

Towards a New Approach to Palestinian Performance History: Revisiting Mawsim al-Nabi Rubin

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Focusing on the Sufi festival (mawsim) of Nabi Rubin, which used to take place near Jaffa in Palestine, this article explores the indigenous performance traditions that were an important part of Palestinian cultural life prior to the mass displacement of Palestinians by Zionist forces in the Nakba of 1948. Using the extinct festival of Nabi Rubin as a specific example, the article sheds light on a significant and neglected part of Palestinian theatre and performance history: indigenous Palestinian performance practices which have been omitted from the literature on Palestinian theatre. Thus the article advocates for a more inclusive approach to the study of performance that gives value to indigenous performance practices, which form a fundamental part of Palestine's rich cultural history. It also examines the sociocultural changes that accompanied the Arab Nahda ('renaissance') and the manner in which it influenced cultural life in Jaffa and the festival of Nabi Rubin.

Since the early 2000s, there has been a substantial increase in scholarship on Palestinian theatre, which has primarily focused on the activities of professional theatres in the West Bank.¹ Surprisingly, scholars have given very little attention to the indigenous performance practices which were an important part of Palestinian cultural life prior to the mass expulsion of Palestinians by Zionist forces in the Nakba of 1948. In the rare instances when indigenous theatrical forms are mentioned, they are quickly glossed over and referred to as 'semi-dramatic' or 'semi-theatrical' forms.² Here, the term 'indigenous performance practices' refers to performance activities not based on the appropriation of European-style theatre. It includes religious rituals, circumcision celebrations, storytelling and puppet theatre, all of which formed an important part of cultural life in Palestine prior to 1948. The purpose of this article is to provide some much-needed historical background on indigenous Palestinian performance traditions that have not received sufficient attention from theatre scholars, focusing primarily on the Sufi festival of Nabi Rubin (see Figs 1 and 2). Using Nabi Rubin as a case study, it argues that a more inclusive and less Eurocentric approach to the study of Palestinian performance is much needed. Such an approach, which gives value to indigenous traditions, challenges the false assumption that theatrical activity did not exist in Palestine prior to the introduction of European-style theatre in the late nineteenth century. The importance of broadening the scope of the exploration of Palestinian performance to include non-European forms is that it gives value to indigenous performance activities often



FIG. 1 Musicians performing at the Nabi Rubin festival in 1930. G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-matpc-21958, at www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/matpc.21958.

dismissed as 'folklore' or 'pre-theatrical' forms, implying that such practices need to somehow 'develop' into European-style theatre in order for them to have value.³ Thus the aim of this article is to introduce a more inclusive approach to the study of Palestinian theatre and performance, inviting scholars to further deepen their investigations of indigenous traditions prior to the Nakba.

Although references to cultural activities, which included a wide variety of performance traditions, are abundant in the literature on the late Ottoman and British Mandate periods (1900–1948), as well as in the diaries of Palestinians who lived during that era, they have not been sufficiently explored as performance practices.⁴ One of the reasons that may explain why Palestinian indigenous performance traditions have been neglected is that, much like other performance traditions in the Arab world, they did not adhere to Eurocentric definitions of the theatre. Such Eurocentric approaches to the study of Arab performance have led to the false assumption that theatre was introduced to the Arab world in the mid-nineteenth century, thus marginalizing performance practices and theatrical forms that were not based on European-style theatre.⁵

Several scholars have challenged the idea that theatrical forms did not exist in the Arab world prior to the introduction of European-style theatre. Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlson have made some of the most significant contributions, advocating for a more inclusive approach to the study of performance which takes into account indigenous forms.⁶ Indeed, Carlson and Amine, as well as other scholars of North African theatre, have shown that broadening the scope to include traditions like the *halqa* (performing in a circle) has the potential not only to enrich our understanding



FIG. 2 A circumcison procession at the festival of Nabi Rubin. The photograph was taken sometime between 1920 and 1933. G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-matpc-15514, at www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019706293.

of Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan cultural life, but to also create new avenues for theatrical experimentation.⁷

Drawing on this more inclusive approach to the study of performance, this article explores the religious rituals and theatrical activities that were part of the Sufi Nabi Rubin festival (*mawsim al-Nabi Rubin*), which used to take place near the city of Jaffa prior to the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948. The British occupation and Mandate period in particular (1917–48) sheds light on a significant moment in Palestinian theatre history, when both indigenous practices such as *dhikr* rituals and European-style Arab theatre were performed at the summer festival of Nabi Rubin.

European-style theatrical activity at Nabi Rubin was composed of performances by local groups, primarily theatre troupes that were part of various literary clubs and societies, as well as Egyptian troupes that exerted an important influence on Palestinian theatrical activity ever since they began touring Palestine in the late Ottoman period.⁸ The Egyptian troupes continued to perform in Palestine throughout the British Mandate period, including in Jaffa, and thus had an important role in shaping Palestinian theatrical practice, which was influenced by the Arab *Nahda* ('renaissance') movement.⁹ In a certain sense, the festival of Nabi Rubin represents a microcosm of cultural life in Jaffa prior to the Nakba, which both highlights the importance of indigenous performance practices that existed in Palestine for centuries, and reflects the social and cultural changes taking place at the time – namely the advent of modernity and the development of a new Palestinian theatre based on European forms. To contextualize the

activities that used to take place at the festival of Nabi Rubin, it is important to provide an overview of the sociocultural context in which these different forms of performance developed, beginning first with a brief discussion on Arab and Palestinian theatre, followed by a more in-depth examination of cultural life in Jaffa in the first half of the twentieth century.

