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A Locus-Less Literature: the Parallel Geographies of Palestinian Literature during the Tunis Period (1982–1994)

Refqa Abu-Remaileh | ORCID: 0000-0003-0235-0015

Professor Modern Arabic Literature and Film, Freie Universität Berlin,
Berlin, Germany

Corresponding author

r.remaileh@fu-berlin.de

Hanan Natour | ORCID: 0009-0000-3889-6058

Research Associate, ERC project PalREAD, Freie Universität Berlin,
Berlin, Germany

hanan.natour@fu-berlin.de

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Abstract

Emerging from the rubble of the civil war in Lebanon, a group of literary figures sought shelter in Tunis, alongside the PLO and its political factions. Although the ‘Tunis period’ lasted more than a decade, from 1982 to 1994, it remains a neglected period of Palestinian literary history. As part of a larger project that seeks to reconnect disconnected periods of Palestinian literature from 1948 to the present, this article probes the lost Tunis period to better understand Palestinian literature’s North African foray. Using the lens of Arabic literary periodicals, and supported by the tools of Digital Humanities, the article surveys the contents and contributor networks of Tunisian, Moroccan, as well as local and transnational Palestinian periodicals. By tracing literary networks and personal trajectories, the article reveals the parallel geographies of Palestinian literature during a period of intense exile and deterritorialization, an itinerary that includes stops in Tunis, Paris, Casablanca, Nicosia, Jerusalem, and Haifa.

Keywords

Palestinian literature – literary history – periodical studies – digital humanities – Tunis period – Maghreb and Mashriq – transnationalism

The numerous exilic contexts of literary production, circulation, and debate of Palestinian literature, which were particularly expansive in the 20th century, are rarely featured in the foreground of literary histories.¹ Many of these scattered Palestinian literary locales were situated regionally in the Arab world, with Palestinian literature operating as part and parcel of the production of modern Arabic literature at large. They also featured international settings that spanned Cyprus, Europe, North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Despite fascinating regional and international intertwinements, few scholarly sources delve into the transnational contexts of Palestinian cultural production. More recently, the period of the so-called golden age of Palestinian cultural production in Beirut between the mid-1960s and early 1980s has generated a flurry of interest through publications and initiatives to document the global appeal of the Palestinian Revolution.² Neglected, however, are exilic

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- 1 This article is the outcome of research conducted as part of the European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant project *PalREAD—Country of Words* (Reading and Reception of Palestinian Literature from 1948 to the Present), led by principal investigator Refqa Abu-Remaileh. It is part of a series of forthcoming articles, conceptualized by Abu-Remaileh, on little-known periods of Palestinian literary history. See also: Refqa Abu-Remaileh, *Country of Words: A Transnational Atlas for Palestinian Literature*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023 (<https://countryofwords.org>). Translations are by the authors unless stated otherwise. Authors are listed in alphabetical order, with Refqa Abu-Remaileh as the corresponding author. We would like to express our warm acknowledgements to Ritā 'Awaḍ, Hādī Dānyāl, Tawfiq Fayyād, Lattouf Abdallah at the Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), and Mohamed-Salah Omri at Oxford University, who helped contextualise this period, sharing valuable publications with the PalREAD project. We would also like to express our gratitude to our team members Ibrahim Mahfouz Abdou and Heba Tebakhi, who contributed to the scholarly discussions in the development phase of this article, while Heba further obtained access to crucial primary sources. During our fieldwork, we benefited from the resources at the Tunisian National Library, the Tunisian National Archives, the Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes (IBLA), and the Palestinian Embassy in Tunis. We received further resources from libraries across Germany, including the Freie Universität Berlin and the University of Bamberg.
 - 2 See: Zeina Maasri, *Cosmopolitan Radicalism: The Visual Politics of Beirut's Global Sixties* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Dina Matar, "PLO Cultural Activism: Mediating Liberation Aesthetics in Revolutionary Contexts," *Comparative studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 38, no. 2 (2018): 354–364. Nadia Yaqub, *Palestinian Cinema in the Days of Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021). *The Palestinian Revolution*

literary periods before and after the extraordinarily rich but also extremely brief and tragic Beirut years. In the spirit of advocating for the writing of transnational literary histories, this article will trace the contours and outline the main features of the period that immediately followed the Palestinian exodus from Beirut.

Following the ravages of the Lebanese civil war and the Israeli siege of Beirut in 1982, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was expelled and forced to flee from Lebanon along with many of its affiliated literary and cultural figures, relocating a skeletal version of its institutions, infrastructure, and personnel to Tunis. It is this period, Tunis between 1982 and 1994, an overlooked 'blackhole' period in Palestinian literary history, that will be the focus of this article. If Beirut symbolized the consolidation and centralization of Palestinian cultural production, and represented the beating heart of the Palestinian Revolution, Tunis bore witness to new forms of Palestinian fragmentation and isolation, irredeemable losses, cultural devastation, regional and international hostilities, and internal divisions and tensions. The Tunis period saw the PLO at its most vulnerable with the eruption of the First Intifada in 1987, the Gulf War in 1990, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the beginning of an irrevocably flawed 'peace process' that led to the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. The consequences of these events eventually brought the North African foray of the Palestinian leadership-in-exile to an end.³ Given this context, the 'Tunis Period' as a term is used to demarcate the new physical location that played host to surviving Palestinian institutions and organizations. Simultaneously, it seeks to encompass the new forms of decentralization, deterritorialization, and exile of Palestinian literature during this period by reading the Tunis location together with its parallel literary geographies.

This article builds on the framework introduced in the article "Country of Words: Palestinian Literature in the Digital Age of the Refugee,"⁴ which contends with the realities of literary production of an entire nation-in-exile. In this "Age of the Refugee,"⁵ as Edward Said referred to successive waves of

project curated by Karma Nabulsi, University of Oxford, accessed July 11, 2024, <http://learn.palestine.qeh.ox.ac.uk>. The *Revolutionary Papers* platform that maps leftist, anti-imperial, and anti-colonial journals, accessed July 11, 2024, <https://revolutionarypapers.org>.

- 3 For more detailed insights into the state of the PLO and political events of this period see: Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 545–656, and Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 147–48.
- 4 Refqa Abu-Remaileh, "Country of Words: Palestinian Literature in the Digital Age of the Refugee," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 52, no. 1–2 (2021): 68–96.
- 5 Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile* (London: Granta Books 2001), 173.

dispossession that marked the 20th century, the case study of Palestinian literature as a literature-in-exile can contribute to improving our understanding of literary histories beyond the framework of the nation state.

Tunis as a location impacted and in part restricted the interactions of Palestinian and Tunisian writers. Nonetheless, Palestinian literary presence and the reception of Palestinian literature shines through Tunisian periodicals. In its turn, the PLO also founded and published several of its own periodicals in Tunisia. During this period, however, Palestinian literary engagements did not confine themselves to periodicals published in Tunis. They expanded into the Maghrebi and Arabic-language literary spheres in Europe, and continuously struggled to connect and re-connect with isolated literary spheres in Palestine. The resulting transnational literary geography of the Tunis period features an itinerary that includes cities such as Paris, Casablanca, Nicosia, Jerusalem, and Haifa.

Tunisian literary periodicals we surveyed include *Al-Hayāt al-thaqāfiyyah* and *Al-Masār*, as well as *Al-Fikr* and *Qaṣaṣ*.⁶ We also considered PLO periodicals based in Tunis, including *Al-Ṣadāqah*, *Bayādir*, and *Lotus*.⁷ In light of the deterritorialization and decentralization of literary production during this period, we followed the itineraries of Palestinian periodicals and literary figures to identify parallel geographies beyond Tunis, surveying periodicals such as *Revue d'études palestiniennes* and *Al-Yawm al-sābi'* in Paris, *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah al-maghribiyyah* in Casablanca, and *Al-Karmel* in Nicosia.⁸ Finally, we travelled full circle back to Palestine to consider the sporadic and disconnected literary periodicals published on the 'inside', in the stranded cities of Jerusalem and Haifa, including *Al-Bayādir*,⁹ *Al-Kātib*, *Al-Fajr al-adabī*, and *Al-Jadīd*.¹⁰

6 We accessed an almost complete set of the Tunisian periodicals under review for this article.

7 We worked with an almost complete set of the English edition of *Lotus*. Access to the equivalent Arabic edition was difficult. Regarding *Al-Ṣadāqah* and *Bayādir*, we worked with three issues of each published in the late 1980s for the former and issues published in the early 1990s for the latter.

