it avoided the involvement of local Arab

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Catholics, it provides important information on how to conceive and understand the development of the local Catholic condition in the post-1929 Mandate political field. The International Centre's microhistory offers evidence of the attention that the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy in Palestine paid to the role of information, communication, perception and representation both at local and international levels. It also shows a nuanced understanding of the importance of the media and public opinion in modern society. Finally, it proves the gradual recognition of the strategic role of presiding over such fields, establishing spaces of exchange and outreach. At the same time, being directly supported by the Holy See, it represents an auxiliary source for understanding how the Catholic Church perceived and interpreted ongoing political developments in the land of Palestine during the 1930s.¹

In these regards, the following analysis focuses mainly on the first dimension, namely that of the Latin Patriarchate and its commitments to the defence of Catholic interests in Palestine.

Historically, the establishment of the International Centre as a non-profit organisation acting in Europe is particularly interesting because it aimed to develop an integrated scheme of coordination between Palestine and the international community, specifically through the medium of an office in Belgium where the Centre's official headquarter was established.² The International Centre was thus composed of two "legs" and one centralised "mind". Officially it was established in Belgium because it was considered the most opportune country in Europe, as is later analysed. The Belgium "leg" was then mirrored by a Palestinian office in Jerusalem directly under the control and management of the Latin Patriarch, Luigi Barlassina. He was the "mind" behind such an initiative and the one who was presiding over, supervising and, sometimes, concretely writing the material to be disseminated.

Such an organisation would have made it possible to disseminate articles, commentaries and op-eds in different languages (mainly French, but there is evidence of the use of Italian, German, Spanish and Dutch) through existing Catholic media outlets. Moreover, the Belgian office would also have organised thematic conferences to inform and aggregate consensus in favour of the Catholic Church in Palestine.

¹For a detailed analysis of the Holy See's views and understanding on the establishment of the International Centre see Paolo Pieraccini, "La Diocesi Patriarcale Latina di Gerusalemme, La Santa Sede e le Grandi Potenze dal crollo dell'Impero ottomano alla Seconda guerra mondiale (1917–1939)" (PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Firenze Facoltà di Scienze Politiche "Cesare Alfieri", 2008–2009), 551–558; Paolo Zanini, "Il Centro internazionale per la protezione degli interessi cattolici in Palestina," *Studi storici* 54, no. 2 (2013): 415–417.

²Archivi Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari (AAES), IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), "Centro internazionale per la Palestina", N.10814, letter from the Nuncio to Belgium, Clemente Micara, to Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Giuseppe Pizzardo, Brussels, 28 April 1932, f. 69.

The paper elaborates on this topic according to three different microhistorical axes, namely Barlassina's biography and character, the communication strategy and the instruments employed by the Patriarchate in Palestine (that can be reconsidered according to the idea of local cultural diplomacy) and, finally, the Centre's activity and main production between 1933–1935/37. Ideally, such a partition tries to deconstruct the project proposed by Barlassina in 1930 according to the key elements guiding the concept of cultural diplomacy, explaining the cultural milieu that contributed to the elaboration of the proposal, how the cultural diplomatic³ initiative was to be realised and, finally, for the sake of whom and what the Patriarch felt urgent to develop an International Centre dedicated to Catholicism in Palestine.

First, an analysis of the International Centre for the Protection of Catholic Interests in Palestine cannot avoid taking into consideration Barlassina's distinctive and strong personality and character. The Patriarch was widely criticised during his lifetime by the British authorities, Latin and Oriental Catholic hierarchies, the local faithful, Muslims and Jews.⁴ At the same time, Barlassina never held back from criticising or opposing whomever he considered to be limiting and undermining the status and position of Catholicism in Palestine. This attitude and position strongly influenced the Latin Patriarchate during the interwar period, and it provides evidence of the *raison d'être* for establishing the International Centre's project.

Secondly, contextualising the origin of the Centre from the perspective of the different communication tools Barlassina employed is useful to fully appreciate the project's role within the framework of the Latin Patriarchate's daily activities. In particular, this chapter briefly reconsiders two of the Patriarchate's cultural "devices" at the time, the Patriarch's pastoral letters and the Patriarchal bulletin *Jerusalem: le Moniteur diocésain patriarcat latin de Jérusalem* (today Archives diocésaines).

Although generally ignored, Barlassina's pastoral letters⁵ contain important elements to develop a parallel path in the history of the Latin Patriarchate and of the configuration of the Patriarchate in the land of Palestine during the Mandate. Clearly, they are important sources for appreciating his pastoral activity and the Patriarchal religious message. But I propose to look at them as useful sources to illuminate an aspect of the history of this institution and of the idea of how to organise and define the position, the boundaries and spheres of the local Catholic community during the Mandate. Founded in 1933, the year of the official announcement of the International Centre, the bulletin *Jerusalem: le Moniteur diocésain patriarcat latin de Jérusalem*

³David Clarke, "Theorising the Role of Cultural Products in Cultural Diplomacy from a Cultural Studies perspective," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 22, no. 2 (2016): 147–163.

⁴Pieraccini, *La Diocesi Patriarcale*, 101; Agnes De Dreuzy, *The Vatican and the Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Washington: CUA Press, 2016), 95–99.

⁵Archive Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Lettere pastorali (Pastoral letters).

is another interesting source of information for understanding the ratio of Barlassina's project in the field of outreach.⁶ Although it can be considered a traditional instrument of communication and dissemination, the timing of its creation is indicative of the Patriarch's strategic vision and of his idea of centralising and coordinating the Patriarchate's communications strategy, intertwining different levels and embracing multiple dimensions in order to consolidate its role as spokesperson for Catholicism in the Holy Land, in all aspects of the Catholic community's daily life.

The last axis of study focuses on the *raison d'être* for the establishment of the Centre and its activity. It reveals the Holy See's and Latin Patriarchate's concrete motivations to develop this initiative. It is by searching in the correspondence from its foundation that one can appreciate this initiative as an enterprise in cultural outreach and non-state diffused cultural diplomacy, at least as it was designed. In this regard, the timing of Barlassina's proposal and the personalities involved in its creation help to elaborate on this. The analysis of the establishment of the Centre offers a view of the different Catholic orientations towards local politics in Palestine because it involved a plurality of institutions at their highest level, from the Latin Patriarch (the promoter) to the Pope (who approved the initiative), the Secretary of State of the Vatican and of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs (who mediated its creation), the Apostolic Delegate (who was required to express his opinion and offer his vision) and the Apostolic Nuncio to Belgium (who concretely selected the members of the Centre, asking the Belgian authorities for official recognition of the institution). At the same time, this final level provides insights into the life of the International Centre and its functioning, or more precisely its shortcomings and dysfunctionalities. Through this axis, one can better understand what were considered the Catholic interests at stake and how they developed during the implementation of the British Mandate and the configuration of local political balances of power after 1929 riots. At the same time, this axis helps to elucidate how and to what extent cultural outreach was interpreted as a useful complementary activity to that of the pontifical diplomacy and the Latin Patriarchate in the spirit of pursuing and defending the position of the Catholic presence within the Holy Land.

THE LATIN PATRIARCH BARLASSINA: A TIRELESS FIGHTER

At the end of the 1950s, Joseph Hajjar published a volume on the history of the Melkite Patriarch Maximos III Mazloum, describing him as "a tireless fighter".⁷ Mazloum dedicated his entire life to developing and expanding the Melkite Patriarchate, inevitably entering into conflict with a number

⁶Archive of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (ALPJ), LB 9 *Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, 1930–1933/1935, Conferenze ecclesiastiche sui privilegi e le riforme necessarie.*

⁷Joseph N. Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable: le patriarche Maximos III Mazloum* (Harissa: Imprimerie Saint Paul, 1957).

of authorities and personalities throughout the Ottoman Levant and beyond. The relationship with Propaganda Fide⁸ was frequently uneasy, while his dynamism was regularly viewed with suspicion. Barlassina is quite similar. The Patriarch was one of “the tireless fighters” in Mandate Palestine and in the post-Ottoman Levant. He also had a complex personality, sometimes even controversial, with a rigid and strict vision of the world. In essence, Barlassina was one of those personalities who divide and polarise, so that Pieraccini describes him as the “troublesome Patriarch”.⁹ He frequently overexposed himself, going beyond hierarchies and roles.¹⁰ His activism and dynamism frequently turned into adventurism, multiplying the number of his enemies and rivals.¹¹ The Patriarch was attacked by Catholics in Palestine¹² as well as by the Greek Orthodox because he was considered a symbol of the will to “latinise”¹³ the Christian Orient. He was criticised by Zionists and Muslims, the former seeing him as an opponent of the Zionist enterprise, the latter often depicting his attitude as a foreign intrusion and will to control. At one point he was considered for removal because of criticism from the British authorities, who did not appreciate his activism. He had a very difficult relationship with the Franciscans and the Melkite Church, such that

⁸Propaganda Fide was the Congregation charged by the Holy See with supervising all missionary activities abroad and entertaining contacts with the Uniate Churches, namely the Catholic Eastern Churches as they were defined at that time.

⁹Paolo Pieraccini, “Il Patriarcato Latino di Gerusalemme (1918–1940): Ritratto di un patriarca scomodo: Mons. Luigi Barlassina,” *Il Politico*, nos. 2–4 (1998): 207–256, 591–639.

¹⁰The Apostolic Delegate, Gustavo Testa, sketched a vivid portrait of the Latin Patriarch Luigi Barlassina describing him as a man of agitated zeal. Archivio Sacra Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali (ASCCO), Latini, Palestina e Transgiordania: Patriarcato di Gerusalemme, 559/41 (603/28), “Ricorso contro Mgr. Barlassina”, report from the Apostolic Delegate, Gustavo Testa, on the Latin Patriarch, Luigi Barlassina, 4 March 1937.

¹¹The Apostolic Delegate, Testa, recalled that Barlassina entertained strained relationships with Greek Catholic clergy, religious congregations in general, the Custody of the Holy Land, Zionism and the Jews, and, finally, the Palestinian Government. *Ibidem*.

¹²On this the Archive of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches has preserved a conspicuous documentation. During the 1920s, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem was strongly criticised by part of the local Catholic community. The criticisms expressed by the Melkite Church are well known and documented. They petitioned the Holy See to dissolve the Latin Patriarchate in order to promote the Melkite Church as the true expression of Eastern Catholicism. Such positions were constantly revived until Vatican II. Less known are the criticisms from a component of the Latin Catholics both of Palestine and Transjordan, asking for the full Arabisation of the Latin Patriarchate. Regarding the first issue see: ASCCO, Latini, Palestina e Transgiordania: Patriarcato di Gerusalemme, 335/37, “Relazioni tra il Patriarcato latino ed il clero orientale”. Concerning the second issue see: ASCCO, Latini, Palestina, Latini Palestina Aff. Generali e Del. Apostolica, 417/Prop, “Movimento di scenofobismo contro il clero straniero ed il Comitato Cattolico di Betlemme”.

¹³Latinisation has represented a long-discussed issue in the relationship between Western and Oriental Catholicism-Christianity. In essence, it refers to the suspicion that Western Catholic missionaries were trying to transform Oriental Christianity according to the liturgy and the canon of the Western Catholic Church.

the Apostolic Visitor Robison was openly requested to investigate possible remedies and solutions to heal the fragmentation affecting local Catholics in Palestine and Transjordan.¹⁴ Finally, he was constantly supervised by the Apostolic Delegate, who recognised his integrity and dedication but never refrained from criticising what he considered Barlassina's limited diplomacy and prudence.

Nevertheless, his strong temperament made him an absolute protagonist in the history of Latin Catholicism during the Mandate. He served as Patriarch for 27 years, the duration of the British Mandate. Moreover, although generally ignored by the literature on Mandate Palestine, he was among those few personages with a position of responsibility in negotiating with the British authorities and local leaderships (both Arabs and Jews) for the whole Mandate period, having been nominated General Vicar in 1918, then Apostolic Administrator in 1919 and finally Patriarch in 1920, a position that he held until 1947. Therefore, he can be considered an important figure in the history of the struggle to define the future of this land.

He was totally dedicated to making the Latin Patriarchate a pivotal institution, not simply in the life of local Latin Catholics, but for Catholicism as a whole in the Holy Land and in post-Ottoman Palestine and Transjordan. In fact, he was also well respected and well thought of for his abilities and dedication. His antagonists and critics often became supporters of this complex personality. He opposed nationalist attitudes and was equally suspicious of Western foreign influences and Arab nationalist or Zionist ambitions. Nevertheless, he always mediated for and voiced the interests of the local populace, being considered by some Arab Palestinians an ally in their struggle.¹⁵ He was thus expressing a complex form of local patriotism, centred on the role and value of Latin Catholicism in the Holy Land. In this regard, he was both a "troublesome Patriarch" and a "tireless fighter" for the interests of the Catholic community in the Holy Land, equally concerned for the spiritual and material needs of his diocese.¹⁶ These were the coordinates defining his conception of what Catholic presence in Palestine was and how it should be understood.

The Patriarch perceived the Catholic community as existentially threatened and under siege both by external and internal enemies.¹⁷ In this regard, the 1929 Palestine riots were revelatory. Barlassina saw in this struggle, mainly

¹⁴AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 61 P.O, fasc. 64 (1925–1931), "Proposta per la nomina di un Visitatore o Delegato Apostolico. Nomina di P. Robinson. Sua missione," 2–6.

¹⁵AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 108 P.O, fasc. 103 (1929–1933), "Situazione in Palestina. Prot. n. 3457." Report from the Apostolic Delegate, Valerio Valeri, to the Secretary of State, Pietro Gasparri, Cairo (Zamalek), 22 December 1929, f. 5.

¹⁶APLG, GV-AG 1.7-1, Visite Canoniche Parrocchie, 1874–1957, "Visita pastorale in Galilea e Transgiordania di Mons. Barlassina, Patriarcha Latino," April–May 1923, Miscellanea.

¹⁷Archivio Sacra Congregazione Propaganda Fide (ASCPF), Acta, Terra Santa, Missioni di Palestina, vol. 291, pon. 14/VI/1920, "Rapporti tra la Custodia Santa e il Patriarcato. Disposizioni e ordini di Propaganda sui vari punti per un miglior andamento di quelle missioni," f. 280.

involving Jews and Muslims, the proof of all his concerns.¹⁸ In one of his first reports of the clashes, Barlassina explained to Rome that after the riots Christians had been increasingly isolated. Although he was praising them for their decision to remain neutral in the clashes, as the Catholic Church had always advised them to do, Barlassina was also pointing out that such behaviour was now harming Christians' position in the Holy Land. In this regard, the Apostolic Delegate Valeri was in perfect agreement.¹⁹ While he assured Rome that such behaviour was not producing negative effects for Christians dwelling in the rest of the region, Valeri pointed out that something was changing in the way that Muslims were looking at Christians in Palestine. They were now vocally criticised by Muslims, both in Palestine and Transjordan, and increasingly associated with foreign presences such as that of Britain.²⁰ In essence, Barlassina saw in the 1929 riots two overlapping, nefarious dynamics. On the one hand, the Zionist movement had grown stronger after the riots, showing its capacity to exploit tragic events for the sake of its political project. According to him, this was possible mainly because of London's negligence. On the other, Muslims and Christians were now divided with the former looking with suspicion on the latter after their neutrality during the riots of 1929. In his view, this growing fragmentation and isolation affected Catholics in particular.²¹ In this period of growing communitarianism,²² Barlassina began to reflect on the future of Catholicism in the Holy Land, and that of Palestine more broadly. In a long report of 1929 that the Patriarch dispatched to Rome, Barlassina made initial suggestions about what would become the project for an International Centre, proposed in 1930. The 1929 riots increased Barlassina's conviction that Catholics were doomed to be condemned to the margins of politics in Palestine. He could not accept such a situation. Barlassina was looking at a community increasingly ignored by the British authorities and viewed with suspicion by Muslims and Jews. In this framework, Barlassina brought forward two proposals to Rome. Firstly, he hinted at the possibility of exploiting the disgust aroused by the riots on the international level to mobilise public opinion to put pressure

¹⁸AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 108 P.O, fasc. 103 (1929–1933), “Relazione del Patriarca latino di Gerusalemme. N. 279/29,” report from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the Secretary of State, Pietro Gasparri, Jerusalem, 29 August 1929.

¹⁹Ibidem, f. 28. AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 108 P.O, fasc. 103 (1929–1933), “Situazione in Palestina, N. 56,” report from the Apostolic Delegate, Valerio Valeri, to the Secretary of State, Pietro Gasparri, 7 October 1929, f. 74.

²⁰AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 108 P.O, fasc. 103 (1929–1933), “N. 279/29”.

²¹AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 108 P.O, fasc. 103 (1929–1933), “Conflitti Sanguinosi dell’Agosto. N. 312/29,” report from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the Secretary of State, Pietro Gasparri, Jerusalem, 10 September 1929, f. 45r.

²²Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 98; Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 63.

on London.²³ Secondly, the internal disorder in Palestine could be used as proof of the failure of the British Mandate so that it would be possible to revive the idea of internationalising Palestine. In essence, the project of an International Centre for the Protection of Catholic Interests in Palestine developed from Barlassina's tireless activism, his top-down vision of how Catholicism should be defended and represented and, finally, his profound frustration and disillusion with local politics in Palestine after 1929.

THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE'S CULTURAL POLICIES DURING THE MANDATE

Although unique in the history of the Latin Patriarchate, the International Centre did not develop in a vacuum. It was a consequential, albeit adventurous, development of how Barlassina interpreted his role as Patriarch and of what resources and devices he considered necessary to fulfil his duties and objectives. This project would provide the Patriarch and Patriarchate with an instrument for reaching out to an international audience, independently from ecclesiastical hierarchies, establishing their voices and priorities. As analysed in the following section, in the mind of the Patriarch the International Centre should be a Catholic realisation of what Zionism had already developed. This can easily be considered a disproportionate ambition, as was noted by some commentators at the time, but these were the Patriarch's intentions.

Before analysing the International Centre's microhistory, it is worth here focusing on two spheres of Barlassina's activity that contribute to elucidating the bases on which the project developed and why at the beginning of the 1930s he suddenly proposed such an initiative. These are his pastoral letters and the two Patriarchal bulletins, the *Raqib Sahyūn* (1921–1940) and the *Moniteur diocésain* (created in 1933).

Although already an integral part of the community life of Latin Catholics since the revival of Patriarchate in 1847, pastoral letters became a tool that Barlassina widely employed to communicate regularly with the local Catholic community. Accordingly, the Patriarch interpreted the pastoral role of such an instrument in its fullest sense. Barlassina was a prolific writer. During the Patriarchate of Piavi (1889–1905) one can find in the Jerusalem archives nine pastoral letters (nearly one for each year of his service) and the same for his successor Camessei (acknowledging that he served as Patriarch during the Great War), Barlassina left thirty-two documents. One should bear in mind the length of each Patriarch's term of office (Barlassina served for 27 years, from 1920 to 1947) and the different political conditions at the time.²⁴

²³AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 108 P.O, fasc. 103 (1929–1933), “Conflitti Sanguinosi dell'Agosto. N. 312/29,” report from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the Secretary of State, Pietro Gasparri, Jerusalem, 10 September 1929, f. 45r.

²⁴ALPJ, Lettere pastorali (Pastoral letters).

But he was not simply distinctive from previous Patriarchs for the number and frequency of his pastoral letters. Rather it was his approach, style and the many messages conveyed in them that make such documents important for the present analysis. This is a characteristic that the Patriarch evidenced in all fields of activity. In this regard, two brief elucidations help us appreciate Barlassina's stance and rationale. On the one hand, he decided for the first time to publish his pastoral letters not only in the liturgical language of the Church or in those mostly spoken in the Patriarchate and diocese (Latin, Italian, French and Arabic), but also in English, the idiom of the political authorities, with the aim of establishing a clear and honest relationship with them, as he explained in his correspondence. His pastoral letters should not only speak to his flock but were designed to transmit his message to "all" Palestine. On the other, through his pastoral letters Barlassina promoted a precise idea of the Latin community's boundaries and spheres, in particular in the field of morality and education. Local Catholics should live within the firm boundaries of the community and the Church, refraining from involvement in militant politics or utilising services provided by other communities and non-Catholic institutions.²⁵

In this framework, the first pastoral letter published in 1920 can be considered a summation of Barlassina's future service in Palestine. In the letter of March 1920, Barlassina presented himself to his community, taking the opportunity to inform the civil authorities, the British, of how he would interpret his role.²⁶ There are two main messages condensed in the following sentence from his first pastoral letter: "We shall grant Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and We know, also Caesar will give to God what is God's due, whilst We warn all the faithful to bear in mind: *obedite praepositis vestris* [obey to your authorities], both religious and civil, because every authority proceeds from God".²⁷ Barlassina offered full collaboration with the British authorities. Nevertheless, he also outlined that this was in exchange for their full cooperation. At the same time, he invited his community to obey and respect the authorities, following the Patriarchate's orders. Barlassina would dedicate all his service to voicing these objectives. He committed himself to defending Catholic interests and Church autonomy against any possible limitations by the Palestinian authorities. He was also strenuously devoted to erecting precise community boundaries at cultural and political levels, holding centre stage in all possible issues concerning Catholicism. This can be considered a

²⁵ Regarding this issue see also: Karène Sanchez-Summerer, "Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine. Fear of Confusion or a Powerful Tool?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 2 (2016): 191–205.

²⁶ ALPJ, Lettere pastorali (Pastoral letters), "Aloysius Barlassina. Miseratione Divina et Apostolicae Sedis gratia. Electus Patriarcha Hierolosolymitanus. Ad Clerum et Populum. N. 1," Jerusalem, March 1920, 10.

²⁷ Ibidem, 11.

useful standpoint for reconsidering the significance and role of the outreach initiatives developed by Barlassina during the 1930s both at local and international levels.

Almost in synchrony with the foundation of the International Centre, in 1933 Barlassina also promoted the publication of a new monthly bulletin, *Jerusalem: le Moniteur diocésain patriarcat latin de Jérusalem*. This was devised as an instrument dedicated to collecting and disseminating information considered important for the life of the Latin community, especially in the fields of liturgy and canon law. As with the pastoral letters, the publication of a bulletin does not represent a particular innovation *per se*. Rather it can be considered the last tile in the mosaic of Latin Patriarchate's communication strategy. The publication of monthly or weekly journals by religious institutions was not unique in Palestine. Since 1921 the Franciscans had been publishing *La Terra Santa*. In the same year, the Patriarchate promoted its own publication, the *Raqib Sahyūn*.²⁸ Published only in Arabic, this journal was meant to provide regular updates on socio-political issues concerning the life of the Church in Palestine. Its function was thus eminently local, although copies were occasionally sent to Rome. In this framework, as emerges from the documentation preserved in Jerusalem, the foundation of the *Moniteur diocésain* served a slightly different need. It not only provided the Patriarchate with a new device within a new field, but it also perfectly combined with the mission that the International Centre would perform at the international level. First, the *Moniteur diocésain* was designed to act as a bridge between the Patriarch, the faithful and the different religious orders working in Palestine.²⁹ Accordingly, while pastoral letters guided the community's moral and theological dimensions and the *Raqib Sahyūn* provided Latin worshippers with more "mundane" information, the *Moniteur diocésain* reinforced coordination between the Patriarchate, the Catholic religious orders and, thus, the whole Latin community, dealing with liturgy and canon law. Moreover, it published excerpts of or information about conferences organised by Catholic institutions in Palestine dealing with related issues. Conferences were of equal importance for the quality and saliency of the issues discussed and for the opportunities they offered for exchange and coordination. For example, in 1934, while the International Centre was trying to establish itself, a number of conferences were organised involving the Patriarchate, Salesians, White Fathers, Carmelites, Franciscans

²⁸For accessing its issues see Arab Newspaper Archive of Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine at <https://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/en/Jrayed>.