The broader sociocultural context

Among theatre scholars, there is a general consensus that the first Arab plays written in the European style were composed in 1847 by Abrahaim Daninos in Algeria and Marun al-Naqqash in Lebanon. Naqqash's *al-Bakhil* (The Miser), based on Molière's play of the same name, was performed at his home in Lebanon in 1847, marking the beginning of a new era for Arab theatre.¹⁰ Writers and performers then began to experiment with European forms through both adaptation (*iqtibas*) and the creation of original content that often drew on Arab and Islamic history.¹¹ Among such writers was the Syrian Abu Khalil al-Qabbani, who first attempted to perform a European-style play in Damascus in 1865.¹² Due to political tensions, he left Syria for Egypt, where a European-style theatrical tradition had already begun to develop after Ya'qoub Sannu' created one of the first theatre troupes in Egypt in 1870.¹³

Like Qabbani, several other theatre-makers from Syria had left for Egypt, where they enjoyed greater autonomy and continued to make important contributions to the development of European-style Arab theatre.¹⁴ The early twentieth century witnessed the formation of several theatre troupes in Egypt made up of prominent actors who later became known throughout the Arab world, including George Abyad, Yusuf Wahbi, Salama Hijazi and 'Ali al-Kassar.¹⁵ These troupes toured different parts of Bilad al-Sham (South West Asia) and North Africa, introducing European-style Arab theatre to the region and encouraging experimentation with the European theatrical tradition.¹⁶ Egypt played a pivotal role in the spread of European performance practices to different parts of the Arab world, and thus its playwrights, actors and directors have often been considered the pioneers of Arab theatre.¹⁷

Carlson asserts that the performances of Naqqash, Qabbani and Sannu' were part of the *Nahda* ('renaissance') movement whose adoption of European ideas brought important political, cultural and economic changes to the Arab world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁸ Moreover, he argues that although the early European-style Arab performances were significantly influenced by the European theatrical tradition, they were not merely imitations of European theatre.¹⁹ *Iqtibas* (adaptation) and *ihya'* (revival) were prominent features of the *Nahda* movement, through which theatre-makers adapted European methods and ideas to fit their local cultural context.²⁰ *Iqtibas* meant that playwrights could make significant changes to the content of a play when adapting the works of European writers such as Molière to make it more appropriate for an Arab audience. In contrast, *ihya'* involved the revival of Arab heritage by drawing on characters and events from Arab and Islamic history.²¹ In other words, Arab 'theatrical

modernism' did not only include the importation of European forms, but also incorporated different forms of theatrical innovation that gave European theatrical practices new meanings in the Arab context.

European-style theatre in Palestine

As was the case in other parts of Bilad al-Sham (South West Asia), the local Palestinian population's first exposure to European-style theatre occurred through missionary schools, first established in Palestine in the late nineteenth century.²² These schools had an important influence on the cultural trends that became prominent among Palestinian intellectuals in the early twentieth century by way of their exposure to European ideas that made up an important part of the Arab Nahda movement.²³ This included French, British, German, American, Russian and Italian schools, where it became customary for students to perform an end-of-year play. They performed works by European authors such as Molière, Racine and Shakespeare.²⁴

Another important influence on the development of Palestinian European-style theatre was the Egyptian theatre troupes that began touring Palestine as early as 1908. This included performances by well-known musicians and actors such as George Abyad and Salama Hijazi, who were popular amongst Palestinian audiences.²⁵ In accordance with the cultural trends in Egypt at the time, the touring troupes performed Arabized European plays (iqtibas) as well as plays inspired by Arab and Islamic heritage. During one of their tours in Palestine in 1913, Abyad and his troupe performed *Louis the Eleventh* and *Ughniyyat al-Andalus* (The Andalusian Song).²⁶ Other notable Egyptian actors who visited Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century include Yusuf Wahbi (Firquat Ramsis), Fatma Rushdi and Amina Riziq.²⁷

Palestinians' exposure to European-style performances further increased during the Mandate period, during which British theatre companies visited Palestine.²⁸ The most significant influence, however, was that of Egyptian troupes who continued to perform in Palestine throughout the 1920s and 1930s, encouraging Palestinians to experiment with European-style theatre.²⁹ The 1920s also witnessed the establishment of various clubs and literary societies that performed Arabized European plays in different Palestinian cities, including Jerusalem, Jaffa and Gaza.³⁰ Several prominent Palestinian intellectuals were either founders or members of these literary clubs, many of whom had an important role in promoting Palestinian nationalism and resistance against British colonialism and against Zionism.³¹

Meanwhile, plays continued to be performed at both missionary and nationalist schools. Several of these nationalist schools were established by distinguished Palestinian intellectuals, notably Khalil al-Sakakini and Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazeh, who were critical of the colonial attitudes of missionary schools, but also sought to modernize and reform the educational system.³² In line with the cultural trends of the Nahda movement, the performances of these nationalist schools focused on the revival of Arab heritage (turath). This included plays about well-known figures from Islamic history, such as Ayyubid sultan Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi and Umayyad military commander Tariq Ibn Ziyad.³³

Furthermore, some of the first European-style Palestinian plays were written by teachers for students' end-of-year performances. This includes Darwazah's 1925 *Malik al-'Arab fi al-Andalus* (The King of the Arabs in Andalusia), performed at the al-Najah school, which had clear nationalist undertones.³⁴ It is among a wide range of Palestinian plays that criticized British colonialism, warned Palestinians of the dangers of Zionist migration, and dissuaded people from selling their lands to Zionists.³⁵ It is therefore not surprising that many of these plays were banned by the British colonial authorities, which continued to censor Palestinian theatrical activity throughout the Mandate period.³⁶ Alongside the prominence of anti-Zionist and anti-colonial themes in many of these plays, Palestinian theatre-makers also used their performances to critique their society and address important social issues, such as arranged marriage.³⁷

As already noted by Carlson, the Nahda was not a mere appropriation of European ideas and performance practices; rather it was perceived as part of the process of 'renewing' and 'modernizing' society by drawing upon what was useful from European sources in a manner that fit the Arab sociocultural context.³⁸ Indeed, this often included the revival of Arab and Islamic heritage, rather than its mere displacement by European mores.³⁹ In Palestine, these modernization efforts were significantly influenced by the sociopolitical changes of the first half of the twentieth century, namely the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the signing of the Balfour declaration (1917), the advent of British colonialism (1917–48), and Zionist migration to Palestine. All these factors led to the formation of a Palestinian national identity that spread through the press, and the development and modernization of the educational system.⁴⁰ Thus the integration of nationalist ideas into Palestinian plays that were written and performed in the Mandate period is very much in line with the cultural and political trends of the time in which Palestinians were attempting to employ every means possible in their struggle against British colonialism and the Zionist movement.

