

# Translating Late Ottoman Modernity in Palestine

Debates on Ethno-Confessional Relations and Identity  
in the Arab Palestinian Newspaper *Filasṭīn* (1911–1914)





**unipress**

Transottomanica  
Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische  
Mobilitätsdynamiken

Band 2

Herausgegeben von  
Stefan Rohdewald, Stephan Conermann und Albrecht Fuess

Evelin Dierauff

# Translating Late Ottoman Modernity in Palestine

Debates on Ethno-Confessional Relations and  
Identity in the Arab Palestinian Newspaper *Filasṭīn*  
(1911–1914)

With 24 figures

V&R unipress

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen  
Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über  
<https://dnb.de> abrufbar.

© 2020, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Theaterstraße 13, D-37073 Göttingen  
Alle Rechte vorbehalten. Das Werk und seine Teile sind urheberrechtlich geschützt.  
Jede Verwertung in anderen als den gesetzlich zugelassenen Fällen bedarf der vorherigen  
schriftlichen Einwilligung des Verlages.

Umschlagabbildung: Street vendor with newspaper "La Palestine" in Jaffa (1921–1923),  
© The Netherlands Institute for The Near East (Leiden), Frank Scholten Collection,  
[www.nino-leiden.nl/collections/frank-scholten-legacy](http://www.nino-leiden.nl/collections/frank-scholten-legacy)

**Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | [www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com](http://www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com)**

ISSN 2626-9449

ISBN 978-3-8470-1066-1

To Karl Dierauff (1901–1992), an example of *ṣumūd*,  
and my parents, Lydia & Ernst (1935–2002).



---

## Contents

Acknowledgements . . . . .	11
Notes on the Transliteration and the Use of Terms . . . . .	13
List of Abbreviations . . . . .	15
Introduction . . . . .	17
1. Historical Context and Definitions . . . . .	17
2. Historiographical Context . . . . .	31
2.1. ‘Dual Society’ and Inter-Confessional Relations . . . . .	32
2.2. Plural Societies in Ottoman Modernity . . . . .	34
2.3. Dialectics of Space, Communication and Society-Building . . . . .	38
3. Exploring <i>Filastīn</i> as a Medium . . . . .	41
3.1. Research on the Palestinian Arabic Press and <i>Filastīn</i> . . . . .	41
3.2. Collecting and Evaluating the Coverage in <i>Filastīn</i> . . . . .	45
4. Central Concepts and Methods . . . . .	48
5. Content of Study . . . . .	49
I. <i>Filastīn</i> and the ‘Spirit of the Age’: Educating the Nation . . . . .	51
1. The Development of Arabic Print Media in Palestine . . . . .	51
2. <i>Filastīn</i> in Context . . . . .	57
2.1. The Background of <i>Filastīn</i> . . . . .	57
2.2. Accessing Readership and Markets . . . . .	65
2.3. Structure of Press Communication . . . . .	70
3. Central Concepts and Terminology in <i>Filastīn</i> ’s Discourse . . . . .	78
3.1. Missions and Priorities . . . . .	78
3.2. Modernist Discourse . . . . .	81
3.2.1. The Sacred Mission of Modernization . . . . .	81
3.2.2. The Other Side of the Coin: Palestinian ‘Backwardness’ . . . . .	88
3.3. Imperial Discourse . . . . .	93



3.3.1. Ottoman Constitutionalism versus Despotism . . . . .	93
3.3.2. Overlapping Ottomanism, Arabism and Palestinian Patriotism . . . . .	94
3.3.3. Ottoman Brothers . . . . .	100
3.4. Civic Discourse . . . . .	110
II. The Jaffa Region as an Ethno-Confessional Contact Zone . . . . .	117
1. Historiographical Context and Relevance . . . . .	117
2. From 'Fortress' to 'Boom Town' . . . . .	123
3. Demographic Diversity and Migration . . . . .	136
4. Relationalities between the Urban and the Hinterland . . . . .	146
5. Ethno-Confessional Cohabitation and Power Sharing . . . . .	154
6. Negotiating Urban Politics in Jaffa . . . . .	158
6.1. Modernization of Infrastructure: Roads and Port . . . . .	159
6.2. Establishing Security, Defending Public Space . . . . .	163
III. The 'Arab Orthodox Renaissance' in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Conflicts about Participation . . . . .	175
1. Framing the Topic . . . . .	175
2. Historical Context . . . . .	184
2.1. Features and Structure of the Jerusalemite Patriarchate . . . . .	184
2.2. Factors in the Arab Orthodox Awakening . . . . .	188
2.3. The Patriarchal Crisis and the Arab Orthodox Rebellion . . . . .	190
3. <i>Filastīn</i> and the Arab Orthodox Cause . . . . .	196
3.1. <i>Filastīn</i> as the 'Mouthpiece' of the Arab Orthodox Movement . . . . .	196
3.2. Arab Orthodox Networks . . . . .	200
4. Language and Themes Used in the Arab Orthodox Campaign . . . . .	205
5. Political Instruments of the Arab Orthodox Movement . . . . .	211
6. The Mixed Council as a Platform for Debate . . . . .	218
7. A History of Escalation(s): Case Studies on the Mixed Council . . . . .	223
7.1. Conflicts over the 'Trustees' Councils' . . . . .	224
7.2. Debates on Educational Reforms . . . . .	236
7.3. Debates on the Social Budget . . . . .	248
7.4. The Rotation of Delegates and the Election Affair(s) . . . . .	251
7.5. From Personal Feuds to the Council's Crisis . . . . .	257
7.6. Back to Square One? From Escalation to 'Reconciliation' . . . . .	264
7.7. From Polarization to Self-Censorship . . . . .	273