²⁹ALPJ, LB 9 Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, Conférenze ecclesiastiche sui privilegi e le riforme necessarie, 1935, "Report of monthly conferences, 1934", miscellanea, 2. See also within the same box: "322/35, 6 Febbraio 1935", letter from the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, Cardinal Fomasoni-Biondi, to the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalme, Luigi Barlassina.

and Benedictines. The topics discussed went from the moral condition of Palestinian society and Protestant propaganda to the need to coordinate Catholic initiatives on personal status, schools, taxes and exemptions, namely the most urgent Catholic concerns, according to the Patriarchate's vision.³⁰

In this guise, the *Moniteur* was meant to be a sort of official magazine for the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. It was also envisaged to be read in public.³¹ The *Moniteur* established an alternative channel of communication to instruct Latin Catholics at the local level and coordinate the activity and life of Catholic religious orders. It was also a tool for providing authentic information on the Patriarchate's activities. In this regard, the bulletin was aimed at creating an autonomous sphere of exchange between the Authority, namely the Church, and all its components.³²

Therefore, the International Centre for the Protection of Catholic Interests in Palestine can be appreciated as a sort of culmination of Barlassina's activism, raising to the international level his aim of mobilising international Catholic public opinion to advocate in favour of Catholicism in the land of Palestine. As is analysed below, Barlassina designed the International Centre to be an instrument at his full disposal, reinforcing his idea of being the legitimate spokesperson of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. It was to become a tool for projecting his diplomatic efforts and transmitting his discourse at the international level. Therefore, while neither Barlassina nor the Latin Patriarchate fully developed a precise rationale or a fully organised strategy of cultural diplomacy during these decades, these initiatives attest to the fact that the Patriarch had a clear understanding of the political and diplomatic role of culture, knowledge and information both as defensive resources and as tools for projecting a precise idea of the role of his ecclesiastical institution and of the Catholic community within the Mandate political field. The International Centre was not just an alternative tool for echoing his messages. It was to be an innovation in quality and vision. The Centre would provide Catholics of the Holy Land with a tool in the field of cultural diplomacy as Zionism had already done. At the same time, it would offer a resource to balance what Palestinian Muslim leaderships were trying to achieve at the beginning of the 1930s with initiatives such the Islamic Conference convened in Jerusalem in 1931. As is analysed later, the International Centre should close the ranks of world Catholicism for the sake of Catholics in Palestine and it would remind British authorities, Zionists and Muslims that their interests in the Mandate were the same of those of world Catholicism.

³⁰ ALPJ, LB 9 Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, Conferenze ecclesiastiche sui privilegi e le riforme necessarie, 1935, "Séances Ecclésiastique, 27–28 Septembre 1934," 1–4.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² Ibidem.

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CATHOLIC INTERESTS IN PALESTINE AND ITS *RAISON D'ÊTRE*

As emerges from the archival documentation, the idea of founding an organisation to represent and defend Catholic interests in the Holy Land was probably already in Barlassina's mind in the 1920s. Although how to realise it had not been clearly expressed and conceived yet, the Patriarch was looking with concern to the Catholic condition within the Mandate political field. Barlassina had always been determined to have a say in all aspects concerning the life of Catholicism in the Holy Land. He placed no limits on his role and interests, conceiving the Patriarchate as an institution called to embrace the whole life of its community. The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of the French Catholic protectorate (1920–1924) imposed on Catholic hierarchies the duty of re-negotiating the position of Catholicism in the Mandate and its religious and political rights.³³ These tasks were perceived with great concern, particularly because Catholic hierarchies, and especially Barlassina, often suspected that British authorities favoured the development of both Anglicanism and Zionism to the detriment of Catholicism. In this framework, since the early 1920s Barlassina had shown a firm conviction that the defence of Catholicism could be achieved only by winning the battle for representation and ideas. In 1922, the Patriarch sent a report to Rome in which he directly expressed his concerns about recognition of a "Zionist committee" in the Mandate, lamenting the lack of a similar institution for Catholics.³⁴ According to his statements, this kind of institutional representation could have lessened the shortage of material resources and the weakness of local Arab Catholics' political influence, reinforcing Catholicism and providing local hierarchies with a formal channel to effectively negotiate with the British authorities.³⁵ Barlassina always looked with concern on the development of Zionism, in both the political and cultural domains.³⁶ Therefore, his strenuous battle for ideas began well before the proposal of the International Centre. As stated above, the 1929 riots can be considered the turning point in his mind. The riots polarised the Palestinian constituency,³⁷ and Barlassina

³³ On this topic see also: Paolo Zanini, "The Holy See, Italian Catholics and Palestine under the British Mandate: Two Turning Points," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 67, no. 4 (2016): 799–818; Paolo Zanini, "The Establishment of the Apostolic Delegation to Palestine, Cyprus, and Transjordan (1929): Cause or Effect of Changes in Vatican Middle East Policy?" *Church History* 87, no. 3 (2018): 797–822. See also: Roberto Mazza, *Jerusalem: From the Ottomans to the British* (London: IB Tauris, 2009).

³⁴ AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 6 P.O, fasc. 15 (1922–1939), "Prot. 235/22," letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the Secretary of State, Pietro Gasparri, 26 March 1922, f. 45.

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ On this topic see: Pieraccini, *La Diocesi Patriarcale*, 189, 193.

³⁷ In a letter of 1932, the Apostolic Delegate informed the Holy See that a new front of critics had recently opened against Christians in the Holy Land. Confirming the Swiss priest-journalist Mombelli's article in *Fidelis* regarding growing hostility towards Christianity in Palestine,

understood this dynamic as the sign of the inevitable marginalisation of the Catholic community in a struggle increasingly involving Zionism, Muslims and British authorities.

Proposed by Barlassina to the Vatican Secretary of State in 1930, the International Centre was officially founded in 1933. Its foundation took long negotiations and a dense exchange of missives between the Latin Patriarch, the Nuncio to Belgium, Clemente Micara; the Vatican Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli; that of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Giuseppe Pizzardo; and the Apostolic Delegate, Valerio Valeri.³⁸ The idea immediately caught the interest of the pontiff, the Vatican Secretary of State and that of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, despite their awareness of the challenges and risks of the enterprise. Before approving Barlassina's project, the Vatican focused on analysing and discussing two main issues, namely which should be the hosting country of the Centre and whether its foundation could prejudice the Holy See's activities.

Regarding the possible seat of the Centre, the Vatican fully took on Barlassina's proposal. He had not only proposed the project, but also signalled Belgium or the Netherlands as possible headquarters. The Nuncio to Belgium, Micara, was then charged with establishing which of the two countries was most suitable. After several weeks Micara suggested Brussels as the best place from which to coordinate the activity of this project.³⁹ The choice to establish the Centre in Belgium followed a precise rationale. It was a country with a solid presence in the international organisations of the time, and a Catholic country with a potentially broad audience, predominantly French-speaking, a factor considered of vital importance for disseminating articles and content abroad without excessive translation costs. The presence of the Catholic University of Leuven, with its 4000 students, also ensured an initial

he summarised the recent articles published by a new journal, *al-Ǧami'a al- Islāmiyya*, against Barlassina and Hajjar. He considered this new journal proof of Muslim will to develop an autonomous media in competition with the traditional newspaper *Filastin*, owned and founded by an Orthodox Christian, Issa al-Issa. AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 105–106 P.O., fasc. 101, "Situazione in Palestina. Prot. N. 1209," letter from the Apostolic Delegate, Valerio Valeri, to Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli, Jerusalem, 21 November 1932, ff. 46–46r.

³⁸The delay in establishing the *International Centre* was due to a number of factors, including an unexpected reshuffling of the Belgian government, the complexity of selecting appropriate members of the committee and, finally, the intricate procedure required by Barlassina who intended to screen his role in the project in order to present it as an original and independent initiative of willing Catholics in Europe. In this regard, the Patriarch imposed on the Belgian president the dispatch of a series of fake letters presenting the initiative to the Patriarch. In turn, he used them to describe the role and scope of the International Centre to British authorities. For a detailed analysis see Pieraccini, *La Diocesi Patriarcale*, 551–558; Zanini, "Il Centro," 397–405.

³⁹AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), "Centro internazionale per la Palestina," N. 10814, letter from the Nuncio to Belgium, Clemente Micara, to Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Giuseppe Pizzardo, Brussels, 28 April 1932, f. 69.

audience and the necessary intellectual resources to give substance to the project of outreach and dissemination. The Nuncio also pointed out that most Belgium journalists were part of the Association des Journalistes catholique. Micara specified that Delforge, director of the journal *Vers l'Avenir* of Namur, was also president of the Bureau International des Journalistes Catholiques in Paris, while the Catholic journalist Paul de Lantsheere was the president of the journalists' association in Belgium. Moreover, he considered it possible (as in fact happened) to involve Theunis, the Minister of State and a man of prestige with a strong relationship with the nuncio and an equally uncompromising opposition towards Communism, a factor of great importance for the Holy See, as is explained below. Finally, Belgium was a medium-size power without the overexposure of countries such as France or any concrete interests in the Middle East. Regarding Rome, its exclusion was considered self-explanatory, being the territory where the Vatican and the Holy See are located. It was also agreed to exclude Italy to avoid the risk of raising concerns in France.⁴⁰

As is confirmed by the statute of the organisation, most of these concerns were addressed in the first Committee of the Centre. In fact, Micara managed to win the support of first-rank intellectual and political figures: among the ten founding members, four were ministers of the Belgian government. George Theunis was the president, assisted by Henry Carton de Wiart, Prosper Poulet (both ministers of state and former presidents of the Council of Ministers), Firmin van den Bosch, a distinguished jurist who had been a judge at the mixed court of Cairo, and Fernand van den Corput, a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Regarding the second issue, there were three main problems that had required some discussion. First, the idea of tracing a parallel between Zionism and the International Centre's mission was considered too ambitious, if not disproportionate. Secondly, the convenience of such a project was doubted, given the fact that the Catholic Church was already well equipped to defend Catholic interests in the Holy Land thanks to its well-established diplomatic corps. Finally came debates over who should be involved and what would be the most appropriate vision driving the work of the Centre.

The archives show that an anonymous commentator called into question the opportuneness of this enterprise and its compatibility with the Holy See's diplomatic activity. In fact, given the nature and sensitivity of the issues and topics that the International Centre would deal with, it could never have been a simple organisation or a league made up of willing Catholics such as those which existed against blasphemy or the trafficking of women.⁴¹ The main

⁴⁰AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Progetto Centro internazionale,” N. 108/32, f. 57r.

⁴¹These were the examples proposed by Barlassina to perorate the establishment of the International Centre. AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Appunto Anonimo,” N. 750/32, f. 63.

concern was that its activity could overexpose the Holy See at the international level. This was considered a very serious risk for the authority and prestige of the Vatican. In fact, the anonymous commentator pointed out that it would be difficult to consider the International Centre as a totally autonomous project, independent from the Holy See. Any of its initiatives would inevitably involve Rome, directly or not, with the risk of forcing the Holy See to dissociate or comment, therefore taking a public position. Furthermore, the way the Centre was conceived by Barlassina could implicitly create many possible overlaps between its activity and that of the Holy See's diplomacy.⁴² In order to dispel such doubts, Pacelli and Pizzardo contacted the Apostolic Delegate, asking his opinion of Barlassina's project.⁴³ While agreeing about the project's potential, he was cautious.⁴⁴ Although he did not fully share the anonymous commentator's concerns, he did not oppose the project in principle but considered it wiser to focus mostly on the Holy Places, considering their status and defence a priority, to the extent of proposing to involve the Franciscans.

Barlassina did not ignore the challenges at stake either. The Patriarch was aware that his objectives would be difficult to achieve but felt that extreme urgency warranted the effort. It is also probable that he had made reference to Zionism without the real intention to emulate its organisation and scope, but to point out the level of ambition and vision that should inspire the Centre. According to him, the situation in Palestine was not simply dangerous for Catholicism. He was concerned that it could become even worse because of scarce or erroneous information at an international level about the Catholic condition and the challenges at stake. There was an information gap and a lack of concrete awareness. As seen before, the Patriarch could not accept that the future of Palestine would increasingly become an issue involving Jews and Muslims with no consciousness of the needs of Catholics and more widely of Christians. In fact, Barlassina understood that Zionism could never be rivalled, but believed that its strategy and modus operandi could be used as a model.⁴⁵

In conclusion, despite doubts and perplexities, the Centre project had aroused the interest of the Pope and of the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs. Both considered it

⁴²AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Appunto Anonimo,” N. 750/32, f. 63.

⁴³AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Progetto Centro internazionale per la Palestina,” handwritten notes, 10 February 1932, f. 59.

⁴⁴AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Progetto Centro internazionale per la Palestina,” “Proposta del Patriarca latino di Gerusalemme. Rapporto di Mons. Valeri (1932),” letter from the Apostolic Delegate, Valerio Valeri, to the Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli, 6 March 1932, ff. 61–62.

⁴⁵AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Progetto Centro internazionale per la Palestina,” N. 108/32, letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli, 2 February 1932, f. 57.

interesting in terms of outreach and dissemination, potentially beneficial because it was aimed at directly targeting and involving Catholic audiences outside Palestine.⁴⁶ The involvement of Micara helped to dispel many doubts and made the initiative more concrete and feasible. In fact, in 1933 the Patriarch was finally able to inform the High Commissioner, Arthur Wauchope, that his project was fulfilled. After years of thought and constant communication, Barlassina wrote to Wauchope that the long-desired aspiration of 350 million world Catholics to have a stable representation in Palestine had been achieved.⁴⁷ In his mind, the International Centre would now act as the manifestation of the interests and concerns of world Catholicism in Palestine and as the voice of Palestinian Catholicism at the international level. Almost immediately, the Patriarch proceeded with the foundation of the Jerusalem branch. As with the Belgian office, the Jerusalem Committee membership represented the Patriarch's idea of creating an institution expressing the official view of the Catholic Church in Palestine. He only involved religious personalities and superiors of religious orders, excluding local Arab Catholics. In particular, the Jerusalem office saw the contribution of Adolphe Perrin (of the Latin Patriarchate), Antonio Gassi (Custos in the Holy Land), Carrière (Dominican and Prior of St. Etienne, who left the Centre shortly after its establishment), Maistre (Superior of St Pierre de Ratisbonne), Sonnen (Lazarist) and, finally, the priest-journalist Mombelli.⁴⁸

Having analysed how the International Centre was established, it is necessary to focus on what would be its mission and code of conduct. As explicitly stated in its name, the goal of the International Centre was to defend Catholic interests in the Holy Land.⁴⁹ Although the nature of such interests was considered self-evident by the Patriarch (he had not been prolific in detailing them within his numerous missives to Rome), it is important to elucidate what Barlassina had in mind and how the Holy See understood his proposal. In the letter in which he first proposed the project, Barlassina explicitly described them as concerning all issues, laws, procedures and affairs pertaining, directly or not, to the life of the Catholic institutions in the Mandate and the personal status of Catholics dwelling in this territory. These

⁴⁶AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Centro internazionale per la Palestina,” letter from the Nuncio to Belgium, Clemente Micara, Bruxelles, 2 April 1932, f. 66.

⁴⁷AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Centro internazionale per la Palestina,” “A. S.E. l'Alto Commissario per la Palestina,” letter to the Higher Commissioner, Arthur Wauchope, from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, Jerusalem, 19 October 1933, F. 105.

⁴⁸ALPJ, LB 9 Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, 1930–1933/1935, Conferenze ecclesiastiche sui privilegi e le riforme necessarie, “Communication to the Higher Commissioner,” Jerusalem, 19 October 1933.

⁴⁹AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Progetto Centro internazionale per la Palestina,” N. 108/32, letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli, 2 February 1932, F. 57.

were substantially the rights and interests that at the time of the Ottomans were guaranteed by the French protectorate over Catholics. In early 1929–1930, Barlassina pointed out that, despite the formal commitments expressed in the Mandate, the British authorities were introducing innovations and postponing final regulations on vital issues for the life of Catholicism, especially regarding the fields of education, taxes and exemptions and marriage. This was occurring without a clear awareness by world Catholicism and international Catholic public opinion. Moreover, the 1929 riots risked clouding the concrete condition of Catholicism in Palestine. Therefore, it would be necessary to establish an alternative mechanism to exert diplomatic pressure on London, without putting the Holy See in a difficult position, and to coordinate the defence of such interests. As evidence of this, after the official registration of the International Centre in the *Moniteur Belga* and the exchange of a series of missives to show that it was entirely created by the will of Belgian Catholics without external influences, the Patriarch observed that in the gazette the name of the Centre referred to “religious rights”. Barlassina lamented such an inaccuracy, reminding the president of the Centre that he should commit to the defence of all aspects of Catholic life in the Holy Land. The strict reference to the religion was considered a harmful limitation for an institution called upon to defend concrete rights such as those pertaining to schools, charities and personal status.⁵⁰ Legal, political, material and religious dimensions should not be separated. These were all part of Catholic interests in the Holy Land.

From this standpoint, it seems that in the early 1930s the Latin Patriarch was not really interested in containing or confronting Zionism, an issue considered of far more concern by the Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Luigi Pizzardo, and the new Apostolic Delegate, Torquato Dini. In particular, containing Zionism was understood as an integral part of the wider attempt to confront the development of Communism.⁵¹ This issue had been highlighted when Micara suggested to the Holy See the name of Theunis as a possible president of the Centre. In 1933, the new Apostolic Delegate, Torquato Dini, reported to the Holy See that the economic development of Zionism and its evident proximity with Communism was the most serious challenge in Palestine.⁵² This alarmed Pizzardo, who wanted to know more. Accordingly, Pizzardo asked Micara

⁵⁰Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV), Archivio della Nunziatura in Belgio (ANB), n. 194, N. 562/33, letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the President of the International Centre, George Theunis, Jerusalem, 24 October 1933.

⁵¹In this regard, Pizzardo explicitly instructed the Nuncio Micara. AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Ordine di S.E Mgr. Pizzardo,” 9 November 1933. See also: Zanini, “Il Centro,” 414; Pieraccini, *La Diocesi Patriarcale*, 556–563.

⁵²ASV, ANB, n. 194, “N. 3726/33”, from Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Giuseppe Pizzardo, to the Nuncio to Belgium, Clemente Micara, Rome, 31 December 1933.

what the Centre was doing to confront such a challenge. The Nuncio was obliged to reply that the Brussels' office was obliged by the Patriarch to disseminate only contents previously approved by Jerusalem. The Centre was not autonomously doing anything on this subject. It is indicative that the article dispatched by Barlassina in 1933 concentrated on narrating the history of the protection of the Catholic Church's rights from the Ottoman Empire to the British Mandate, totally ignoring Zionism and its development.⁵³ During the following years, the Patriarch did not change his viewpoint. Although he made increasing reference to Zionism, its concrete developments and cultural influence in Palestine, Barlassina's standpoint remained structurally connected to what he perceived as a challenge because of the lack of sufficient protection of Catholic rights and interests.

It thus seems clear that for Barlassina, the Centre was not specifically against something or someone but should focus on outreach and dissemination, giving a voice to Catholicism in the Holy Land. As is stated in a pro-memoria preserved in the archive, as "the Jews had founded an Agency, officially recognised and seated in London, for defending their interests and fulfilling their broad projects", Catholics had founded the International Centre to articulate Catholic interests in the Holy Land.⁵⁴ Accordingly, the Centre would concentrate its efforts and resources on issues concerning the daily life of Catholic and ecclesiastical institutions in the Holy Land, without a specific "antagonist".⁵⁵ It would aid Catholics in the Holy Land, avoiding the Holy See's continuous involvement in petitioning for their daily rights so that it could concentrate on the Holy Places, a topic explicitly excluded from the Centre's activities.⁵⁶ These were considered a priority that Barlassina continuously reasserted. The International Centre was specifically designed to appear to the general public as an independent actor detached from the direct control of the Holy See and the Patriarchate. It was also devised to present itself as an authentic and spontaneous initiative of Catholics in Belgium so that the Latin Patriarchate would be left free to act behind it, without being over-exposed to the British authorities.⁵⁷ The Belgian headquarters were, in fact, viewed as a sort of necessary functional façade. The Patriarch clearly saw the

⁵³ Pieraccini, *La Diocesi Patriarcale*, 557–558; ASV, ANB, "Les Institutions Catholiques en Palestine," miscellanea.

⁵⁴ ASV, ANB, n. 194, "Pro-Memoria". The same document is preserved at ALPJ, box: LB 9 Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, Conferenze ecclesiastiche sui privilegi e le riforme necessarie, 1935, "Pro-Memoria".

⁵⁵ AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), "Progetto Centro internazionale per la Palestina," N. 108/32, letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli, 2 February 1932, f. 57r.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ ASV, ANB, n. 194, N. 562/33, letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the President of the International Centre, George Theunis, Jerusalem, 24 October 1933. See also: Archive Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, LB 9 Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, 1930–1933/1935, "Pro-Memoria," October 1933, F. 25, 2.

Centre as a non-equal partner in the project. Rather, it was to be a transmitter of contents and views that would circulate only after being expressly approved and confirmed by him and his selected entourage.⁵⁸ The Centre would be involved in any issues concerning Catholicism or its traditional rights, but it should also refrain from taking positions and disseminating content autonomously. Only Jerusalem could verify and express the extent of the issues at stake, guiding the Centre's communication strategy.⁵⁹ This was proposed by Barlassina and fully endorsed by the Holy See.⁶⁰ This would also be one of the reasons for the failure of the project once the Belgian office began to prepare excerpts of the long articles dispatched from Jerusalem to make them disseminated more easily.⁶¹ Such an act of autonomy, combined with protracted delays in publishing articles coming from Jerusalem, irritated Barlassina who progressively lost interest in his creation.⁶²

Finally, the International Centre was designed to follow a precise code of conduct.⁶³ It was clearly agreed upon to avoid fundraising, an activity already implemented by other institutions.⁶⁴ As seen above, it should avoid direct confrontations with local political actors, especially the British Mandate authorities.⁶⁵ It would also abstain from dealing with economic and financial issues in Palestine. At the same time, all its initiatives should be public and explicit to remind the British authorities and the Jews about its existence.⁶⁶ Accordingly, although the Patriarch never described it as such, he seems to have wished to develop a sort of local Catholic Church soft power through the establishment of the Centre.⁶⁷

The International Centre would be considered an instrument through which Western Catholics could express their concern and solidarity for Catholics in Palestine. It would thus attract support on their behalf, demanding the respect of non-Catholic nations.⁶⁸ From this standpoint, the

⁵⁸ASV, ANB, n. 194, "Riservata," N. 10813.

⁵⁹ASV, ANB, n. 194, "Pro-Memoria".

⁶⁰Ibidem.

⁶¹ASV, ANB, n. 194, "Lettera n. 187/34," letter from the Latin Patriarch, Luigi Barlassina, to the Nuncio to Belgium, Clemente Micara, Jerusalem, 5 February 1934.

⁶²AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), "Progetto Centro internazionale," "Foglio confidenziale con cui la Segreteria informa Barlassina di aver già preso iniziative presso il Comitato e il Nunzio per preoccuparsi di cosa il Patriarca riferiva," N. 3668/35, 18 October 1935, f. 128.

⁶³ASV, ANB, n. 194, "Pro-Memoria".

⁶⁴AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), "Centre International de Defense des Intérêts Catholiques en Palestine. Pro Memoria," N. 2, enclosed with the letter, N. 415/34, from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, 1 February 1934, f. 92.

⁶⁵ASV, ANB, n. 194, "Riservata," N. 10813.

⁶⁶ASV, ANB, n. 194, "Pro-Memoria".

⁶⁷Clarke, "Theorising the role of cultural," 148–150.

⁶⁸ASV, ANB, n. 194, "Pro-Memoria".

Palestinian office of the Centre would ensure a stream of approved information about local Catholics so that their condition could be known of beyond the territory and the region, entertaining a direct relationship with different international audiences (mainly French-speaking, but also Italian, German and Dutch), but always with the necessary prudence.⁶⁹ In essence, these were the elements that would substantiate the non-state diffuse cultural diplomatic efforts promoted by the Latin Patriarch.

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CATHOLIC INTERESTS IN PALESTINE AND ITS ACTIVITIES

The Centre's daily activity was to publish articles and commentaries as well as organise thematic conferences, serving as a venue for exchange and discussion.⁷⁰ These undertakings were performed according to a precise rationale. It is worth noting that such a logic also explains the Centre's shortcomings and the reasons why it had suddenly disappeared shortly after its foundation.

The International Centre functioned as a “content creator” without its own media but with a network of contacts to disseminate information and follow-up stories, developing knowledge and awareness and organise conferences.⁷¹ Initially, the Patriarch planned a monthly Bulletin and the establishment of distinct national branches, but these remained only a proposal.⁷² Although such a framework could have been an efficient solution to reduce costs and overcome the challenges experienced from shortly after its foundation, this rationale fragmented the Centre's activities, forcing it to bargain daily to publish its content. The result of conditions was that it is almost impossible to concretely measure the extent of its dissemination activity, but it appears episodic and unevenly distributed. On top of this, the archival documentation does not provide a systematic catalogue of the published articles, but only of the reports and texts drafted by the Jerusalem office which gave rise to them.⁷³ In this regard, the archives offer evidence of three

⁶⁹ALPJ, LB 9 *Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, 1930–1933/1935, “Pro-Memoria,”* October 1933, f. 25, 1.

⁷⁰AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Progetto Centro internazionale,” N. 108/32, f. 58.

⁷¹AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), N. 522/32, from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina, to the Nuncio to Belgium, Clemente Micara, Jerusalem, 5 October 1932, f. 97. AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Progetto Centro internazionale per la Palestina,” N. 108/32, f. 57r. See also: ASV, ANB, n. 194, “Riservata,” N. 10813, from Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Giuseppe Pizzardo to the Nuncio to Belgium, Clemente Micara, Roma, 2 April 1932.

⁷²ASV, ANB, n. 194, “Pro-Memoria”.

⁷³ASV, ANB, n. 194. ALPJ, LB 9 *Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, 1930–1933/1935.* AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936).

macro-set of publications that should have been disseminated through articles in different languages. The titles are: “the Catholic institutions in Palestine” (1933), a long article, almost a report, about the legal rights and privileges of Catholicism before and after the Great War, with a note describing the main points to be discussed in dedicated conferences; “Catholicism, Zionism and a Legislative Council in Palestine” (1935); and the “the partition project of Palestine is harmful for Christianity” (1937).