One of the means by which Palestinian theatre-makers extended their influence on society were literary and social clubs, which provided an avenue for introducing new European-inspired ideas about the theatre. As early as 1922, Jam'iyyat al-Nahda sponsored a playwriting competition to encourage Palestinians to experiment with European theatrical models. Prominent members of this society included playwrights Jamil al-Bahri and Najib Nassar.⁴¹ The latter wrote a nationalist play titled *Wafa' al-Arab* (The Loyalty of the Arabs), performed in Haifa in 1919, which, according to Nasri al-Jawzi, is one of the first Palestinian plays ever written in the European style.⁴² The press also played an important role in the promotion of this new art form, as it was an important means of exposing Palestinians to European cultural ideas.⁴³ In addition to printing advertisements for performances, newspapers included reviews of various productions and encouraged further experimentation with European theatrical forms.⁴⁴ Moreover, some of the most prominent playwrights of the period were involved in the press, such as Nassar, who owned *al-Karmil*, and Asma Toubi, who was the editor of the women's section of the *Falastin* newspaper.⁴⁵ However, the development of a European-style theatre in Palestine does not mean that indigenous performance traditions were absent from Palestinian society. In fact, an examination of sources from the late Ottoman and

British Mandate periods shows that many different forms of performance simultaneously coexisted, as is illustrated in the following section, on cultural life in Jaffa before 1948.

Jaffa prior to the Nakba

Prior to the mass displacement of Palestinians by Zionist forces in 1948, Jaffa was one of Palestine's most important cultural centres. Jaffa's theatres, cinemas, clubs, cafés, Sufi shrines and schools hosted a wide array of performances that included both indigenous and European forms.⁴⁶ As was the case in other parts of Palestine, the population of Jaffa had been influenced by the Nahda movement, which is clearly reflected in the theatrical activities of its youth clubs. Examples include the performances of al-Nadi al-Riyadi al-Islami, Nadi al-Shabibah al-Urthuduxiyya and al-Nadi al-Arabi.⁴⁷ Cinema al-Hamra was among the most important cultural institutions that hosted the performances of both local and Egyptian troupes, as well as a festival that took place in 1942.⁴⁸ None other than Umm Kulthum, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahab and Tawfiq al-Hakim were amongst the luminaries of Egyptian performance and theatre to visit Jaffa in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁹ Other notable Egyptian performances continued into the 1930s and 1940s, including the Ramsis troupe (led by Yusuf Wahbi), the troupe of 'Ali al-Kassar, the Awlad 'Ukasha troupe, the Firqa Qawmiya troupe, Amine 'Atallah, Najib al-Rihani, Fatma Rushdi and George Abyad.⁵⁰ Many of these theatrical and musical performances took place either at Cinema al-Hamra or at cafés, such as Maqha al-Halawani, Maqha Abu-Shakush and Maqha Baryzyana.⁵¹ Jaffa was also home to the Sharq al-Adnna (Far East) radio station, which, in addition to broadcasting radio plays, hosted Egyptian theatre-makers and musicians on its radio show, including Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahab, Thuraya Hilmi, Najib Rihani, Yusuf Wahbi and Amina Riziq.⁵²

Indigenous performance traditions were also an important part of cultural life in Jaffa before the Nakba. This includes the hakwatis (storytellers), who were particularly sought after during the holy month of Ramadan. They performed popular stories (hikayat sha'biya), such as the story of the pre-Islamic 'Antar Ibn Shadad and the Mamluk sultan al-Dhahir Baybars at various cafés in Jaffa. The audience would become so involved in the performance that they often would not allow the hakawati to leave the café until he had told the rest of the story.⁵³ Popular poets (sha'ir sha'bi) – many of them Egyptians – also performed at cafés, entertaining their audiences with poetry, music and stories about Bani Hilal.⁵⁴

Cafés also hosted karagoz puppet theatre performances, which were farcical and used as means to critique society and the ruling social elite. Much of this was done through innuendo, alluding to certain subjects through stories derived from Arab history while generally refraining from directly naming a given social and political issue.⁵⁵ Other examples of similar indigenous traditions included the sunduq al-'Ajab (box of wonders). Audiences would look through a hole in a wooden box containing a set of moving pictures, complemented by stories about 'Antara Ibn Shaddad and Abu-Zayd al-Hilali told by the operator. According to Ali Hasan Bawab, both karagoz and the box of wonders are originally from Turkey.⁵⁶

The performances of the janaki (women's singing and dance troupe) were also popular among the residents of Jaffa, particularly at wedding and hinna celebrations. They also performed on other festive occasions, including circumcisions, celebrations held for those who had healed from a difficult illness and celebrations for returnees to Jaffa after a long period of travel.⁵⁷ It is worth noting that the aforementioned indigenous performance traditions were not unique to Jaffa, but were prevalent in many other parts of Palestine.⁵⁸

The celebrations of the Christian Orthodox community of Jaffa, which lasted throughout the forty-eight days of Lent, called al-Taql'y'a, are also worth mentioning.⁵⁹ As was the case with the Sufi festivals of Nabi Rubin, Nabi Musa and Nabi Salih, the Taql'y'a was celebrated by both the Muslim and Christian communities of Jaffa.⁶⁰ It was composed of carnivalesque celebrations performed continuously throughout the fasting period. Members of the troupe responsible for the Lenten festivities held masquerades (haflat tanakuriya), dressing up and acting out the roles of various characters, such as the king, the queen, the guard, the swordsman, the bride, the beggar, the jester and so on. Both Muslim and Christian families would invite the Taql'y'a troupes to perform at their homes.⁶¹ They also performed at schools and clubs such as Nadi al-Shabiba al-Urthuduxiya. The Taql'y'a troupe would march down the streets in festive processions that included music, singing and dancing, until they arrived at their hosts' homes. Performances included poetry, music, dancing, singing and theatre plays. On the last day of the Taql'y'a people gathered at the 'Ajami neighbourhood, where they would sing and dance until the late hours of the night, after which the Easter celebrations began.⁶²