IV. The Press Debate on Zionist Immigration: Driving Force or Obstacle to Local Development? . . . . .	277
1. Framing the Topic . . . . .	277
2. Historical Context . . . . .	287
2.1. Zionist Immigration before World War I . . . . .	287
2.2. Local Responses on Zionist Migration up to World War I . . . . .	290
3. Framing the Debate on Zionism in the Local Press . . . . .	293
3.1. Central Elements of the Debate on Zionism . . . . .	293
3.2. Communicational Aspects of the Coverage on Zionism . . . . .	297
3.3. Terminological Elements . . . . .	300
4. Negotiating Zionist Exclusiveness versus Inclusiveness . . . . .	302
4.1. The Integration of Zionist Migrants in Jaffa . . . . .	303
4.2. The Jewish Netter School and its Confessional Policy . . . . .	311
5. Promoting Zionism in <i>Filastīn</i> . . . . .	318
5.1. Zionism as a Stimulating Force for Development . . . . .	318
5.2. The Column ‘Letters of a Farmer’ by a Russian-Zionist Immigrant . . . . .	325
6. Campaigns for the Control over Land and Water . . . . .	342
6.1. Jewish Land Purchase as a Dispute Issue . . . . .	343
6.2. Muhdī Bek and the Sand Dunes of Rishon le-Tzion . . . . .	346
6.3. The Transaction of Abū Šūša and Kafr Uriya . . . . .	348
6.4. <i>Filastīn</i> , <i>Herut</i> and the Water Mills at the Yarkon . . . . .	352
6.5. Notables against the Sale of the ‘Crown Lands’ . . . . .	357
7. The Impact of Zionism on Christian-Jewish Relations . . . . .	364
7.1. Strategies for Conflict Management . . . . .	364
7.2. Towards Polarization: the ‘Black Sheep’ among the Israelites. . . . .	371
7.3. <i>Filastīn</i> ’s Networks with Jews and Zionists . . . . .	379
8. The Debate Ends: Towards a Political Campaign against the ‘Zionist Danger’ . . . . .	383
V. Conclusion . . . . .	397
1. Central Terminology and Concepts in <i>Filastīn</i> . . . . .	399
2. Jaffa as an ‘Ethno-Confessional Contact Zone’ . . . . .	403
3. The Arab Orthodox Renaissance . . . . .	406
4. The Debate on Zionist Migration . . . . .	411
5. General Conclusions and Outlook . . . . .	417
VI. Glossary and Appendices . . . . .	419
1. Appendix I: Resolutions on the Arab Orthodox Case . . . . .	419
1.1. Summary of the 1910 Resolution . . . . .	419

---

1.2. Summary of the Regulations Concerning the Local Trustees . . . . .	425
1.3. Summary of the Resolution of 30 December 1913 . . . . .	426
2. Appendix II: Chronology of the Orthodox Movement, 1908–14 . . . . .	427
3. Appendix III: Persons Engaged in the intra-Orthodox Conflict, 1910–14 . . . . .	428
4. Appendix IV: Glossary of Terms . . . . .	430
VII. Bibliography . . . . .	433

---

## Acknowledgements

This study is a revised version of my dissertation that I submitted to the Department of Oriental and Islamic Studies at Tuebingen University in 2018. Several people were extremely helpful in finishing this study and provided to me various kinds of support. I am grateful to my supervisors, Johann Büssow and Stefan Rohdewald, who both helped with practical advises and dedicated a lot of time to critically discuss and reevaluate the concepts of this work. I owe many thanks to Johann Büssow who has shared his notes of his former research on Ottoman Palestine, materials on Palestinian elites and his own evaluations of *Filasṭīn* with me and always helped to reframe this study and its methodological approach. Many thanks go to Emanuel Beška who was so generous to provide me with the digital issues of *Filasṭīn* of 1914 – without this it would not have been possible to complete my conclusions on the Orthodox Renaissance during the late Ottoman years. I also owe many thanks to the people who read pieces or even complete chapters of this work, corrected mistakes and improved the style; especially Johann Büssow, Stefan Rohdewald, Emanuel Beška, Martin Streibel, Franzi Dröscher, Petra Nendwich and Sarah Schmitz-Büssow. Special thanks also go to Carol Rowe who was extremely engaged, thorough and quick in co-editing the whole piece and who always supported me with practical advises.

Finally, my deepest and heartfelt gratitude goes to a circle of beloved and unique friends who have encouraged me, and accompany me in this life journey, or parts of it. You make my day.



---

## Notes on the Transliteration and the Use of Terms

The transliteration system used for Arabic terms follows the regulations of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DMG). Words in the Arabic text spelled in dialect mostly applies to names of persons and places. In these cases, I slightly adapted the pronunciation of the transliteration. For example, I used the feminine ending -eh instead of -a (*ta-marbūṭa*) when written accordingly in the original text. As for the transliteration of Hebrew words, I followed the norms in line with DIN-31636, however, with slight alterations.<sup>1</sup> I applied the discritical sign ḥ for ḥa, ‘ for ‘ayyin, ṭ for ṭet, ṣ for ṣameḥ, ts for tsade, q for quāf, and š for šin. In case of Ottoman Turkish terms, I followed the recommendations of the Redhouse Turkish/Ottoman-English Dictionary. The transliterations in Arabic, Hebrew or Turkish are in general given in small letters and italic script, or cursive writing; besides transliterated names of persons and places which are in normal script. Capital letters are given only in case of transliterated names of persons (for instance, Muḥammad) and places (al-Quds, ‘Aḡamī, etc.), and for titles of magazines (*Filasṭīn*) taken from the original script. Regarding the first mentioning of proper names, the full name is spelled with the original article (Arab.: al-, Hebr.: ha-). This applied for instance to names of persons (Yūsuf al-‘Īsā) and titles of magazines (*ha-Ḥerut*, *al-Karmil*). In the following, I omit the article (*Ḥerut*, ‘Īsā).

Some Arabic and Hebrew words that are in frequent use in the Arabic source or scholarly literature, are given in their original version; for example, terms deriving from the Ottoman administration that describe offices or institutions, such as *muḥtār*, *waqf*, or that define organizations, such as *šomrim*. This also applies for some key terms that often appear in the newspaper’s jargon and therefor stand for itself in the frame of this study. For example, I will use the word *nahḍa* instead of “renaissance” and *milla* instead of ‘religious community’. Importantly to note, I decided to spell terms deriving from Ottoman bureau-

---

1 For the revision of the DIN-norm for Hebrew transliteration, see the article of Heuberger (2006).

cracy, that are in frequent use in *Filasṭīn* in its Arabic transliteration and not in the Turkish version; for example, *mutaşarrif*, *qaḍāʾ*, *qāʾimaqām* or *ḥaḥāmbāšī*, but also the honorary title Bek (Tur.: Bey). For explanations, please consult the glossary of Hebrew and Arabic terms (Appendix IV). However, words that derive from other languages and made their way into English, are given in its common spelling. This applies to the terms mufti, rabbi, qadi, sheikh and lira, but also for Yishuv (defining the Jewish community in Palestine), or Tanzimat (as the period of Ottoman reforms, 1839–1876), etc.

Names of institutions, parties and associations are usually given in capital letters and will be fully spelled at the first mention. In the following, they might be shortened, for instance, I will use CUP instead of Committee of Union and Progress or WZO instead of World Zionist Organization. For this, please consult the list of abbreviations.