8 Access to REP was limited to tables of contents and abstracts of articles. Issues between 1984–1989 of *Al-Yawm al-sābi'* were consulted. An almost complete set of *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah al-maghribiyyah* was consulted. Most issues of *Al-Karmel* were consulted, with gaps between 1993 and 1997.

9 Please note that the Tunis-based *Bayādir* and the Jerusalem-based *Al-Bayādir* are two different periodicals.

10 We accessed issues of *Al-Bayādir* published between 1976 and 1980, issues of *Al-Kātib* published between 1979 and 1992 with gaps in the late 1980s, and issues of *Al-Fajr al-adabī* published between 1982 and 1988 with gaps especially in the years 1985 and 1987. We were

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines literary history with periodical studies and Digital Humanities (DH), we explore the relatively untapped potential of Arabic-language literary periodicals as a primary source for the writing of transnational literary histories. Digital tools, especially the relational multilingual database and visualization tool specifically customized and developed for the PalREAD project, allowed us to collect, house, interlink, and visualize a wide range of data gathered from a broad corpus of Arabic periodicals published during the Tunis period. The process focused on gathering information on a number of key elements from each periodical, including names of editors and contributors, tables of contents, section divisions, locations of publication, and any additional paratextual information; the publication of relevant special issues, supplements or files; the evolution of themes and trends within and across periodicals, and the coverage of literary events and cultural news. Several illustrative visualizations, such as a timeline, network, and map are included as references. Equipped with these digital tools, we were able to carry out both quantitative and qualitative analyses on the corpus of periodicals that fall within this period. This allowed us to conduct distant readings, including content and network analysis, combined with close readings of selected editorials and relevant special issues.

The exploration of the Tunis period therefore features Arabic literary periodicals as a window into, and barometer of, the literary constellations, trajectories, and debates of the period. The digital approach allowed us to map a meta-literary landscape for the Tunis period which facilitated a rich and multi-layered perspective into an uncharted period of Palestinian literary history. It also showed how closely the history of Palestinian literature is linked to the movements and personal trajectories of its literary figures.

The Tunis Years 1982–1994

Two literary groups shaped Palestinian literary history during the Tunis period. One group includes Palestinian literary figures who moved from Beirut to Tunis before the PLO's relocation, for example the writer Tawfiq Fayyāḍ and the literary scholar Rītā 'Awaḍ. The second group includes those who moved to Tunis with the PLO: Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Liyānah Badr, Aḥmad Daḥbūr, Mu'īn Bsisū, Rashād Abū Shāwar, and Yaḥyā Yakhluf. A sub-group of those who moved to Tunis were non-Palestinians affiliated to the PLO, such as the Syrian poet and

able to access numerous issues of *Al-Jadīd* for all the years of the Tunis period with only individual issues missing.

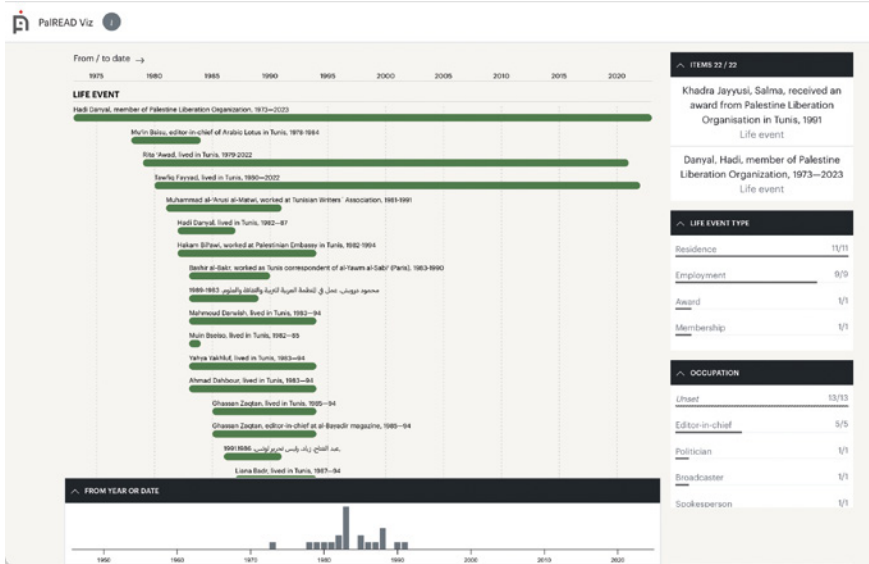


FIGURE 1 Screenshot of an interactive timeline showing Palestinian and affiliated non-Palestinian literary figures who were based in Tunisia in the 1980s and 1990s. Access link: <https://palread.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/view/79> SOURCE: THE PALREAD PROJECT

writer Hādī Dānyāl.¹¹ The interactive timeline in Figure 1 illustrates the residence events of literary figures during the Tunis period.

The three literary figures that stand out in the new Tunisian context are those who made Tunisia their home and stayed beyond the PLO’s departure in 1994, namely Riṭā ‘Awaḍ, Tawfiq Fayyāḍ and Hādī Dānyāl. ‘Awaḍ is a literary figure who actively shaped the Palestinian cultural sphere in Tunisia through institutional initiatives. A literary scholar of Palestinian origin, she relocated to Tunisia from Beirut in 1979. She developed close contacts with Palestinian literary figures in Tunisia, including Darwīsh and Fayyāḍ. As the director of the cultural division at the Tunis headquarters of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), she initiated and edited several volumes relating to Palestinian cultural heritage,¹² and actively promoted the nomination of Jerusalem as the 2009 Arab Capital of Culture. Her activities also spanned other Maghrebi countries, including collaborations with the

11 The PalREAD Podcast, *Balad min kalam*, features interviews with Liyānah Badr and Hādī Dānyāl. For further information see the PalREAD project website, <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/palread/Podcast/index.html>.

12 Ḥamdān Ṭahā, *Qā’imat mawāqif al-turāth al-thaqāfi wa-l-ṭabī‘i dhāt al-qimah al-‘ālamīyyah al-mutamayyizah fi-Filasṭīn* ed. Riṭā ‘Awaḍ (Tunis: ALECSO, 2006).

Moroccan poet, Muḥammad Bennīs, in organizing literary events such as the Writers' Conference in Casablanca in 1985.¹³ Tawfiq Fayyāḍ moved to Tunis in 1980, prior to the PLO's relocation. Upon his arrival in Tunis, he developed close relationships with Tunisian writers, including Tunisia's most renowned resistance poet, Muḥammad al-Saghīr Awlād Aḥmad. While Fayyāḍ already knew many of the literary figures who eventually relocated from Beirut to Tunis, he was particularly close to Darwīsh given their shared youth in Haifa.¹⁴

As a non-Palestinian, Dānyāl's move to Tunis with the PLO is a tale that encapsulates a moment in history when the Palestinian Revolution attracted poets, writers and intellectuals from all parts of the globe. At a young age, Dānyāl fled Damascus to Beirut to join the PLO and the Palestinian Revolution. He eventually became the director of the Palestinian radio station (Idhā'at Filasṭīn), which continued to operate during the siege of Beirut in 1982. Fleeing Beirut with the PLO cadres, Dānyāl ended up in Tunis where he went on to serve as the general secretary of the General Union for Palestinian Writers and Journalists while Darwīsh was its president. Between 1982–1987, Dānyāl was the Tunisia correspondent for the Beirut-based PLO magazine *Filasṭīn al-thawrah*. In 1988, he went into exile in Algeria, but was able to return to Tunis that same year.¹⁵ Later, he went into publishing, directing the Tunis-based publishing house Nuqūsh 'Arabiyyah, also known as Arabesques, before founding his own publishing house, Dār Diyār, where he publishes both Tunisian authors such as Muṣṭafā al-Kilānī and Palestinian poets such as Dārīn Ṭāṭūr.¹⁶ Like Fayyāḍ, Dānyāl maintained a regular presence in Tunis and remains engaged in the Tunisian literary sphere until today.¹⁷

The cases of 'Awaḍ, Fayyāḍ, and Dānyāl show that due to their extended stays in Tunis, they were able to forge deeper links with the Tunisian literary sphere, a sphere that was, for various political reasons, rather inaccessible for the majority of Palestinian literary figures. These figures would interact with both sides, engage in literary events and collaborate on publications that

13 Personal Conversation with Rītā 'Awaḍ in Tunis, 05.08.2019.

14 In his youth, Fayyāḍ shared a flat with Darwīsh in Haifa on Abbas Street 35. Personal conversation with Tawfiq Fayyāḍ in Tunis, 11.06.2019.