The last two topics dominated the Jerusalem office’s concerns. Between 1935 and 1937, Barlassina continuously urged the Centre to publicise the importance of granting representation to Catholics in the Legislative Council. The project of a Legislative Council appeared to Barlassina as the answer to all his worries. In his missives, Barlassina underlined that this sort of new Parliament would probably be based on the current demography in Palestine, without any respect for the traditional rights of its populace, in particular the Catholics.⁷⁴ The number of Jews was increasing, while Christians were already declining, as the 1931 Census certified.⁷⁵ In this framework, the British authorities intended to grant “all the Christians” only one single seat, against 6 for Muslims and 3–4 for Jews. This would have ratified the marginalisation of Christianity.

Such concerns grew following the publication of the result of the Royal Commission’s mission in Palestine. The text not only advanced the idea of partition, but it proposed to grant the Zionists territories densely inhabited by Christians, and especially Catholics. In the mind of Barlassina this would have inevitably entailed the exclusion of Catholics. They would have become a minority divided between two distinct political fields; their rights expropriated. In one report in 1937, the Patriarch clearly framed the condition of Catholics as that of a minority within a minority, namely Christian Orthodox.⁷⁶ The Patriarch had never before framed the condition of Catholicism as such, and this new approach to its status was not simply the acceptance of a “new” political grammar, but seemed coherent with the set of initiatives inspired by the Patriarch to gain recognition for and defend the rights of Catholicism. The International Centre should have reminded British authorities and public opinion that local Catholics could be considered a minority in Palestine, but that their rights and interests were those of world Catholicism. As seen before, these concerns were not new, but in the late 1930s the possibility that the Mandate would end without first fully recognising Catholic rights

⁷⁴AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Consiglio Legislativo,” N. 1050/35, letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Bralassina, to Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Giuseppe Pizzardo, Jerusalem, 8 October 1935, ff. 120–121.

⁷⁵Pieraccini, *La Diocesi Patriarcale*, 565.

⁷⁶ALPJ, LB 9 Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, 1930–1933/1935, Conferenze ecclesiastiche sui privilegi e le riforme necessarie, “Risposte supplementari 1140/37 al Rapporto 1085/37,” Jerusalem, 11 August 1937, 1.

was viewed with alarm.⁷⁷ In 1937, such an event was not so remote. In fact, while Barlassina was writing these words, the Royal Commission had already put forward the result of its inspections, underlining the impossibility of proceeding with the current state of affairs and thus proposing the partition of Palestine. In this framework, Barlassina used the word “minority” to stress the British authorities’ duty to fulfil their Mandate, protecting minorities in Palestine, and their material and spiritual rights. He also employed such a grammar to suggest that the Holy See highlight the failure of the Mandate to remain faithful to its duty to protect “minorities”, coherently asking for its revision and the internationalisation of Palestine, or at least the part mostly inhabited by Christians and where the Holy Places stand.

In this framework, the archive documentation helps to assess the International Centre’s activity. On the one hand, the reply from Rome to Barlassina clearly confirms that the words of the Patriarch were considered of extreme importance. Secretary of Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Pizzardo, asked to Barlassina to provide him with further information in order to be able to effectively negotiate with the British authorities.⁷⁸ Looking at these requests one can appreciate precisely the poor results of a Centre called to disseminate information on Catholics in Palestine. Pizzardo did not simply ask Barlassina to provide more information regarding the demographic distribution of Catholics in Galilee, Judea and Samaria. He also asked him to prepare a precise and updated list of rights and interests of Catholics, exactly the topics that the International Centre should already have disseminated. At the same time, although the Centre seems to have published a series of articles, the quality of these appears to have been quite different from those drafted in 1933. The archive preserves a sample of the original draft, written in Spanish, which is less concerned with providing concrete information and developing knowledge on the issue at stake. Rather, it is focused on mobilising public opinion empathically. Knowing that shortly after this article the Centre ceased to function, such a difference reveals that in essence Barlassina’s project had failed to materialise.

Similarly, when the Centre’s dissemination strategy is discussed, it mostly provides insights into the shortcomings in coordination between Jerusalem and Brussels. There are two examples that illustrate this. First, in 1935, while the creation of a Legislative Council was being discussed in Palestine, Barlassina proposed a communication strategy to win the maximum coverage possible on the conditions of Catholics in the Mandate. He suggested avoiding the sole publication of the drafted articles in Jerusalem. Instead, the Centre should use them as the basis for promoting different articles in order

⁷⁷Ibidem, 2.

⁷⁸ALPJ, LB 9 *Intérêts de Catholiques en Palestine, 1930–1933/1935, Conferenze ecclesiastiche sui privilegi e le riforme necessarie*, “N.3124/37,” letter from Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Giuseppe Pizzardo, to the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Bralassina, the Vatican, 7 August 1937.

to multiply their effects. He thus invited the Centre to ask Nunciatures to France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and the diocese of Westminster to publish the greatest number of articles.⁷⁹ These seem to be the countries and languages of the Centre's outreach activity. Accordingly, such an approach can be considered appropriate given the mission of the Centre. Nevertheless, it immediately fostered misunderstanding and tensions between Jerusalem and Belgium. The Patriarch desired the integral publication of the articles dispatched to Belgium. The European headquarters replied to Barlassina that it would be difficult to fulfil such a request. The articles were too long, and it was unlikely that journals would accept to simply re-publish old articles. Therefore, Brussels suggested that it should prepare excerpts to make their publication easier. This annoyed Barlassina.

A couple of articles published by the Austrian Catholic journal the *Reichspost* in 1935–36 offers another illuminating example. Although the articles explicitly referred to the Centre and its Palestinian committee, it is not possible to say if these had been directly requested or inspired by Brussels and Jerusalem. Nevertheless, they were quite successful in triggering debate in the contemporary media in Palestine. In fact, the articles were commented on by the *Palestine Post* and *Filastīn*. At the same time, this episode also offers clues regarding the International Centre's shortcomings and limits. The archival documentation shows that after the *Reichspost*, the *Palestine Post* published an article raising the idea that Italy was trying to interfere in Palestine by exploiting requests put forward by Catholic institutions in the Mandate. Immediately, a correction was sent to the *Palestine Post* to react against this distortion of reality. The “(anonymous) authoritative Catholic source” that sent the new article explained that the only interests of Catholics in Palestine were in defending their rights. There was no intention of engaging in polemics with British authorities and any attempt to search for external aid and support from other countries was excluded.⁸⁰ Beyond the content of the reply, such a correction is particularly interesting because it seems to contradict one of the founding principles of Barlassina's project. Although the Centre was meant always to work publicly, the correction sent to the *Palestine Post* was entrusted to an anonymous author (quite probably of the Latin Patriarchate or by someone in contact with it). In particular, it is indicative that the Patriarchate decided to adopt such methods instead of asking the Centre directly to publicly reiterate its vision and mission. This is revealing given the article's direct reference to the mission and code of conduct of the Centre. The International Centre's silence can be considered indicative of the internal difficulties that it was already experiencing during its first year of existence.

⁷⁹AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Riflessione su missiva di Barlassina e su proposta di strategia divulgativa,” 20 November 1935.

⁸⁰AAES, IV Periodo, Turchia, Palestina, 131 P.O., fasc. 115 (1932–1936), “Appunto,” Rome, 29 January 1936, f. 146.

In this setting, in 1937 Barlassina communicated to the Holy See his frustrations towards his long-awaited project. In his report, titled “How to defend Catholic Interest in Palestine” (1937), the Patriarch condemned the failure of the Centre in Brussels. Barlassina explicitly criticised the inaction of the Brussels office and its modus operandi. He could not accept the editing of his articles and their uneven dissemination. According to him, this chapter in the history of the project should be quickly closed with the aim of reviving it through the involvement of the International Young Catholics, who could have been asked to join the Centre. Nevertheless, the proposal remained unanswered, showing that the Holy See probably considered the project failed as well.

The balance of the International Centre’s activities is, therefore, quite meagre. While remaining an interesting initiative, innovative in character, it failed to impose itself as an alternative path to articulate the interests of Catholicism in the Holy Land. The reasons that brought about its closure only after few years are probably contained in its own code of conduct and organisation. It essentially remained a top-down initiative, fully controlled by the Latin Patriarch. He thus excluded the participation of the local Catholic faithful at any level and tried to close all spaces of autonomy to anyone who was not part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Palestine. In this regard, the *Reichspost* case is indicative. According to Barlassina, this rationale should have shielded the Patriarchate. Nevertheless, it instead undermined the Centre’s impact and narrowed its vision. The Centre and Barlassina exclusively committed to legal and institutional means, without giving a voice to local Catholics’ views and needs. In essence, it exclusively concentrated on defending the “tradition” (namely Catholic rights assured by French Catholic protectorate at the time of the Ottoman Empire) rather than seeking on articulating a new vision of the Catholic presence fully involving local Arab Catholics. Furthermore, the complex and fragmented procedures combined with the lack of a precise strategy, isolated and jeopardised its activities. In this guise, the Centre remained only an experiment and a first attempt at cultural diplomacy and outreach. The spaces for exchange and outreach were limited in numbers and quality and the Centre seems to have remained a mere symbol. This probably contributed to its disappearance from memory once it suddenly ceased to function, probably as soon as 1935 and definitively in 1937.⁸¹

CONCLUSION

Beyond the historical significance of such an initiative, the archival documentation on the International Centre provides a useful perspective from which to deduce the Catholic hierarchy’s understanding of the interests, issues and the challenges at stake, and their priorities for addressing them. It is a window

⁸¹ Last document preserved in the archive of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem dealing with the Centre refers to the Royal Commission 1936–1937.

through which to examine how the Catholic Church, at different levels, felt about the situation in Mandate Palestine, the challenges to the present and future status of Catholics in this land and, more widely, the role of international public opinion in the politics and diplomacy of the time.

The establishment of the International Centre and its analysis from the perspective of cultural diplomacy and outreach offers a different angle from which to research a parallel front in the political struggle for state, self-determination and existence in Mandate Palestine, namely the battle for ideas over political identity and the destiny of the territory, its communities and people. It also sheds light on the process of internationalising the Palestinian question from the distinctive perspective of a specific religious rite (Latin Catholic) at the heart of a precise denomination (Catholicism) characterised by a diverse presence, made up of Arab-speaking and non-Arab faithful, and under the direction of an institution that was part of a complex local and transboundary ecclesiastical network (the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem). Finally, this microhistory provides a circumscribed field in which to reconsider the complex dynamic of defining Christian, and specifically Catholic and Latin, essence, life, characteristics and conditions. The International Centre was, therefore, a project that cut across multiple levels. It not only involved a broad network of personalities and institutions in Palestine and abroad, but also intertwined two different, and unequal, levels of exchange. On the one hand, it was designed to be a voice from Palestine, a window opened to the international community that from below would present the “real” and “true” experiences of the Catholics in this land. On the other, as a consequence of the extreme centralisation of this initiative and the absence of native Arab clergy involved, the International Centre was inevitably viewed as a top-down enterprise narrating from above a specific idea of the identity, needs and challenges of the Catholic community in the Holy Land.

Barlassina and the Latin Patriarchate showed a great sense of modernity in understanding the importance of reaching out to different audiences with the aim of finding a position in the developing Palestinian question. He invited the Latin community to avoid engaging in concrete politics, maintaining a certain neutrality between the main political fronts. But, at the same time, he directly promoted the Latin Patriarchate’s voice, aspiring to develop a sort of soft power in the ongoing battle for ideas to defend Catholic interests. It is in this framework that these initiatives can be ascribed simultaneously to the fields of pastoral mission, communication, politics and diplomacy.

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A “Significant Swedish Outpost”: The Swedish School and Arab Christians in Jerusalem, 1920–1930

Inger Marie Okkenhaug

In the fall of 1925, the Director of Education in Palestine, Humphrey Bowman (1879–1965), was invited to the Swedish School in Jerusalem.¹ Also present were the school’s teachers—five Arab women: Warde Abudije, N. Halany, Hanna Abla, Bedea Haramy and Helena Kassisijeh—while Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson (1881–1958), renowned photographer of the American Colony and Swedish Consul General to Jerusalem and Signe Ekblad (1894–1952), the school’s headmistress represented Sweden in this transnational meeting. Having tea in the Scandinavian inspired, *hyggelige* [cosy] office, the party discussed the school. The Director of Education pointed to two things that had caught his attention during his tour: The children were clean

¹Humphrey Bowman had worked in the Ministry of Education in Egypt and had been Inspector of Education in the Sudan before 1914. Before coming to Palestine, Bowman had also been director of education in British ruled Iraq. This colonial background was to influence and shape British educational policy during their rule in Palestine from 1918 to 1948. See Inger Marie Okkenhaug, “*The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure*”: *Anglican Mission, Women and Education in Palestine, 1888–1948* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 60.

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and well-disciplined while at the same time they seemed happy and content. Bowman, who was known to be outspoken and not one to flatter, generously concluded that the school seemed to be characterised by an equal amount of love and severity.² During his years as head of education in Palestine from 1920 till 1936, Bowman would continue to keep the Swedish School in high regard.³ This is not surprising, as the Swedish School developed into a well respected and sought-after Arab primary school during the Mandate.

British forces occupied Jerusalem in December 1917, and a few years later Great Britain received an international mandate from the League of Nations to rule Palestine. The Mandate included the responsibility of securing the welfare of Palestine's inhabitants; both the Arab majority and Jewish minority.⁴ From the outset of the Mandate the development of education was characterised by a duality: there was a virtually independent Jewish system that included most Jewish children,⁵ and an Arab school system that was far from universal and consisted of government-controlled schools; the large majority being rural schools for boys.⁶ The Mandate authorities did not prioritise education for girls, and in urban areas especially girls' education largely became an arena for private schools (both Christian and Muslim).⁷

Due to the lack of public schools, mission-run educational institutions flourished and, unlike in Ottoman times, the mission schools during the Mandate period were independent from any government supervision. In the

² *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 1 (1926): 29.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians, the League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁵ In theory open to all religions, there were only Jewish children in the Jewish schools. The use of Hebrew as language of instruction enforced this separation. The Jewish system consisted of government supported schools, and schools under the Vaad Leumi (the Jewish National Council), and Jewish private schools, from kindergarten up to university level.

⁶ "A review of Educational Policy 1920–1932," by Humphrey Bowman, Bowman 2/2/10, St.AP, Private Papers, Middle East Library, St. Antony's College Archives, Oxford, UK. In Palestine Bowman gave priority to primary schools in the villages. During the Mandate period there were 75 missionary schools, fourteen British government schools, 412 Muslim public village and town schools, and more than 400 Vaad Leumi Jewish schools (secular and religious) in Palestine. Thomas M. Ricks "Remembering Arab Jerusalem, 1909–1989: An Oral History of a Palestinian City, its Schools and Childhood Memories," https://www.academia.edu/15767904/Remembering_Arab_Jerusalem_1909-1989_An_Oral_History_of_a_Palestinian_City_Its_Schools_and_childhood_Memories.

⁷ In towns, the Muslim children who received any education was, as late as 1935, estimated to be 75% for boys, and 45%, for girls. In the villages, 40% of Muslim boys received some education and only 1% of Muslim girls. From "Memorandum by Government of Palestine: Description of the Educational Systems, Government, Jewish and Private, and Method of Allocation of Government Grants, 1936," by Humphrey Bowman, Bowman, 2/2, St.AP, Private Papers, Middle East Library, St. Antony's College Archives, Oxford, UK. Enaya Hammad Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood. Encounters Between Palestinian Women and American Missionaries, 1880s–1940s* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, and London: Lexington Books, 2016), 13: The government schools provided education to approximately 20 288 students, with only 942 of those being girls.

words of Enaya Hammad Othman: “It was in this disposition that the missionary schools resumed under the Mandate with great power ...”⁸

The focus of this article is the Swedish School in Jerusalem, which was a Christian institution and one of the mission schools that made a significant contribution to Arab education.⁹ Based on published and unpublished sources from the Swedish Jerusalem’s Society’s (SJS) archives, private archives, Mandate government reports, biographies and travel literature, this article argues that while modelled on Swedish educational culture and to a large extent financed from Sweden, the school had a profound local connection to the Christian Arab community. The headmistress was Swedish, but the teachers were Christian Arabs. The pupils came from Arab families; the majority were from Christian families and Muslim pupils constituted a minority. Unlike most other mission schools, Arabic was the language of instruction. For the Christian Arabs, but also to some extent the Muslim population, the Swedish school represented a high-quality primary education and an alternative to British mission schools and Arab government schools. For the Swedish actors in Palestine and supporters at home, the Swedish school became an example of Swedish modernity exported to a less developed area of the world. Thus, while Sweden long had ceased to be an expansionist colonial power, during the 1920s and 1930s, its colonial ambitions—in the same manner as Danish and Norwegian colonialism—was to a large extent seen in mission-based welfare projects in colonial (and Mandate) settings.¹⁰ According to what Peter Forsgren and others have called “Nordic colonial thinking”,¹¹ Sweden as a developed European nation had a mission to develop Palestine. Even so, because of religious and ethnic divisions within Mandate Palestine’s population, the Swedes had competing ideas as to which population to target.

This article starts with a discussion of the SJS’ motivation for transforming a small kindergarten into a large school for Arab children in the early 1920s. In many ways, the “real history” of the Swedish School begins with the new headmistress Signe Ekblad arriving in Jerusalem in 1922.¹² It is thus necessary to look at Ekblad as the prime mover in the development of the school,

⁸Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 14.

⁹A.L. Tibawi, *Arab Education in Mandatory Palestine. A Study of Three Decades of British Administration* (London: Luzac, 1956), 76. The Arabs did not have the financial resources and the British government spent relatively little on education throughout the Mandate period, thus the demand for education among the Arab population was much greater than the Government schools could absorb.

¹⁰See for example Seija Jalagin, Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Maria Småberg, “Introduction: Nordic Missions, Gender and Humanitarian Practices: From Evangelization to Development,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 40, no. 3 (2015): 285–297.

¹¹Peter Forsgren, “Globalization as ‘The White Man’s Burden’: Modernity and Colonialism in a Swedish Travelogue,” *Scandinavian Studies* 91, nos. 1–2 (Spring/Summer 2019): 222–223. See also Johan Höglund and Linda Andersson Burnett, “Introduction: Nordic Colonialism and Scandinavian Studies,” *Scandinavian Studies* nos. 1–2 (Spring/Summer 2019): 1–12.

¹²Märta Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar* (Stockholm: Skoglund Bokförlag, 1931), 62.

both with regard to the board and the funders in Sweden, and to connections in Palestine. This article argues that the Mandate authorities' neglect of Arab welfare and education spurred Ekblad's focus on Arab education, despite opposition from the board and the funders in Sweden.

The second part of this article focuses on the female Christian Arab staff, their backgrounds and their interactions with the Swedish headmistress. I argue that Palestinian middle-class culture shared basic ideals with the values promoted by the Swedish Protestant headmistress, and claim that the educational culture of the school was more important to parents than its religious profile. This second part of the article also explores in what ways Arab society, including the Arab teachers, parents, and children, influenced the educational profile.

The school, however, did not only include Muslim and Christian upper- and middle-class pupils, but also took in children from poor Arab families. Despite improved living conditions among the urban lower and middle classes, many Palestinians lived in meagre material conditions. The school's policy was inspired by the idea of a "people's school", a *folkskole*, a free public school for all, prevalent in the Scandinavian countries at the time. Thus, finally I argue that the Swedish institution not only had bearings on relations between Christian Arabs and Muslims, but also on relations between children and parents from different social strata in ways that were unique among educational institutions in Palestine (Fig. 1).

BACKGROUND

With the establishment of the Swedish Jerusalem's Society (*Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen*, SJS)—an organisation with strong connections to the Swedish state church and king—Sweden became the only Scandinavian country with a national presence in Palestine in the period from 1900 to 1948.¹³ The organisation was modelled upon the German *Jerusalemsverein* [*Jerusalem Association*]. Even so, King Oscar II (1829–1907), who became the SJS' "high protector", insisted on the independence of the organisation. The SJS must not be part of the German organisation, but should represent the Swedish nation. As I have argued elsewhere, one reason might have been Sweden-Norway's position as a small state independent of international alliances. Being part of a German organisation might harm relations with other great powers.¹⁴ In addition, in Sweden and the other Nordic countries with

¹³The founders were inspired by new evangelical movements, in particular the British Lord Radstock. They belonged to the elite of society and had strong links to the Swedish royal family. See Gustaf Björk, *Sverige i Jerusalem och Bethlehem. Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen 1900–1948* (Uppsala: Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen, 2000), 13–14.

¹⁴Inger Marie Okkenhaug, "Scandinavian Missionaries in Palestine: The Swedish Jerusalem's Society, Medical Mission and Education in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, 1900–1948," in *Tracing the Jerusalem Code: Christian Cultures in Scandinavia* vol. 3., eds. Anna Bohlin and Ragnhild J. Zorgati (Berlin: De Gruyter Verlag, to be published in 2021).



Fig. 1 Signe Ekblad at her desk in Jerusalem where she would write her reports and letters to the Swedish Jerusalem's Society board in Sweden, ca. 1926. Image courtesy of the Swedish Jerusalem Society. <http://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/imageViewer.jsf?dsId=ATTACHMENT-0001&cpid=alvin-record%3A270063&cdswid=-6953>

a Protestant Lutheran state religion, Christian missions with their visual and written narratives of “the other in need” helped define Swedish (or Norwegian or Danish) identity during a time of competing national building projects in the Nordic countries. In their day-to-day management, the SJS was to have close connections with the German Kaiserswerth Deaconesses Institution and the Syrian Orphanage in the years before 1918.¹⁵ These German Protestants were the forerunners of today’s independent Palestinian Lutheran Church (in Israel/Palestine and Jordan), but the Swedes played a very subordinate role. They never had their own church in Palestine. This can partly be explained by the fact that throughout its history the Swedish organisation has to a large degree been ecumenical in character.¹⁶ The SJS started

¹⁵Gustav Björk, *Sverige i Jerusalem och Betlehem. Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen 1900–1948* (Uppsala: Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen, 2000), 15.

¹⁶Björk, *Sverige i Jerusalem och Betlehem*, 6.

out as a mission to the Jews, but even so, their missionary agenda was very soon transformed into a cultural mission which in practice meant education, health and relief work among the Arab population. Its original and continuous aim until war¹⁷ forced the school to close down in 1948, was to provide welfare to the people “in Jesus’ own country”.¹⁸

The Swedish school opened in October 1902, providing a kindergarten for boys and girls and the first two years of primary school for girls. It served as a pre-school for children who would later attend other mission schools. The majority of the 70–80 children attending the school were Christian Arabs and in addition there were a few Muslim girls. A German deaconess, Martha Klaer from the Protestant German mission school Talitha Kumi, supervised the local Christian teacher Afifa Sliman in running the school.¹⁹ “Since 1851, the German Protestant deaconesses had established schools in various cities of the Ottoman Empire with the intention of ‘uplifting’ local girls, the mothers of future generations through education”.²⁰ This meant that the Swedes’ educational partners were not only fellow Lutherans, but also well-educated with extensive and lengthy experience from welfare work in the Levant.

The board and supporters at home were not happy with this strong German connection and requested a more direct Swedish involvement in the school. This was achieved in 1909, when the school obtained its first Swedish headmistress, Helfrid Willén. This same year the Ottoman authorities officially recognised the school as the *École de la Société de Jérusalem*.²¹ The Swedish institution was part of the large body of foreign mission schools that dominated education in Jerusalem. In 1910 there were seventeen

¹⁷The war for Palestine in 1948 is called “The War of Independence” by the Israelis, while the Arabs call it *al-Nakba* or “the disaster”.

¹⁸Sune Fahlgren, Mia Gröndahl, and Kjell Jonasson, eds., *A Swede in Jerusalem. Signe Ekblad and the Swedish School, 1922–1948* (Bethlehem: Diyar Publishing and Swedish Jerusalem’s Society, 2012), 20. In 1903 the SJS established a hospital in Bethlehem.

¹⁹Uwe Kaminsky, “The Establishment of Nursing Care in the Parish. Kaiserswerth Deaconesses in Jerusalem,” in *Deaconesses in Nursing Care. International Transfer of a Female Model of Life and Work in the 19th and 20th Century*, eds. Susanne Kreutzer and Karen Nolte (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 83–85. Kaiserswerth *Orientarbeid* was founded in 1851 by Theodore Fliedner. This German Protestant organisation that became an influential ally of the Swedish mission, started providing nursing and educational services in Jerusalem in 1851. The organisation defined their vocation as evangelising among the oriental churches. In 1868 Talitha Kumi, an educational institution for girls, was established. Talitha Kumi still exists today.