---

## List of Abbreviations

AIU	Alliance Israélite Universelle
APB	Anglo-Palestine Bank
Ar.	Arabic
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
CZA	Central Zionist Archives
Hebr.	Hebrew
ISA	Israeli States Archives
JCA	Jewish Colonial Association
JN	Jewish National Fund
LU	Liberal Union
Turk.	Turkish
WZO	World Zionist Organisation
ZAC	Zionist Actions Committee
ZCO	Zionist Central Office





---

# Introduction

## 1. Historical Context and Definitions

This book explores how ‘ethno-confessional relations’ were negotiated in Palestine during the years before World War I as a particular ‘translation of late Ottoman Modernity’, linking the reconstitution of its group identities with greater mobility dynamics such as transregional migration and the appropriation of transottoman concepts in the local context.<sup>1</sup> Although situated in the Ottoman periphery, Palestine definitely played an important role in the Arab Middle East as a magnet for migrants, tourists, pilgrims and diplomats. Before the outbreak of the War, societies in the Arab East in general and in Palestine in particular, underwent far-reaching transformations.<sup>2</sup> From the nineteenth century, reforms and new institutions were introduced in the region that faced paradoxical circumstances: the beginning of secularization and civic equality, as well as the rise of sectarianism and inter-confessional strife, great technological change and integration into global markets but also economic crisis, migration, political disintegration and the emergence of nation states outside the imperial frame.

In the light of articles published in the local Arabic Palestinian newspaper *Filasṭīn* (‘Palestine’) in Jaffa from 1911–1914, this study analyzes local views on social cohabitation between different confessional and ethnic groups in Pales-

---

1 See Rohdewald, Fuess, Riedler, and Conermann 2019, 83–103, on ‘Wissenszirkulation’ in the transottoman context. The term ‘ethno-confessional relations’ used here implies a simplification, subsuming relations between certain confessional and/or ethnic groups. My analysis focuses on the intra- and inter-confessional levels of group relations. However, local debates about these relations may include arguments about ethnicity.

2 In this work, alternative terms for geographical spaces are used (Eastern Mediterranean, Arab Middle East, Arab Provinces, Palestine, Holy Land, Jerusalem District). None of these terms are neutral or ‘innocent’ as they are constructed by power relations and reflect political perspectives. The terms ‘Middle East’ and ‘Orient’ only make sense from the perspective of Europe situated west of the Mediterranean. The term ‘Holy Land’ defines Palestine from a Biblical point of view, marginalizing its Muslim history, which became the dominant European-historical perspective. See Krämer 2002, 11–13.

tine, the socio-economic integration of migrants into local society and ideals of civic participation and governance through the lens of selected case studies.<sup>3</sup> It looks at how these views were negotiated in *Filasṭīn* as a joint production or a 'pool of publishers', were diffused into the public space and contributed to the re-constitution of ethno-confessional relations in Palestine. While *Filasṭīn* has been the subject of studies before, it has been given simplistic labels as pioneer of anti-Zionism and Palestinian nationalism before World War I on the basis of random samples, without proper contextualization of its coverage during the years 1911–1914. Through a concise in-depth media analysis, this study tries to link the production of local discourses with the broader historical context: a local Palestinian society in the Ottoman periphery, affected by transottoman migration, urbanization and competing proto-national discourses; all of this accompanied by high expectations in the field of modernization according to the global *zeitgeist*.

#### *Inter-Confessional Relations in the Context of Ottoman Reforms*

The Ottoman Reforms, the *Tanzimat* (1839–1876) or *Tanzīmāt-i Ḥayrīye* ('Beneficial Reorganization'), aimed at strengthening the central state and the military, securing the tax flow from the provinces and bringing about modernization in line with European standards. The reforms were implemented to gain European support, or ward off European intervention in Ottoman policies, but Zurcher points out that they were strongly motivated by the belief that only a European-style reformation could pave the way out of the financial, political and military crisis, the Empire was experiencing. Thus, the *Tanzimat* proclaimed the civic equality of Muslims, Christians and Jews, at least in theory and under European pressure to liberalize in line with the ideals of the French Revolution.<sup>4</sup> The Ottoman population had previously been divided into Muslims and non-

3 Articles from *Filasṭīn* will be quoted in the following format: *Filasṭīn*, date: number of issue/number of page/number of column on the page (from right to left).

4 In 1839, the first edict, the *Ḥaṭṭ-ı Şerif of Gülhane*, was issued to gain British support in the 'Egyptian crisis', and to end the expansion of Muḥammad 'Alī in Syria. It reformed judicial, tax and military structures and confirmed the equality of all subjects. The second edict, the *Ḥaṭṭ-ı Humāyūn* (1856), was issued under tremendous European pressure following the Ottoman defeat in the Crimean War (1853–1856) and focused on regulating relations between the Empire and non-Muslims so as to take a stand against European interference, and especially against a European appeal to Ottoman minorities under the pretense of offering them protection. The *Tanzimat* ended with the promulgation of the Fundamental Law (Tur.: *Qānūn-ı Esāsī*) in 1876, and the suspension of the Constitution by Sultan Abdülhamid (1878). However, a lot of civic and legal reforms were implemented only under the regime of the Young Turks (1908–1918). See Reinkowski 1995, 13, and Zurcher 2004, 50–70. For guidelines of the edicts of 1839 and 1856, see Matuz 1985, 224–231; and the German translation, Meier 1994, 54f., 60f. For its aims and effects, see Sonyel 1993, 147–155, and for its ambivalences, Davison, *Tanzīmāt*. In: EI<sup>2</sup>.

Muslims (*muslim wa-ğayr muslim*). According to the Sharia on minorities under Muslim authority (*ahl ađ-dimma*), non-Muslim communities were granted an inferior legal status but were protected and given extensive autonomy in religious and civil affairs.<sup>5</sup> Here, the Ottoman *millet* system regulated relations between the state bureaucracy and the non-Muslim communities who were acknowledged as *millets* and had an official representative to the state; this applied, until the nineteenth century, to the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Christians and Ottoman Jews.<sup>6</sup>

The *Tanzimat* officially abolished traditional religious distinctions between Ottoman subjects. Instead of religious identity, the state now fostered secular concepts of citizenship and Ottoman patriotism (Tur.: *osmanlılık*; Ar.: *al-waṭaniya al-ʿuṭmāniya*) regardless of confessional ties, so as to unite the disparate segments of society.<sup>7</sup> The edict of 1858 reconfirmed civic equality and the abolition of by-laws and special taxes (*ğizya*) for non-Muslims stipulated in Islamic law. It also made provision for recruitment to the military, regardless of faith or ethnicity, introduced mixed courts for legal issues between Muslims and non-Muslims, and confirmed participatory rights for non-Muslims in political bodies. The state also claimed that Muslims, Christians and Jews should have equal rights to representation in the Ottoman bureaucracy and the provincial administration on the basis of a proportional quota.<sup>8</sup> Public reactions in Arab cities to the declaration of civic equality were mixed. Many Muslims felt that it was a provocation that challenged their former superior status.<sup>9</sup> There were also Muslim

5 Sharia, often translated as ‘Islamic Law’, is not a fixed corpus but a legal and moral value system that constantly produces regulations. For non-Muslims under early Islamic rule, see Bosworth 1982, 37–51, and Braude 2000, 409–418.