15 Another literary figure who moved to Tunis but was exiled to Algeria shortly thereafter is 'Izz al-Dīn al-Manāṣarah, staying in the Algerian cities of Constantine (1983–1987) and Tlemcen (1987–1991). See Wasīnī al-A'raj, "عز الدين المناصرة في جزائر الغزالي وحيوية" *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, April 6, 2021.

16 Dārīn Ṭāṭūr, *Qaṣīdatī al-khaṭīra: mudhakkarāt shā'irah mu'taqilah fi-sujūn al-iḥtilāl* (Tunis: Dār Diyār, 2019).

17 Dānyāl also published studies on Tunisian literature. See Hādī Dānyāl, *Qirā'atī fi al-adab al-tūnisī* (Tunis: Nuqūsh 'Arabiyyah, 2009).

furthered the links between the Palestinian and Tunisian literary spheres. Besides official PLO meetings, such as the writers and journalists union (some of which were held in Tunis), many of the literary figures living in Tunis regularly met in cafés such as Maqhā al-Kawn and Maqhā al-Zunūj, as well as in bookshops such as Le Gai Savoir, and hotels such as the Hotel International.¹⁸ In Hotel Salwa, for example, a poetry wall was created featuring the works of Palestinian poets upon their arrival in Tunis.¹⁹ In addition to events and initiatives organized by ‘Awaḍ through ALECSO, this period also saw Tunisian initiatives to organize events around Palestine. In 1989, a Tunisian cultural symposium on the *intifāḍah* took place in Tunis, bringing together both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ Palestinian literary figures such as Samīḥ al-Qāsim, who traveled from Haifa, and Yaḥyā Yakhluḥ who was already in Tunis.²⁰ Another example is the 1991 Tunisian film titled “Waqā’i’ al-layālī al-mushammasah,” dedicated to exploring Fayyāḍ’s life and his relationship to the *intifāḍah*.²¹

Tunisian Literary Periodicals

Despite the presence of important literary figures, a survey of Tunisian literary periodicals reveals only a small increase in interest and engagement with Palestinian literature during the Tunis period. It becomes clear that Palestinian presence in Tunis did not translate into an immediate but rather a delayed impact on the Tunisian literary sphere, featuring more contributions on Palestinian literature after the PLO’s departure from Tunis in 1994. In accordance with conditions imposed by their Tunisian hosts, the PLO adopted a strict policy to prevent Palestinian involvement in the local Tunisian context. This included the active limiting of opportunities for Palestinian-Tunisian literary exchanges, preventing Palestinian literary figures from participating in local Tunisian literary activities, festivals, and events.²² These restrictive policies were a direct result of the tragic events of the Lebanese civil war where the PLO was accused of meddling with local Lebanese politics. Additionally,

18 Personal Conversation with Hādī Dānyāl in Tunis, 15.07.2019. See also PalREAD podcast episode with Dānyāl: <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/palread/Podcast/HadiDanyal.html>.

19 Personal Conversation with Hādī Dānyāl in Tunis, 15.07.2019.

20 This event was reported in the Haifa-based *Al-Jadīd*. Editorial team, “Thaqāfat al-ḥijārah da’wah ilā murāja’at al-dhāt ba’da hamās al-laḥzāt al-ūlā,” *Al-Jadīd*, 9 (1989): 5–15.

21 The film was reviewed in *Al-Jadīd*. See: Nijāḥ al-Mawliḥī, “Waqā’i’ al-layālī al-mushammasah: Qiṣṣat al-kātib al-filastīnī Tawfiq Fayyāḍ,” *Al-Jadīd*, 4 (1991): 94–96.

22 Personal Conversation with Hādī Dānyāl in Tunis, 15.07.2019.

the cultural and political devastation suffered in Beirut meant that only a diminished version of the PLO was able to relocate to Tunis, lacking the cultural infrastructure and personnel to re-build a new and dynamic literary sphere. PLO and Tunisian policies clearly took a toll on both Palestinian and Tunisian literary figures and led to Palestinians in Tunis being isolated.

An in-depth content analysis of the issues of two renowned Tunisian literary periodicals whose lifespans fall directly within the Tunis period, *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah* and *Al-Masār*, was carried out. *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah* was founded in 1975 by the then Tunisian Minister of Cultural Affairs, Maḥmūd al-Mas'ādī, and continues to be published monthly by the ministry until today. *Al-Masār*, on the other hand, was published by the Tunisian Writers Union between 1988 and 2011. Although *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*'s mandate, as defined in its very first editorial, is to represent Tunisian literary and cultural expression and its evolution since the Tunisian independence,²³ several of the literary figures who relocated to Tunis contributed to it during this period. Up until 2014, *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah* published twenty-three contributions on Palestinian literary topics, the majority of which were published after 2001, well after the PLO's departure from Tunis.²⁴ During the Tunis period, only two articles were published that touch on Palestinian literary topics, including a 1985 interview with the Damascus-based Palestinian writer and artist 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Muzayyin,²⁵ and a literary study published in 1986 comparing Imīl Ḥabībī's novel *The Pessoptimist* to Voltaire's *Candide*.²⁶

Although outside the scope of the Tunis period, two years in particular saw increased contributions on Palestinian literary topics in *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*. The year 2008, which marked the death of Maḥmūd Darwīsh, and 2009, which coincided with the declaration of Jerusalem as the Arab Capital of Culture.²⁷ In addition, literary figures who remained in Tunis, namely Tawfiq Fayyāḍ and

23 Editorial board, "Limadhā majallat Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah?," *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, 1 (1975): 3–4.

24 *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah* issues 125 (2001); 135 (2002); 155 (2004); 159 (2004); 196 (2008); 197 (2008); 200 (2009); 202 (2009); 205 (2009); 213 (2010); 228 (2012); 233 (2012); 235 (2012); 237 (2013); 242 (2013); 244 (2013); 247 (2014); 249 (2014); 250 (2014); and 254 (2014).

25 'Abdallah 'Īsa, "Hiwār ma'a al-fannān al-filasṭīnī 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Muzayyin," *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, 35 (14.12.2021 1985), 188–191.

26 'Alī al-Ṣayyād, "Qiṣṣat *Al-waqā'i' al-gharibah fī ikhtifā'* Sa'īd Abī al-Naḥs li-Imīl Ḥabībī wa-qiṣṣat *Candide* li-Voltaire," *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, 41 (1986): 82–93.

27 Examples of articles published in 2008 relating to Darwīsh include: Yūnis Sulṭānī, "Tūnis taḥṭafī bi-arba'īniyyat al-shā'ir Maḥmūd Darwīsh," *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, 196 (2008): 109–112; Khālid Zaghrīt, "Tajalliyyāt al-anmāt al-ustūriyyah li-ṣūrat al-shajarah bayna Ezra Pound wa-Maḥmūd Darwīsh," *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, 197 (2008): 73–79; Sāmīyah 'Ammār Bu'attūr, "Tarnīmah ilā Maḥmūd Darwīsh," *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, 197 (2008): 127–128.

Hādī Dānyāl, eventually managed to publish original literary works in *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*,²⁸ while other Palestinian literary figures were featured mainly as the subjects of literary studies. Although Darwīsh was not a contributor to *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, during the post-Tunis period his works received more attention than any other Palestinian literary figure, with numerous articles discussing and analyzing his poetry.²⁹

Meanwhile, *Al-Masār*, given its mandate to support literary and cultural progress in Tunisia and thereby taking a less conservative approach in comparison with *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*,³⁰ was more open to including Palestinian literature during the Tunis period. Of a total of nineteen articles published in *Al-Masār* on Palestinian literary topics, seven were published during the Tunis period, a relatively higher number than the two articles published by *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah* in the same period. These included original poetry contributions by Hādī Dānyāl and Samīḥ al-Qāsim, a 1992 interview with al-Qāsim, and a literary study comparing two of Darwīsh's poetry collections.³¹ In the post-Tunis period we noticed a wider engagement with Palestinian literature, including a posthumously published interview with Maḥmūd Darwīsh;³² a farewell to Imīl Ḥabībī;³³ a literary study of Rashād Abū Shāwar's Beirut memoirs;³⁴ a study of the Palestinian novel,³⁵ and a literary analysis of Darwīsh's poetry collection *Limādhā tarakt al-ḥiṣān wahīdan* (*Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone*) (1995).³⁶

28 Tawfīq Fayyāḍ, "al-Bahlūl," *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, 125 (2001): 81–87. He later published a same-titled collection of short stories with the Tunisian publisher Dār al-Ma'ārif. See Tawfīq Fayyāḍ, *al-Bahlūl: thalath qīṣaṣ* (Sousse: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 2006). As for an example of a literary contribution by Dānyāl see Hādī Dānyāl, "Qaṣā'id," *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, 213 (2010): 133–135.