Religious performances also included the activities of the various Sufi communities that lived in Jaffa, such as the Shadhiliya, Naqashabandiya, Khalwatiya and Rifa'iya.⁶³ Members of these orders would perform songs and music at religious occasions such as the mawlid (the birth of the prophet Muhammad), al-'Isra wa al-Mi'raj (the Prophet's ascent), Laylat al-Qadir (a specific day during Ramadan), 'Ashura, the sending and greeting of pilgrims going to the Hajj, and Eid al-Adha and al-Fitir. They would form a procession (called a zaffa to highlight the celebratory nature of the event) and walk through the markets and streets of Jaffa while singing mada'ih (songs that praise the prophets) and playing the mizmar (a kind of wind instrument), copper cymbals and tubul (drums).⁶⁴

Although most of these celebrations included a procession (zaffa), the songs performed at each occasion were different. For example, there were specific songs for those going and returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca and for the mawlid, which were accompanied by stories about the life of the Prophet Muhammad.⁶⁵ Furthermore, many of the clubs mentioned earlier, such as Nadi al-Riyadi al-Islami, had musical troupes who performed religious songs on these different occasions, including the mawlid, mawsim al-Nabi Rubin, and mawsim al-Nabi Salih.⁶⁶

Sufis also held weekly dhikr and hadra rituals, which included poetry recitations, meditative practices such as repeating one of the ninety-nine names of God mentioned in the Qur'an, and inshad (religious singing).⁶⁷ Sufis also performed religious songs at people's homes for special occasions such as weddings, circumcisions, celebrating the achievements of those who had memorized the Qur'an, a sick person's recovery from

illness, as well as at religious mawsims (festivals), such as al-Nabi Salih, Arbi'at Ayyub, and al-Nabi Rubin, which is described in detail in the following section.⁶⁸

Mawsim al-Nabi Rubin

Located fourteen kilometres south of Jaffa, the shrine of Nabi Rubin hosted the most widely celebrated Sufi festival in Palestine. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was estimated that the festival was attended by 50,000 people who came from Jaffa, Ramla, Lydd, Gaza, Majdal and their surrounding villages, as well as inhabitants from Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine.⁶⁹

It is believed that the mawsim of Nabi Rubin was established in the twelfth century during the reign of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (1138–93) to protect Muslim territories during the visits of European pilgrims. Such was also the case for the Nabi Musa festival, which, along with Nabi Rubin, continued to be one of the most important Sufi festivals in Palestine under Ottoman rule and during the British Mandate period.⁷⁰

Most people from Jaffa would spend at least two weeks at Nabi Rubin, and many stayed the entire month.⁷¹ Furthermore, accounts of the 1930s and 1940s mawsim reveal that it was quite popular among the inhabitants of Jaffa, as can be observed from the well-known saying *Ya bitrubini ya bitale'ni* ('Either you take me to Rubin or you divorce me').⁷² This may have been because, in addition to the religious rituals, the festival included a wide array of recreational activities and performances, discussed in greater detail below. Furthermore, as already noted by Mahmoud Yazbak, the summer festival offered a less socially restrictive environment for women, who enjoyed much more freedom at Rubin than in their normal day-to-day lives in Jaffa.⁷³

The month-long celebrations generally commenced sometime between late June and mid-August with a procession (*zaffat al-'alam*, 'procession of the flag'), usually on a Wednesday in Jaffa, which began at the Great Mosque. Prominent sailors, merchants and religious leaders, as well as other notables, would join the procession which included singing, chanting, and the *bayraq* or flag of Rubin, as well as other flags. The procession then made its way through the old city and the markets, until it eventually returned to *waaf* (the office for religious endowments near the Great Mosque), where banners were kept until the *zaffat al-thawb* ('procession of the garment') celebrations that took place on the following Friday.⁷⁴ The preference was for *zaffat al-thawb* to be performed on a full moon; hence *zaffat al-'alam* took place a few days before. On Friday, the inhabitants of Jaffa gathered at the Great Mosque to commence *zaffat al-thawb* with the raising of the flag of Rubin, inscribed with the verse 'There is no God but God; Rubin is the beloved of God' and the carrying of the *thawb* (the garment to be placed on the tomb of Rubin).⁷⁵ The procession, which included singing, music (drums, cymbals) and sword-fighting (*sayf wa turs*), then made its way to the village of Rubin (where the shrine is located) on camels and horses, and later (in the 1930s and 1940s) in cars and buses. On the way to Rubin, people sang religious hymns about their journey to the Sufi shrine.⁷⁶

During the British Mandate, the Nabi Rubin celebrations began to incorporate anti-Zionist and anti-colonial chants and slogans, which were integrated into the songs

(ahazij) performed during the mawsim such as 'Oh revolutionaries, oh revolutionaries, we do not want colonialism.'⁷⁷ It is certainly not the first Palestinian Sufi festival to be politicized, the most salient example being the Nabi Musa mawsim, which acquired an explicitly political character after the 1920 celebration turned into an anti-Zionist and anti-colonial protest.⁷⁸ Political tensions were particularly high at the time, after the signing of the Balfour declaration in 1917 and the advent of British colonialism in 1917–19. It is therefore not surprising that Palestinians took advantage of these mass gatherings to express their political discontent. It is also worth noting that in addition to these two Sufi festivals, which were the most widely celebrated mawsim at the time, political chants were incorporated into other religious events, such as the mawlid celebrations in Jaffa.⁷⁹ This attests to the fact that these cultural and religious traditions were not static, but subject to alteration to better fit the needs of the community.

Visitors arrived at Rubin in festive processions, carrying with them the flags of Rubin, Jaffa, Lydd and Ramla, in addition to the Palestinian flag. The celebrations continued with swordfighting (sayf wa turs) and music performed by Sufi groups and troupes tied to various clubs, until the procession reached the mosque beside the shrine of Rubin, where they performed the Friday prayer.⁸⁰ Zaffat al-thawb was then performed a second time at the shrine of Rubin, two weeks after the arrival of the first pilgrims.⁸¹ Tents, restaurants, cafés and markets were set up for the month-long stay at Rubin. Many café, restaurant and shop owners from Jaffa relocated to Rubin for the mawsim period. All this, as well as the housing of visitors, was organized by the Jaffa municipality along with members of the awqaf (religious endowments), which provided pilgrims with free meals (simat) and access to clean water.⁸²