²⁰Julia Hauser, “Mothers of a Future Generation: The Journey of an Argument for Female Education,” in *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19–20th Centuries)*, eds. Julia Hauser, Christine B. Lindner, and Esther Möller (Beirut: Beiruter Texte und Studien, 2016), 137, 147. Their school for girls in Beirut, established in 1862, was the most exclusive Protestant school for girls in the city.

²¹Björk, *Sverige i Jerusalem och Betlehem*, 28–29. See Okkenhaug “Scandinavian Missionaries in Palestine.”

mission schools, while there were ten Islamic and Ottoman schools, and one Palestinian national school in the city.²²

With the outbreak of World War I, the Swedes became even more dependent on German colleagues in running the school. The Germans, as the Ottoman state's central ally in the war, were allowed to stay in Palestine, while the Swedish staff left. The Christian Arab teacher Maria Harb took charge of the daily running of the institution, while formal supervision was given to a German woman, Gertrude Einszler, who had grown up in Jerusalem.²³ The Swedes' strong ties to the German Protestant establishments and people in Jerusalem were also demonstrated by the SJS' explicit sympathy with the German and Turkish sides in the war. In the SJS journal (in reports written by Gertrude Einszler) the British were portrayed as one of many conquerors.²⁴ Even so, with the British occupation giving way to civilian rule, the Germans had to leave Palestine. With the fellow Lutherans and close allies forced out (they were allowed back later) by the new rulers, the Swedes had to make their own way in Palestine.²⁵ What roles could they play? How did the school position itself in a British-ruled Palestine?

EARLY MANDATE YEARS

The end of both Ottoman rule and German political influence in 1918 forced the SJS to orient itself towards the new rulers of Palestine. The ecumenical orientation of the Swedish organisation meant that without major difficulties they could replace their close German cooperation with British Protestants. Thus, in order to prepare Signe Ekkblad—a primary teacher with experience from social work in Sweden—for work in a Middle Eastern country under British rule, the SJS paid for a three month course of mission training at Kingsmead, the Protestant Mission home close to Birmingham.²⁶ She then spent one semester at the School of Oriental and Asian Studies (SOAS) in

²²Ricks, “Remembering Arab Jerusalem, 1909–1989,” 7. Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 11. See also Rochelle Davis, “Ottoman Jerusalem,” in *Jerusalem 1948. The Arab Neighbourhoods and Their Fate in the War*, ed. Salim Tamari (Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Badil Resource Center, 2002), 10–29.

²³*Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 1 (1921): 32–33. Gertrude Einszler was the daughter of the physician Adolph Einszler, an Austrian Catholic citizen by birth whom had moved to Jerusalem in the early 1880s, converted to Protestantism, and worked in the Moravian Brothers' Leprosarium. He married Lydia Schick, daughter of Conrad Schick, the architect of the German consulate in Jerusalem. Lydia had an interest in popular Arab culture and beliefs, collected artifacts, and started writing ethnographic articles in the 1890s. See Suzanna Henty, “Stolen Land: Tracing Traumascapes in Four Leprosaria in the Jerusalem District,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* no. 69 (2017): 87–96.

²⁴Björk, *Sverige i Jerusalem och Bethlehem*, 41.

²⁵*Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 2 (1922): 36.

²⁶Selly Oak Colleges was a federation of colleges offering studies in theology, social work, and teacher's training.

London, where she studied English, Arabic and Oriental religion and culture. After arriving in Jerusalem, she continued her Arabic studies at the British Anglican High School.²⁷

Foreign mission schools were usually housed in impressive buildings placed in prime locations in Beirut and other cities of Anatolia and the Levant, and were “intended to project the image of a clearly superior European or Western culture”.²⁸ This was not the case with the Swedish institution. Visiting the Swedish School for the first time in the spring of 1922, Ekblad was shocked by the small and run-down building. The teachers and children, however, had spent much time decorating the classrooms and the youngest children greeted the Swedish headmistress by singing a song written by the Arab teachers:

It is so very kind of you
To leave your happy home,
And come out to us little wee's
For we're not only two or three's.
Fifty-eight we are in number ...

It is so good you left your home
And come to us out here
To teach us how to love God
Be diligent and clean.

God bless the work,
which you will do,
Here in Jerusalem
For little Arab girls and boys
To teach us sing and play.²⁹

To the pupils and teachers at the Swedish School it was clear that Ekblad had come to work among Arab children. This was not, however, such a clear-cut matter for the Swedes—to Ekblad herself, or to the SJS board or supporters in Sweden. Some among the latter, including Sweden’s prominent representative in the Middle East, Harald Bildt, ambassador to Egypt from 1922 to 1935, argued that the school should proselytise with the aim of converting Palestinians to Protestantism. Bildt wrote “an official letter criticizing the Jerusalem’s Society in strong terms”,³⁰ and he claimed that the

²⁷ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 2 (1922): 79.

²⁸ Michael F. Davie, “Local and Western Educational Institutions in Beirut: Topographical and Symbolic Dominations,” in *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19–20th Centuries)*, eds. Julia Hauser, Christine B. Lindner, and Esther Möller (Beirut: Beiruter Texte und Studien, 2016), 64.

²⁹ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 2 (1922): 35. My translation from Swedish.

³⁰ Fahlgren, *A Swede in Jerusalem*, 33. This letter was written some time in 1923 or during spring of 1924.

organisation damaged the name of Sweden. According to Bildt, both the school and the hospital were neglecting their primary duty of evangelisation.³¹

Ekblad was extremely upset with Bildt’s condemnation and, in a letter to the board of the SJS, she made it clear that she had “thought a lot about the complaints in the official letter from Bildt concerning our lack of evangelisation. But the question of whether we are evangelising here or not had tormented me already before his letter”.³² The young headmistress told the board in no uncertain terms what Swedish policy should be:

1. That one cannot and should not engage in missionary work in Palestine as one does in other parts of the world, since a large part of the population already belongs to Christian Churches;
2. That we as Lutherans should not try to win new members from any of these other Churches, but rather point to the treasures these Churches have without realising it;
3. That the task of the school in relation to Mohammedanism is to show the children, through Christian education but even more through the spirit and fosterage of the school, that Christianity is not words but LIFE and STRENGTH.³³

Ekblad concluded with a clear warning to the board: “But if the school, following Bildt’s prescriptions, should be judged according to the number of conversions from Mohammedanism and ‘conquests’ from the Greek Catholic Church, it seems to me that we will find it very difficult to reach a high standard”.³⁴ It was excellence in education that Ekblad understood to be Sweden’s mission in Palestine. But education for whom? That was the question the new headmistress took to the responsible body; the British Director of Education (Fig. 2).

“NEEDED AMONG THE ARABS” IN MANDATORY PALESTINE

Even if the British authorities did not interfere in the way foreign (mission) schools were run, it was important to be on good terms with the Department of Education, which issued a yearly grant to private schools.³⁵ For the newcomer Ekblad, it was vital to meet the Director of Education and get his response to the question of the future of the school. The official visit to Bowman reflects Ekblad’s professional ambitions and marks a change in direction for the Swedish institution, from an evangelical kindergarten/school to a professional education that aimed to find a place within the Mandatory system.

³¹Fahlgren, *A Swede in Jerusalem*, 33.

³²Ibid.

³³Fahlgren, *A Swede in Jerusalem*, 34. Translated by the authors. All other translations from Swedish are my own.

³⁴Fahlgren, *A Swede in Jerusalem*, 34.

³⁵Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 13.



Fig. 2 Signe Ekblad, teacher and pupils at the Swedish School, Jerusalem, ca. 1925. Held in Uppsala University Library at the Swedish Jerusalem's Society's Collection. Image courtesy of the Swedish Jerusalem Society. <https://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/attachment/download/alvin-record:294000/ATTACHMENT-0001.tiff>

When Ekblad called on Bowman in the fall of 1922, he greeted the young Swedish headmistress warmly, even though he had never heard of her school. Based on what she explained, though, he could immediately assure Ekblad that the Swedish school really did have a role to play in Jerusalem. The city was in need of more schools; especially ones providing kindergarten for Muslim children. His support and interest were also expressed by his wish to visit the school.³⁶ Using her momentum, Ekblad made her case to the funders in Sweden:

I do not believe our work is as needed among the Jews. Most Jewish children in Palestine have regular schooling. That is not the case for Arab children. The large majority of the Arab population is illiterate. In the small villages it is still the belief that girls do not need any schooling. That is why it seems to me that the SJS best fulfills its mission in the Holy Land by continuing to — as we have done — cater for the Arabs' education.³⁷

³⁶ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1922): 79.

³⁷ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1924): 101–103.

Ekblad included both Muslim and Christian Arab children in the Swedish educational scheme, emphasising that they were “needed” both among the Muslim population and the Orthodox Christians. Her decision to focus on the Arab population, and invest in the development of Palestinian Arab society, had deep political as well as social implications. Even so, her rhetoric when communicating with Sweden was, during these early years, in keeping with traditional evangelical discourse. Here Ekblad was merging the Apostle Paul’s vision on one of his mission journeys, of a Macedonia pleading with him and crying “Come over to Macedonia and help us” and Nordic colonial thinking, when she wrote: “We Swedes need to believe that our people have a special gift to bring even to the people of the Holy Land”.³⁸ The people of Palestine here meant Muslim and Eastern Christian Arabs. According to Ekblad, and in line with traditional evangelical views of Orthodox Christians, the local Christians of Palestine were described as having “limitless ignorance about the stories of the Bible”.³⁹ Thus, a modern, Swedish school was needed among the Arabs, not only from an educational perspective, but also as a means of promoting Protestant influence in Palestine. This endeavour included a national, Swedish responsibility to prevent Arab children from being educated in Greek Orthodox or Muslim schools, as argued by Ekblad:

We Swedes have started an evangelical enterprise in the Holy Land. We want to help and serve the people of this land. Should we refuse to accept the children that are trustingly sent to us, and whom if not accepted by our school will be sent to the Greek-Orthodox propaganda-schools or Muslim government schools? No, we should accept the children who are sent to us. It is not our task to judge among which of the populations of the Holy Land we are most needed.... Should we expand our school — as there clearly is a need for — or should we continue to be forced to let the children leave and go on to the Catholic or even Muslim schools? That is a question I leave for the friends in Sweden.⁴⁰

“The friends in Sweden” did over time accept Ekblad’s views on educating Arab children. The message the headmistress in Jerusalem transmitted to supporters in Sweden was that the organisation was giving the children of Jerusalem “a good and Christian upbringing”.⁴¹ In 1930, after a longer visit

³⁸ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 2 (1923): 97.

³⁹ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 3 (1924): 104.

⁴⁰ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 1 (1923): 6–7.

⁴¹ As I have written elsewhere, in 1927, as part of the funding campaign for a new school building, the weekly journal *Husmodern* [*The Housewife*], published a petition signed by four of the most significant women in Swedish society at the time, including Selma Lagerlöf whom in 1909 had been the first female writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. The petition encouraged Swedes to support the SJS’ work in Jerusalem, in order to give the children of Jerusalem “a good and Christian upbringing.” Okkenhaug, “Scandinavian Missionaries in Palestine.” See also Fahlgren, *A Swede in Jerusalem*, 50–51.

to the school, Swedish journalist Märta Lindqvist assured Swedish funders who might be worried at the lack of Protestant influence that “the Swedish School is a mission school, but not in the manner of Roman Catholic or American direct propaganda and attempts of proselytising. There are ... no attempts at conversion.....”⁴² The underlying message was that the Swedish mission in Palestine was to promote Protestantism through education and Swedish culture.

There were, however, Christian Arab communities that turned down the Swedish offer of education, among them the Roman Catholics. The Catholic community had a number of schools to choose from and might not have needed to consider a Protestant school for their children. That was not the case for the Orthodox Arab community, which was by far the largest of the Christian communities in Palestine yet lacked a “good school” in Jerusalem. During Ottoman times the majority of children at the Swedish School had come from the Orthodox Christian community. This was also the case during the Mandate: Orthodox parents sent their children to the Swedes, seemingly with their religious leaders’ consent.⁴³ In 1922, when Ekblad took over the school, there were 62 children; of these 43 were Greek Catholic 4 were Roman Catholic, 7 were Muslim and 8 were Protestants.⁴⁴

So far, the school had been free of charge and it had been a school for children from poor, mainly Christian, Arab families. Now Ekblad convinced her supporters and superiors (the SJS board) in Sweden of the need to support a more professional and modern school. The shift towards professionalisation was, as previously discussed, marked by close relations with the educational authorities. It was also apparent in the new policy of school fees. Ekblad introduced fees, but kept a number of free places for children from poor homes.⁴⁵ School fees were typical of Christian schools, which mostly catered for children from wealthier families including Muslim children from the upper- and middle- classes. Under Ekblad’s regime Arab girls were educated until they had finished fourth or fifth grade at the age of thirteen or fourteen, and were then qualified for further education at a secondary school, usually a British or American mission school. The boys had to leave the school at the age of nine or ten when they would continue on to similar schools.⁴⁶

By 1930 there were 150 children in the school, and the staff had expanded to seven Arab teachers, and one Swedish volunteer in addition to Ekblad. During the early 1940s the number of children had increased from 200 to 250, with ten Arab and two Swedish teachers; all female. By 1930 Ekblad

⁴² Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 74.

⁴³ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1924): 104. From early on Orthodox priests showed their interest in the Protestant school by attending the yearly Swedish Christmas party.

⁴⁴ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 2 (1922): 75.

⁴⁵ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 4 (1922): 100.

⁴⁶ Inger Marie Okkenhaug, “Signe Ekblad and the Swedish School in Jerusalem,” *SMT (Swedish Missiological Themes)* no. 94/2 (2006):147–61, 154.

was supervising a major operation, which was held in high esteem by the local community as well as the Mandate authorities. In the words of Lindqvist—bearing in mind her Swedish predisposition and admiration for Signe Ekblad—“The Swedish school has under the leadership of Ekblad gained an exceptional reputation. It has developed into one of the foremost places among the foreign educational institutions in the city”.⁴⁷ An institution with such a solid reputation would attract highly qualified teachers, which raises the question: Who were the Arab teachers employed at the Swedish School?

THE ARAB TEACHERS

In the summer of 1921, the Swedish school arranged a farewell party for Maria Harb, mentioned above, who had been the main teacher at the school for five years. Harb’s fiancé, Elias Totah, an Arab businessman, was also present.⁴⁸ Marriage meant the end of her teaching career and Harb was to be replaced by a woman named Helena Kassisijeh. By the fall of 1923 three more local women teachers joined the staff: Hanna Able, Warde Abudije and Bedea Haramy.

Both Maria Harb and Elias Totah came from Christian families based in Ramallah. Harb came from a Greek Orthodox family, while Elias Totah had converted to Quakerism.⁴⁹ Elias Totah was a nephew of the Palestinian pioneer educator Khalil Totah (1886–1955), who received a PhD from Columbia University, returned to Palestine and served as Government Arab College Principal (1919–1925), and as teacher and director of the Friends Boys’ School in Ramallah from 1927 to 1944. Another of the teachers, Bedea Haramy, also had a link to Palestinian educators. Shukri Haramy, a member of the Haramy family of Jerusalem (from Baq'a, one of the city’s middle- to upper-class neighbourhoods), became famous as one of the few Palestinians who established a private national school during the Mandate period.⁵⁰ Thus, teachers at the Swedish school belonged to the upper- and middle-class Christian families that valued the modern education which could be obtained in foreign mission schools.⁵¹ They came from the minute group of Arab

⁴⁷ Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 72. Signe Ekblad, *Lyckliga Arbetsår i Jerusalem* (Uppsala: J.A. Lindblad, 1949), 109. Lindqvist’s judgement aligns with the way one elderly Christian Arab I met in Jerusalem in September of 2005, who remembered the Swedish School. His sister had been a pupil at there in the 1930s. He had gone to St George, the Anglican school for boys. Both schools, he told me, were “the best” in the city.

⁴⁸ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1921): 66.

⁴⁹ Thomas Ricks, e-mail to author, April 27, 2019.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ In the SJS journals there are photographs of these young and middle-aged women from the classroom with children, in the playground with the youngest children or posing with the headmistress. These photographs are held in the SJS archive in Uppsala. They made a good and solid impression on Swedish visitors. *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1924): 97.

women who had received formal education before the war.⁵² The fact that the teachers at the Swedish School spoke “some English”, implies an education from an English-language mission school.⁵³ One of the most important English higher education mission schools for girls in the Levant before World War I was the British Syrian Training College in Beirut.

One of these pioneer teachers educated at the Anglican institution in Beirut was Munira Badr Musa (b. 1880). Jean Said Makdisi writes of her maternal grandmother:

It was at the British Syrian Training College that Teta (Munira Badr Musa) accomplished her metamorphosis from an ordinary young girl to that archetypical figure in modern Arab cultural history, the Syrian Christian schoolteacher. The powerful and transformative influence of these women was to be felt not only in the immediate region, in historic Syria, and the countries that are today Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, but as far away as Iraq and Egypt. Under their tutelage ... students were taught new languages and a new way of life, and were trained in an educational style more in harmony with Western ways than Ottoman....⁵⁴

Witnessing this transformation first hand was the Anglican educator and missionary Mabel Warburton (1879–1961), who had been headmistress of the British Syrian Training College in the years before the First World War. As one of the first British teachers to return to the region after the war, Warburton then became the first headmistress of the Anglican British Girl’s High School and Training College in Jerusalem. Warburton writes:

Amongst many changes which have taken and are taking place in Palestine under the British Occupation, a most remarkable one is the change in the position and work of women in the land. Before the war only a very few girls received anything in the way of a liberal education, and it is noteworthy that it was these few who almost immediately came to the fore when the work of building up Palestine began- as teachers, nurses and leaders in social work.... During the war financial straits and the conscription of young men had made it necessary for the girls of the family to work and to contribute to the family support. Girls trained in Mission Schools such as the British Syrian Training College and the American Girls’ School in Beyrouth, the C. M. S. Girls’ School at Bethlehem, The American Friends’ School at Ramallah, and the Bishop’s School in Jerusalem, were able to find work as teachers and nurses, and in many cases became sole supporters of their families during those terrible years of privation. This prepared the way for girls to plan for, and parents to reconcile

⁵²Tibawi, *Arab Education in Mandatory Palestine*, 229.

⁵³*Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1924): 97.

⁵⁴Jean Said Makdisi, *Teta, Mother, and Me. Three Generations of Arab Women* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 151.

themselves to, the idea of a professional career, which the latter had previously opposed to for their daughters.⁵⁵

Were these educated women Protestants? According to Laura Robson, “women in the Arab Episcopalian community had an unusual degree of access to schooling and often worked as teachers in mission schools”⁵⁶. This would also have been true for Arab women from other Protestant congregations, including the Lutheran congregations.⁵⁷ The Arab teachers at the Swedish school may have been Protestants. Certainly, they would have been educated and shaped culturally during their most formative years at a Protestant institution. Arab Roman Catholics did not send their children to the Swedish school, and it is highly unlikely that the school recruited teachers from this community. The Greek Orthodox community established their own secondary school in the 1920s, too late for the first generation of teachers at the Swedish school during the Mandate.⁵⁸ The strong link between the Swedish institution and the Arab Protestant milieu is reflected in the fact that the minister of the Anglican-Protestant congregation in Jerusalem, pastor Saleh Saba, was invited to give a sermon for the children and teachers on the formal opening day of the new school in 1926.⁵⁹

The teachers at the Swedish School and the headmistress shared a deep spiritual commitment that was nurtured during daily rituals performed by the staff. This commitment was not only related to faith but also to professional life, as observed by Lindqvist: “The local teachers are glowingly interested, eager and determined and the relationship between the teacher and their head is characterized by understanding.... Every morning before school starts, the headmistress and the teachers gather for a morning prayer in the teacher’s room. - one would not be mistaken to say that these daily meetings in silence is one of the primary forces of power in the running of the Swedish school”.⁶⁰

The sharing of prayers did not, however, necessarily mean that these women shared the same version of Christianity. Ekbлад was ecumenically oriented. The above-mentioned sermon before the official opening of the new school was, for example, modelled upon the Orthodox tradition of having a priest

⁵⁵“Women’s Education in Palestine” by Mable C. Warburton, 1923, (J&EM) XL/1, The Jerusalem and the East Mission, Private Papers Collection, Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony’s College, Oxford, UK.

⁵⁶Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas, 2011), 131.

⁵⁷Letter from Henrik Steen to SJS, Jerusalem, September 16, 1902. Published in Jan-Olof Johansson and Sten Norin, eds., *Född i Betlehem. Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen ethundra år* (Ingelstad: Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen, 2000), 148–149.

⁵⁸*Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 1 (1925): 12–13.

⁵⁹*Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 4 (1926): 192.

⁶⁰Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 70.

bless a new home before moving into a new building.⁶¹ Members of different Christian denominations in Jerusalem also met socially during “open house”, which were regular meetings organised by Ekblad at the school. By the 1930s these events also included Jewish guests.⁶²

Ekblad’s respect for and trust in her teachers’ Christian faith is also seen in the fact that teaching religion was left to her Arab staff. When criticised by SJS members in Sweden who wanted a Swede to perform what they saw as a most crucial educational task, Ekblad answered that the local teachers knew the children better than a foreigner could ever do, and this fact was instrumental when the goal was to best reach the young with the Protestant message. It might, however, also have been a question of language: despite diligent Arabic studies it took time for the Swedish headmistress to master the language fluently.⁶³

Another reason for Ekblad not to teach Christianity/Bible studies was the fact that she became increasingly a full-time administrator, spending most of her time fundraising for the building and yard that was bought in 1926, in addition to the new school building finished in 1929/1930. The Swedish headmistress’ large-scale and impressive fundraising efforts found resonance in Palestinian middle-class culture where charity and individual donations for the welfare of society was held in high esteem. The periodical *Al-Iqtisadiyyat al-arabiyya* [*The Arab Economic Journal*] for example, promoted “charity as a basic tenant of civilized conduct and social responsibility”.⁶⁴ Charity was also important to the Arab staff at the Swedish school. The Arab teachers and Ekblad created a sewing club and the products made at these meetings, mostly embroideries, were sold in Sweden and helped finance, among other things, the purchase of the new school building.

The female teachers were the first generation of Palestinian women to earn a salary and have the possibility of managing their own finances. Compared to the majority of Palestinians, who lived in poverty, these women belonged to an elite who, in the words of Sherene Seikaly, believed that “managing money ... was crucial to maintaining social norms. Thus, the editors of *Al-Iqtisadiyyat al-arabiyya* provided precise calculations for the saving and spending patterns of the model middle (class).... The most important aim of these budgetary prescriptions was saving, which emerges as the basic principles of a healthy and successful family.... Saving was a grave matter, and if

⁶¹ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 4 (1926): 192.

⁶² The Ekblad Family Private Archive, letter from Signe Ekblad to her brother Martin Ekblad, Swedish school Jerusalem, June 21, 1936. I would like to thank the Ekblad family for allowing me access to this material.

⁶³ Sofia Häggman, *Hilma Granqvist. Antropolog med Hjärta i Palestina* (Helsingfors: Svenska folkskolans vänner, 2016).

⁶⁴ Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital. Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 61.

ignored, the individual would incur harm on ‘himself, his family, and his surroundings’”.⁶⁵

According to Said Makdisi, Munira Badr Musa was responsible for the family budget and gained great respect for her control of family and their church’s finances (her husband was a Baptist minister in Nazareth in the 1920s). This skill she might have learned at the Protestant mission schools she attended. Ekblad also eagerly promoted budgeting one’s finances and the importance of saving. She encouraged her staff members to open savings accounts and place their money in the bank.⁶⁶ According to Seikaly, the editors of *Al-Iqtisadiyyat* claimed that “Economic conduct would be a source of personal empowerment and great individual benefit. But the advantages were even broader. Accumulating and saving money was a national obligation”⁶⁷. When Ekblad introduced the art of saving money and opening a saving account not only to her Arab staff, but also to the pupils, she was encouraging Palestinian nation-building (Fig. 3).

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: EXPECTATIONS AND ATTRACTIONS

In the years after World War I, during the period of British rule, Jerusalem developed into a cosmopolitan and modern city. In this process of economic and social growth the rise in the general level of education played a major part.⁶⁸ According to Seikaly, it was precisely a certain level of education that was the defining component of this middle class: “It was the educational status of the man of the household that, above all, defined the Palestinian middle class”.⁶⁹ It was the men who “were responsible for the financial and ‘cultural’ needs of the middle-class family”.⁷⁰ Even so, in order to have educated men one needed educated mothers.⁷¹ This fact was reflected in the number of fathers who visited the Swedish institution looking for a suitable primary school for their daughters, and kindergarten and lower-class education for their sons. Fathers (sometimes with their wives) came with their young children to inspect the premises before deciding which school to choose for their offspring. The fathers also attended the annual Christmas

⁶⁵Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 60–61.

⁶⁶Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 70.

⁶⁷Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 61–62. The periodical *Al-Iqtisadiyyat al-arabiyya* [*The Arab Economic Journal*] “was a journal on the margins of social life, run by a group of men who would become among the most important contractors, bankers, investors, and accountants in the Middle East,” (55).

⁶⁸Davis, “The Growth of the Western Communities,” 39.