6 *Millet* (Tur.) or *milla* (Ar.) means ‘denomination’ or ‘religious community’ or, in the modern context, ‘nation’. See Öztürk 2009. There is a huge debate about the origins and historical meanings of this term, which is usually applied to non-Muslims. Braude states that, until the Islamic Middle Ages, *milla* referred to any religious community and the concept was transformed over time. In nineteenth-century correspondence, *millet* referred to acknowledged non-Muslim groups whose representatives were the Patriarchs for the Christians, and the Chief Rabbi for the Jews. Later, the *millet* status was extended to other groups, such as Catholics and Protestants. For the debate on concepts of *milla*, see Braude 1982, 69–73 f.; Ursinus 1989, 201 f., 206–207. For the traditional *millet* system, see Levy 1992, 42–44; Ağoston and Masters 2009, 382–384. For its extension to the Catholics, Protestants and others (Syriac Orthodox, Chaldeans, etc.), see Merten 2013, 52–91, 97–101.

7 Barkey classifies Ottoman patriotism as the ‘management of diversity’ in the Empire. It was especially espoused by the Young Ottomans (1867–1876) to attract non-Muslim elites who might otherwise be drawn to the West. Barkey 2006, 191. For the Young Ottomans, see Kayalı 1997, 22–24.

8 Krämer mentions that the quota system privileged Christians and Jews over Muslims in the provincial councils in terms of the number of seats. See Krämer 2002, 115–116.

9 Masters has investigated chronicles on Muslim–Christian relations in nineteenth-century Syrian cities following the declaration of equality. In Aleppo, when the imperial decree was

protests against military conscription, which was, by the way, only fully applied to non-Muslims under Young Turk rule (1908–1918).<sup>10</sup> Until then, Christians and Jews mostly paid, in lieu of military service, the *bedel-i askeri*, practically a modified *ğizya*, according to Davison.<sup>11</sup>

In the context of the *millet* reorganization, communities were also restructured on the intra-confessional level. The formation of so-called ‘Mixed Councils’ was to grant lay participation in the administration of the Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish *millets*. This created intra-confessional tension between the traditional clerical hierarchies and lay people who wanted to have a say in the decision running of their community.<sup>12</sup> Despite of Ottoman citizenship and the promotion of civic equality, and also as a result of the quota policy, confessional identities in the Middle East were strengthened rather than blurred, which contributed to increasing inter-confessional rivalries in the Arab Levant at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> The rise of sectarianism was further fostered through the ‘Capitulations’ (*imtiyāzāt*), bi-lateral treaties between the Empire and European powers that allowed the latter to intervene in Ottoman internal affairs. Originally, the *imtiyāzāt* secured privileges for foreign merchants and diplomats in the Empire, exempting them from taxes and the Ottoman legal system and making them accountable only to consular courts. Up to the nineteenth century, the Europeans expanded the treaties far beyond their original

---

announced before Muslim notables, it made their faces turn ‘grey as ashes’, wrote the Syrian Muslim historian al-Ustuwānī in his chronicle *Mašāhid al-Aḥdāt*. On the other side, the atmosphere was euphoric. Christian elites were celebrating and invited to receptions by the foreign consul, according to the Syriac Christian historian Baḥḥāš. See Masters 2013, 172f.

10 For instance, in Aleppo (1850) rumors about Muslim military registration gave rise to plunder and murder in Christian neighborhoods. This went on for several days until Ottoman and British forces intervened. About 1,000 were killed, and 500 injured. In Damascus too, Muslim resentment escalated from time to time into anti-Christian massacres. After riots between Druze and Christian factions in Lebanon, inter-confessional strife spread to Syria in 1860. Muslims looted Christian quarters in Damascus, causing hundreds, or according to other reports thousands, of deaths. This was a massive shock to the Ottoman government and caused a Christian exodus from the city and international diplomatic entanglements. Masters 2013, 169f., 174–182; and Ma’oz 2002, 108–118.

11 See Davison, *Tanzīmāt*. In: EF<sup>2</sup>.

12 In this context, Davison refers to “Millet Constitutions”, which stipulated the formation of ‘Mixed Councils’ for the Greek Orthodox (1860–1863), Armenian (1863) and Jewish (1865) *millets*. Davison 1973, 114–134. For the rise of the Chief Rabbi or *Hakhambashi* (Ar.: *ḥā-ḥāmbāšī*) as representative of the Sephardi Jews to Ottoman bureaucracy and internal conflicts arising from this, see Levy 1992, 105–108, and Levy 1994, 425f. For the reformation of Jewish education, see Levy 1992, 108–115.

13 For the emergence of sectarianism in nineteenth-century Lebanon in the context of modernization and policies of diplomats and missionaries, see Makdisi 2000. For the transition of inter-confessional relations in Ottoman Syria and Palestine after the *Tanzimat*, see Ma’oz 1982, 92–95, and 2002, 108–118. For roots of sectarianism in Syria see Masters 2001, and on sectarian dissonance in the Arab “periphery”, Masters 2013, 163f.

frame: diplomats passed on their privileges to Jewish and Christian minorities collectively, acting as the protectors of non-Muslims, or even granted citizenship to individuals.<sup>14</sup> Empire wide, these factors contributed to a growing gap between Muslims and Christians and challenged traditional patterns of interaction and segregation in inter-confessional and state–citizen relations, renegotiated in the light of Ottomanism and a new political culture.