29 *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah* issues 135 (2002); 159 (2004); 196 (2008); 197 (2008); 202 (2009); and 244 (2013). Going beyond literature, one of the articles shines a light on three artists whose works are inspired by Darwīsh's poetry, including the Iraqi artists Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī and Kāmil Ibrāhīm, as well as the Algerian artist Rashīd Qurayshī in issue 135 (2002).

30 Editorial board, "Iftitāḥiyyah," *Al-Masār*, 1 (1988): 3–4.

31 See: *Al-Masār* issues 3/4 (1989); 5 (1990); 6 (1990), 9 (1991); and 13/14 (1992).

32 Shams al-Dīn al-Ūnī, "Ba'da sanah ūlā 'alā raḥīlihi: ḥadīth ma'a al-shā'ir al-filasṭīnī Maḥmūd Darwīsh qubīl raḥīlih," *Al-Masār*, 86/87 (2009): 108–114.

33 Muḥammad al-'Arūsī al-Maṭwī, "Raḥīl Imīl Ḥabībī ... wa ākhir mā katabahu fi Mashārif," *Al-Masār*, 28/29 (1996): 187–188.

34 Ibrāhīm Darghūthī, "Qirā'ah fi tafāṣīl yawmiyyāt al-ḥiṣār li-'āshimah 'arabiyyah fi nihāyat al-qarn al-'ishrīn 'Ah ya Beirut" li-l-kātib al-filasṭīnī Rashād Abū Shāwar namūdhajan," *Al-Masār*, 49 (2001): 21–27.

35 Şubḥiyyah 'Awdah Muḥammad, "Ahammiyyat khuṣūṣiyyat al-makān fi al-riwāyah: al-riwāyah al-filasṭīniyyah namūdhajan," *Al-Masār*, 54: 28–31.

36 Faṭḥī Naşrī, "al-Shī'rī wa-l-sīrī fi dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh "Limādhā tarakt al-ḥiṣān wahīdan," *Al-Masār*, 82/83 (2008): 64–73.

A unique feature traced in *Al-Masār* are the contributions of Arab writers on Palestinian literature, such as an elegy by the Tunisian poet Sāmiyah ‘Ammār Bu‘attūr dedicated to the Palestinian poet Fadwā Tūqān,³⁷ and a study of resistance literature by the Egyptian writer ‘Abdallah Abū Hayf.³⁸ *Al-Masār* also saw Palestinian contributions on North African literature, such as the comparative literary study by the Palestinian writer from Syria, Ni‘mah Khālid, on the works of Tunisian, Algerian, and Syrian women authors.³⁹ Ultimately, both *Al-Masār* and *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah* demonstrate a continuous engagement and interest in Palestinian literature with peaks at crucial moments in Palestinian (literary) history that span the Tunis period and beyond.

Other Tunis periodicals that precede, fall partially within, or slightly after the Tunis period were also surveyed for their engagement with Palestinian literature. In *Al-Fikr*, for example, published between 1955 and 1986 co-founded by al-Bashīr Bin Slāmah and Muḥammad Mzallī (both of whom later pursued political careers as ministers),⁴⁰ five contributions relating to Palestinian literature were identified, two of which were published during the Tunis period. In 1984, the Palestinian poet and literary scholar Salmā al-Khaḍrā’ al-Jayyūsī contributed an article on the Tunisian national resistance poet Abū Qāsim al-Shābbī.⁴¹ This was in fact al-Jayyūsī’s second article on al-Shābbī in *Al-Fikr*, the first appearing in 1975.⁴² The second article, published in 1985, is a contribution by Tunisian writer Muṣṭafā al-Fārisī honoring the passing of the Tunis-based Palestinian poet Mu‘īn Bsisū.⁴³ Earlier articles appearing in *Al-Fikr* feature two Palestinian contributions on different aspects of modern Arabic literature, including a 1961 study by Jabrā Ibrahīm Jabrā, the well-known Palestinian writer based in Baghdad, and a 1977 literary analysis by al-Jayyūsī.⁴⁴ In the pre-Tunis period context, it is likely that al-Jayyūsī had already developed

37 Sāmiyah ‘Ammār Bu‘attūr, “Murthāh ilā Khansā’ Filastīn: Fadwā Tūqān,” *Al-Masār*, 69/70 (2004): 16–17.

38 ‘Abdallah Abū Hayf, “Qirā’ah naqdiyyah fi riwāyāt al-muqāwamah,” *Al-Masār*, 65/66 (2003): 137–159.

39 Ni‘mah Khālid, “al-Ḥākimiyyah wa-naqḍuhā fi al-takhyīl wa-l-riwā’i li-l-jasad,” *Al-Masār*, 50/51 (2001): 40–50.

40 Bin Slāmah became Minister of Cultural Affairs and Mzallī became Prime Minister. For further insights into *Al-Fikr*, see Shakry, 150.

41 Salmā al-Khaḍrā’ al-Jayyūsī, “al-Mawqif wa-l-ru’yā fi shi’r al-Shābbī,” *Al-Fikr*, 3 (1984): 425–436.

42 Salmā al-Khaḍrā’ al-Jayyūsī, “Ab‘ād al-makān wa-l-zamān fi shi’r al-Shābbī,” *Al-Fikr*, 4 (1975): 352–376.

43 Muṣṭafā al-Fārisī, “Ilā Mu‘īn Bsisū,” *Al-Fikr*, 6 (1985): 890–895.

44 Jabrā Ibrahīm Jabrā, “al-Riwāyah wa-l-qīṣṣah al-qaṣīrah wa-l-masraḥiyyah wa-dawruhā fi-l-mujtama‘ al-‘arabī,” *Al-Fikr*, 3 (1961): 64–71. Salmā al-Khaḍrā’ al-Jayyūsī, “al-Baṭal fi

close links in the North African literary sphere while living in Algeria, where she taught at the University of Algiers between 1973 and 1975.

A second journal, *Qaṣaṣ*, is also illustrative of Tunisian engagement with Palestinian literature. Founded in 1966 by the Tunisian writer Muḥammad al-ʿArūsi al-Maṭwī, who later became the editor-in-chief of *Al-Masār*, it can be considered a precursor to *Al-Masār*. *Qaṣaṣ* was published until 2009 with a focus on Tunisian literary themes and topics,⁴⁵ but also published three contributions relating to Palestinian literature during the Tunis period. The first article, published in 1988, is a literary study of Ghassān Kanafānī's novella *Rijāl fī al-shams* (*Men in the Sun*) (1963).⁴⁶ In 1993, *Qaṣaṣ* published a short story by an Egyptian writer featuring a Palestinian female protagonist.⁴⁷ And finally, in 1994, *Qaṣaṣ* featured a book review contributed by Syria-based Palestinian writer Ni'mah Khālid, who later became a contributor to *Al-Masār*.⁴⁸

While the distance from the local Tunis literary context is evident in the surveys presented above, the interest in Palestinian literature seeps through the pages of Tunisian periodicals despite restrictive and isolationist policies. In particular, a sustained interest in the figure and works of Maḥmūd Darwīsh is evident throughout and after the Tunis period. Although he did not contribute any of his own poetry or prose to the Tunisian periodicals surveyed in this article, Darwīsh is positioned as a transnational Arab poet whose works garnered increased interest and held widespread appeal across the board. Further buttressing Darwīsh's transnational persona, in 2007 he was invited back to Tunis as part of the annual Carthage Theatre Festival to receive the prestigious Tunisian literary prize, the November 7 Creativity Award, which was presented to him by the Tunisian president.⁴⁹ Overall, Palestinian literature as a topic and Palestinian writers as contributors received a voice in the Tunisian periodicals analyzed. However, the most perceptible impact of the Palestinian presence in Tunis reveals itself after the end of the Tunis period through the sustained and growing engagement with Palestinian literature in Tunisian periodicals.

al-adab al-ʿarabi al-mu-ʿāshir ... al-shakhsīyyah al-butūliyyah wa-l-ṣiḥhiyyah," *Al-Fikr*, 3 (1977): 248–259.