After setting up tents at the campsite, more performances would abound, including religious rituals such as the dhikr (repetition of the Divine Names) and Qur'anic recitations.⁸³ Similar meditative practices were performed by a group of youths, who circumambulated the streets of the Rubin campsite while repeating specific religious phrases. They would continue to recite these sacred words until they were overcome with exhaustion, after which they would sleep wherever they happened to be standing and remained there until the following morning.⁸⁴ Circumcision celebrations also took place at the mawsim, as it was believed that children circumcised at Sufi shrines were endowed with blessings. Traditions of saint veneration also included tying a piece of cloth or leaving a supplication (dua') at the shrine of Rubin. These kinds of Sufi practices were prevalent in many parts of Palestine at the time, including at the festival of the Prophet Moses, which also hosted circumcision celebrations.⁸⁵

Circumcision celebrations involved dressing the child in elaborate clothing and placing him on a decorated horse accompanied by a procession (zaffa) in which religious hymns were sung in praise of the Prophet Muhammad, accompanied by the ululations of women. After the circumcision, the family of the child would host Qur'anic recitations as well as adhkar and tawashih (the performance of religious recitations and hymns).⁸⁶ Some invited the janaki women's troupes to perform at their tents. The janaki also performed at the weddings that took place at Rubin. People enjoyed the Rubin wedding celebrations so much that if no weddings were taking place during the mawsim, they

would create an imaginary wedding (urs wahmi) where they wed two young men, one of whom would wear the attire of a bride. A zaffa was then performed for the newlywed couple in which people sang the songs that were usually performed at weddings.⁸⁷

Musical concerts were also regularly held at the festival of Rubin and included performances of some of the most popular singers from Jaffa, such as Rajib al-Akhal and Nimir Nasir – the latter also used to recite the story of the mawlid at Nabi Rubin.⁸⁸ There were also daily musical performances in the streets of the campsite by the kashaf (scout) troupes from Jaffa, Lydd and Ramla.⁸⁹ The cafés set up during the mawsim were also important performance spaces. Much as in Jaffa, the cafés at Nabi Rubin hosted karagoz puppet theatre and hakawati (storytelling) performances to attract customers.⁹⁰ It is worth noting that hakawati and karagoz performances were also prevalent in other religious events, including the festival of Nabi Musa and the Ramadan celebrations in Jaffa and Jerusalem.⁹¹

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the Nabi Musa and Nabi Rubin festivals was that the latter incorporated European-style theatre performances. In addition to the indigenous traditions mentioned earlier, the mawsim hosted Egyptian and Palestinian theatre troupes. Local troupes included al-Nadi al-Riyadi al-Islami and al-Firqa al-Mutajawila al-Islamiya from Jaffa and al-Firqa al-Mutajawila al-‘Abassiya from al-Ramla. Among their performances in 1933 were al-Hanan al-Qatil (Deadly Affections), al-Hawiya (The Abyss), and Thi al-Qar, which references a historical battle of the same name that took place between the Arabs and the Persians in the seventh century.⁹² Al-Hanan al-Qatil (Deadly Affections) was written by a playwright from Jaffa whose name was not mentioned in the *Falastin* newspaper, as it was submitted to al-Nadi al-Riyadi’s playwriting competition.⁹³ These same troupes, which were part of different clubs, also held hafalat samar (night parties), which included musical pieces and theatre performances, and were popular among the mawsim attendees. *Falastin* reported that the samar party held in late August 1933 was attended by over 400 women.⁹⁴

Notable Egyptian actors and singers who performed at Nabi Rubin include ‘Ali al-Kassar, Yusuf Wahbi, Fatima Rushdi and Muhammad ‘Abd al-Muttalib.⁹⁵ As noted earlier, many of these troupes had begun touring Palestine since the early twentieth century and performed in Jaffa in the 1930s and 1940s, exerting an important influence on the development of European-style Palestinian theatre.⁹⁶ By the 1930s, generators were also brought to the mawsim, and film screenings at a makeshift cinema became part of the Rubin festivities.⁹⁷

A comparison between the activities that took place at Rubin and cultural life in Jaffa prior to the Nakba suggests that the performances at this Sufi festival, whether European-style theatre or indigenous practices such as karagoz, were familiar to most visitors, as they were part of their cultural milieu. Moreover, it provides a fascinating example of how contemporary theatrical forms and indigenous practices were not only able to coexist but also adapted to fit the needs of the community by addressing the social and political issues that were important at that time, whether through the use of European-style plays to promote Palestinian nationalism or the integration of political slogans into the zaffa of Rubin. The last time the festival of Nabi Rubin was performed was in 1946. It was suspended in 1947 due to political tensions. Then the Nakba of

1948 resulted in the mass expulsion of the indigenous Palestinian population by Zionist forces. The ethnic cleansing was particularly brutal in Jaffa, resulting in the displacement of 97 per cent of its population. An entire culture was wiped out in the space of a year and with it the festival of Nabi Rubin.⁹⁸

Towards a new approach to Palestinian performance history

As explained in detail in the previous section, the festival of Nabi Rubin highlights a pivotal moment in Palestinian performance history, in which indigenous traditions existed alongside European-style Arab plays, representing a microcosm of cultural life in Jaffa prior to 1948 and the changes it underwent with the advent of modernity. In addition to documenting Jaffa's rich cultural life prior to the Nakba, an exploration of the variety of performance practices that were part of the Nabi Rubin festival raises important questions about the exclusion of indigenous traditions from the literature on Palestinian performance. I argue that such an exclusion is due to Eurocentric approaches to the study of performance which only give value to European-style theatre. This problematic omission reinforces the idea that theatre was imported from Europe, especially when scholars refer to these traditions as 'semi-theatrical' or 'semi-dramatic' forms.⁹⁹ Thus the aim of this article is to invite scholars to adopt this more inclusive approach to the study of Palestinian performance, which gives value to indigenous performance practices and Palestine's rich cultural life prior to the Nakba, using the festival of Nabi Rubin as a specific example.