### *Migration and Nationalism in the Age of ‘Global’ Modernity*

During the *Tanzimat*, the Middle East and late Ottoman Palestine faced the first stages of modern globalization and its transforming effect on local cultures. Globalization dynamics introduced new technologies, increased human mobility, accelerated the circulation of commodities and ideas, provided new access to knowledge, speeded up the dissemination of information and contributed to the establishment of trans-regional networks to an extent never seen before.<sup>15</sup> The Middle East became integrated into global markets and increasingly exposed to European imperialism and hegemony, linked with the idea of cultural ‘civilization’ and the ‘elevation’ of colonized societies.<sup>16</sup> In particular, late Ottoman Palestine became subject to foreign investment, transottoman and global migration in unprecedented forms; all the more since it was loaded with religious symbolism as the ‘Holy Land’ (Ar.: *al-arāḍī al-muqaddasa*) in Jewish, Christian and Muslim tradition and attracted people from all continents<sup>17</sup> and Jerusalem, the Palestinian coastal plain and the Galilee especially saw migration from all over the Levant and the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, the Russian Empire and Western Europe. These migrants, who transformed local ethno-confessional compositions, were farmers, Bedouins, soldiers, refugees, pilgrims, tourists, merchants, entrepreneurs, missionaries, diplomats and governmental

---

14 Campos 2011, 64f. For the development and extension of the *imtiyāzāt* to protect foreign communities and individuals from the fourteenth century until their abuse as capitalist instruments, see Wansbrough, İnalçık, Lambton, and Baer, *Imtiyāzāt*. In: EI<sup>2</sup>. Also, Boogert 2005.

15 Kozma, Schayegh and Wishnitzer dedicated their volume to the exploration of the history of the ‘first modern globalization’ in the Middle East, understood as an “unprecedented intensification in the movement of people, commodities and ideas”. See Kozma, Schayegh, and Wishnitzer 2015, 1. For concepts of globalization, see Osterhammel and Petterson 2003, 7–15.

16 For imperial policies, the industrial revolution and global capitalism, see Osterhammel and Petterson 2003, 50–70. For imperialism and ‘civilizing missions’, see Osterhammel 2005, 363–426; cf Buessow 2011, 427–430.

17 The idea of Palestine as a sacred space exists in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Muslim tradition, Jerusalem (Ar.: *al-Quds*, meaning ‘the Holy’ or *Bayt al-Maqdis*, meaning ‘Sacred House’) is the center of this space. The city was praised in Muslim *faḍā’il* literature, describing the ‘virtues of Jerusalem’ (*faḍā’il al-Quds*) to pilgrims. See Khalidi 1997, 29–30, and Ben-Bassat 2011, 1–14.

representatives.<sup>18</sup> A high number of foreign religious, educational and political institutions were concentrated in Jerusalem, capital of the District and a place of political and spiritual importance.<sup>19</sup> The vital interests of foreign investors contributed to Jerusalem's quick urbanization, which caused inter-European competition in building activity and 'hunting' for public works projects.<sup>20</sup>

Another center of quick demographic, agricultural and economic expansion in the District was the coastal city of Jaffa.<sup>21</sup> Despite being a minor town, Jaffa was considered the 'gateway of Palestine' because of its port,<sup>22</sup> and became *the* economic hub in Ottoman Palestine.<sup>23</sup> This development was accelerated by the rapid expansion of its citrus industry and rising exports to Europe. Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the society of the late Ottoman Jerusalem District was a very heterogeneous 'kaleidoscope' of different confessions, ethnicities, languages and cultures.<sup>24</sup> However, increasing mobility led to the phe-

---

18 For nineteenth-century-migration from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Circassia, Chechnya and Bosnia to the Palestinian coastal plain, the central mountains and the Sharon valley, see Grossman 2011, 43–77.

19 For Ottoman reforms in the Jerusalem District, and the practical work and political activities of the Jerusalem municipality (Ar.: *baladīya*) to develop the public space, see Buessow 2014, 97–141.

20 For infrastructural developments and economic growth in Jerusalem and Jaffa through initiatives undertaken by the Ottomans in terms of roads, water, sanitation and public places, see Kark 1986, 46–58. Avcı has explored public works schemes to foster urban development in Jerusalem and Jaffa. The plans for an electric tramway system, electric light and drinking water, an extension of the Hijaz railway to Jerusalem via Haifa, a city plan for Jerusalem, infrastructure and customs facilities at Jaffa's port mostly stayed on paper but shed light on the dilemmas of Ottoman urban policy. See Avcı 2011, 81–102. For public projects and the Chamber of Commerce in Palestine and initiatives of the Jerusalemite Sephardi David Yellin in public projects, see Norris 2013, 39–46.

21 Kark has explored urban change in the Palestinian coastal cities of Acre, Haifa, Jaffa and Gaza during the *Tanzimat* under the influence of Ottoman administration and Western engagement. Kark 1990a, 69–90.

22 See Tolkowsky's (1924) account of Jaffa as 'gateway of Palestine'.

23 See Avcı 2011, 89, and the letter of the Ottoman Minister of Finance to the Minister of Interior on p. 95. On the rapidly growing importance of Jaffa's port, its citrus industry and transportation system during the late Ottoman period and the high interest of the Ministry of Public Works in its development, see Norris 2013, 36–38.

24 According to McCarthy, the Ottoman population in the districts of late Ottoman Palestine amounted to 657,000 Muslims, 81,000 Christians and 59,000 Jews in 1914. McCarthy 1990, 10. Schmelz has reported that in 1914, 121,000 Ottoman citizens lived in the Jerusalem District: 70,000 Muslims, 33,000 Christians of many denominations and 18,000 Jews of Sephardi and Ashkenazi origin. A considerable number of foreign Jews lived in Jerusalem. In 1914, Arthur Ruppin, director of the Palestine Office of the International Zionist Organization in Jaffa, estimated the total number of Jerusalemite Jews at 45,000. There were also numerous foreign Christians in Jerusalem, but their number is not known. Schmelz 1990, 25–26.

nomenon of international migration throughout the late Ottoman Empire, not only in Palestine.<sup>25</sup>

In the age of globalization, the Middle East had to contend with the demands of ‘modernity’, defined as a new ‘set of practices, institutions and discourses’ that emerged in nineteenth-century Europe, and characterized by movement towards global markets, industrialization, urbanization, representative political structures and new concepts of the ‘public’, superseding absolutist concepts of political rule. This transformation, referred to as modernization, went along with the production of new discourses about political liberalization and ‘social questions’.<sup>26</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, modernity standards had spread, more or less, around the globe but were received in different regions of the world at different moments and certainly not to the same extent. What, in the European context, was understood as the ‘standard set’ of modernity was received differently in other regions. Eisenstadt has called this phenomenon ‘multiple modernities’, while Schmidt has defined it as ‘varieties of modernity’.<sup>27</sup> Asking ‘whose modernity?’, Pappé suggests exploring what modernity meant in different regions from the perspectives of *local* actors and *how* it changed their lives, rather than in comparison with European modernity.<sup>28</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, local varieties of modernity emerged in the Arab East that still need to be explored further in future research.<sup>29</sup>

The Palestinian intellectuals who discussed society and politics in *Filasṭīn*, were much engaged with this global *zeitgeist* of modernity. As is clear from *Filasṭīn*, a ‘modernization imperative’ was adapted by Palestinian elites of each confession. These authors were deeply convinced that only a comprehensive modernization from above *and* below would constitute the basis for a successful future in Palestine. They were inevitably confronted with a Euro-centric ‘standard set’ of modernity, which was articulated by European authors and much quoted in *Filasṭīn*, and which shaped their vision of ‘being modern’.