⁶⁹Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 58.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹On educated mothers as a major theme in Middle Eastern nationalism, see for example Ellen Fleischmann. *The Nation and its “New” Women. The Palestinian Women’s Movement, 1920–1948* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003).



Fig. 3 Teachers and headmistress Ekblad at the Swedish School. Caption written on the back of the photo: "We teachers in Jerusalem, Christmas 1936". Held in Uppsala University Library at the Swedish Jerusalem's Society's Collection. Image courtesy of the Swedish Jerusalem Society. <http://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/view.jsp?pid=alvin-record%3A93016&cdswid=1244>

parties, and they were invited to a separate party together with non-Palestinian guests, in order not to infringe on traditions of seclusion.⁷²

What did these fathers and their wives expect from the Swedish School? There were two main items on their wish list: Before the war Arabic had been the only language of instruction at the Swedish school. From the very beginning of the Mandate, however, with English becoming one of the three official languages in Palestine, parents wanted English as a subject for their children. The Swedes responded quickly by hiring Arab teachers who were able to teach English—that is, women educated in one of the American or British Protestant mission schools of the Levant. In addition, Ekblad also taught English.

The second desire of many parents was more comprehensive: They wanted the school to become an accredited primary school with a kindergarten, something that would secure pupils access to higher educational institutions.⁷³

⁷² Okkenhaug, "Scandinavian Missionaries in Palestine."

⁷³ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 2 (1928): 36.

Jerusalem was a buyers' market when it came to Christian schools. Children and parents could choose between a number of Christian establishments, and pupils could quit school in the middle of term to start a new one that seemed to be more attractive. Thus, in order to be competitive, and not least because of Ekblad's ambitions, the Swedish institution had become an official primary school by 1926, when they moved into their own building.

The purchase of a spacious Arab private home and garden was made possible partly because of a generous donation from the founder of the SJS, Bishop Knut Henning G. von Schéele (1838–1920) and his wife, Anna Ekman Schéele (1850–1925). Thanks to the von Schéeles the SJS was able to buy a suitable building and a large plot of land in Musrara, a wealthy Christian Arab neighbourhood just north of the Damascus Gate. The neighbourhood's history stemmed from the nineteenth century when wealthy Arabs had opted to live outside the city wall and built large, luxurious mansions in this area: The Swedish School had found a stately neighbourhood with close proximity to their main users. From the rooftop of the school one could overlook the old city of Jerusalem and beyond. Michael F. Davie has analysed the particular topographic locations of mission schools in Beirut, arguing that: “The location of these institutions seems to have not been left to chance”⁷⁴ This was true for the new location of the Swedish school, which was found and purchased with the help of the Swedish consul in Jerusalem, the aforementioned Lars Hol Larsen, who having grown up in the city had a deep local knowledge.

On these new premises, the Swedish school added a factor to its attractions: a modern and spacious playground. This outdoor area, where the youngest children could play, and a yard where the older children would do gymnastics, was part of the Swedish educational philosophy.⁷⁵ The new swings and seesaws, not found in many other school yards, were also extremely effective in attracting the youngest pupils. When Ekblad introduced a dramatic change to the school's daily schedule—the children went from having a long break in the middle of the day to a Swedish school day (with lunch at school and an earlier finish)—the playground was open for children in the afternoons. This made the fact that there was no school in the afternoon easier to accept for parents. The schoolyard was also popular in the early mornings before classes. By 6:30 in the morning many of the schoolboys played football in the yard.⁷⁶ This yard and playground was open to all children, not only pupils at the school, thus contributing to the general welfare of Arab children in the neighbourhood.

At the time of the move to the new building there were 106 children in the school. Among the older girls finishing in the spring of 1927, two would

⁷⁴Davie, “Local and Western Educational Institutions in Beirut,” 50–51. Davie mentions the lack of historical research on mission buildings in the Levant.

⁷⁵Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 75.

⁷⁶Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens *Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1927): 111.

continue on to the Jerusalem Girls' College and two on to the American Friends' School in Ramallah.⁷⁷ This was in line with Ekblad's vision of the role of the school: "The English and Americans have excellent schools for higher level education. That is why I believe we Swedes should, through limiting ourselves to a good kindergarten and primary school, create a good base for those children who later would be able to continue to study".⁷⁸ The Swedish School was by now an acknowledged part of the Christian educational system and cooperated with the important Protestant schools. The fact that Ekblad was a member of the educational committee of the United Missionary Council (the Organisation of Protestant Missions in Palestine and Syria) strengthened the Swedish role in the Christian educational community.⁷⁹

The majority of pupils continued to come from the Christian middle class. During the 1920s, however, there was a relatively large increase in the number of fee-paying Muslim students. Muslim parents wanted their children to be exempted from Christian lessons and some wanted Koran lessons, but neither the board in Uppsala or Ekblad saw this as acceptable in a Swedish school. Even so, the number of Muslim pupils kept increasing.⁸⁰ Among the Muslim pupils were children from prominent Jerusalem families; two of the first Muslim pupils were sons of the head of the Moslem Orphanage in Jerusalem. This was a case of interfaith marriage, with a Muslim father and a mother who belonged to the Protestant congregation. Even so, there were also Muslim pupils with no Christian connection attending the school. The Nashashibi family, for example, sent several children, including a nephew of Jerusalem's governor, to the Swedish School. The fact that the major's close relatives were attending the Swedish school was a great recommendation for the institution among the Muslim population.⁸¹

The Swedish School did not, however, only cater for middle-class families, it also wanted to reach out to the poorer part of the population. The focus on the underprivileged stemmed from the school policy before the war, when all pupils had come from impoverished families. In addition, Ekblad's experience from social work in poor neighbourhoods in Stockholm made her educational program give "the poor pupils, whom after finishing our school, have to work or go back to their home, good knowledge in the usual school

⁷⁷ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 4 (1927): 128.

⁷⁸ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 4 (1927): 129.

⁷⁹ Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 74.

⁸⁰ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 1 (1927): 21. Report from John Adler who visited the Swedish school. In a letter to Adler, Ekblad explained that the school experienced a large increase in Muslim children, despite the fact that Muslim parents wanted their children to be exempted from Christian lessons. The school did not accommodate these demands, even so, the number of Muslim pupils kept increasing.

⁸¹ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 1 (1923): 5–7.



Fig. 4 “School children playing in the school yard at the Swedish School, ca. 1930” Held in Uppsala University Library at the Swedish Jerusalem’s Society’s Collection. Image courtesy of the Swedish Jerusalem Society. <http://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/imageViewer.jsf?dsId=ATTACHMENT-0001&pid=alvin-record%3A194135&dswid=-2843>

subjects and evangelical Christianity”.⁸² These children, who got a free place, paid for their education by helping to clean after school.⁸³ It was an explicit policy of the school to treat the poor children the same as fee-paying pupils. There should be no favouritism from teachers towards pupils, regardless of wealth and social status. This was in theory a legacy from the Swedish school system that was free and universal. According to a Swedish observer, “the best traditions of Sweden’s *folkskola* had through its headmistress benefitted Palestinian education”.⁸⁴ In a similar manner to poor children in Sweden, these Palestinian children might experience some upward mobility because of their access to education. Even so, the fact that the pupils who received a grant had to stay behind and clean after school-hours did set them apart from the fee-paying children and must have been a social stigma (Fig. 4).

⁸² *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 4 (1927): 129.

⁸³ Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 69.

⁸⁴ Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 70, 75. *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 2 (1923): 97.

WHY DID ARAB PARENTS SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO THE SWEDISH SCHOOL?

Even if there was no attempt at conversion in Ekblad's school, Orthodox Christian and Muslim parents had to accept that their children started their day in school with a short morning prayer and the singing of a hymn, and that they had lessons in Protestant Christian Bible study.⁸⁵ As with other mission institutions in Palestine, Muslim parents were worried about their children being exposed to Christian religious teachings.⁸⁶ Greek Orthodox parents might also have had the same worries concerning Protestant influences. Why did these Palestinian parents send their children to a Protestant institution?

Firstly, the Arabs demanded more control over their educational system, which the British did not allow. As Said Makdisi put it, "in the mid-1920s, there was much dissatisfaction in the Palestinian towns with the state of the government schools, not only academically, but also administratively and politically. Furious debates surrounded the schools, which gradually became the focal point of Palestinian nationalism...".⁸⁷ Moreover, the Swedish institution's Arab language profile was an important factor that was also related to growing Arab national awareness.⁸⁸

Teaching the young to read and write their mother tongue in order for them to know the Bible had been a royal mandate in the Scandinavian countries since the eighteenth century. Scandinavian missions did not promote their own languages, but taught themselves local languages in order to teach reading and writing in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Madagascar, China and South Africa.⁸⁹ This emphasis on teaching the native language was also a characteristic of the Swedish enterprise in Jerusalem. When an experienced Palestinian teacher who had been teaching Arabic for many years came to see Ekblad to tell her that the grammar teaching at the Swedish school was not up to standard, Ekblad listened and gratefully accepted the teacher's suggestions. The Arabic teaching improved and gained a solid reputation: The Missionary Council's language school started sending interns to the Swedish School because of their

⁸⁵ *Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1927): 86.

⁸⁶ Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 74. See also Ellen Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon on the Construction of Female Identity, c. 1860–1950," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2002): 411–426.

⁸⁷ Said Makdisi, *Teta, Mother, and Me*, 252–253.

⁸⁸ Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 58. As pointed out by Seikaly: Educating the mind was a critical task that the "East" had neglected: "reading has not reached the necessary extent among the Eastern middle-class."

⁸⁹The only exceptions were the Danish colony Greenland and the Norwegian mission to the Sami population in the North of Norway. See Hilde Nielssen, Inger Marie Okkenhaug, and Karina Hestad Skeie, eds., *Protestant Mission and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

Arabic-language teaching.⁹⁰ Likewise, the Ministry of Education sent interns to the school, preferring the Swedish institution to the British schools. The school's standing also made local teachers visit in order to learn and be inspired. This was the case with a competent female Arabic teacher from the Greek Orthodox National School that was started in 1924; she became a regular guest, wanting to know about new teaching methods and practices.⁹¹

The fact that Arabic was the main language of instruction made the Swedish school stand out from the British, American, French and Italian (and German?) mission schools where the main language of instruction would be the national language of the various schools. In addition to the lack of Arabic as the language of instruction, these schools were unpopular because they lacked connectedness to the Palestinian population. In the words of Khalil Totah:

Missionary schools are often criticised by both Moslems and Christians. The former accuse them of “missionarizing” which is perhaps a mild form of proselytising and the latter complain that the post-war (World War One) tuition fees are too heavy. Moreover, the feeling is quite universal that, in spite of their service, mission schools are detrimental to Arab solidarity. Like the Government (British) schools, they are controlled by foreigners and are said to be lacking in zeal for Arab nationalism. Some are even accused of being political propagandists for their own governments. It is pointed out, e.g. that French schools emphasise French history and geography more than the Arab; that American schools exalt American customs more than they foster Arab culture and native manners; that Italian schools serve Italian rather than Arab interests; and that German education is conducive to loyalty to Germany instead of love for Palestine.⁹²

Sweden was not a great power and did not have ambitions towards political influence in Palestine. Even so, the SJS had strong ties to the Swedish State Church and by the late 1920s the Swedish School had become a popular meeting place for Swedes living and travelling in Palestine and neighbouring countries. Signe Ekblad, known as the “Swedish ambassador” in Jerusalem, exercised “public diplomacy”; “the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented”.⁹³ How did the Swedish School influence Jerusalem society?

Besides the Protestant religion and educational profile, the SJS built on Swedish aesthetics, arts and handicrafts in order to communicate with the Palestinian public. Instead of choosing local furniture for the new building,

⁹⁰Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 73.

⁹¹Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 1 (1925): 14.

⁹²Khalil Totah, “Education in Palestine,” in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: Special Issue on Palestine: A Decade of Development*, vol. 164 (November 1932) (Philadelphia: Sage Publications Inc., in association with the American Academy of Political Science): 164. Quoted in Ricks, “Remembering Arab Jerusalem, 1909–1989.”

⁹³Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005), 8. Paul Sharp’s definition quoted in Melissen.

Ekblad and the SJS board decided to order furniture and textiles from Sweden. The furniture was bought in Stockholm. Financed by Swedish supporters and shipped via Gothenburg, the teachers' office was furnished with a large square table, a large writing desk and a book case, all in oak and made by Swedish craftsmen. There were hand-woven textiles and table cloths from Sweden, and beautiful Swedish candle holders.⁹⁴ The class rooms had flowers and green plants in the windowsills, and copies of paintings by the popular Swedish artist Carl Larsson (1853–1919) on the walls. The Swedish element was underscored by the Swedish Christmas Party, held at the school every year, which became a popular event in Jerusalem. In addition to school children and staff, the guests included both Christian and Muslim parents and the people from the British Mandate administration.⁹⁵

The furniture and annual Christmas gifts played a significant role both materially and psychologically in the transnational links between Sweden and Palestine.⁹⁶ In addition to being a daily reminder of the donors in Sweden, it was believed that contributing to a modern, practical and aesthetically pleasing (in accordance with Scandinavian taste) environment would create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children: "The new furniture will always remind us of the love and work of many Swedes in order to secure peaceful and good working conditions at the Swedish school".⁹⁷

While Swedish aesthetics were prominent at the school, it was, however, the fusion of the Scandinavian and Middle Eastern that made it seem exceptionally appealing. Ekblad's private rooms and hall for entertaining guests were places in which "Swedish home comfort meets oriental fantasies".⁹⁸ According to Lindqvist, "the largest room in the house is an indescribable attractive mix between a saloon for diplomats and artist's studio, a charming, beautifully proportioned large party room characterised by entertainment and personal taste. Many are those Swedes who have felt a pang of sudden and happy longing for home, and many are those foreigners who have for the first time met and gained a lasting impression of Swedish culture".⁹⁹ This might have been the description of a Scandinavian embassy in an Eastern context; a "saloon for diplomats".¹⁰⁰

In addition to being part of the school's image-building, the emphasis on aesthetics was also related to modern ideas of health, hygiene and an

⁹⁴ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 1 (1925): 26.

⁹⁵ Inger Marie Okkenhaug, "Att avresa till Jerusalem som lärarinna: Signe Ekblad, jorsalsfarer, lærer og misjonær," in *Religiøse reiser. Mellom gamle spor og nye mål*, eds. Siv Ellen Kraft and Ingvild S. Gilhus (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2007), 128–129.

⁹⁶ See for example Liisa H. Malkki, *The Need to Help. The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015).

⁹⁷ Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift no. 1 (1925): 26.

⁹⁸ Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 71.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Comment by Anthony O'Mahony, conference Leiden, March, 2019.

orderly life. Cleanliness was similarly part of modern Swedish culture.¹⁰¹ To Ekblad, with her background in both education and social work, cleanliness and order were part of Christian pedagogy.¹⁰² Swedish guests as well as British officials—the District Governor of Jerusalem, Edward Keith-Roach, and the Director of Education, Humphrey Bowman—all talked about cleanliness and order when describing the school. As seen earlier, even the Arab teachers (who had written the song) and the young pupils had greeted their Swedish headmistress by expressing a hope that she would teach them how to “be diligent and clean”. The Jerusalem health authorities, represented by the Armenian Palestinian doctor Kishishian, when visiting the new school a few days before the beginning of the school year in October 1926, were able to verify that “the level of cleanliness and order in this school is admirable”.¹⁰³

Cleanliness was not just about fighting germs, however: in a Scandinavian context a clean home or school also represented care, respect for its users, and—not least—self-respect. Not all mission schools had this practice of cleanliness. Hilda Musa Said (b. 1932?) remembered that at the American School for Girls in Beirut, where she enrolled in 1928, “the bathrooms were quite cold and the lavatories were dirty”¹⁰⁴ (Fig. 5).

CONCLUSION

For both the Christian and Muslim communities the Swedish School represented an alternative way of approaching the world. Arabic was the main language of instruction and the children were taught by well-educated Arab female teachers. The Arab language base was a contrast to the language policies in other foreign mission schools as well as British government institutions. Parents and pupils influenced the Swedish School’s educational profile with demands that arose from the new reality under British Mandatory rule. These parents and pupils were also challenged by the fact that pupils from the middle class and the urban poor attended the same lessons and were—in theory at least—treated in an equal way regardless of social or religious background.

For the Swedes, the school in Musrara represented Swedish welfare and innovation in the Holy Land but it also carried a history of Swedish national presence in Jerusalem since Ottoman times, thus becoming a symbol of both Western ideas of modernity and Nordic colonialism.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, through

¹⁰¹See Frank Meier, “A Comparative Look at Scandinavian Cultures: Denmark, Norway and Sweden and Their Encounters with German Refugees, 1933–1940,” <https://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr12/meyer.htm>.

¹⁰²Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 75.

¹⁰³*Svenska Jerusalemsföreningens Tidsskrift* no. 3 (1927): 86.

¹⁰⁴Said Makdisi, *Teta, Mother, and Me*, 273.

¹⁰⁵Peter Forsgren points to the strong connections between Western ideas of modernity and colonialism. Forsgren “Globalization as ‘The White Man’s Burden’”, 222.



Fig. 5 Photo taken outside the new school buildings in 1930: From left to right: Lewis Larsson, Swedish Consul General to Jerusalem, Humphrey Bowman, Director of Education, Signe Ekblad, Eliel Löfgren, Swedish politician and former foreign minister of Sweden, Stig Sahlin, Swedish diplomat and the commission's secretary, Edward Keith-Roach, District Governor of Jerusalem, and unknown consular guard. The photo is taken in connection with the Western Wall commission's visit to Jerusalem in 1930. The commission was appointed by the British government and approved of the League of Nations to investigate the causes of 1929-ritos. Eliel Löfgren and Stig Sahlin were both members of the commission, with Sahlin as the commission's secretary. The image captures Signe Ekblad in her role as the "Swedish ambassador" in Jerusalem, thus visualising Swedish influence in "The Holy Land" for a Swedish audience. Held in Uppsala University Library at the Swedish Jerusalem's Society's Collection. Image courtesy of the Swedish Jerusalem Society. <http://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/imageViewer.jsf?dsId=ATTACHMENT-0001&pid=alvin-record%3A270058&cdswid=4603>

the leadership of Signe Ekblad the school gained a reputation as a "Swedish Embassy" in Palestine "this significant Swedish outpost, worthy of all our support and love, by the border to the Orient".¹⁰⁶ The school's Swedish "public diplomacy" lived on even after it had to close down in 1948. A

¹⁰⁶ Lindqvist, *Palestinska dagar*, 76.

year before, in 1947, the Swedish State church had established the Swedish Theological Institute. In the ecumenical spirit of Ekblad and the SJS, the Institute, which still exists today, was founded with the aim of working for dialogue between Christians and Jews.

In the early 1950s different humanitarian groups within the Swedish church started collecting funds for Palestinian refugees, including for the Augusta Victoria hospital on the Mount of Olives. In 1959 the SJS took over a girls' school from the Lutheran congregation in Bethlehem, renaming it the Good Shepherd's Swedish School.¹⁰⁷ Signe Ekblad's educational endeavours also left a strong educational legacy: The Good Shepherd's Swedish School, with its 300 pupils, is among the most important Palestinian girls' schools today.¹⁰⁸

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¹⁰⁷Björk, *Sverige i Jerusalem och Betlehem*, 59.

¹⁰⁸The same year, in 1959, the SJS re-opened their hospital in Bethlehem. Today the hospital, named Hussein bin Talal’s Hospital, is a regional hospital financed by the SJS and the Palestinian authorities. See <http://www.jerusalemsforeningen.se/>.

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French Cultural Efforts Towards Jerusalem's Arab Population in the Late British Mandate in Palestine

Dominique Trimbur

When it comes to the French presence and activities in British Mandate Palestine, it is typically associated with Catholicism. Nevertheless, as shown elsewhere,¹ the interwar period was also marked by an attempted renewal of the French presence in the Holy Land, specifically through secular means. This obviously accommodated new, numerous Jewish aspects in Palestine in connection with the growing Jewish/Zionist population and political influence in the area. In contradiction to what is generally understood, France developed concerns for the development of a new Palestine, interested in making contact with the growing population, and the increasing options; for instance, it introduced French courses at the brand-new Hebrew University, and opened a Centre for French Culture in the very heart of the expanding New City on the west side of Jerusalem. Parallel to this, France was also interested in renewing its approach to Arab populations.

The following discussion will deal with this latter aspect, with the evocation of a short-lasting experience that took place at the very end of the 1930s,

¹Dominique Trimbur, “L’ambition culturelle de la France en Palestine dans l’entre-deux-guerres,” in *Entre rayonnement et réciprocité - Contributions à l’histoire de la diplomatie Culturelle*, eds. Dominique Trimbur et al. (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), 41–72.

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at the beginning of the end of the British Mandate in Palestine: A Centre for French Culture established on Mamillah road, devoted to the Arab population of the Holy City, with the aim of expanding French Culture to a population which had been previously somewhat neglected, and which should be included in a then new French cultural policy, beside the traditional French Catholic activities and new developments towards the Jewish population. Nevertheless, due to general and local circumstances, the ambitious, but fragile, experience already failed after some few years.

PRELIMINARIES

Arab Palestinians had for a long time been a major point of interest for the French presence in Palestine, at least since they were considered seriously by French politicians. In a way, since the French return to Palestine in the mid-nineteenth century, the local inhabitants had been somewhat ignored by the French authorities, the latter being in contact with the Ottomans, wishing to enlarge the French network of religious institutions, and looking on Zionist activities with disdain. In this context, the Arabs were traditional clients for French Catholic institutions, especially the numerous schools.² But they remained for a long time *objects* in a sense, and not *subjects* of the history of the area, and one has to say that only shortly before WWI, through the elections following the Young Turks' coup, were they considered as actors by French observers.³

Before the war, Arab girls and boys alike were pupils of schools, or young adults attending various Oriental seminaries, run by French nuns and friars, on behalf of French Catholic congregations or orders. It was important for France to have them educated in a French way (the “mission civilisatrice”),⁴ becoming and being one and for all bearers of French values, almost without interrogating their own destiny as adults. During and immediately after WWI, the Arab populations, of whatever confession, became of more interest

²Karène Sanchez Summerer, “Langue(s) et religion(s) en Palestine mandataire au sein d’institutions éducatives catholiques – Etablissement des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes et Sœurs de Saint Joseph de l’Apparition 1922–1940,” in *Documents pour l’histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, Dossier “Langue(s) et religion(s): une relation complexe dans l’enseignement du français hors de France XVI^e–XX^e siècle” no. 37 (Décember 2006): 93–132; Esther Möller, *Orte der Zivilisierungsmision – Französische Schulen im Libanon, 1909–1943* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2013); Orit Ichilov and André E. Mazawi, *Between State and Church—Life-History of a French Catholic School in Jaffa* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996); Jennifer M. Dueck, *The Claims of Culture at Empire’s End: Syria and Lebanon Under French Rule* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³Dominique Trimbur, “Les acteurs de la politique palestinienne de la France, 1901–1948,” in *France in the Middle East—Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Michel Abitbol (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2004), 55–97.

⁴Mathew Burrows, “‘Mission Civilisatrice’: French Cultural Policy in the Middle East, 1860–1914,” *Historical Journal* 29, no. 1 (March 1986): 109–135.

in terms of helping to have French ideas implemented regarding the fate of Palestine: be it through vain promises during the conflict, or through support of Muslim–Christian committees, when it came to a decision regarding the fate of the area, the committees being in charge of advancing the French option for a region which appeared at the time to be but the southern part of a broader ensemble, “Greater Syria”.⁵ The events of the following years, with the League of Nations Mandate in Palestine granted to the United Kingdom and the creation of the French Mandates in Syria and Lebanon, but above all with the Zionist advance following the Balfour declaration and the impossibility for Arabs to achieve an Arab kingdom, or even a whole Arab state on the territory of the previous Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire, led the Palestinian Arabs to focus on their own area. From then on, they largely abandoned their aspiration to be part of a pan-Arab or pan-Syrian entity, concentrating on their Palestinian Arab identity alone. This evolution had its political side, as shown by the events from 1920 onwards (Nebi Musa incidents) until the very end of the 1930s (“Arab great strike”).⁶ The evolution was also cultural, the Arab Palestinian identity being built through literature and the press.⁷

Nevertheless, it took a long time for France to consider influencing, through the dissemination of its own culture, the Palestinian Arabs, who were the new actors, the new subjects of their own history.⁸ The evolution towards such a new consideration is part of a general, but slow movement. After the installation of the British Mandate in Palestine, France took time to reconsider how to be present on the spot. The acceptance of the new state of things was difficult, hence the reflection on a necessary adaptation. For French representatives and clerics in the Holy Land, as well as for the decision-makers in France, everything had to be tried in order to keep the old order of things, specifically to maintain French status: France was *the* Catholic power, *the* protector of the local and foreign Catholics, attached to her own traditions, values and ways of action. France could not consider any change, even if some improvements could be contemplated, by limiting support to Catholic establishments which had no real contact with the outside world (contemplative monks and nuns, for instance), and by promoting Catholic

⁵ Vincent Cloarec, *La France et la question de Syrie, 1914–1918* (Paris: CNRS- Éditions, 1998); Gérard D. Khoury, *Une tutelle coloniale – Le mandat français en Syrie et au Liban – Écrits politiques de Robert de Caix* (Paris: Belin, 2006).