The importance of the festival of Nabi Rubin to the study of Palestinian performance is threefold. First, it challenges the idea that theatrical activity did not exist in Palestine prior to the introduction of European-style plays, highlighting the need to study indigenous performance practices that have been marginalized. Second, it points to a significant moment in Palestinian history in which European-style Arab plays were integrated into a local Sufi festival, reflecting the social and cultural changes that were taking place in Palestinian society during the British Mandate period. An examination of these practices also supports the claims made by scholars such as Amine and Carlson, in their discussions on Arab theatre more generally, who argue that the advent of modernity in the Arab world occurred through a complex process of cross-fertilization rather than the mere imitation of European models.¹⁰⁰ Third, it reveals that Palestinians have been utilizing different performance techniques to express political discontent since the early twentieth century. As explained earlier in this article, Palestinians used both indigenous traditions, such as the zaffa of Nabi Rubin and Nabi Musa, and European-style theatre to promote Palestinian nationalism and protest against Zionism and colonialism in the 1920s and 1930s.

Moreover, Zionist settler colonialism is predicated upon the erasure of Palestinian history while also appropriating certain aspects of Palestinian culture, such as dabkeh, to promote a Zionist ideology.¹⁰¹ Indigenous traditions, particularly ones like mawsim al-Nabi Rubin that were performed in Jaffa and other areas swallowed up by the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, are part of the history that Israel is attempting to eradicate. Such traditions provide a visceral reminder of Palestinians' connection to the

areas colonized by Zionism and highlight that the disappearance of these cultural traditions is part of the massive loss incurred by Palestinians in 1948. Thus, drawing attention to them not only challenges the Zionist discourse that Palestine was a 'land without a people', but also gives value to the rich cultural life that existed in Palestine prior to the Nakba.

Finally, revisiting indigenous traditions such as those that were part of Nabi Rubin encourages us to adopt a more inclusive approach to the study of performance, creating new opportunities for collaboration between researchers and theatre-makers. Researchers can support contemporary artists by uncovering new materials and analysing indigenous practices in the pre-1948 period while also exploring the complex meanings that arise from the revival of such practices in the present day. Meanwhile, theatre-makers can acquire a better understanding of their own performance history through dialogue with researchers, which can certainly enrich their theatrical practice and create new avenues for artistic experimentation. For scholars of Palestinian theatre working in the context of Israeli settler colonialism, it seems especially pertinent for them to ask themselves how they can contribute to the study and practice of Palestinian performance to give something back to the communities they so eagerly study.

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NOTES

- 1 For example, Gabriel Varghese, *Palestinian Theatre in the West Bank: Our Human Faces* (London: Palgrave, 2020); Erin B. Mee, 'The Cultural Intifada: Palestinian Theatre in the West Bank', *Drama Review*, 56, 3 (2012), pp. 167–77; Reuven Snir, *Palestinian Theatre* (Berlin: Reichert Verlag Wiesbaden, 2005)
- 2 For example, Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, p. 1. Also see Avaes Mohammad, 'Theatre of the Occupied', *Wasafiri*, 29, 4 (2014), pp. 24–9, here p. 24.
- 3 There has been a tendency to examine theatre in the Arab World in this way, particularly in English-language scholarship. For example, see Muhammad Badawi, *The Development of Early Arabic Drama* (London: Longman, 1984); and Jacob Landau, *Studies in Arabic Theatre and Cinema* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958). Also see Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, p. 1 and Mohammad, 'Theatre of the Occupied', p. 1.
- 4 See Salim Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (London: University of California Press, 2009); Wasif Jawhariyyeh, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948*, ed. Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar, trans. Nada Elzeer (Northampton: Olive Branch Press, 2014); Omar Saleh al-Barghouti, *Al-Marahil (The Stages)* (Beirut: al-Mu'asasa al-'Arabiya, 2001); and al-'Asali, *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa fi Falastin: Tarikh al-Mawsim wa al-Maqam* (The Festival of Nabi Musa in Palestine: The History of the Festival and the Shrine) (Amman: Manshurat al-Jami'a al-Urduniya, 1990).
- 5 Khalid Amine, 'Theatre in the Arab World: A Difficult Birth', *Theatre Research International*, 31, 2 (2006), pp. 145–63.
- 6 Ibid.; also see Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlson, *Theatres of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia: Performance Traditions of the Maghreb* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Amine and