As part of global modernity, nationalism became popular.<sup>30</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, the era of the multi-religious and multi-ethnic empires

25 For Ottoman immigration and settlement policies during the *Tanzimat*, see Başak 2014, 252–271.

26 Buessow 2011, 10–12, and Bayly 2004. For the definition of modernization as ‘social change’, see Bendix 1969, 510; quoted in Uhl 2001, 10–15.

27 Eisenstadt 2000, Wittrock 2000, and Schmidt 2006.

28 Pappé 2005, 1–13.

29 Freitag has investigated Middle Eastern intellectual thought on modernity during the *Tanzimat* and the terminology applied to describe modernization processes, such as *işlâh* (reform), *ḥaḍāra*, *madaniya* and *tamadun* (civilization) and *taqaddum*,  *taraqqin* (progress). See Freitag 2008, 89–117.

30 Smith equates the paradigm of nationalism with classical modernism. See Smith 1998, 1–4.



of Tsarist Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottomans slowly came to an end.<sup>31</sup> Nationalist ideologies set out to design the modern 'nation state' that was to replace heterogeneous empires with smaller territorial units much more homogenous populations.<sup>32</sup> Multiple identity models, both overlapping and conflicting, circulated in the Arab East. In Palestine, supra-confessional Ottomanism existed side by side with local Arab identity, created variations of a 'Palestinian Ottomanism',<sup>33</sup> and faced a first flare-up of Arab proto-nationalism.<sup>34</sup> Since Zionist migrants from Eastern Europe outnumbered migrants from other regions and transformed local ethno-confessional patterns, political Zionism became a major factor in identity conflicts before World War I. In response to these phenomena, the urban and educated segments of Palestinian society sought to establish a 'public discourse' on group relations. 'Discourse' as a specific 'understanding of reality' as defined by Foucault, is expressed through language forms and produced by the selection, organization and channeling of knowledge according to certain rules. Based on power relations, an 'order' is set up concerning *what* and *how* something is to be said or *not* to be said in a debate. This shapes the *content* and *form* of the perception of reality. The term 'discourse', the production of reality through a 'structured and organized communication' that is linked to power, is used in this study to refer to the 'order of what to say or not to say' in a debate.<sup>35</sup>

---

31 For a comparison between Ottoman and Habsburg decline, see Barkey 2006, 167–197. For the definition of 'Empire' as political frame with reference to Charles Tilly, see idem, 173–175 and Kasaba 2006, 201.

32 For the definition of 'nations' as imagined and constructed communities, see Anderson 1996. Assuming that nationalism is constructed, its emergence as first an ideology and then a movement is a process that Hobsbawm divided into three phases. Phase A implies cultural, literary and folkloric activity without political or national implications. In phase B, activists engage in political propaganda to mobilize groups. Only in phase C does a nationalist program acquire mass support, at least to some extent. See Hobsbawm 1990, 12.

33 See Campos 2003, 16–18.

34 The origins of early Arab nationalism have been widely discussed in scholarly literature. In an early standard work 'Arab Awakening' (1938), Antonius saw the activities of literary societies in Beirut and Damascus during the second half of the nineteenth century as the beginnings of Arab nationalism and cultural resistance to Turkish policies. Zeine (1958) defined the era of the Young Turks (1908–18) as the critical phase in the emergence of Arab nationalism. Dawn (1973, 1991) has explored the ideological foundations of Arabism during the same era in Damascene elite politics. Khalidi (1977, 1984, 1991) has argued that socio-economic changes in Arab cities fostered the rise of a popular nationalism that reached the middle-classes during this era. Kayalı 1997, 11–16.

35 See Foucault 1991; Jäger 2004 and Ullrich 2008.

*Public Debates between 'Freedom' and 'Cataclysm' (1908–1914)*

In the negotiation of group relations, the Arab press of the Second Constitutional Era (1908–1914) played an important role. On its pages, a spectrum of Palestinian authors entered into passionate debates about coexistence in a transottoman society, the integration of migrants and conditions for political participation, trying to work out standards that were perceived as fitting ‘the spirit of this age’ (*rūḥ ḥādā l-‘aṣr*), or ‘the new age’ (*al-‘aṣr al-ġadīd*), a slogan used by Palestinian journalists in *Filasṭīn*, and a synonym for progress and late Ottoman modernity.<sup>36</sup>

‘The new age’ signified the post-revolutionary era under the regime of the Young Turks; and ‘the spirit’ was the values of modernity and the Constitution that granted equal rights to Ottoman citizens regardless of their faith.<sup>37</sup> In the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution (1908), the autocratic rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1908) ended, the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 was restored, and three Palestinian delegates were elected to represent the Jerusalem District in Parliament in Istanbul.<sup>38</sup> On the agenda of the Young Turks were modernization, secularization, the abolition of the *millet* system, the fostering of Ottomanism, resistance to the European powers and the abolition of the *im-tiyāzāt*.<sup>39</sup> The slogan of the 1908 Revolution, ‘liberty, equality, fraternity’ (*ḥur-rīya, musāwāt, iḥā*), picking up the principles of the French Revolution, was chanted by the urban elites in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, Nazareth and other cities, who exuberantly celebrated ‘the age of freedom’ (*‘aṣr al-ḥurriya*), adding a sacred dimension to the idea of freedom.<sup>40</sup>

The Young Turk era up to World War I (1908–1914) is very crucial in the exploration of Palestinian press debates. The official lifting in 1908 of censorship that had led to the dissemination of only official reports and the omission of ‘bad’ news, caused an explosion of private journalism in Palestine, more or less free from censorship, and enabled public debate. The press quickly picked up the political vocabulary of the Young Turk era: Arab newspapers euphorically celebrated the introduction of constitutional rights and a ‘new age’ that ended des-

36 See, for instance, *Filasṭīn*, 15 July 1911: 51/2/3–3/4. Here, the journalist Būlus Ṣiḥādeh from Jerusalem called for the modernization of Palestinian education in line with the ‘spirit’ of the age, the constitutional values.