45 References to Arabic literature in this journal focus on literature from Egypt rather than the Levant.

46 ʿAbd al-Ḥamid ʿAbd al-Wāḥid, "Dirāsah taḥlīliyyah li-riwāyat "Rijāl fī al-shams" li-Ghassān Kanafānī," *Qaṣaṣ*, 79 (1988): 59–82.

47 Ḥusnī Sayyid Labīb, "Fīlasṭīniyyah," *Qaṣaṣ*, 101 (1993): 65–68.

48 Ni'mah Khālid, "al-Riwāyah al-ʿarabiyyah wa-l-ḥadīthah," *Qaṣaṣ*, 105/106 (1994): 102–115.

49 During the Carthage festival, Darwīsh was invited to recite his *Jidārīyyah* poem at the Municipal Theatre. The poem also inspired a play that was staged as part of the theatre programming.

The Tunisian periodicals surveyed reflect the reality of a restricted and isolated Palestinian literacy presence in Tunis, compounded by the diminished cultural capacities of the PLO. Quite telling is the fact that many of these periodicals revealed a delayed impact, showing an increased engagement with Palestinian literature after the departure of the PLO from Tunis in 1994. Literary figures who remained in Tunis had a more perceptible impact on the Tunisian literary scene, contributing original literary works to Tunisian periodicals, publishing studies on Tunisian literature, organizing cultural events related to Palestinian literature, and establishing publishing houses that publish the works of Tunisian, Palestinian and other Arab writers.

PLO Periodicals in Tunis

Tunisian periodicals provide only a partial view of the Palestinian literary sphere during this period. Although on a much smaller scale than during the preceding Beirut period, the PLO published and issued a limited number of periodicals during the Tunis period. Whereas sparse, short-lived, and relatively isolated, PLO periodicals published in Tunis reached outwards to mobilize solidarity with the Palestinian cause, and inwards to bridge the literary gaps between Palestinian literature 'inside' and 'outside' in exile.

Different from the Tunisian periodicals surveyed which show a clear focus on societal and cultural issues, the PLO's Tunis periodicals combined the political with the literary and cultural. The two Arabic-language periodicals edited directly by the PLO that we were able to access, *Al-Ṣadāqah* and *Bayādir*, will be mentioned briefly, before looking at the trilingual and transnationally edited *Lotus* magazine in more detail. *Al-Ṣadāqah*, a cultural quarterly, was founded in Tunis by Maḥmūd Abbās and Muḥammad Ismā'īl in 1986. Its subtitle refers to the Union of Palestinian Friendship with Other Peoples ("Majallah faṣliyyah yaṣḍuruhā ittiḥād jam'īyyāt al-ṣadāqati al-falaṣṭīniyyah ma'a al-shu'ūb") as its publisher, thus underlining the thematic connection to international solidarity with Palestine. *Al-Ṣadāqah* published limited literary content. The few literary articles were contributed mainly by Tunis-based literary figures such as Yaḥyā Yakhluf, with a focus on exploring literary and political themes, particularly the impact of the occupation and the *intifāḍah* on Palestinian literature.⁵⁰

50 Yaḥyā Yakhluf, "Kalimāt 'an al-intifāḍah wa-Samiḥ al-Qāsim wa-l-Asdiqā", *Al-Sadāqah*, 6 (1988): 55–60. Also: Ibrāhīm al-Jundī, "al-Thaqāfah al-filaṣṭīniyyah fi ḡill al-iḥṭilāl al-suhyunī", *Al-Sadāqah*, 2 (1987): 77–84.

Bayādir, on the other hand, was founded in 1990 as a quarterly magazine published by the PLO's cultural division in Tunis.⁵¹ *Bayādir*'s editor, 'Abdallah al-Ḥūrānī, was formerly the director of the PLO media department in Beirut, later founding the PLO's cultural department in Tunis in 1984. The editorial team included other Tunis-based literary figures: Aḥmad Daḥbūr, Ghassān Zaqtān, and Jamāl al-Afghānī. Despite its removed Tunis location, the stated mission of the periodical was to reconnect Palestinian writers in exile with those 'inside'.⁵² Hence, the editor notes, the first issue is dedicated to Palestinian writers, including those 'inside' such as Samīḥ al-Qāsim, Ismā'īl Shammūṭ and Fadwā Tūqān, as well as exiled writers in Tunis or elsewhere such as Aḥmad Daḥbūr.⁵³ In its first editorial, *Bayādir* engages with the role of the (Palestinian) intellectual and writer, particularly during and after the *intifāḍah*.⁵⁴ Articles in later issues include a sprinkling of literary contributions by the editors, Zaqtān and al-Afghānī and poetry by Darwīsh and Rashād Abū Shāwar.⁵⁵ In *Bayādir* we notice the names of two key Moroccan literary figures, Muḥammad Bennīs and Muḥammad Barrādah, who become regular contributors to the transnational Palestinian literary sphere.⁵⁶

Content analysis of the two Tunis-founded PLO periodicals reveals different missions. *Al-Ṣadāqah* looked outwards, holding a more leftist internationalist view that sought to buttress support for the Palestinian people across solidarity networks. *Bayādir*, on the other hand, looked inwards, in an attempt to heal the fractures of the scattered and fragmented Palestinian literary sphere by bridging the gaps between 'inside' and 'outside'.

Lotus, the trilingual periodical published by the Afro-Asian Writers Association (AAWA), also bridged these gaps, providing rare opportunities for Palestinian-Tunisian collaboration through its open contribution policies and editorial makeup. In comparison with *Al-Ṣadāqah* and *Bayādir*, *Lotus* covered a much more expansive literary geography in its reach, content, editorial

51 We accessed the first three issues of *Bayādir*. It was first published in Tunis in 1990, although its second issue from the same year notes a press in Amman as its place of publication yet keeping the Tunis address and returning to print it there in the following issue 3 (1993).

52 *Bayādir* 1 (1990): 8.

53 *Ibid.*, 9.

54 'Abdallah al-Ḥūrānī, "*Bayādir* 'alā ṭarīq al-mashrū' al-thaqāfi al-falastīnī," *Bayādir* 1 (1990): 11.

55 Maḥmūd Darwīsh, "Aḥad 'ashar kawkaban" *Bayādir*, 3 (1993): 15–24; Rashād Abū Shāwar, "Min sīrat al-kilāb," *Bayādir*, 3 (1993): 131–135.

56 Muḥammad Bennīs, "Dhubdhubāt taḥtamī bi-yaqzatihā," *Bayādir*, 2 (1990): 143–148; Muḥammad Barrādah, "Filastīn wa-l-su'āl al-thaqāfi al-'arabī," *Bayādir*, 2 (1990): 28–45.

makeup, and contributors, positioning itself beyond the boundaries of any single nation-state. *Lotus*, published under the auspices of the PLO in Tunis between 1983 and 1991, was the only literary periodical to move with the PLO from Beirut to Tunis. Its previous two locations, Cairo (1968–1978) and Beirut (1978–1982), saw the periodical at its prime production years and remain the cities that *Lotus* is most strongly associated with.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, *Lotus'* Tunis years are crucial in the context of this article, providing unique insights into the transnational Palestinian literary sphere during this period. In this sense, *Lotus* was an exception in its tricontinental reach, wide ranging audience, leftist internationalist outlook, and dedication to publishing Palestinian literature.