⁶ Nadine Picaudou, *Les Palestiniens, un siècle d'histoire* (Bruxelles: Complexe, 2003).

⁷ Qustandi Shomali, “La vie culturelle arabe en Palestine pendant la période du Mandat britannique,” in *De Balfour à Ben Gourion*, eds. Dominique Trimbur and Ran Aaronsohn (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2008), 347–356.

⁸ Dominique Trimbur, “Les Français et les communautés nationales de Palestine au temps du mandat britannique,” in *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives/Les mandats français et anglais dans une perspective comparée*, eds. Peter Sluglett and Nadine Méouchy (Leiden: Brill [Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, 93], 2004), 269–301.

institutions able to maintain, or improve, a French presence within the local populations (schools, seminaries). New ways, new preferences still had to be thought of, invented and attempted.

Before many other countries, France inaugurated a real cultural foreign policy at the very beginning of the 1920s, with the creation of a dedicated department at the French Foreign ministry, the *Service des Oeuvres françaises à l'étranger* (SOFE) headed by the diplomat Jean Marx.⁹ Before this, the “mission civilisatrice” had been coordinated via various sections, and in a non-systematic way. Regarding Palestine, and the Middle East generally, the dissemination of French values was long perceived as only possible through the activities of Catholic institutions, even if alternatives already existed since 1860. The Jewish side was embodied by the *Alliance israélite universelle* and its schools around the Mediterranean. And since the very beginning of the twentieth century a secular structure was created in order to offer other educational, non-religious, or even anti-religious models: the *Mission laïque française* (French lay mission, MLF). The AIU was present in Palestine before WWI, not the MLF, Catholic institutions being considered as sufficiently efficient and not to be subjected to competition in an area where France appeared to be only the Catholic presence.

After WWI, the French presence remained fixed on a rigid perception of the environment and of the local ethnic groups, even if early reports described a need to enlarge its scope.¹⁰ But the evolution of the situation, with the end of the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate and the growing Zionist aspirations, led France to reconsider its approach, which was old-fashioned, no longer economically viable and attracted British distrust in a Palestine which needed to be completely renewed, according to British opinions.¹¹ France had to accompany the evolution, if it did not want to be sidelined, despite its continuing attachment to traditions. The idea of having an active MLF was a result of this reflection.

THE FOUNDING OF A *CENTRE DE CULTURE FRANÇAISE DE JÉRUSALEM*

The Mission laïque française, founded in 1902, embodied French anticlerical policy at the very end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Its very name, a “mission”, illustrates a wish for it to replace the activities of the religious missions within French cultural action abroad. France had to return to its revolutionary vocation, the incarnation of *reason*;

⁹Catherine Nicault, “Jean Marx, universitaire et diplomate (Paris, 26 octobre 1884 – Paris, 26 avril 1972)”, in *Archives juives*, 2013/1 46: 120–129.

¹⁰Archives of the French Foreign ministry, Nantes (MAE, Nantes), papiers du Service des Oeuvres Françaises à l'Étranger (SOFE), Série D, 172 Palestine 1924/1929, note by P. Dhorme, 18 May 1922, “La langue française en Palestine”.

¹¹Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete—Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000).

the secular missionaries had from then on to be the main disseminators of the universal values present in French humanism.¹² Quickly the Mediterranean became the first and main zone of activity for the new body, its populations having to be withdrawn from the control of religious institutions. The first such establishments were founded in the main cities of the area: Alexandria, Cairo, Salonica, Damascus, Aleppo.¹³

Palestine was immediately included in the plans, even if the perspective appeared “difficult”.¹⁴ A French civil servant, *inspecteur général* Charlot, present on the spot in 1906, concluded that the already existing network of French religious educational institutions was indeed efficient enough and made it useless to imagine the creation there of a school led by the MLF. Moreover, the perspective of such a French secular establishment was quickly rejected by the religious actors present there, fearing any reduction in the grants they still received officially from France.¹⁵

The Idea of a French Lycée (Secondary School)

At the end of the 1920s, the idea of an establishment headed by the MLF to be settled in Palestine came under consideration once more, France having to adapt to the new local context. The idea appears through the correspondence of the French Consuls-general, among them more specifically the somewhat progressive Gaston Maugras (1924–1926). Although he received the usual instructions before taking up his position,¹⁶ once arrived he realised the necessity of adapting to the new conditions. His first and main concern dealt with the Jewish side, which should become focus of the attention of

¹²André Thévenin, *La Mission laïque française à travers son histoire 1902–2002* (Paris: MLF, 2002).

¹³The French journalist Maurice Pernot, in his report on the French presence in the Orient (*Rapport sur un voyage d'étude à Constantinople, en Egypte et en Turquie d'Asie [janvier-août 1912]*, Comité de défense des intérêts français en Orient, Firmin-Didot, Paris, 1913) already mentions it. Regarding Alexandria, Frédéric Abécassis, “Les lycées de la Mission laïque française en Égypte (1909–1961) – L’exportation d’un ‘modèle français’ en Orient et ses contradictions,” paper given during the conference “Lycées et lycéens en France (1802–2002)”, Sorbonne, July 2002. Regarding Damascus, Randi Deguilhem, “Impérialisme, colonisation intellectuelle et politique culturelle de la Mission laïque française en Syrie sous mandat”, in *The British and French Mandates...*, *op. cit.*, eds. Peter Sluglett and Nadine Méouchy (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 321–341.

¹⁴Archives of the French Foreign ministry, Paris (MAE, Paris), Papiers d’agents-Archives privées (PAAP) 240-Doulcet, 4 protectorat religieux, notes sur le rapport du budget de 1905.

¹⁵The Jesuit Fathers of the Saint-Joseph University in Beirut went as far as to prevent the mission conducted by Charlot entering their establishment: Chantal Verdeil, “Travailler à la renaissance de l’Orient chrétien: Les missions latines en Syrie (1830–1945),” *Proche-Orient chrétien* 51 (2001): 267–316.

¹⁶MAE, Paris, Levant 1918–1940, Palestine, 18, consulats de France, juillet 1922-novembre 1929, Recommendations by the French Foreign minister to M. Maugras, departing to Jerusalem, 16 April 1924.

a new French diplomacy in Palestine.¹⁷ His successor, Jacques d'Aumale, in Jerusalem from February 1929 onwards, made a new French policy out of the idea. According to him, it “is necessary to proceed to a complete and radical overhaul of our school policy, as well as of the organisation of our efforts in this country”.¹⁸

The idea of a French secular *lycée* was considered within this context: it illustrates the wish to have, within a school under French auspices, pupils representing the various populations of the area. In order to express the strong sense of renewal behind the idea, a new partner was involved, the *Mission laïque française*. Personalities until then hardly active on Palestinian topics intervened, such as the French senator Justin Godart, member of the MLF, also known for his pro-Zionist activities within the *Association France-Palestine*.¹⁹ The MLF was at the time quite active in strengthening and renewing the French network in the Middle East, and therefore received funds from the French Foreign ministry.²⁰ In Palestine, the MLF was solicited by Joseph Cohen, a Tunisian Jew, himself leading French courses in Jerusalem, willing to establish a huge institution²¹ to fight against the weakening of the French language and to contribute to a peaceful evolution in the area:

... Christians, Arabs, Jews, receiving a common education, being continuously in contact, would achieve a better knowledge and understanding of each other. Prejudices, atavistic instinctive animosities would lessen; friendships, sympathies would come into being on school seats. The religious dissensions put aside would be replaced by a reciprocal tolerance in all the domains of ideas, principles and convictions.²²

The idea existed between 1930 and 1933: after some prior financial objections,²³ it was maintained due to the wish to act for the benefit of French

¹⁷Ibid., letter from the French Consulate General, Jerusalem (24) to the MAE, 6 May 1925, Maugras.

¹⁸MAE, Nantes, SOFE, série D, 172 Palestine 1924/1929, letter from the French Consulate General, Jerusalem (118) to the MAE-SOFE, 25 November 1929, d'Aumale.

¹⁹Philippe Boukara, “Justin Godart et le sionisme. Autour de France-Palestine,” in *Justin Godart – Un homme dans son siècle (1871–1956)*, ed. Annette Wieviorka (Paris: CNRS-Éditions, 2004), 199–206.

²⁰See for instance MAE, Nantes, SOFE, série O, 53 subventions à la Mission laïque, arrêté du MAE, 6 August 1927. In the Middle East, the MLF's share of the grants provided by the French Foreign ministry represented somewhat less than 10% of the funds.

²¹Ibid., correspondance de Jérusalem, B, 207 Centre de Culture Française, letters by Joseph Cohen to d'Aumale, 11 June and 8 July 1930.

²²Ibid., SOFE, série D, 173 Palestine 1929/1932, report by I. Bassan to the AIU, 4 June 1930 (forwarded to the FO MAE by Bigart, secretary of the AIU).

²³Ibid., correspondance de Jérusalem, B, 207 Centre de Culture Française, letter from Besnard (secretary general of the MLF) to d'Aumale, 6 October 1930, and letter from d'Aumale to Besnard, 15 December 1930.

culture.²⁴ But the very Palestinian context made it difficult to go beyond the idea that: “given the rivalries between races and sects, one cannot imagine a *lycée* like in Beirut and Alexandria welcoming everybody. If Jews enter it, the Arabs will not, and vice versa”.²⁵ Difficulties also lay in Zionist opposition to any external actor within the Jewish educational system in Palestine,²⁶ and the solution that was finally found was the introduction of special courses at the local AIU school. This meant that the Arab side was at first set aside, France focusing on a new clientele, but only the Jewish, Ashkenazi and Zionist.

Halted during the Spring of 1933, the project of a *lycée* reappeared a year later, but only under the appearance of a French-Hebrew school. This time the Arabs were included, but only in connection with already existing models: the Damascus French-Arab school (1925) and the Cairo French-Egyptian *lycée* (under construction at the time). But the project remained a project, and no French *lycée* was opened in Jerusalem at the time.

French Courses

Despite the first, vain attempts, the MLF remained a partner for a new, less ambitious project. But again, wishing to avoid problems with the Zionists, and to avoid controversy due to Arab-Jewish antagonism, the MLF proposed sending two French teachers, who would act only for the MLF, without the traditional framework of a secondary school, and so in contradiction with the habits of the educational institution. Saving money, France kept its own aim at the same time. As expressed by the French Consul at the time: “This project appears to me to be immensely interesting and practical. It meets the real desire of numerous Palestinians wishing to learn French. It also allows us to remain neutral, without taking sides for a French-Arab or a French-Hebrew *lycée* which is an advantage”.²⁷ Aiming at the expansion of its own ideas among all the populations of the then Palestine, France was also willing to undermine all possible opposition; the project “relieves the *Mission Laique* of the concern [...] to have to combat the more or less real hostility of the Jewish or Arab Executive and of the Mandatory authorities, and then to be placed under their control”.

²⁴Ibid., letter from Jean Helleu (civil servant, French High-Commission, Syria) to d'Aumale, 3 March 1933.

²⁵Ibid., letter from d'Aumale to Helleu, 10 March 1933.

²⁶As for Chaim Weizmann, he had long denounced the activities of the French, who “have always interfered with the population and tried to impose upon them the ‘*esprit français*’.” “The Alternatives for Palestine”, London, 25 April 1917, interview with Lord Cecil, in Barnett Litvinoff, ed., *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, Papers, vol. I, series B, August 1898–July 1931 (Jerusalem: Transaction Publishers, 1983), 146 sq.

²⁷MAE, Nantes, SOFE, 369 Palestine, letter from the French Consulate general in Jerusalem (27) to MAE-SOFE, 28 March 1934, d'Aumale.

THE CENTRE DE CULTURE FRANÇAISE

Quickly France and the MLF became more ambitious again and arrived at the idea of a Centre for French Culture (*Centre de Culture française*, CCF), “accessible to the Arabs as well as to the Jews [*Israélites*]²⁸. Nevertheless, if the previous ideas, the French *lycée* or the mere courses for French, gave the impression of wishing to stay neutral, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Mission, the new project mostly focused on the Jewish aspects of the new Palestine. The main motivation leading to the creation of a CCF lay in the growing Jewish population²⁹: aiming at a first branch in Jerusalem, the idea of an extension to Tel Aviv quickly arose. Therefore, after negotiations between all parties, the CCF opened in the very heart of the Jewish part of Jerusalem in October 1935.³⁰

The CCF quickly became a success story, offering courses for adults and Hebrew University students, a library (and a travelling one, with a bus driven through Palestine), exhibitions, concerts, film screenings and encounters with French writers and scientists. The latter were representatives of their time; if some of them such as André Siegfried can be considered as neutral, others are well-known today rather as being hostile towards the Jews, like the author Paul Morand, or more benevolent towards the Arabs, like Louis Massignon.³¹ Remembering the fundamental neutrality of the MLF, and after having established a balance between the lectures in order to address the various communities of the Holy City, the head of the new CCF, Jean Thibault-Chambault (previously a French and English teacher at the MLF secondary school in Beirut), turned his attention to the Arab population. He did so, even if doubts existed regarding such an orientation. As he himself expressed upon his arrival in Jerusalem: “there is, as it appears, nothing to do there, and this is wasted time”.³² And even if this negative opinion was shared by the contemporary Consul-General, Jacques d’Aumale: “Only on the Arab side will your hopes not be fulfilled; it appears increasingly to me that here at least,

²⁸ *Bulletin de la Mission Laïque française*, année scolaire 1934–35, 2.

²⁹ MAE, Nantes, 369 Palestine, letter from the French Consulate in Jerusalem (31) to the MAE-SOFE, 11 May 1935, d’Aumale.

³⁰ Ibid., letter of the Mission laïque to the French Consulate in Jerusalem, 13 February 1935, Besnard. The CCF is located on Ben Yehuda street, one of the main streets of the developing Jewish side of Jerusalem.

³¹ Ibid., MLF, Paris, *Établissement de Jérusalem*, rapports mensuels du 1^{er} au 30 mars 1936 (Morand) et du 1^{er} au 28 février 1937 (Massignon). Also AN, 60 AJ 142 *Lycée français de Jérusalem* 1936–1939, letter from the CCF to the MLF, 21 February 1937, Thibault-Chambault, describing Massignon’s satisfaction concerning the perspective of the opening of the Arab branch.

³² MLF, Paris, dossier Jean Thibault-Chambault, letter from Thibault-Chambault to the MLF, 1 December 1935.

intimacies belong to fantasy [*chimères*]”.³³ Overcoming his own reluctance, if not to say prejudice, having cleared the question of the identity of the teacher (with the designation of an Arab, with French and Lebanese citizenship), Thibault-Chambault announced very proudly in April 1937 that a “French Centre for Arabs” had just opened in the New City, on Mamilla Road – then the main commercial hub of Jerusalem, with a very promising perspective: “I have the impression that the Arabs [...] will welcome us in a positive way and try to compete with the Jews in the cultural field”.³⁴

After the first year and a half of existence for the Jewish branch, and shortly after the opening of the Arab one, Thibault-Chambault wrote to the MLF headquarters in Paris, describing his position within the political and cultural landscape of Jerusalem:

I am honoured to tell you that in the current state of things the Centre continues not doing politics and not interfering in anything. This is so true that it is considered by the Arabs and the Germans as pro-Jewish, by the Jews as pro-Arab, by the French as not pro-Arab enough; as for the English, they seem not to care about our image and they go on letting us work in peace.³⁵

This first satisfying report led the head of the young institution to express new ambitions, since he saw in the success in Jerusalem a solution which could be introduced in other parts of the Middle East, especially those places also affected by nationalist upheavals. Quoting the founding values of the *Mission laïque*, he considered that France could play a role in the new Middle East:

The formula of the *Centre de Culture française* seems to be achieving success in the Orient and maybe in other parts. So it is necessary to settle some principles and to try to apply them as quickly as possible and in the best way. Confronted with aggressive nationalisms, the intense propaganda from the dictatorial states, propaganda that is contrary to the free French spirit, one has to adapt and look for new means in order to sow everywhere the directing ideas of the *Révolution*, of the declaration of the Rights, as well as the more modern ideas.³⁶

Thibault-Chambault’s idealism also illustrates what he perceived as a necessity for France to be loyal to her own “mission civilisatrice”; more than ever, this mission had to break with the French Catholic tradition until then prevalent

³³MAE, Nantes, 207 Centre de Culture Française, letter from d’Aumale to Besnard, 1 February 1936. Some months later d’Aumale has harsh words against Arab students, “very much less developed than the Jews” (*ibid.*, 214 Université hébraïque, letter from the French Consulate in Jerusalem to the MAE-SOFE, 25 May 1937, d’Aumale).

³⁴AN, 60 AJ 142 Lycée français de Jérusalem 1936–1939, letter from the CCF to the MLF, 21 April 1937, Thibault-Chambault.

³⁵Ibid., letter from the CCF to the MLF, 22 March 1937, Thibault-Chambault.

³⁶Ibid., “Le Centre de Culture Française – Jérusalem”, 27 February 1937, Thibault-Chambault.

in the area. By doing so, it would be possible to control the young, rising nationalisms and to win them over to the French cause, against every other (German and Italian) influence.

After some hesitation at first, the two successive French Consuls General, Jacques d'Aumale and Amédée Outrey, supported the CCF, all the more so as the institution registered a greater success than comparable entities, like the Italian cultural centre.³⁷ France officially recognised the success, and in May 1938 the very secular French politician Edouard Herriot, head of the French parliament and of the MLF, came to Jerusalem and visited the institution, while inspecting the MLF network in the area.³⁸ For their part, some traditional French representatives in Palestine were benevolent towards the new institution, like the Dominicans of the famous École biblique, acknowledging the CCF's merits in improving the French position in Palestine. Known today as pro-Palestinian, they nevertheless considered with some disdain, or even racism, the talks given by Arab students at the Mamilla branch of the CCF. On 20 May 1938 for instance, such a lecture was considered as "superficial and wrong in many points. On the reciprocal influence of French and Arab cultures. Luckily Ch. Martel [the Frank king who halted the Arab invasion in France in 732] has freed us from this breed".³⁹

As for their colleagues at the AIU, they perceived the CCF as an ally in the project of penetrating the Palestinian Jewish community with French ideas.⁴⁰ Others remained suspicious, keeping in mind the obvious contradiction between the CCF and the French tradition in Palestine, like the White Fathers, themselves heading an important tool for French cultural policy among the Arab population, the Greek-Catholic seminary established at the French national domain of Sainte-Anne⁴¹:

This is an establishment where members of the *Mission Laïque* provide French courses, in the evening, to foreigners, who are almost all Jews. Lectures are also given there, either by teachers of the Centre, or by outside personalities. [...] the global spirit of the Centre is not what it should be: so the director has naively told us that, in order to teach French and specifically in order to transmit the French spirit to the people attending the courses, he explained to them *Candide* by Voltaire and *Émile* by Rousseau; as well as these, the lectures given during the last three months dealt with: [...] Idealist and *dreyfusard*,

³⁷MAE, Nantes, SOFE, D, 372 Palestine, université de Jérusalem 1936/1940, letter from the French Consulate in Jerusalem (11) to the MAE-SOFE, 1 February 1936, d'Aumale.

³⁸See his *Sanctuaires*, the volume he published after his journey through the Middle East (Paris: Hachette, 1938).

³⁹Archives of the Saint-Étienne convent in Jerusalem (Ecole biblique), diary of the convent, notice 20 May 1938.

⁴⁰Guy Cohen, "L'Institut français de Jérusalem," *L'Univers israélite*, 28 June 1935, 657.

⁴¹See the chapter by Charbel Nassif in the volume for more on French cultural diplomacy towards Palestine's Melkite communities.

Zola; André Gide or on the pursuit of his own soul; Jaurès [...] the attendance is mostly Jewish and in a very narrow room; [...] to go there would be to seem, to Catholic people [Arabs], to approve of a Center whose spirit we disapprove of”.⁴²

As for the Zionists, while accepting the CCF and the participation of Hebrew University students at French courses given there, they refused any further step towards a French secondary school in Jerusalem and did not recognise the Arab branch of the CCF.

THE FATE OF THE CCF

Early Days

After promising beginnings, the CCF was directly affected by the violent political situation which prevailed in Palestine at the very same period as its opening, like many French and other foreign institutions. With the 1936–1939 uprising, the Arab General Strike, the CCF, focusing on evening courses for adults, encountered huge difficulties due to the regular curfew imposed on Palestine and the Holy City and forbidding any circulation in the evenings. Beyond the regular financial difficulties of the MLF itself, the activity of the CCF quickly reached a very low level. This peculiarly affected the attempt to have a Jewish and an Arab branch existing simultaneously. The “ecumenical” experiment suffered the same dramatic destiny as Palestine itself. The French Consul general said of the idealistic director of the Centre that: “He would like to swallow everything at once; he would like the Jews and Arabs to adore France without hesitation. This is a difficult aim to be reached”.⁴³

This affected specifically the cultural perspectives which existed concerning the Arab side. The same French Consul, himself a collector of traditional oriental clothes, quickly described his own feelings: “on this side, there was, there is and there will never be anything to do. Do not consider me as systematically anti-Arab. This judgement is but the fruit of the experience of no few years spent in the Orient”. This assessment was confirmed by his successor as French representative, Amédée Outrey.⁴⁴ Focusing from then onwards on the Jewish side, France and the MLF forgot the dream of neutrality in the Palestinian context of the times and chose efficiency, also in order to

⁴² Archives de la Société des Pères blancs, Rome, quatrième période: Birraux 1936–1947, dossier 255, Ste Anne, letter from P. Portier (superior of *Sainte-Anne de Jérusalem*) to Mgr. Birraux (superior-general of the White fathers), 12 January 1937.

⁴³ MAE, Nantes, correspondance de Jérusalem, B, 187 Français en Palestine, letter from d'Amale to Marx, 4 May 1937.

⁴⁴ Ibid., SOFE, D, 207 Centre de Culture Française, letter from the French Consulate general in Jerusalem (254) to the MAE-SOFE, 6 August 1938, Outrey, confidential.

avoid the growth of German influence.⁴⁵ Beside the CCF, a chair for French Culture was then inaugurated at the Hebrew University in November 1938.⁴⁶

With the worsening of the situation over the ensuing months (the mobile library not being able to get to its readers due to the regular closure of roads in the context of the Arab General Strike), the Arab branch was provisionally closed by the beginning of 1939, confirming early negative assessments. Convincing of his own ideas and initiatives, Thibault-Chambault's enthusiasm was indeed not shared by other observers. In a report written after some months of activity by the Arab branch, the MLF's inspector was already more skeptical: "We have opened in the Arab city a special course for the people of the neighbourhood, a maximum of 10 people have gathered; the attempt does not really meet with success".⁴⁷ The closure of the Arab branch, decided by the MLF headquarters in Paris, considering financial constraints, occurred even though Thibault-Chambault had previously warned against such a step:

In the case of the Arab Centre not being maintained, we would not have one Arab in our establishment anymore: we then would be immediately considered as only conducting a Jewish policy. At this point I allow myself to remind you of the very sane words you pronounced regarding solidarity among the establishments. The closure of the Arab location will be known in Egypt as well as in Syria, and I think it will make a bad impression. Nevertheless, the idea of the closure may be the idea of *Monsieur le Consul Général*, who until today, to my knowledge, has done nothing for the benefit of the Arabs. It seems to me that, even if there be no other reason than this, we should not entirely "bet" on the Jews.⁴⁸

On the Jewish side, meanwhile, the level of activity remained very low.

WWII

With the declaration of war, the Palestinian Muslim–Christian violent moments came to an end, and the new climate offered the possibility of returning to normal cultural activity, dealing again with both sides: in November 1939, it was again envisaged to open French courses on the Arab side of the city.⁴⁹ But the French institutions, specifically the CCF, were

⁴⁵Ibid., SOFE, D, 372 Palestine, université de Jérusalem 1936/1940, dossier Palestine établissements d'enseignement, letter from Thibault-Chambault to Marx, 12 November 1937.

⁴⁶Dominique Trimbur, "La création de la chaire de civilisation française de l'Université hébraïque de Jérusalem," *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah-Le Monde Juif* no. 167 (September–December 1999): 161–179.

⁴⁷MLF, Paris, Dossier Jean Thibault-Chambault, rapport d'inspection, 6 December 1937.

⁴⁸AN, 60 AJ 142 Lycée français de Jérusalem 1936–1939, Sous-dossier 152, letter from the MLF to the CCF, 6 October, and letter from the CCF to the MLF, 18 October 1938, Thibault-Chambault.