37 On the typical press discourse on ‘liberty, Constitution, brotherhood, equality’ (*ḥurriya, dustūr, iḥā*, *musāwāt*), compare an article in *Filasṭīn*, 15 July 1911: 51/2/3–3/4.

38 The Young Turks, a group of opposition officers, organized a coup from Salonika, overthrew Abdülhamid and held the first governmental elections in 30 years. The delegates from the Jerusalem District were the Jerusalemite notables Rūḥi al-Ḥālīdī and Sa’īd al-Ḥusaynī and the businessman Ḥāfiẓ as-Sa’īd from Jaffa. Fishman 2005, 7.

39 For the course and aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution, see Zurcher 2004, 93f., and Divine 1994, 143–168.

40 Campos defines this process as the ‘sacralization’ of freedom. Campos 2011, 20–58.

otic rule. The terms ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’ became slogans that were used to excess in the post-revolutionary press and, without fear of exaggeration or ambivalence, interpreted quite freely. A similar obsession is to be observed regarding the concept of Ottoman ‘unity’ which acquired a sacred dimension in the journalistic discourse of the Young Turk era.<sup>41</sup>

It must be stressed that the journalistic output of these years was surprisingly controversial and Palestinian journalists showed considerable self-confidence, presenting themselves as ‘educators of the nation’ in line with the constitutional spirit, and as creators of a ‘new public’ that was to act as mature citizens and stand up for their civic rights. A protest culture emerged in Palestine, unthinkable before 1908, generated through the foundation of civic and communal organizations, whose official purpose was to protect Ottomanism and educate their members in the spirit of the Constitution. Practically, these organizations promoted the interests of a certain groups to the state; this in the light of the quickly transforming imperial hierarchy and inter-communal rivalries, as Campos explains.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the new protest culture was generated through countless ‘open letters’ and petitions in the press, which presented itself as the ‘watchdog’ of the government,<sup>43</sup> claiming to be the people’s ‘mouthpiece’ (*lisān*). Contemporary intellectuals stressed the meaning of the press as an advocate of ‘the public interest’ (*al-maṣlaḥa al-‘amma*), ‘civilizational interests’ (*maṣāliḥ ‘um-rānīya*),<sup>44</sup> and ‘the public benefit’ (*al-manfa‘a al-‘amma*) – terms that acquired tremendous popularity in the political discourse, as echoed in the press.<sup>45</sup>

However, the years 1908–1914 were marked by great ambivalence. Although Palestinian authors wrote euphorically in the press about the new age, they experienced in the same measure a sense of insecurity. The Young Turks’ regime was from the start on the defensive, overshadowed by internal fragility, rebellions

41 For the term ‘Ottoman brotherhood’ in contemporary intellectual discourse, see Campos 2003, 66–91.

42 As example, Campos discussed the agenda of the Jerusalemite Society of Ottoman Jews. Officially, it defined the patriotic education of Jewish citizens as its main goal. Practically, it acted as a lobby for Jewish interests in Palestine. Campos 2003, 297–307; and idem 2011, 145–148. See also Campos’s discussion on bourgeoisie networks after 1908 through the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Culture, the Anglo Palestine Bank (APB) and the Freemasons’ Barkai Lodge in Jaffa. Campos 2003, 168–236. The Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Culture was founded in Jerusalem and Jaffa by local landowners, businessmen and merchants of Muslim, Christian and Jewish backgrounds to foster public works projects in Palestine, and it served as an intermediary between Ottoman ministries, local investors and European vendors. Campos 2003, 172–181.

43 See Campos 2015, 93f.

44 *Filasṭīn*, 17 April 1912: 128/1/1–3. Here, the editors underpinned their loyalty to the CUP and their support for Jaffa’s development in the ‘public’ and ‘civilizational interest’.

45 *Filasṭīn*, 6 September 1913: 269/3/4–4/2. Here, a reader passionately called for the development of the Palestinian economy, as the ‘basis of civilization’, for ‘the public good’.

and repression, and Palestinian press debates revealed great fear. Up to this point, political decision-makers, community representatives and intellectuals had not seen an alternative to the Empire and, in the light of upheavals and territorial losses, they feared the breakdown of the existing order – a nightmare in their eyes.<sup>46</sup>

It was not yet time to take an Arab proto-nationalism seriously, and the preservation of the Ottoman framework was the goal of all the authors publishing in *Filasṭīn* until late summer 1914, as I shall show. Among the events that deeply shook the populations in the Arab provinces during the Young Turk era were the losses in Libya (1911) and the Balkans (1912–1913), after which the Empire had lost its last stand in North Africa to Italy and all its European territories to Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. The loss of the Balkans was a major demographic, economic, cultural and political set-back. Its impact on Arab populations cannot be underestimated, and the Balkan rebellions and battle fronts received extensive coverage in *Filasṭīn*.<sup>47</sup>

The regime was also shaken by counter revolts and internal opposition.<sup>48</sup> In the aftermath of manipulated elections in 1912, the ruling party of the Young Turks, the Committee of Union and Progress (Tur.: *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*; CUP), was overthrown by the oppositional Liberal Union (Tur.: *Hürriyet ve İ'tilaf Fırkası*; LU).<sup>49</sup> Internal friction between CUP followers, called 'İttihadists' (Ar.: *ittihādiyūn*) and LU supporters, the 'İtilafists' (Ar.: *i'tilāfiyūn*), both meaning unionists, were hot topics in the Palestinian press and caused insecurity among local elites. With growing internal and external pressure, the regime encouraged

---

46 Recently, 'Ottoman Cataclysm' was introduced as a term at the Research Foundation Switzerland-Turkey, a research cluster exploring the 'Cataclysm', the end of the Ottoman world during the 1910s as a decade of "catastrophic change". See Kieser, Öktem, and Reinkowski 2015, 16. <https://nahoststudien.unibas.ch/forschung/projekte/laufende-projekte/ottoman-cataclysm/> (accessed 17.08.2017).

47 First, it was a moral defeat as Salonika had been the heartland of the Young Turks and many leading Young Turks were originally from the Balkans. Second, the Empire forfeited nearly 60,000 square miles and four million people and it had to deal with Muslim refugees from the Balkans who had to be resettled elsewhere. Zurcher 2004, 108–109. After a period of two years of Albanian revolts, Albania withdrew from the First Balkan War as an independent state. For background and the course of the Albanian revolt (1910–1912) against the Young Turks, the Tripolitanian War (1911) and the First and Second Balkan Wars (1912–13), see Shaw 1977, 287–298, and Matuz 1985, 254–261. For internal friction and external pressure in a wider context, see Zurcher 2004, 99–109.