Following the assassination of *Lotus'* Egyptian editor, Yūsif al-Sibā'ī, in 1978, the periodical moved to Beirut where the PLO oversaw it, offering the editing team refuge and being involved in contributing and editing it through individual key Palestinian writers.⁵⁸ In Beirut, Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz took over as the editor-in-chief, bringing Maḥmūd Darwīsh on board as the editor of the Arabic edition.⁵⁹ Faiz continued in this role during the transition to Tunis, this time bringing to his side another Palestinian poet, Mu'īn Bsīsū as deputy editor-in-chief. According to reports and meeting minutes published in *Lotus*, Bsīsū was also part of the decision-making process that led to the relocation of the periodical to Tunis.⁶⁰ *Lotus* became one of the few avenues for Palestinian-Tunisian literary collaborations. This is apparent in *Lotus'* editorial makeup. During Bsīsū's and 'Abd al-Fattāh's editorships, the Tunisian writer and founder of the Tunisian Writers' Association, Mustafā al-Fārisī, became deputy editor-in-chief of *Lotus*.⁶¹ Furthermore, the international network of

57 According to Hala Halim, the bureau of the AAWA moved back to Cairo afterwards. See Hala Halim, "Lotus, the Afro-Asian Nexus, and Global South Comparatism," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 32. 3 (2012): 563–583, 566. For more in-depth discussions of *Lotus'* Cairo and Beirut years see Nida Ghouse, "Lotus Notes," *After Year Zero: Geographies of Collaboration* (2015), 110–118; Halim; Hala Halim, "Afro-Asian Third-Worldism into Global South: The Case of *Lotus* Journal," *Global South Studies: A Collective Publication with The Global South* (2017); Hala Halim, "Bandung at 65, and the Afro-Asian Movement's Later Years," *Ahram Online* (2020); Tareq Mehmood, "The Rise and Significance of *Lotus*," *Codesria* (2014).

58 *Lotus*, 52 (1983), 138.

59 Ghouse, 113–118. By this point, Darwīsh had already won the Lotus Prize for Literature in 1969. The two other Palestinians to receive this prize are Ghassān Kanafānī in 1975 (posthumously), and 'Abd al-Karīm al-Karmī (Abū Salmā) in 1978.

60 *Lotus*, 52 (1983), 139. The following issue of *Lotus* contains a formal note about the relocation, namely that "M. Beseisso reported that the editorial office of *Lotus* had been established in Tunis", as well as that they "agreed to send a message of thanks to the President of Tunisia for his generous assistance". See *Lotus*, 53 (1983), 107.

61 Al-Fārisī was also among the winners of the Lotus Prize in 1982/1983.

contributors to *Lotus*, including Palestinian, Maghrebi, and other leftist Arab literary figures, is unrivaled when compared to local national periodicals. In this sense, *Lotus* transcended isolated discussions of national literatures.

Given the Palestinian involvement as hosts and editors of *Lotus*, combined with the periodical's clearly stated leftist political position of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle, it is no surprise that *Lotus* saw Palestine as a cornerstone of its editorial mission. This plays out most concretely in the three special issues dedicated to Palestinian literature that *Lotus* published in the 1980s. The first special issue appeared in 1983. In the opening pages, Faiz and Bsīsū dedicate the issue to "the cause of Palestine and the tragedy of Lebanon."⁶² They assert that the consequences of the Lebanese civil war are of universal importance: "These dire happenings are a matter of intense concern not only for the Palestinians and the Lebanese, not even for the Arab peoples alone, but for the whole of mankind and the entire present day world."⁶³ To give the world a glimpse of the "horrific carnage in Beirut and South Lebanon,"⁶⁴ the editors include "some representative writings of Palestinian resistance literature produced during and before the blockade"⁶⁵ along with the reactions of prominent writers from around the world. The editors end their introduction to the issue by highlighting the homelessness of *Lotus* at that moment before it fully re-located to Tunis: "*Lotus* magazine has been deprived of its editorial offices in Beirut. Efforts are afoot to decide on a new venue for our editorial establishment."⁶⁶ During this transitional period, Faiz goes as far as to provide his home address in Lahore and the Headquarters of the Soviet Writers Union in Moscow as forwarding addresses for those interested in contributing to *Lotus*.⁶⁷

Bsīsū followed the opening statement with an editorial entitled "Afro-Asian Writers on Palestinian Barricades." In the editorial, Bsīsū explains that it was "on the national barricades of Beirut that arose the concept of creating this Palestinian special issue of *Lotus*."⁶⁸ He describes the contributors to the Palestine special issue as a "noble choir formed by the voices of men of letters of different Afro-Asian countries", and how these "voices of solidarity"⁶⁹ have come together like never before to join Palestine's national resistance.

62 Ibid., 4.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., 5.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Muin Besieso, "Afro-Asian Writers on Palestinian Barricades", *Lotus*, 52 (1983), 7.

69 Ibid., 6.

Ultimately, what Bsīsū seeks to illustrate through the special issue is how the “Palestinian motif has developed into one of the dominant themes inspiring progressive national writers and poets.”⁷⁰ The 1983 special issue featured contributions by several Palestinian and Tunisian literary figures, among them Samīḥ al-Qāsim, Darwīsh, Bsīsū and Tunisian writer Muṣṭafā al-Fārisī who had contributed the previously mentioned obituary for Bsīsū to *Al-Fikr* in 1985. It also includes personal memoirs of the Sabra and Shatila massacres written by Alys Faiz, and an opinion piece by the Moroccan writer Muḥammad Barrādah.

Bsīsū’s leading role in *Lotus* would not last long. He passed away in 1984, and it is to his memory that *Lotus* dedicated its second Palestine-related special issue.⁷¹ In his piece “In Memory of a Great Palestinian Poet and Fighter,”⁷² Muṣṭafā Haykal, the Egyptian-German historian and writer who edited the 1982 German translation of Bsīsū’s collected works,⁷³ calls him the “poetic messenger of the Palestinian people’s struggle and resistance.”⁷⁴ Darwīsh’s piece, “Mouin Beseisso is not Sitting in an Empty Chair,”⁷⁵ includes extracts republished from the original elegy that appeared in the Beirut-based PLO magazine *Filasṭīn al-thawrah*. The translated extracts highlight Bsīsū as an enigmatic Gazan, a “citizen without a country, a singer without a song ... He knew: this exile will lead him to a new one, another one.”⁷⁶ Yaḥyā Yakhluḥ in his farewell piece, visualizes the nature of Bsīsū’s poetry as the “debate between

70 Ibid., 7.

71 “In Memory of Mouin Beseisso 1930–1984” featured as a special file in *Lotus* 55 (1984). Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Yaḥyā Yakhluḥ and Muṣṭafā Haykal contributed prose elegies to this issue, along with the Soviet writers Sarvar Azimov, Anatoly Sofronov, and Alim Kshokov. Moustapha Haikal, “In Memory of a Great Palestinian Poet and Fighter,” *Lotus* 55 (1984): 157–159; Mahmoud Derwish, “Mouin Beseisso is not Sitting in an Empty Chair,” *Lotus* 55 (1984): 160; Sarvar Azimov, Anatoly Sofronov, and Alim Keshokov, “The Son of the Palestinian People,” *Lotus* 55 (1984): 161–165. Furthermore, the Writers’ Union of the German Democratic Republic included their condolences, followed by several short “Telegrams of Condolences”, ending with a piece by Alys Faiz on her meetings with Bsīsū in Moscow. Writers’ Union of the German Democratic Republic et al., “Condolences,” *Lotus* 55 (1984): 168. Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Subhas Mukherji, Reotilal Shah, and Duggal, “Telegrams of Condolences,” *Lotus*, 55 (1984): 169. Alys Faiz, “Beseisso: The Loss Will Never Lessen,” *Lotus*, 55 (1984): 170–173.

72 Mustafa Haikal, “In Memory of a Great Palestinian Poet and Fighter,” *Lotus*, 55 (1984): 157–159.

73 Muin Bessieso, *Palästina im Herzen: Gedichte (Palestine in the Heart: Poems)*, trans. Johanna Haikal, ed. Mustafa Haikal (Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1982).

74 Haikal, 159.

75 Mahmoud Derwish, “Mouin Beseisso Is Not Sitting in an Empty Chair,” *Lotus* 55 (1984): 160.

76 Ibid.

poetry and the Kalashnikov” that flares up when “Umm Ali dances in a Sabra tent and your voice raises the spirit, the symphony of life resounding in your words ...”⁷⁷ In this *Lotus* special issue, Bsīsū is held up as the quintessential revolutionary poet.