⁴⁹MAE, Nantes, SOFE, D, 207 Centre de Culture Française, letter from Outrey to Besnard, 27 November 1939.

obviously affected by the conflict. The heads of the Centre left Jerusalem, joining the French army or other activities, leaving the French Consul general, Amédée Outrey, to devote himself all the more to the survival of what remained of the new, but declining, body. After the end of the fighting in France, in June 1940, and the new political regime placed under the authority of Maréchal Pétain, a bizarre situation prevailed. This was the rupture between Palestine and metropolitan France (France entering into collaboration with Germany, and so not on good terms, even if not at war, with Great Britain), hindering the circulation of money from France towards French institutions in Palestine. Beyond that, the CCF, an initiative of the secular MLF, now depended on a France which was placed under the traditional, Catholic-leaning, Vichy regime, itself hostile to freemasons, among whom were many members of the MLF. In this situation, solutions were found in order to maintain some of the Centre's activities.⁵⁰

The international cultural landscape brought new problems. After the end of the Italian presence (Italy being at war with Great Britain), the United Kingdom opened a branch of the British Council in 1941 in Jerusalem. The competition was perceived as a danger by the representative of Vichy France, Amédée Outrey, who remained in post until July 1941, as well as by the Free French representative who replaced him after his expulsion from Palestine, comte du Chaylard:

All these signs, as well as the material difficulties encountered by the schools of the *Alliance Israélite*, administered since the armistice by the Palestine Education Department, do not leave any doubt about the intense activity of the "British Council", efficiently supported by the [British] Government, aiming at not only developing English cultural influence, but also at stopping ours, not only in Palestine, but also in the entire Middle-East.⁵¹

Likewise, Outrey had commented some time before that:

... this is still the best answer we may give to the insidious propaganda with which they are confronted. [...] the Mission Laïque [...] possesses [...] a

⁵⁰In the same way that the *Alliance israélite universelle*, like the Hebrew University, still received funds from Vichy France, the *Centre de culture française* still received money transfers from the *État français*. MAE, Paris, PAAP 130 Outrey, 31, Jérusalem Correspondance (télégrammes) 1940, telegram from the French Consulate in Jerusalem (130–131) to the MAE, Vichy, 16 October 1940. Regarding the AIU, Laurent Grison, "Diplomatie culturelle et paradoxes sous Vichy: l'exemple de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle," *L'information historique* 58 (1996): 163–166; by the same author, "Le Service des Œuvres françaises à l'Étranger et les juifs sous Vichy," in *Entre rayonnement et réciprocité*, *op. cit.*, 73–84. Regarding the continued money transfers to the chair for French culture at the Hebrew University, my paper: "La création de la chaire de civilisation française ...," *op. cit.*

⁵¹MAE, Paris, Guerre 1939–1945, Londres(-Alger), 423, Œuvres françaises, dossier général, août 1940-septembre 1943, letter from the French Consulate in Jerusalem (61) to the Free French authorities in London, 24 December 1942, du Chaylard.

beautiful library in Jerusalem, a gift from the French government, which should be rescued at any cost. I ask the Mission to assume at least the rent [...], the salary of the librarian [...] and the low maintenance costs... I think that under the current circumstances the only policy we should have in these countries would be to preserve, at any price, all the means to act and to influence for the day, I hope not too far off, on which we will be able once more to occupy the traditional position that is ours, and that we have, despite everything, occupied in not too bad a way.⁵²

Despite the general good will, the CCF had then to reduce its own activity further to a very low level, focusing on French courses, which had been the very first option, some years before.⁵³ From spring 1941 onwards, the Centre de Culture française belonging to the very secular Mission laïque française, established in the Holy City, came to be put under the responsibility of ... a French friar, the Dominican Roland de Vaux, at the time head of the Ecole biblique.⁵⁴

Financed by Free France, based in London, then Algiers, from July 1941 onwards, the CCF was visited by the Free French Commissioner for Education, René Cassin, travelling through the Middle East at the turn of 1941–1942, in order to underline the attachment of Charles de Gaulle to all the French institutions in the area, of whatever kind.⁵⁵ The claim also aimed at proving that France still existed, and was still preserving its traditional position in the area, despite any English contradictory thoughts and efforts.⁵⁶ The maintenance of a French presence appeared all the more necessary in a period which, it was foreseen, might lead to a definitive settlement of the status of Palestine, in which France could regain its previous, dominant situation.

Benefiting again from regular money transfers, the CCF relaunched its pedagogical activities; in June 1944 a diploma in French language was inaugurated.⁵⁷

⁵²MAE, Paris, 1940–1944 Vichy, 57 Enseignement, Palestine, letter from the French Consulate in Jerusalem (80) to Lagarde, 13 December 1940, Outrey.

⁵³MAE, Nantes, SOFE, Jérusalem B, 207 Centre de Culture Française, letter from the CCF to Outrey, 4 March 1941, Kraft (the author being an interim secretary of the CCF).

⁵⁴Ibid., letter from Outrey to P. de Vaux, 26 May 1941.

⁵⁵Archives nationales, Paris, 382 AP R. Cassin, 382 AP 59 dossier 2 préparation voyage au Proche-Orient, dossier 3 Syrie, Liban, Palestine et dossier 6 Conclusions générales du voyage.

⁵⁶MAE, Paris, Guerre 1939–1945, Londres(-Alger), 1029, Questions nord-africaines, musulmanes et du Levant, Personnel administratif de la Délégation générale, Œuvres françaises au Levant, dossier général: juillet 1943 - septembre 1944, letter from the French Consulate in Jerusalem (503) to Beirut, 29 July 1943, du Chaylard.

⁵⁷Ibid., 765, Département des Affaires étrangères, Service des Œuvres françaises à l'étranger, dossier général: mai - juin 1944, letter from the Commissariat aux Affaires étrangères-SOFE (265) to Ottawa, 27 June 1944, attached a letter from the Délégation de la France Combattante en Palestine et Transjordanie (108) to the Commissaire aux Affaires étrangères, 2 May 1944, du Chaylard.

CONCLUSION: AFTER WWII

After the end of the Second World War, in 1945, assessments regarding the fate of the CCF in previous years were globally negative, even if its direction by the head of the Ecole biblique somewhat limited the damage.⁵⁸ For France, the end of WWII nevertheless offered possibilities to regain its position. The activities of the Catholic institutions were renewed, as well as those of the CCF, under the auspices of the new, very Catholic and traditional French Consul general, René Neuville. In the latter's opinion, the CCF could even have a central position within the future Palestine. It could become the central pillar of a "maison de France", within a real, relaunched cultural policy.⁵⁹ The CCF could then be withdrawn from the sole control of the MLF, becoming an intellectual centre, with an academic at its head. By doing this, "the Centre would become [...] the cell for a cultural influence that would later grow. The way it has been understood and functioned until today, and through force of circumstance since the war, one has to recognise that its influence, in this respect, has been close to nil".⁶⁰

Nevertheless, once again, ideas had to confront reality: financial difficulties,⁶¹ but above all political ones. As had happened before, objections appeared quickly. Everything that would make France have to choose one population rather than the other should be avoided. If once again efficiency concerns orientated plans towards the Jewish side, this did not mean that the Arab side should be neglected, be it in Palestine or elsewhere, at a time when France was entering its own decolonisation process, with the risk of the Middle-Eastern developments of the time (the independence of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria) having consequences for North Africa, for instance. Under the circumstances, once again, the evolution of the local context brought all plans to a halt, in addition to the strong wish of the French Consul general, René Neuville, to be the only one in charge and to avoid any favouritism towards one or another institution, at a time when some clerics representing French interests were thinking of leaving the area:

it seems to me that at a time when our troops are evacuating the Levant we should not let our works in Palestine collapse. On the contrary, I think that [...]

⁵⁸The consul writes of him: "I owe to the activity and the devotion of this Dominican a deserved tribute. One may say that he has rescued the institution which was declining, and whose activity has almost tripled since he has been heading it" (*ibid.*, Levant, 1944–1960, Palestine, 430, Œuvres françaises, dossier général, 1er décembre 1944–31 décembre 1947, letter from the French Consulate in Jerusalem [25] to the MAE, 30 April 1945, du Chaylard).

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹*Ibid.*, telegram from the MAE-RC (91) to the French Consulate general in Jerusalem, 3 March 1946, Laugier (head of the new Department for cultural relations at the French Foreign ministry).

the evacuation should have, as a counterpart, the strengthening of our cultural activity in the entire Levant.⁶²

Despite all reflections and plans, the years 1946–1948 led to no real reactivation of the CCF.⁶³ With the division of Jerusalem, following the first Israeli-Arab war, the situation could only become even more delicate. One may nevertheless say that the new situation allowed a new French cultural investment in what had become Arab East Jerusalem. The CCF was at the time able to organise cultural activities on the Israeli as well as on the Jordanian side of Jerusalem with, for instance, in the 1950s, lectures held in the premises of the Ecole biblique; lectures given by Consular personnel, some clerics (on religious topics) or Louis Massignon.⁶⁴ But such activities could not make something really viable out of the CCF. Local circumstances, with less French activities in East Jerusalem following the rupture of French-Jordan diplomatic relations after the Suez crisis, a real disaffection for the French language, as well as the evolution of local populations towards their cultural autonomy or independence, meant the end of the attempt. The CCF, and its Arab branch, bore in any event the seeds of its own destruction, in its aims of the flourishing of peoples, the rights of the peoples to be their own masters.⁶⁵ Apparently a secular answer to the problems of Palestine, the CCF failed for being what it was: a tool of French foreign, imperialistic policy; in the 1930s as well as after WWII, it was not adapted to the local context.

⁶²Ibid., from the French Consulate general in Jerusalem (228/AL) to the MAE, 5 August 1946, Neuville.

⁶³Ibid., letter from the French Consulate general in Jerusalem (111/RC) to the MAE, 11 October 1946, Neuville; Ibid., Palestine, 371, Représentation française (consulat de Jérusalem), 6 août 1945-31 décembre 1952, telegram from the French Consulate in Jerusalem (1515) to the MAE, 21 October 1948, Neuville.

⁶⁴Archives of the Saint-Étienne convent in Jerusalem (Ecole biblique), diary of the convent, notices of 23 November 1953, 10 December 1953, 7 January 1954, 18 February 1954, 1 April 1954, 10 June 1954, 20 January 1955, 24 February 1955, 30 April 1955, 15 February 1956, 22 March 1956, 18 May 1956. The shared activity between West and East Jerusalem prefigures the current situation, with two French Cultural centres in Jerusalem, the centre Romain Gary (West), and the centre Chateaubriand (East).

⁶⁵The same evolution is valid for the 1930s, then the 1950s–1960s, for Syria and Egypt (see above the contributions by Randi Deguilhem and Frédéric Abécassis). It is not only the case for the establishments of the MLF, since some Catholic institutions, specifically educational ones, closed in the same period (Jérôme Bocquet, *Missionnaires français en terre d'Islam – Damas 1860–1914* [Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2005], and *La France, l'Église et le Baas: un siècle de présence française en Syrie, de 1918 à nos jours* [Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2008]).

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Conclusions



Cultural Affiliation and Identity Constructs Under the British Mandate for Palestine

Tamara van Kessel

The British Mandate for Palestine was no mere temporary stewardship of the territories in question. Deploying Western scientific knowledge to map, mine and manage the area, “Britain entered the Mandate with grand ambitions to transform the territory in line with a ‘new imperialist’ vision of industrial and technological modernity”.¹ “Transformative occupation” has proven to be a fruitful and still much to be explored concept with which to analyse how interwar Mandates, in what was beginning to be labelled as the “Middle East”, led to profound changes and tensions with repercussions until this day.² The emphasis has been on the economic and political impact of capitalist modernisation and forceful colonial administration, highlighting the frictions between the Wilsonian ideal of national self-determination for all peoples and exertions of Western imperial control that supposedly paved the way to sovereignty. Greater attention needs to be paid to the transformative effect of cultural and linguistic strategies with which the British as well as other European powers influenced the self-perception and cultural

¹Jacob Norris, “Transforming the Holy Land: The Ideology of Development and the British Mandate in Palestine,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 280.

²Simon Jackson and A. Dirk Moses, “Transformative Occupations in the Modern Middle East,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 232.

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identification of communities in Palestine during the Mandate period and were in turn affected by their experiences there.

Examining the cultural transformations that the Palestinian Christians underwent and brought about during the Mandate period can serve as effective starting point in gaining an understanding of these interwoven histories. The Palestinian Christians were generally more urbanised and hence exposed to European influences. Writing about Mandate Haifa, a city that was designated and developed by the British as gate to the Middle East Maayan Hilel in her contribution to this volume underscores that the Christians—and Melkites in particular—were the most likely to be employed in administration and private business under British rule. These were also the groups already most exposed to European influences through the educational activities of especially French Roman Catholic missionaries, whose schools were appealing to Maronites and even Greek Orthodox groups. Sarah Irving too confirms that Christian communities often had the most contact with Europeans and their educational, economic and administrative initiatives: an exposure to European modes of thinking which ironically meant that they were often the ones to be employed for the process of inventorising and protecting Palestinian cultural heritage that changes in lifestyle induced by Western influences were rendering obsolete and hence at risk of loss.³ Intermeshed with this was a culturalisation of political tensions brought about by the British Mandate government's attempts to treat all communities with equanimity and thus grant each their own cultural expressions. This in fact essentialised the religious identity of these communities. Furthermore, in a situation in which the British administration was accentuating and reconfiguring categories of race, ethnicity and religion, Christians in Palestine defied the simplified image of the Muslim Arab.

Cultural diplomacy suggests dialogue, whereas in the case of European cultural policies in Mandate Palestine and the response of local Christian communities, we are in fact often looking at one-way cultural projection and not always exchange. If there was exchange, this did not always convey the meanings or obtain the goals intended. The workings of such cultural cross-roads, where encounters do or at times do not take place, require consistent attention to the multidirectionality of processes and purposes. As Dueck has observed in relation to Syria and Lebanon: “Culture was a political tool only when it buttressed the cultural or political aspirations of the local leadership and population”.⁴ In other words, we need to be aware of the process of appropriation and subversion of European cultural activities to own ends that has taken place. In terms of viewing Mandatory Palestine as a case of transformative occupation, an important question is also whether the various European actors were themselves transformed by the local realities that they

³Sarah Irving in this volume.

⁴Jennifer Dueck, *The Claims of Culture at Empire's End. Syria and Lebanon Under French Rule* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 229.

were facing, including the confrontation with Christian cultures that did not sit comfortably with own conceptions of civilisational progress.⁵

In this volume we have seen instances of cultural models that were not absorbed in a straight-forward or foreseeable manner. For example, American humanitarian groups, non-denominational educational institutions such as the American University in Beirut, the Mission laïque française and European communist newspapers such as *L'Humanité*, were according to Idir Ouahes the largely unintended training grounds for Palestinian Christians to develop secular, anti-imperialist ideas and self-images. This is reminiscent of how introducing the Boy Scouts movement backfired: the British Mandate government grossly underestimated to what extent this form of activity could be absorbed by the local communities and put to use for their own political ends. In fact, the Palestinian Arab Scouts became “a subversive nightmare” and were to play an active role in the 1936–1939 Arab revolt.⁶ There seems at times to have been a blind eye for the resistance that certain European practices elicited. Despite the administration’s striving to appear impartial at all times, all cultural interventions by the British could, if only because of their extraneous nature, be perceived as political. A case in point is the prevention of cruelty to animals. Seen by the British as part of the universal “civilising” humanitarianism that British interwar imperial identity stood for, it was embraced by some but also repudiated by a large part of the population in the Mandate as a malignant foreign imposition, especially in rural areas.⁷

Writing about cultural diplomacy in the twenty-first century, Ien Ang, Yudhishthir Raj Isar and Phillip Mar have pointed out that there is a distinction to be made between cultural relations, that are the result of private initiative, and cultural diplomacy, which is by definition the work of diplomats promoting the interests of their respective governments. In recent years, scholars and practitioners have tended to blur these lines.⁸ In the period of the British Mandate, European governments—responding to the growing importance of public opinion and the emerging power of mass media—were only just beginning to properly develop their direct use of culture as a strategic tool, following the private initiatives developed in this field at the end of the nineteenth century.⁹ Here, the distinction between cultural relations and

⁵ Jackson, “Transformative Occupations,” 235.

⁶ Arnon Degani, “They Were Prepared: The Palestinian Arab Scout Movement 1920–1948,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 41, no. 2 (2014): 201 and 205.

⁷ Alma Igra, “Mandate Compassion: Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 47, no. 4 (2019): 773–799.

⁸ Ien Ang, Yudhishthir Raj Isar, and Phillip Mar, “Cultural Diplomacy: Beyond the National Interest?” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 4 (2015): 365–381.

⁹ Tamara van Kessel, *Foreign Cultural Policy in the Interbellum: The Italian Dante Alighieri Society and the British Council Contesting the Mediterranean* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

diplomacy was at times also blurred: in this case, unlike today, not because non-governmental players were gaining influence but, on the contrary, because governments were taking on more responsibility and agency in the instrumental use of culture rather than being indirectly involved. Adding to the blurring of lines is the specific role of religious institutions, which were to a lesser or greater extent tied to the national interests of European states, including Russia until the Bolshevik Revolution. The local communities in Palestine were themselves seeking appropriate forms of representation and cultural leadership, be it within the existing hierarchy of religious structures (such as in the Greek Orthodox Church) or in new types of cultural spokespeople, such as the organisers of the First National Arab Fair.

If we approach the cultural activities analysed in this volume as falling under the intersection between cultural diplomacy and cultural relations, then David Clarke's reflections on how Cultural Studies theory can elucidate the workings of cultural diplomacy become very relevant.¹⁰ Cultural Studies researchers take as a premise that every cultural product is "the site of struggle over meaning" and consequently that "consumption itself becomes a form of production".¹¹ Clarke hence identifies four major actors involved in cultural diplomacy: policymakers, agents, cultural practitioners and consumers, whereby the relation between producers and consumers needs to be viewed critically. Rather like Dueck, Clarke calls for an awareness of the consumer's own agency in determining the meaning-making process. However, while he observes that identity issues will affect how consumers interpret the cultural product, the question arises how in turn this identity is conditioned by producers.

In view of this ambiguous power relation between producer and consumer, an issue that underlies several of the volume's chapters and which needs to be critically reconsidered, is the present and past influence of a western discourse of "modernity". To what extent do historical interpretations risk being trapped in the long-standing false dichotomy between modernity and the Mediterranean? As Naor Ben-Yehoyada has argued: "In the battle between two notions of modernity—pluralistic cultural elitism or nationalism—the latter had the upper hand".¹² The northern European model of modernity, characterised by state formation, capitalism, urbanisation, individualisation and above all nationalism, became the antithesis of the Mediterranean; it stood at odds with cosmopolitan port cities such as Alexandria, Beirut, Istanbul and Izmir/Smyrna, which were still flourishing at the turn of the twentieth century. Scholars themselves need to be wary of transposing a simplistic dichotomy

¹⁰David Clarke, "Theorising the Role of Cultural Products in Cultural Diplomacy from a Cultural Studies Perspective," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 22, no. 2 (2016): 147–163.

¹¹Ibidem, 152.

¹²Naor Ben-Yehoyada, "Mediterranean Modernity?" in *A Companion to Mediterranean History*, eds. Peregrine Horden and Sharon Kinoshita (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 117.

between tradition and modernity onto the Mediterranean.¹³ The “hybrid Euro-Oriental cities” of this area and their enterprising middle-class inhabitants have been all too easily relegated to the periphery, ignoring how this hybridity enabled them to negotiate their own position between their Ottoman heritage, the emerging pan-Arabist and pan-Islamic movements, the openness required by trade and the new models of living presented by European powers.¹⁴

Hence, when studying the interaction between European cultural policies and Palestinian Christian’s cultural affiliations and identifications, we need to ask: how did Christian Palestine Arabs—as a strongly urbanised part of the population—relate to western notions of cultural modernisation? How does a scholar tackle attitudes towards modernity in what was in many respects a colonial context, whereby civilisational ideals of European powers were more or less consciously absorbed or rejected? These ideas of modernity not only triggered the striving for cultural recognition of (a constructed) Palestinian Arab tradition but also both problematised and stimulated the local communities’ potential as cultural producers. The British administrators’ continuous concern with civilisational progress and their tendency to assign European Jews the role of carriers of progress, meant they disregarded the economic development that had already begun in late Ottoman Palestine and rejected the active role that Arab merchant classes were willing to play in its continuation.¹⁵ Furthermore, a considerable flow of emigrants from Palestine and the broader region who had returned by the time of the Mandate, formed a class of nouveaux riches that was culturally influential and by no means unfamiliar with industrialism, capitalism and state bureaucratisation.¹⁶ The framing of local populations as “undeveloped” was possibly not only the effect of colonial policy but also of internal processes of cultural distinction, which might have affected the collective sense of self of the various groups within the Christian communities in different ways.

The issue of “modernisation” also relates to the linguistic, educational and religious policies in Palestine, that according to Karène Sanchez Summerer still require more thorough exploration.¹⁷ While the British administration was imposing English and Hebrew as official languages besides the predominant Arabic, European mission schools negotiated national interests and

¹³Ibidem, 113–114.

¹⁴Christopher A. Bayly and Leila Fawaz, “Introduction: The Connected World of Empires,” in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, eds. Leila Tarai Fawaz and Christopher A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 9.

¹⁵Norris, “Transforming,” 282.

¹⁶May Seikaly, “Haifa at the Crossroads: An Outpost of the New World Order,” in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, eds. Leila Tarai Fawaz and Christopher A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 96–111; Jacob Norris, “Return Migration and the Rise of the Palestinian Nouveaux Riches, 1870–1925,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* XLVI, no. 2 (Winter 2017): 60–75.

¹⁷Karène Sanchez Summerer, “Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies Among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine. Fear of Confusion or a Powerful Tool?” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 2 (2016): 191–205.

religious universality, the latter being especially emphasised by the Roman Catholic Holy See. Applying diverse strategies, these schools continued to teach French, Italian and Russian respectively, and, depending on the religious order, taught mostly or partly in Arabic, seen as the most effective language in terms of catechism and proselytism. This exposure to European cultivation of the national language directly and indirectly gave an impulse to Palestinian Arab identification with the Arabic language. At the same time, English was becoming invariably associated with “modernisation” and the career prospects made possible by the British and their imperial network, not unlike French and Italian which from the mid-nineteenth century onwards had been embraced by local elites.¹⁸ In this context, the fact that Catholic Palestinians continued to cherish their habitual multilingualism did not go well with the logic of state formation and of monolingualism for each community which the British government applied to this Mandate.¹⁹

There are parallels to be drawn between how the British government tried to expel the use of Italian on Malta to counter Catholic and Italian Fascist influences, and promoted the Maltese vernacular on the grounds that children’s cognitive development would be hampered if they were taught in more languages than their “mother tongue”²⁰ The same pragmatism with which French schools in Palestine offered education in English and Arabic to give greater access to the job market, resurfaces in Italian schools in Malta that offered English to enable pupils to work for the British Navy or administration.²¹ European linguistic policies adapted to on the ground realities and comparing the strategies within Palestine and beyond can help to pinpoint what the underlying assumptions of these different governments and (religious) organisations were. Although Palestine was classified as a type A mandate, it is worth recalling what Hans-Georg Wolf has observed with regard to the differences that can be found in the linguistic divulgation by the French and the British governments in their type B mandates. The British did not encourage the use of English in these latter mandates: local populations were “forced into a colonial framework but were discouraged from aspiring to become like their colonial masters (...).”²² English as a language did not permeate the local elites as did French, nor did it become the lingua franca, something which Wolf explains as being the consequence of the British having a far more utilitarian and socio-racist approach to the territory and its population. As this volume has shown, similar ideological differences emerge

¹⁸Ibidem, 194 and 197–198.

¹⁹Ibidem, 193.

²⁰Ibidem, 197; Van Kessel, *Foreign Cultural Policy*, 146.

²¹Sanchez Summerer, “Linguistic Diversity,” 199–200; Van Kessel, *Foreign Cultural Policy*, 147.

²²Hans-Georg Wolf, “British and French Language and Educational Policies in the Mandate and Trusteeship Territories,” *Language Sciences* 30 (2008): 569, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2007.07.002>.

in the European cultural and linguistic enterprises developed in Mandate Palestine. When focussing on the Christian Arabs, the targeting and the response vary also between the denominations within this category of citizens at which these policies were aimed, bringing to the fore also the religious allegiances that overlapped or clashed with national ones.

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Epilogue

Idir Ouahes

The interwar mandatory period in the Middle East was a period of rapid changes; technological, political, demographic and sociological. In both French and British regions, the authorities sought to contain and control a range of societal forces with a variety of visions for the future of an independent Middle East.¹ The following analysis examines secular, that is to say, laicised cultural institutions such as schools, newspapers and humanitarian institutions. Examining these institutions provides an insight into the context of Palestinian Christians when Syrian politics, international institutions and regional politics were still in flux and the process of forging the modern Middle East was still underway. In this role, these institutions played an important role as conduits for cultural diplomacy.