- Carlson, 'Al-Halqa in Arabic Theatre: An Emerging Site of Hybridity', *Theatre Journal*, 60, 1 (2008), pp. 71–85.
- 7 Amine and Carlson, *Theatres of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia*; Amine and Carlson, 'Al-Halqa in Arabic Theatre'; also see 'Umar Muhammad Al-Talib, *Malamih al-Masrahiya al-Arabiya al-Islamiya* (Aspects of the Arab Islamic Play) (Casablanca: Dar al-'Afaq al-Jadida, 1987).
 - 8 Wasif Jawhariyyeh mentions that renowned actors George Abyad and Shaykh Salama Hijazi visited Jerusalem in 1908, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem*, pp. 72–3. Also see Ali Hasan al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila* (The Encyclopaedia of Beautiful Jaffa), Vol. II (Amman: Ward Books, 2016), pp. 1147–8.
 - 9 Intisar al-Shanti, 'Thakirat al-Masrah al-Falastini Qabl 1948' (The Memory of Palestinian Theatre before 1948), *Samid al-Iqtisadi*, 26, 136 (2004), pp. 166–78.
 - 10 Amine, 'Theatre in the Arab World'.
 - 11 Marvin Carlson, 'Negotiating Theatrical Modernism in the Arab World', *Theatre Journal*, 65, 4 (2013), pp. 523–35.
 - 12 Fatma Barjkani, *Nash'at al-Masrah fi al-Mashriq: al-Hadatha fi Turkiya, Iran, wa Bilad al-Sham* (The Development of Theatre in the East: Modernity in Turkey, Iran, and Bilad al-Sham), Vol. II (Beirut: Birsan, 2011), pp. 78–82.
 - 13 M. M. Badawi, 'The Father of the Modern Egyptian Theatre: Ya'qub Sannu', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 16 (1985), pp. 132–45.
 - 14 Fatma Barjkani, *Nash'at al-Masrah fi al-Mashriq*, pp. 78–82. Also see Maleh Ghassan, 'The Birth of Modern Arab Theatre', *Unesco Courier*, 50, 11 (1997), pp. 28–32.
 - 15 Amine and Carlson, *Theatres of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia*, pp. 70–89. Also see Carmen Gitre, 'The Dramatic Middle East: Performance as History in Egypt and Beyond', *History Compass*, 13, 10 (2015), pp. 521–32.
 - 16 Amine and Carlson, *Theatres of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia*, pp. 70–89; Gitre, 'The Dramatic Middle East', pp. 521–32.
 - 17 For example, see Mohammad Al-Khozai, *The Development of Early Arabic Drama (1847–1900)* (London: Longman, 1984).
 - 18 Ibid.
 - 19 Carlson, 'Negotiating Theatrical Modernism', pp. 523–35.
 - 20 Ibid.
 - 21 Ibid.
 - 22 Nasri al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini (1918–1948)* (The History of Palestinian Theatre (1918–1948) (Ramallah: Dar al-Ard lal-Nashir, 2011), p. 10. Also see Barjkani, *Nash'at al-Masrah fi al-Mashfiq*, pp. 55–61.
 - 23 Mahir Sharif, *al-Muthaqaf al-Falastini wa Rahanat al-Hadatha* (The Palestinian Intellectual and the Stakes of Modernity) (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2020), p. 3.
 - 24 Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 10–15.
 - 25 Jawhariyyeh, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem*, pp. 72–3. See also Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, pp. 30–1.
 - 26 Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, pp. 30–1.
 - 27 Ibid.; also see al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 16–18.
 - 28 Al-Shanti, 'Thakirat al-Masrah al-Falastini Qabl 1948', pp. 156–7. British colonialists even formed an amateur British troupe in Jerusalem. However, these performances were not generally attended by Palestinians. Hagit Krik and Eitan Bar-Yosef, 'Shipwrecked in Jerusalem: British Amateur Theatre and Colonial Culture in Mandatory Palestine', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 50, 1 (2021), pp. 1–32.
 - 29 Al-Shanti, 'Thakirat al-Masrah al-Falastini Qabl 1948'; also see Wasif Jamal Abu al-Shabab, 'al-Qisa wa al-Riwaya wa al-Masrahiya al-Falastiniya' (The Story and the Novel and the Palestinian Play), in *al-Mawsu'a al-Falastiniya* (The Palestinian Encyclopaedia), Vol. IV (Beirut: Dirasat Hadara, 1990), pp. 127–63.
 - 30 Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 18–29, also see Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, pp. 33–6.

- 31 Sharif, *al-Muthaqaf al-Falastini wa Rahanat al-Hadatha*, pp. 30–50. Also see Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, 'Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1, 3 (1972), pp. 37–63.
- 32 Sharif, *al-Muthaqaf al-Falastini wa Rahanat al-Hadatha*, p. 19.
- 33 Al-Shanti, 'Thakirat al-Masrah al-Falastini Qabl 1948', p. 157. Also see Carlson, 'Negotiating Theatrical Modernism', pp. 525–35.
- 34 These nationalist plays began to be performed as early as 1918. Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, p. 14.
- 35 Ibid., pp. 14–41. Also see al-Shanti, 'Thakirat al-Masrah al-Falastini Qabl 1948', pp. 157–68.
- 36 Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, p. 14; al-Shanti, 'Thakirat al-Masrah al-Falastini Qabl 1948', pp. 157–68.
- 37 For example, see the plays of Nasri al-Jawzi, Asma Toubi and Najwa Qa'war. Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 51–143.
- 38 Carlson, 'Negotiating Theatrical Modernism', pp. 525–35.
- 39 Also see Sharif, *al-Muthaqaf al-Falastini wa Rahanat al-Hadatha*, pp. 21–71.
- 40 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 150–75.
- 41 Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 18–19. Also see al-Shanti, 'Thakirat al-Masrah al-Falastini Qabl 1948', p. 162; and Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, pp. 33–9.
- 42 Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 18–19. Also see al-Shabab, 'al-Qisa wa al-Riwaya wa al-Masrahiya fi Falastin', p. 159.
- 43 Sharif, *al-Muthaqaf al-Falastini wa Rahanat al-Hadatha*, pp. 20–74.
- 44 Newspapers that used to discuss the performances of the Jawzi troupe included *al-Difa'* and *Mir'at al-Sharq*. Newspapers also reported on some of the musical and theatrical performances taking place in Egypt. See al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 153–73; and al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, p. 1208. For examples of advertisements for theatre performances see *Falastin*, 26 August 1933 and 29 August 1933.
- 45 Sharif, *al-Muthaqaf al-Falastini wa Rahanat al-Hadatha*, pp. 21–71.
- 46 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1126–97. Also see Ahmad Dajani, *Madinatuna Yafa wa Thawrat 1936* (Our City Yafa and the Revolt of 1936) (Amman: s.n., 1989), pp. 116–29; and Imtiyaz Diyab and Hisham Sharabi, eds., *Yafa 'Utr al-Madina* (Jaffa the Perfume of a City) (Beirut: Dar al-Fan al-Arabi, 1991).
- 47 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1142–9. Also see Don Rubin, ed., *The World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre: The Arab World*, Vol. IV (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 188. Also see Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, pp. 22–6.
- 48 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1142–9. Also see Khayri Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa* (The Book of Stories about Jaffa) (Amman: Dar al-Shuruq, 2008), pp. 103–5.
- 49 Umm Kulthum performed in Jaffa in 1929 and 1923. Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, p. 1208. Also see Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa*, pp. 107–8.
- 50 The plays performed by the Ramsis troupe included *Awlad al-Fuqara* (Children of the Poor), *Rasputin and Majnun Layla* (The One Mad for Layla). Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamil*, pp. 1148–208. Also see al-Shabab, 'al-Qisa wa al-Riwaya wa al-Masrahiya al-Falastiniya', p. 157; and Intisar al-Shanti, 'Thakirat al-Masrah al-Falastini Qabl 1948', p. 160.
- 51 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1148–208. Also see al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 22–5.
- 52 Examples of these radio plays include the works of Palestinian playwright Najwa Qa'war, Jamil al-Jawzi's adaptations of European plays, and the performances of the Firqat Ansar al-Tamthil al-Arabiya. Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 139–69. Also see Fahmi Shama's testimony in Diyab and Sharabi, *Yafa 'Utr al-Madina*, pp. 141–2.