Between the two special issues, and less than a year after Bsīsū’s death, Faiz passes away leaving an editorial vacuum at *Lotus*. In the 1985 issue, Ziyād ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ, a Palestinian writer and journalist who moved with the PLO from Beirut to Tunis, is acknowledged as the deputy editor-in-chief. One year later, in 1986, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ officially becomes the editor-in-chief of *Lotus*.⁷⁸ According to reports, both Bashīr Bin Slāmāh and PLO Chairman Yāsir ‘Arafāt were involved in his appointment.⁷⁹

Lotus’ Palestinian focus strengthened and complicated its transnational aims. In 1988, *Lotus* publishes its third special issue with a focus on “Arab Palestinian Literature,”⁸⁰ with an opening editorial written by ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ dedicating the special issue to the First Palestinian Intifāḍah. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ confesses that the Palestinian “shatāt” (diaspora) did not make the mission of this special issue easy.⁸¹ He explains that the difficulties locating, reaching, and communicating with other Palestinians, both inside and outside, as well as securing and accessing the literary material proved to be a tremendous task. He also asks the reader to agree with him that it will be impossible for one issue to encompass all aspects of Palestinian literary production, even if the aim of the special issue was to draw a map of Palestinian creativity. Finally, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ stresses that contributions are meant to be examples rather than representatives of each genre.⁸² In many ways, the challenges that ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ faced back in 1988 persist today, resonating deeply with the struggles in gathering the fragments of Palestinian literature as part of the research undertaken in the PalREAD project.

Despite ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ’s editorial disclaimers, the 1988 special issue proves to be a remarkable achievement. The table of contents reads like a who’s who of Palestinian literature during that period. All the important literary figures are represented, including some names that are unfamiliar to us today, such as Maḥmūd al-Rimāwī, Ghassān ‘Abd al-Khāliq, Rasmī Abu ‘Alī, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ‘Aql, and Yūsif ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, among others. The issue also features contributions by

77 Yahya Yakhlef, “Farewell, Mouin!” *Lotus* 55 (1984): 166–167.

78 See *Lotus*, 56 (1985).

79 Secretariat, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Secretariat 1984 Moscow, 1–2 October 1984,” *Lotus*, 56 (1985): 168–170.

80 Editorial board, “‘Adad khāṣṣ bi-l-adab al-‘arabī al-filastīnī,” *Lotus*, 65/66 (1988): 167–313.

81 Editorial board, “Hādhā al-‘adad,” *Lotus* 65/66 (1988), 3.

82 *Ibid.*, 4.

important Palestinian literary critics such as Fakhri Šālih, Walid Abū Bakr, and Fayṣal Darrāj.

Lotus was also a reflection of the moment when the issue of Palestine was at the vanguard of revolutionary and liberation movements across the world. Given its unique nature, *Lotus* has received increasing attention in recent years, especially as part of academic projects focused on studying leftist solidarity, anticolonial, decolonial, and south-south transnational movements.⁸³ Although recent interest in the *Lotus* periodical has generated new research on its Afro-Asian nexus, internationalist trajectories and solidarities across the Global South, and its alternative history of postcolonial critique, the Tunis years and its relationship to Palestinian literature warrant further research and in-depth analysis.⁸⁴

Ultimately, the surveys of Tunisian and PLO periodicals reveal that Tunis did not, or more accurately could not, become the main literary hub for Palestinian literature. While an interest in Palestinian literature is perceptible in Tunisian periodicals, increasing after the PLO's departure in 1994, there is a clear preoccupation with the Palestinian literary sphere in the periodicals published by the PLO in Tunis, especially in their attempts to heal the wounds of division and tension between the 'inside' and 'outside' of Palestinian literature. *Lotus*, on the other hand, was an entirely different type of periodical in that it allowed writers to express the transnational reality of their lives, creating multi-lingual and cross-continental affiliations, relationships, and solidarities, both literary and political.

Parallel Literary Geographies

The literary and political infrastructure-in-exile that had been briefly consolidated and centralized in Beirut, was no longer possible in Tunis. Nonetheless, what the Tunis period brings into sharp focus is the reality of fragmentation and the resulting transnational modes of production and circulation that account for most of Palestinian literary history after 1948. More broadly, the Tunis years

83 For further information see "The Lotus Project", American University of Beirut, accessed September 9, 2022, <https://www.aub.edu.lb/fas/ampl/Pages/lotus.aspx>, and the "Afro-Asian Future Past Project", American University of Beirut, accessed September 9, 2022, <https://www.aub.edu.lb/aafp/Pages/default.aspx>, including the sub-project "The Literary Ghosts of Bandung Today", American University of Beirut, accessed September 9, 2022, <https://www.aub.edu.lb/aafp/Pages/research-streams.aspx?expand=1>.

84 See Halim, "Global South Comparatism".

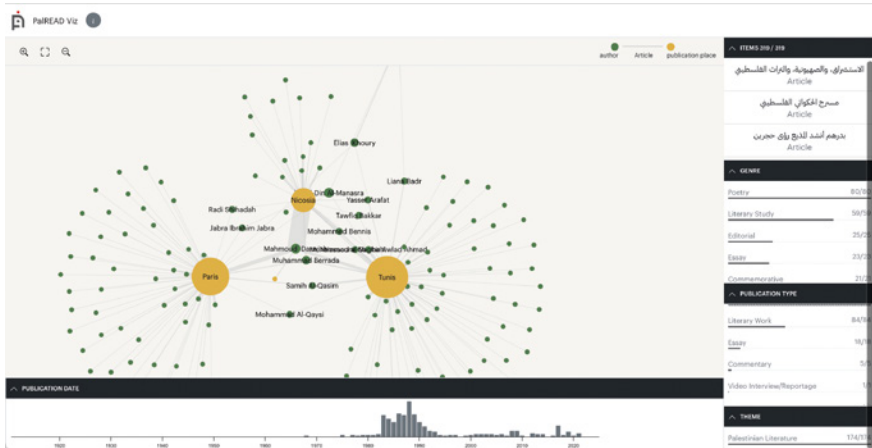


FIGURE 2 Screenshot of an interactive network visualization of contributors on Palestinian literature to periodicals published in Tunis, Paris, and Nicosia. Access link: <https://palread.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/view/83>

SOURCE: THE PALREAD PROJECT

were part of a larger transnational setting that saw Palestinian literary production and debate scattered across regional and international locales, from the Arab world to Cyprus and Europe. As such, our research question for this period transformed from one based on an assumption of the impact of physical presence on a literary sphere to a process of identifying parallel geographies and exploring transnational literary constellations. What the transnational literary networks show are continued interactions between Palestinian writers and their Tunisian and Maghrebi counterparts across these different spaces, be it in Tunis or Paris, as we will see. This observation is central to the description of Palestinian literature regarding its growing fragmentation, because despite the displacement and presence in different parts of the world, Palestinian writers connected with other Arab writers, and especially Maghrebi ones whom they had met in Beirut, Tunis, and Paris (see Figure 2 above).

These literary geographies witnessed a hub of Palestinian literary activity in parallel and connected to Tunis: Paris, with it the community of Palestinian, Maghrebi, and Arab writers who wrote and contributed from there, and Palestine itself. A few literary figures moved and lived in several literary spheres at once. While Paris, a literary sphere more open than in Tunis, served as a space where literary figures collaborated, debated, and published their works, Palestine as a literary space revealed a different version of restricted and continuously stunted literary activity. In this way, Paris was a parallel literary site

where Palestinian literature circulated, and where Mashriq/Maghreb networks and collaborations formed organically, parallel to the Tunis context which suffered from the tense political relations with the Tunisian government and the restrictive policies of a diminished PLO.⁸⁵ As for the Palestinian sphere, cities such as Jerusalem and Haifa stand out as islands of literary activity during this period.

The transnational geography of Palestinian literature during the Tunis period can be captured by tracing the literary itineraries and activities of figures such as Maḥmūd Darwīsh. Although Darwīsh maintained regular presence in Tunis during this period, he also lived in Paris, while simultaneously publishing his literary periodical, *al-Karmel*, from Nicosia. The city of Paris provided a more organic and dynamic space for Palestinian-Maghrebi and Palestinian-Arab collaboration. Paris did not only become the Palestinian portal to Europe, but also to North Africa, the Arab world at large, and, ironically, also the Palestinian 'inside'. Palestinian Paris-based periodicals reveal increased collaborations, interconnected networks of contributors, and interlinked content delivered through cultural news and re-published pieces from periodicals across the parallel literary geographies that constituted this period. In this way, Paris became a bridge to Tunis, Nicosia, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Darwīsh's collaboration with the Moroccan poet Muḥammad Bennīs is a testament to the networks developed through, but which also had a reach beyond, Paris. Given that Darwīsh's literary activities and initiatives spanned most of the literary geographies of this period, it is no surprise that his journal *Al-Karmel* established itself not only as an important address for Palestinian literature but also as a central interlocutor in the most significant Arabic literary debates at the time.