A feature of *cultural* diplomacy is that, unlike traditional inter-cultural pre-modern diplomacy or undiplomatic “hard” power wielded by the modern state apparatus, there is an element of dialogue involved; there is inter-relation and clientelism. In the Levantine context, this is an evident feature of the way in which French and British “protectors” sought to use culturally rooted networks as a means of informal diplomatic and influence activities. Thus, in a perhaps overly broad sense, we can consider informal institutions drawn from

¹Several parts of this current epilogue were first published in Idir Ouahes, *Syria And Lebanon Under the French Mandate: Cultural Imperialism and the Workings of Empire* (London: Bloomsbury and I.B. Tauris, 2018).

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societal forces to be concerned with the cultural sphere: education, heritage, ecclesiasticism, theatre and arts, photography and cinema and music. Formal institutions may be considered to relate to bureaucracy, statecraft and sovereign actors. Evidently, this is a very generic division, since there are many overlapping aspects: for instance, ecclesiastical and canon norms and laws form a fundamental basis for statecraft and sovereignty in both Islamicate and European contexts. Cultural diplomacy, thus, can be very briefly considered to be a meeting point between the questions, discourses, structures and events relating to informal and formal institutions.

In Syria, as in Palestine, the core Franco-British influence had been based on religious institutions. Yet by the interwar period, many individuals and institutions, whether sponsored by new powers such as the US and Russia, or encouraged by a new spirit of technological, moral and legal internationalism, started to use secular arguments and tools to undermine the cultural diplomacy of the European powers. The rise of these secular networks provided one angle for an informal cultural diplomacy that, within the clientelism embedded into the Levantine mandates, enabled several setbacks and frustrations of Franco-British aims.

Violence established Franco-British control of the post-Ottoman Middle East. However, a new international sphere prompted by Bolshevik anti-imperialist rhetoric and the subsequent Wilsonian moment required a dilution of imperial aims and methods.² Though initial mandate sponsors and administrators in Paris, London, Jerusalem and Beirut interpreted it as a Levantine protectorate, they soon encountered opposition emanating from local and international stakeholders. Local government actors intended to become clients for the mandate authorities used the League of Nations principle of tutelage to challenge protectorate interpretations and colonial methods. Alongside the constrictions and alterations forced upon governmental and administrative decision makers by international economic or political pressures, groups and individuals within the mandate territories overtly opposed protectorate methods.

EDUCATION

American-sponsored religious institutions represented some of the most entrenched elements hosting cultural diplomatic activity in the mandated Middle East. Schools, hospitals, orphanages and other institutions were created. The greatest of these institutions was the American University in Beirut (AUB). These institutions were mostly the outcome of religiously motivated proselytisers. Yet the AUB was also the first educational institution in

²Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Garay Paul Menicucci, "The Russian Revolution and Popular Movement in Syria in the 1920s" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1993).

the region to introduce non-denominational, fundamentally secular, schooling. As Betty Anderson has noted for the Ottoman period, and as I show in my book on the early twentieth century Libano-Syrian mandate, the AUB became a cauldron for all sorts of Levantine attempts at financial and political autonomy and independence from Franco-British oversight, much to the chagrin of the mandatory authorities.³

In both Palestine and Syria, European educational networks had been long established. The schools that were founded by Russian, German, British, American, French or Italian sponsors often represented the various cultural influences and political interests of these countries. For instance, the Russians in Palestine tended to jealously protect Orthodox rights in the holy land, even after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.⁴ French interests were similarly protected although the Catholic interests they were claiming to represent were actually linguistically and ideologically quite diverse.⁵ Anglo-American, German and Scandinavian protection and promotion of Protestant-focussed education was similarly partisan during the earlier period of interventions (running up to the First World War).

The American University of Beirut (AUB) was of central importance as an American instrument of influence in the region that shaped nineteenth- and twentieth-century Levantine elites' opinions. This certainly continued during the mandate era. In 1920, an AUB student made a vitriolic speech in front of General Gouraud, for which he was expelled, though later readmitted. This student, aforementioned scout leader Muhi Al-Din Al-Nsuli, was later reported by a French informant to be participating in the Club for the Syrian Union, a political group seeking Syrian unity.⁶ A 1924 intelligence report described the existence of *Al-Rabita Al-'Assad Al-'Arabiyya* (Association of the Arab Lion) among the AUB student body whose aims were to "propagate and defend the Arab language" and "diffuse the patriotic spirit and oriental solidarity among all students".⁷

Though such a society may have been overtly literary, it certainly engaged in political activity. When AUB Professor Boulos Kholi became honorary president of the aforementioned Association of the Arab Lion, he received a congratulatory letter from Shahbandar, who expressed his confidence in the

³Betty S. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism & Liberal Education* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011); Idir Ouahes, *Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate: Cultural Imperialism and the Workings of Empire* (London: Bloomsbury and I.B. Tauris, 2018).

⁴Merav Mack, "Orthodox and Communist: A History of a Christian Community in Mandate Palestine and Israel," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 4 (2015): 384–400.

⁵Karène Sanchez-Summerer, "Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies Among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine. Fear of Confusion or a Powerful Tool?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 2 (2016): 191–205.

⁶"Rapport d'un Agent Bien Place", 25 February 1920 [Centre d'Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN)/1SL/V/2374].

⁷'Université Américaine de Beyrouth', n.d. [CADN/1SL/V/1565].

“great influence [of the Association], not only among its students but [...] [over] numerous Arabs as far as the [Persian] Gulf”. Shahbandar also wrote that: “If the AUB’s influence continues to grow and expand, all of its alumni will not miss the opportunity to rise up and liberate themselves in ten years’ time with the aid of the U.S”.⁸ Local newspaper *Al-Lisan al-Hal* praised the AUB as a “brilliant home” which had “inundated the countries of the Orient with its light”.⁹

Within the AUB’s walls, one group of students was fighting to keep Sultan Abdulmecid II as Caliph while the Arab Committee in the same institution sought to promote Sharif Hussein to the post.¹⁰ French intelligence was in direct contact with Anis Al-Khuri Al-Makdisi, a professor of Arabic literature at the AUB who had been educated at the Tripoli Boys’ School and was reputedly a friend of ‘Abdulaziz Ibn Saud.¹¹ Intelligence case officers monitored Al-Makdisi and determined that his activities in Iraq in the cause of pan-Arabism made him “a political agent whose propaganda seeks only to impede” French power in Syria.¹² In 1925, French intelligence reported that nearly \$150,000 had been raised by AUB alumni stretching from Istanbul, through Cairo to Brazil and America.¹³

AUB alumni, propped up by a liberal education that opened up a world of opportunities, often formed the upper crust of local society. The guest list of an alumni meeting in Aleppo reads like a Who’s Who of key local figures from doctors to dragomans.¹⁴ The AUB, if French intelligence reports are to be believed, sent student “propagandists” to America to rejoin Shahbandar and Charles Richard Crane.¹⁵ The same report quoted AUB Rector Bayard Dodge praising efforts to unite Lebanese and Syrian emigres in the Americas and encouraging the same be done with Iraqis.¹⁶ “The American University in Beirut pursues with perseverance its task of fusing the Arab world”, as one intelligence report put it.¹⁷ ‘Abd Al-Rahman Shahbandar agreed, stating that the university’s influence even extended to the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁸

The AUB would send members of its staff such as Lahoud Shehade to inner Syrian cities such as Hama tasked with outreach and a search for alumni

⁸Ibid.

⁹Service de la Presse, ‘RP de Beyrouth du 15 Octobre 1924’ [CADN/ISL/V/1683].

¹⁰‘Rapport d’Agent: Movement pour Abdul Mejid’, 7 May 1924 [CADN/ISL/V/1565].

¹¹‘N8. 247/2 – à l’Université Américaine’, 4 November 1924 [CADN/ISL/V/1565].

¹²‘Le Professeur Anis Khoury Makdissi’ [CADN ISL/V/1565].

¹³‘Bulletin de Renseignement d’Alep 1ère Partie’, 18 May 1925 [CADN/ISL/V/1565].

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵High Commissioner Weygand to Commander in Chief of the *Armée du Levant*, 1 November 1923 [Centre d’Archives Diplomatiques, La Courneuve (CADL)/E-Levant/C H12/D 1A/S-D 28].

¹⁶‘Présence Américaine en Iraq’, n.d. [CADN/ISL/V/1565].

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸‘Université Américaine de Beyrouth’, November 1924 [CADN/ISL/V/1565].

donations.¹⁹ In these early years, another AUB professor, Anis Al-Maqdissi, was sent to Baghdad to examine the possible creation of an AUB affiliate.²⁰ By 1927, the AUB had nearly 130 Iraqi students within its campus, including the sons of Noury Pasha Said and Yasin al-Hashimi.²¹ In that same year, as the Great Syrian Revolt was subsiding, a French report described the American University of Beirut as the pre-eminent site for intrigues against French rule.²²

NEWSPAPERS

Levantine newspapers were fundamental in providing avenues for secular, non-traditional, discussions of the political and socio-economic developments in the region. A flagship newspaper in this vein was the Palestinian newspaper *Filastin* which was set up by Orthodox Christian ‘Issa Al-‘Issa and was vociferously opposed to British and Zionist Jewish activities.²³ Outside of the Levant itself, as the mandates took shape in the early 1920s, a *mahjar* (immigrant) community of Syro-Lebanese and Palestinians founded magazines and newspapers from Montevideo to Cairo.

An important figure in European *mahjar* press activity was Egyptian journalist ‘Ali Al-Ghayati. Although he himself was neither a Christian nor a Levantine, he was nevertheless closely associated with leading Syrian and Palestinian activists including the Christian Lutfallah brothers. Ghayati’s role in providing a platform for anti-imperialist and contrarian opposition to the Middle East mandates was not necessarily a new development. It should instead be read within the framework of long-established Islamicate opposition to European powers’ interference, such as that established by fellow Egyptian Muhammad ‘Abduh and his mentor Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani.²⁴ Indeed, Al-Ghayati had reportedly been condemned to death in Egypt but had been smuggled out by the British in 1912 and, according to the Annemasse special commissioner’s intelligence, was paid to write pro-British propaganda during the World War.²⁵ After the War, Al-Ghayati was the *Tribune de Genève*’s oriental affairs correspondent where, according to the

¹⁹ ‘Propagande Américaine à ‘Hama’, 22 May 1925 [CADN/1SL/V/1565].

²⁰ ‘Presence Americaine [...].’

²¹ ‘Information N8. 906’, 19 November 1927 [CADN/1SL/V/1565].

²² ‘Note’, September 1927 [CADN/1SL/V/1565].

²³ For more on the background of *Filastin*, see: Emanuel Beška, *From Ambivalence to Hostility: The Arabic Newspaper Filastin and Zionism, 1911–1914* (Bratislava: Slovak Academic Press, 2016).

²⁴ I use Islamicate in the same sense as that established by Marshall Hodgson. For more on Al-Afghani and ‘Abduh, see: Idrir Ouahes, “Jamal al-Din al-Afghani,” in *Islam: A Worldwide Encyclopedia* (4 vols.) (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2017).

²⁵ Special Police Commissioner in Annemasse, “Au Sujet de la Creation à Genève d’un Comité Syrien,” 24 June 1921 [AN-P/F/7/13411].

French consul in Geneva, he engaged in a “campaign” against France at the League of Nations.²⁶

The *Tribune de Genève* had previously led an active campaign for Egyptian independence but was flagged by French officials in 1921 for turning its attention to Syrian affairs.²⁷ The *Tribune de Genève* had published an article, written by Al-Ghayati, entitled “Syria and the League of Nations” which stated that there was a forgotten Syrian question whose “weak echo, attenuated by its distance and censorship, managed to reach us from time to time”.²⁸

Al-Ghayati’s article explained that there was a Syrian question as much as an Arab or Egyptian one despite French attempts to bury it. He noted that: The events unfolding over the past two years [...] of which only a weak echo attenuated by distance and censorship reaches us [...] rekindle this question. Among the expansionist or French clerical circles there is an attempt to put aside public opinion by representing the Syrian as satisfied with the new regime [...] Yet [...] we know [...] that the great majority of Syrians are hostile to France’s actual policy.²⁹ Al-Ghayati now had the full attention of the French diplomatic surveillance apparatus.

By 1922, the French consul in Geneva had made up his mind on Al-Ghayati’s stance and described him simply as an “Arab militant”.³⁰ In the same year Al-Ghayati, who lived in Annemasse, left the *Tribune de Genève* and launched his own newspaper, *La Tribune d’Orient*. La Tribune appeared twice monthly with a motto proclaiming it to be “in defence of the rights of a renascent Orient”. Its tagline quoted President Woodrow Wilson’s “14 Points” speech to Congress: “a principle evidently underlies the programme I have outlined: it is that which assures justice to all peoples”. It was published in both French and Arabic.

Al-Ghayati’s newspaper nevertheless provided an outlet for continuing challenges to French mandatory methods. In February 1923, Al-Ghayati’s *Tribune* published an open letter from nationalist leader Shakib Arslan to General Gouraud. In it, Arslan took the general to task for suggesting that part of France’s mission was the protection of the Christian communities from Muslim attacks. Arslan pointed out that during World War I, Syrian and Lebanese Muslims had done no harm to the Christians, and had even welcomed refugees.³¹ In September 1925, Al-Ghayati wrote an editorial warning France that

²⁶ De Caix to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 20 June 1921 [CADL/E-Levant/C 313/D 4 /S-D 58].

²⁷ French Consul in Geneva to MFA, 20 June 1921 [CADL/E-Levant/Syrie-Liban/C 313/D 4/S-D 56].

²⁸ Ali Al-Ghayati, “La Syrie et la Société des Nations,” *Tribune de Genève*, 17 June 1921.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ French Consul in Geneva to MFA, 18 September 1921 [CADL/E-Levant/C 313/D 4/S-D 58].

³¹ Shakib Arslan, “Lettre Ouverte au Général Gouraud,” *La Tribune d’Orient*, 8 February 1923.

the 1925 rebellion represented a rejection of their mandatory methods, explaining that: Syrians are demanding the suppression of the mandate and the recognition of independence [...] the British policy in Iraq should have long ago served to open the eyes of the French and to set an example [...] [instead they have instituted] a policy of colonisation, similar to that in Algeria or Morocco.³²

French and Francophone newspapers afforded another avenue for secular-rooted contestation and protest. One article, written in the *Mercure de France* in 1916 by Y. Bitar, was entitled “the true French Syria”. Bitar noted the flurry of mid-First World War commentary in favour of the establishment of a protectorate in Syria on the basis of a privileged French cultural presence in the region. Though he largely agreed with encouragement of a French protectorate, Bitar nevertheless sought to note the important Syrian absorption of French culture and philosophy. His article thus gave agency to local Syrians and Lebanese in choosing to use French learning to advance their own interests. Bitar explained that: “Syrians [...] are the inheritors of this wonderful Arab civilisation [...] in every cultivated Syrian a Frenchman could recognise his [...] own culture”. Bitar used the interactions between French poets and writers and their Syrian counterparts as proof of these ties which had the effect of placing Syrians as equals to the French.³³

A month later, the *Mercure De France* also published a dissenting piece by a Maronite Christian Lebanese-French editor at *Le Temps*, Khairallah Tannous Khairallah.³⁴ Khairallah criticised Bitar for having exaggerated the extent of French influence among Syrian Christians. He also noted that Bitar had continually referred to Christians, thus passing over wholesale the large number of non-Christian Syrians. Khairallah acknowledged the predominant cultural influence of French authors in the region. However, he emphasised that this coexisted with an enduring Arab-Islamic culture and a growing Russian and British influence. Khairallah noted that even among the estimated 40,000 students educated in French schools:

The congregational [*i.e.* religious missionary] influence in Syria ends at the doors of the school. Modern developments have [...] surpassed it [the missionary influence] and [even] turned against it. The true masters are those French authors [*i.e.* Victor Hugo], who have done the most on behalf of France as a conquering army, by the simply irresistible spread of their genius.³⁵

³²Ali Al-Ghayati, “Si la France voulait [...],” *La Tribune d’Orient* no. 53, 25 September 1925.

³³M.Y. Bitar, “La Vraie Syrie Française,” *Mercure De France* no. 422, 16 January 1916, 217–219.

³⁴Khairallah’s important role in shaping French public opinion has been examined in: Samir Khairallah, “La France et la Question Arabe de L’Empire Ottoman, K. T. Khairallah et son Temps (1882–1930)” (Phd diss., University of Paris, 2011). Khairallah was for a reformed Ottoman system rather than Arab Revolt.

³⁵K.T. Khairallah, “La Vraie Syrie Française,” *Mercure De France* no. 424, 16 February 1916, 762–766.

Le Temps, a quasi-official mouthpiece of government at the time, reproduced denunciations of the Balfour Letter by Syrian and Palestinian activists at the 1919 Marseille Congress on Syria.³⁶ A few weeks later, *Le Temps*, carried another article calling for a unified and integral Syria including Palestine.³⁷ In April 1922, the Communist *L'Humanité* reproduced a telegram from reformist Islamist Syrian thinker Rashid Ridā, then secretary of the Syro-Palestinian Committee in Cairo. Ridā denounced an ‘unsustainable’ political situation and the arrests of nationalists as well as France’s crackdown on widespread protests.³⁸

Alongside the Francophone Levantine press, various Syrians, Palestinians and other post-Ottoman subjects were working as journalists and editors in Europe. French authorities monitored the Syro-Lebanese associations and journalists active in Paris and Geneva. In 1922, a special police commissioner in Paris monitored a group calling themselves the Association of Syrian Youth who had published a tract entitled: “What all Frenchmen should know about Syria”.³⁹ This Association was presided by Ibrahim Naggiar, a journalist who had received French money to found *Al-Mustaqbāl* (The Future). Other members of the Association were students, such as Omar Fakhouri and Hilmi Barudy. Despite its superficially Francophile background, the Association of Syrian Youth’s pamphlet called on the French Parliament and public opinion to heed to their demands regarding the failed military rule of the country.⁴⁰ The Association claimed that “Syria is an ‘independent state’” and that the division of Syria into separate states had been toxic.⁴¹

Later in summer 1922, French intelligence reported that the Association had links with the Syrian Union political party. This party was presided over by Michel Lutfallah, a wealthy Greek Orthodox moneylender based in Egypt, and demanded the removal of Anglo-French troops from the Levant, the end to mandates, recognition of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, and the right to reorganise these states in an Arab Federation.⁴² The Association of Syrian Youth’s members were also noted to be close to the *Union Intercoloniale*

³⁶“L’Unité de la Syrie,” *Le Temps* no. 21016, 14 January 1919.

³⁷“Liban et Syrie,” *Le Temps* no. 21028, 1 February 1919.

³⁸Director of the *Surété Générale* to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), 17 November 1923 [CADL/E-Levant/C H12/D 1A/S-D 208].

³⁹Special Commissioner Attached to the Military Administration in Paris to the Director of Surété Générale, 21 June 1922 [*Archives Nationales*, Perfitte-Sur-Seine (AN-P)/F//7/13411].

⁴⁰Association Française de la Jeunesse Syrienne, *Ce Que Tout Français Doit Savoir de la Syrie* (Paris: Emile Larose, 1922).

⁴¹Ibid. The Association’s poster recalled French repression of popular protests ahead of the King-Crane Commission’s visit to Beirut in 1919. For a comprehensive outline of the King-Crane Commission’s reception, see: Andrew Patrick, *America’s Forgotten Middle East Initiative: The King-Crane Commission of 1919* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

⁴²Surété Générale, “Association de la Jeunesse Syrienne,” 26 August 1922 [AN-P/F/7/13411].

(UI), a group organised by the French Communists (PCF), with some Syrian members taking part in an UI periodicals reading circle.⁴³ This effort was overshadowed, of course, by the very active role of the Palestine Communist Party which, though dominated by Jewish Communists, also mobilised Palestinian Arabs in the anti-imperial and pro-Communist struggle in the Levant and Europe.⁴⁴

HUMANITARIANISM

The early twentieth century, particularly after World War I, saw a major expansion of humanitarian aid. In part, this was a natural increase in American external intervention and charity given the country's spectacular economic growth in the late nineteenth-century. Nevertheless, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia also encouraged an expansion of American internationalism and humanitarianism in order to prevent a collapse of the global capitalist and liberal world order. This was evidenced by President Woodrow Wilson's push for the creation of a League of Nations and of a variety of international sphere non-governmental organisation.⁴⁵

Near East Relief (NER), was founded in 1915 as the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR) in New York but soon grew to become a key player in relief work. Charles Vickrey, the most active manager of the charity on a day to day basis, was general secretary. Among the executive committee were Cleveland Dodge and Charles Richard Crane, later co-author of the famed King-Crane Commission report.⁴⁶ The language used by some humanitarian administrators demonstrated a degree of respect and compassion for the victims. William H. Hall, a member of the NER precursor the American Committee of Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR), on had previously written an article in *Asia* in which he laid out the claims for the maintenance of the Ottoman open borders system.

In a key passage, Hall described the Syrian race as:

Like their Phoenician forebears, they too are world-traders... we need but to turn to Egypt and the building of the Sudan Government to see what this race is capable of along administrative lines. Said Pasha Shukier, born in a little village in the Lebanon Mountains, trained in the American College at Beirut, has been trusted by the British Government with the entire organisation [*sic.*] of the finances of the Sudan. Such men as... Faris Nimir [who edited the respected Egyptian *Moqattam* newspaper] also originating in the mountain villages of Syria have made names as journalists, scientists and publishers in the city of Cairo.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party, 1919–1948: Arab & Jew in the Struggle for Internationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Ithaca Press, 1979).

⁴⁵Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*.

⁴⁶Charles Vickrey, General Secretary New York to Ellsworth Huntingdon, 12 April 1917 [Yale Manuscripts and Archives, New Haven CT/Ellsworth Huntingdon Papers].

In his discussion of Armenian relief by the League of Nations, Keith Watenpaugh noted the objectification of the refugees and the general targeting of Christian communities with less regard for non-Christians.⁴⁷ This is somewhat unsurprising given the deep orientalism at the heart of Western engagement with the East, and in the context of Western public and governmental perceptions of the Ottoman authorities as being repressive their dealings with Christian minorities.⁴⁸ A detailed examination of American humanitarian activity, however, complicates this picture. There were undeniable religiously motivated essentialisms of the objects of humanitarian action, yet so too were there serious efforts at humanising the unfortunate as subjects worthy of compassion from the highest-level down.

From the French point of view, claims of cultural affinity and governmental competence were fundamental to their ability to gain and retain their League of Nations mandate. The French project for the Levant was a paternalist one that sought to forge “colonial citizens” in countries envisioned by imperial diplomacy and imposed through violence.⁴⁹ French publicists, planners and administrators faced difficulties translating talk of a Levantine protectorate into effective control over established and new clients.⁵⁰ Yet at the heart of clientelism lies a dialogue between patron and protectee. Such a clientelist dialogue is not held between equally powerful parties. Yet, in stark contrast to the *tabula rasa* methods employed by the military and colonial settlers in the early Algerian colony, it was premised on the recognition of dialoguing participants.⁵¹

This was particularly the case following the growth of an international arena and norms that, in theory, regulated imperial actions and brought previously obfuscated domestic affairs into broader consciousness.⁵² American humanitarian groups, the French *Mission Laique*, and various newspapers in the U.S. and Europe provided an avenue for Syrian and Palestinian Christians and their allies to contest mandate methods and carry out a dialogue and informal cultural diplomacy. Although many of these institutions were not entirely, or “purely” secular, most enabled students, authors, propagandists

⁴⁷Keith David Watenpaugh, “The League of Nations’ Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927,” *American Historical Review* 115, no. 5 (December 2010): 1315–1339.

⁴⁸Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2006); Keith David Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 7.

⁴⁹Elizabeth F. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York, NY: Colombia University Press, 2000).

⁵⁰Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services And Colonial Disorder After 1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 293–294.

⁵¹William Gallois, *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013).

⁵²Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

and activists to develop secular anti-imperial politics from a range of inspirations. Thus, they provided internationally and regionally situated platforms for secular-rooted protest, contestation and informal diplomatic pressure on the British and French mandatory powers in Syria and Palestine.

CONCLUSION

A variety of Christian Syrians and Palestinians in the mandated Middle East, ranging from wealthy Greek Orthodox like the Lutfallahs, to Maronite publicist Tannous Khairallah, sought to challenge imperial claims and plans. This was made possible by the overlapping institutions, including the secular-rooted institutions such as the modernised American humanitarian machine, the Republican *Mission Laïque* and the Francophone public sphere. Syrian activists and networks, using secular French cultural institutions such as those examined above, closely paralleled and often overlapped with the Palestinian one. There is clear evidence of the role of these secular cultural institutions in shaping possibilities to challenge and shape the direction of the Middle East's future. More research on these institutions, and the countervailing ones such as the Catholic, Islamist and those belonging to other cultural-ideological movements, can help paint a more complex and complete picture of the mandated Middle East, and the shaping of the region's modern history. In particular, the extent to which these secular cultural institutions were used by Levantine Christians to achieve their aims and interests, and how this relationship changed during the mandatory period as competing cultural institutions emerged from the other cultural-ideological movements, needs further investigation.

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