- 53 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1200–317. Also see Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa*, pp. 105–8; and Dajani, *Madinatuna Yafa wa Thawrat 1936*, pp. 125–6.
- 54 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1200–317. Also see al-Shabab, 'al-Qisa wa al-Riwaya wa al-Masrahiya al-Falastiniya', p. 156.
- 55 See the testimony of Layla Nsibeh in Diyab and Sharabi, *Yafa 'Utr al-Madina*, pp. 163–4; and Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa*, p. 107. For an example of the kinds of stories performed with the karagoz see al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1448–9.
- 56 According to al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1448–9, shadow theatre is originally from India and China and was introduced to Palestine with the spread of the Ottoman Empire.
- 57 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1407–9. Also see Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, pp. 25–6.
- 58 Jawhariyyeh, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem*, pp. 59–64; and al-'Asali, *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa fi Falastin*, p. 115. Also see Cristiana Baldazzi, 'Time Off: Entertainment, Games and Past Times in Palestine between the End of the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate', *Oriente Moderno*, 95, 1–2 (2015), pp. 173–92.
- 59 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1294–417.
- 60 Ibid.; also see Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*.
- 61 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1415–17.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Ibid., pp. 1383–405.
- 64 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1383–405. Also see Sa'd Yusuf Dajani, *Kay La Nasa Yafa* (So That We Do Not Forget Jaffa) (Amman: s.n., 1991), pp. 131–3; and Dajani, *Madinatuna Yafa wa Thawrat 1936*, pp. 115–18.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Dajani, *Madinatuna Yafa wa Thawrat 1936*, pp. 119–20.
- 67 They were performed on Thursday, Sunday and Friday. For examples of the songs that were sung at the *hadra* see al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1396–7.
- 68 Ibid.; also see Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa*, p. 75.
- 69 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1396–7. Also see Tewfik Canaan, *Mohammadan Saint and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing, 1927), p. 216; and Elias al-Rantisi, 'Maswim Rubin', in Diyab and Sharabi, *Yafa 'Utr al-Madina*, pp. 71–5.
- 70 Mahmoud Yazbak, 'The Muslim Festival of Nabi Rubin in Palestine: From Religious Festival to Summer Resort', *Holy Land Studies*, 10, 2 (2011), pp. 169–98. Also see Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*, p. 27.
- 71 Al-Rantisi, 'Mawsim Rubin'. Also see Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa*, pp. 78–83.
- 72 Al-Rantisi, 'Maswim Rubin'. Also see Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa*, pp. 78–83.
- 73 Yazbak, 'The Muslim Festival of Nabi Rubin in Palestine', pp. 190–4.
- 74 The focus here is on Jaffa but it is also worth mentioning that *zaffat al-thawb* was also celebrated in Lydd and Ramla. Yazbak, 'The Muslim Festival of Nabi Rubin in Palestine', pp. 185–9. Also al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, p. 1295; and Dajani, *Kay La Nasa Yafa*, pp. 129–30.
- 75 Yazbak, 'The Muslim Festival of Nabi Rubin in Palestine', pp. 185–9. Also see al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1290–9.
- 76 For an example of these songs see al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, p. 1293.
- 77 For examples of these anti-Zionist chants and slogans see al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, p. 1291.
- 78 Jamil Kamil Al-'Asali, *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa fi Falastin*, p. 100.
- 79 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, Vol. 2, p. 1400.
- 80 Ibid.
- 81 Yazbak, 'The Muslim Festival of Nabi Rubin in Palestine', p. 182.
- 82 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, Vol. 2, p. 1400.
- 83 According to Rantisi, 'Mawsim Rubin', *dhikr* rituals were performed every night. 'Mawim Rubin' in Imtiyaz Diyab and Hisham Sharabi, eds., *Yafa 'Utr al-Madina*.

- 84 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, p. 1297.
- 85 Ibid., p. 1304. Also see Yazbak, 'The Muslim Festival of Nabi Rubin in Palestine', pp. 18–19; and al-'Asali, *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa fi Falastin*, p. 116. Also see Canaan, *Mohammadan Saint and Sanctuaries in Palestine*.
- 86 Ali Hasan al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1402–5.
- 87 Ibid., p. 1296.
- 88 Ibid., p. 1171. Also see Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa*, p. 80.
- 89 Al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, Vol. 2, p. 1298.
- 90 Ibid., pp. 1317–448.
- 91 Al-'Asali, *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa fi Falastin*, pp. 133–4. Also see Jawhariyyeh, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem*, pp. 59–64.
- 92 See *Falastin*, 27 August 1933, 29 August 1933, 1 September 1933.
- 93 *Falastin*, 27 August 1933, 29 August 1933, 1 September 1933.
- 94 Separate performances were held for men and women. *Falastin*, 1 September 1933.
- 95 See the testimonies of Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahim and Abu Darwish al-Falaha in Diyab and Sharabi, eds., *Yafa 'Utr al-Madina*, pp. 133–55. Also see Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*, p. 30; and Dajani, *Madinatuna Yafa wa Thawrat 1936*, p. 120.
- 96 Al-Jawzi, *Tarikh al-Masrah al-Falastini*, pp. 15–17. Also see al-Bawab, *Mawsu'at Yafa al-Jamila*, pp. 1147–8.
- 97 Ibid., p. 1297. Also see Abu-Jbin, *Kitab Hikayat 'An Yafa*, pp. 79–82; and Dajani, *Madinatuna Yafa wa Thawrat 1936*, p. 120.
- 98 Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahim, 'Mawsim Rubin' in Imitiyaz Diyab and Hisham Sharabi, eds., *Yafa 'Utr al-Madina*, p. 73. Also see Mahmoud Yazbak, 'The Muslim Festival of Nabi Rubin in Palestine', p. 194.
- 99 For example, in Snir, *Palestinian Theatre*, p. 1. Also see Mohammad, *Theatre of the Occupied*, p. 1.
- 100 Carlson, 'Negotiating Theatrical Modernism in the Arab World'; and Khalid Amine, *Al-Masrah wa al-Hawiyat al-Hariba* (Theatre and Fleeting Identities: Dancing on the Hyphen) (Tangier: International Centre for Performances Studies, 2019).
- 101 Nicholas Rowe, *Raising Dust: A Cultural History of Dance in Palestine* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2010), pp. 80–8.

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