48 Soon after the Young Turks' rise to power, their regime was confronted with the Counter Revolution (1909), driven by conservative powers and supporters of the former regime of Abdülhamid. See Zurcher 2004, 95–99.

49 When the elections in 1912 were won by the CUP, the oppositional LU, supported by a group of officers, declared that they had been manipulated. In July 1912, the CUP cabinet was dissolved and its paper *Tanin* suspended, and the LU came to power. See Reinkowski 1995, 33, and Shaw 1977, 290f.

the Turkish element in state bureaucracy and, from 1913 onwards, increasingly embraced Turkish nationalism. Arab resistance to Ottoman centralization fostered the rise of an Arab Movement for Decentralization.<sup>50</sup>

This movement arose from the ‘Arab Renaissance’ (*an-nahḍa al-‘arabīya*), hereafter *nahḍa*, a modernist movement that sought to revive the Arab cultural heritage, modernize Arabic as the language of Islamic literature and scholars (*‘ulamā*), and secularize local education. Thus, it initiated the translation of modern sciences, European literature and political philosophy into Arabic. Importantly, the *nahḍa* was neither centrally organized nor a mass movement but driven by intellectual urban elite networks, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in Beirut, Damascus and Cairo. Its pioneers were mostly Syrian-Lebanese teachers, journalists and publishers who had received their education in foreign missionary schools, such as the Syrian Protestant College, predecessor of the American University of Beirut (AUB) and one of the ‘think tanks’ of the *nahḍa*.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to the Arab *nahḍa*, the supporters of Arab decentralization also formulated a political agenda. In 1912, they established in Beirut the Arab Reform Committees and in Cairo the Decentralization Party (*ḥizb al-lā-markazīya*), and demanded administrative autonomy for the Arab provinces under the umbrella of the Empire. Their central demands were the introduction of Arabic as the official language, the replacement of Turkish officials by locals, a certain degree of political autonomy with an independent budget and the stationing of Arab soldiers near their provinces. Driven by a conflict in principle with the state, the Arab elites felt neglected by a central power that derived its legitimacy from the restoration of civic equality between all Ottomans but favored the Turkish element in state bureaucracy.

The decentralists were not very numerous and but ambitious. Their activities in Beirut and the First Arab Congress in Paris in July 1913 stimulated heated debates in *Filasṭīn* about the sense or nonsense of Arab administrative autonomy during the summer of 1913.<sup>52</sup> The Young Turks were already facing a ‘national

50 Haddad and Kayalı have called for a distinction to be drawn between Turkification and Ottoman centralization. Haddad views Arab proto-nationalism merely as a consequence of opposition to Turkish nationalism, Young Turk centralization and European control over the Arab provinces. Haddad 1994, 213; Kayalı 1997, 13–14, n. 24. For a short discussion on the development of Pan-Turkism under the influence of internal and external political developments, see Kieser, Öktem, and Reinkowski 2015, 19–22.

51 For contributions to the *nahḍa* by Butrus al-Bustānī, publisher of the journal *al-Ġinan* in Beirut, see Sheehi 2000, 2004, 2011. For the career of Ḥalīl Sarkis, publisher of *Lisān al-Ḥāl* in Beirut, see Ayalon 2008. For Ḥalīl al-Ḥūrī, publisher of *Ḥadīqat al-Aḥbār* in Beirut, see Zachs 2011. For the thought of Ġurġī az-Zaydān, publisher of *al-Hilāl* in Cairo, see Philipp 1971, 1973, 1979, 2010, 2011. For the achievements of Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī, publisher of *al-Muqtabas* in Damascus, see Hermann 1990, and Seikaly 1981.

52 See *Filasṭīn*, 7 May 1913: 234/2/2–4; 5 July 1913: 251/3/1; 9 July 1913: 252/1/4–2/3; and 19 July 1913: 255/1/5–2/1.

question' in Anatolia and Zionist settlement was about to provoke another one in Palestine; they did not want to assist the emergence of a third national question in the Arab East and responded with fierce repression. Arab decentralists did not become separatists until 1914, but their persecution by the regime pushed the transition of Arab decentralization to become a proto-nationalist movement during World War I.<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately, research literature has often missed the distinction between cultural Arabism, Arab decentralization as an elite movement with a clear political agenda and Arab nationalism as an ideology or a popular movement.<sup>54</sup> Kayalı has shown that Arab nationalism was not fully articulated under the Young Turks. Following Hobsbawm, in the emergence of nationalism, he equates the cultural activities of 'Arabists' in the nineteenth century with the first phase, and the second phase with the beginnings of political mobilization, when Arabism formulated a political agenda during the Young Turk era, spurred on by a political culture that would 'fit in with broader imperial patterns of political contestation'. Yet, this did not lead to Arab separatism and was without 'mass' support. Kayalı explains:

Despite their denunciation of the Ottoman government, viewed as Turkish and Turkifying, most Arabists did not disavow the monarchy and lacked a clear conception of the territorial basis of a national Arab unit. Nevertheless, Arabism was closely connected to politics. Even if one does not subscribe to Dawn's instrumentalist representation of Arabism, its relationship to empire-wide political agendas needs to be appraised in addressing it as Arab proto-nationalism.<sup>55</sup>

### *Thematic, Social and Geographical Scope of the Study*

This study investigates how relations between specific confessional and ethnic groups were negotiated and re-constituted on the ground in the Jerusalem District before World War I, considering local, regional and transottoman factors that made an impact in the local context. As I follow the debates mainly through the local newspaper *Filasṭīn*, my results are shaped by its coverage and the spectrum of its authors. In contrast to former research that saw *Filasṭīn* mainly as a private platform for its editors, the newspaper will be considered in this study as a publication with many contributors. *Filasṭīn* was used as a public forum for a 'pool of publishers' who established discourses on group identities and relations

53 The persecution of 'separatists' during World War I produced the first Arab 'martyrs'. The persecution of secret organizations, and the torture and public executions of Arab nationalists in Beirut, Damascus and Jerusalem in 1915 and 1916 by Camal Pasha, the Turkish military governor of Syria, made a deep impression on the collective memory of the Arab populations. On Camal Pasha, see Çiçek 2014, and Kayalı 2014.

54 For this critique, see Haddad 1994, and Reinkowski 1995, 42.

55 Kayalı 1997, 15.