Darwīsh's Paris years are known as his most prolific, where he reached poetic maturity and produced his most important work. It is also the city where he became exposed to wider literary networks, from French Marxists, literary theorists and philosophers to Maghrebi writers and artists, as well as other Arab and Palestinian literary figures living in exile in Paris. Darwīsh's Parisian networks included key intellectual figures such as ʿIlīās Ṣanbār, Farouk Mardam-Bey and Subḥī Ḥādīdī whom he met through the Paris offices of the Institute of Palestine Studies (IPS) and its French-language quarterly *Revue d'études palestiniennes* (REP). Darwīsh also became part of the literary network

85 A further literary locale parallel to the Tunis period was London. Literary figures affiliated with the Palestinian Revolution, like Nūrī al-Jarraḥ and Samuel Shimon, relocated to London and edited periodicals, the former *Al-Kātibah* and the latter *Kikā*. London also served as the place of publication for *Funūn ʿarabiyyah*, which was edited by Jabrā ʾIbrahīm Jabrā, and Aṣwāt.

around the PLO-supported, Paris-based, Arabic-language weekly *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ* which was edited by an important Palestinian literary figure in Paris, Bilāl Ḥassan.

Initially established in Beirut in 1963, IPS began issuing its French-language quarterly REP in 1981 (it had launched its English-language periodical, the *Journal of Palestine Studies* in 1971). REP's production was re-located to Paris after 1982, and lasted until 2008 when the periodical was suspended.⁸⁶ In Paris, REP was spearheaded and edited by Iliās Ṣanbār, an important Palestinian literary figure himself who made concerted efforts to translate and publish Darwīsh's poetry in France. REP had a clear focus on Palestine but managed to engage pan-Arab, French and other international topics and issues. A survey of REP's tables of contents reveals a diverse group of Arab contributors in addition to French contributors, including prominent Maghrebi literary figures.⁸⁷ The periodical consolidated the work of the previous decade of the 1970s which saw vibrant cultural and literary activity, but also the tragic assassinations of two PLO Paris representatives, both of whom were great proponents of Palestinian literature and arts: Maḥmūd al-Hamsharī, assassinated in 1972, and ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Qalaq, assassinated in 1978.⁸⁸

Although closely affiliated with networks around REP, Darwīsh contributed extensively to the Arabic-language weekly *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*.⁸⁹ The weekly newspaper covered a wide range of Arab-related political and cultural topics, with a perceptible focus on Palestinian issues. What stands out about *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ* is that it had an international network of correspondents, reporting from Tunis, Cairo, Rabat, London, Washington, Bagdad, Stockholm, Sanaa, as well as the Gulf countries and Jordan. In other words, it represents a

86 For further information, see the "History" section of the website of the Institute of Palestine Studies, accessed September 9, 2022, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/about/history>.

87 We were unfortunately not able to access to the full issues of REP. IPS plans to digitize the contents of REP which will make it widely accessible for future research. Examples for contributors from the North African network are Muḥammad Barrādah who contributed four reviews in issues 20 (1986); 58 (1996); 87 (2003); and 98 (2006); Ṭāhir Bin Jallūn with an essay in issue 22 (1987); and Bashīr al-Bakr as the Tunisia correspondent for *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ* with two articles in issues 28 (1988) and 53 (1994). REP also includes an article by ʿAbd al-Kabīr Khaṭībī in issue 1 (1981).

88 *Lotus* reviews the posthumously published book by Qalaq. See Alys Faiz, "L'affiche palestinienne (The Palestine Poster): A Collection by Ezzedine Kalak," *Lotus*, 50 (1981): 126–128. The book was titled "L'affiche palestinienne (The Palestine Poster): A Collection by Ezzedine Kalak" and published bi-lingually in French and Arabic by Le Sycamore in Paris.

89 For Darwīsh's contributions to *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ* see Maḥmūd Darwīsh, *Maqālāt "Al-Yawm al-Sābiʿ"*, ed. Ḥassan Khaḍr (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirāsāt al-Filasṭīniyyah, 2019).

transnational network of Palestinian literary figures who remained connected despite fragmentation. *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ* further illustrates how periodicals published at different places were linked through their editors, writers, and reports on each other's latest issues. The periodical networks of the Tunis period are traceable through *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*'s regularly appearing announcements and coverage of new issues of other periodicals, including the Tunis-based *Lotus*⁹⁰ and *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*,⁹¹ and the Nicosia-based Palestinian periodicals *Al-Karmel*⁹² and *Shuʿūn Filasṭīniyyah*,⁹³ among others. The periodical network is further consolidated through the re-printing of articles from sister periodicals in *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*.⁹⁴

Its Tunis correspondent was Bashīr al-Bakr, a Syrian-Palestinian poet, writer, and journalist who had previously worked in PLO media outlets.⁹⁵ Al-Bakr reported on literary events in Tunis such as the famous Carthage Theatre Festival,⁹⁶ book fairs,⁹⁷ Tunisian cultural policies,⁹⁸ and interviewed Palestinian literary figures, including Samīḥ al-Qāsim.⁹⁹ In addition to its correspondents, *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ* featured a wide base of Arab contributors regardless of their location. In this aspect, we see a significant number of Maghrebi literary figures present on the pages of the periodical, especially Moroccan writers ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Khaṭībī,¹⁰⁰ Ṭāhir Bin Jallūn, Muḥammad Bennīs, and Muḥammad

90 *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issue 22.02.1988.

91 *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issues 12.06.1988 and 14.03.1988.

92 *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issues 09.01.1989 and 15.02.1988.

93 *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issue 11.12.1985.

94 For example, re-printing material that originally appeared in the Nicosia-based *Shuʿūn Filasṭīniyyah* on 16.03.1987 in *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issue 20.04.1987. See Editorial board, "Naṣṣ "Wathīqat Tunis", *Shuʿūn Filasṭīniyyah* 170/171 (1987), 159–161.

95 "Bayna al-ʿamal al-suḥufī al-yawmī wa-kitābat al-shiʿr yamḏī al-shāʿir Bashīr al-Bakr ayyamahū", Syria TV, accessed September 9, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzvi5jxLSmk>.

96 *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issues 07.12.1987; 17.08.1987; and 20.11.1987.

97 *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issue 02.05.1988.

98 *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issue 01.02.1988.

99 Bashīr al-Bakr, "Samīḥ al-Qāsim ʿan intifāḍat al-arḍ al-muḥtallah: ḥajar nawawī..mutaʿajjij al-ruʿūs," *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, February 1, 1988.

100 For a critical engagement with this writer in the post-1967 context see Idriss Jebari, "The Other Khatibi: Envisaging Arab Intellectuals after the End of Grand Narratives," *Middle East critique*, 30, no. 2 (2021): 149–168.

Barrādah,¹⁰¹ as well as the Tunisian novelists Ḥabīb al-Sālimī and Ḥassūnah al-Musbāḥī.¹⁰²

Through outlets such as REP and *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, the Tunis/Paris networks overlapped on many occasions. One example is the Tunis-based correspondent of *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, al-Bakr, who was also a contributor to *Revue d'études palestiniennes*.¹⁰³ Further overlaps can be seen through the initiatives of the Tunis-based ALECSO, where Ritā ʿAwaḍ worked, which organized international events such as the one dedicated to Palestinian literature held in Paris in 1984. The event offered prominent guests such as Edward Saʿīd, Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Muḥammad Bennis, and ʿAbdallah al-Ḥūrānī a space to meet. Al-Laʿbī, a well-known Moroccan poet and journalist, published a contribution to this event in the Haifa-based literary periodical *Al-Jadīd*, thereby adding another axis that connected the Palestinian 'inside' to debates 'outside' in exile.¹⁰⁴

It is the city of Paris that allows for a local illustration of how the literary relationship between Maghrebi and Palestinian writers unfolded. Darwīsh symbolises these connections on the personal level. He benefited enormously from the numerous literary circles in Paris, establishing new networks and venues for collaboration that lasted well beyond the Paris years.¹⁰⁵ The city saw

101 See a report on a literary meeting in Marrakesh published in *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, issue 06.03.1983; Muḥammad Barrādah, "Taṭbīk al-nāqid li-manhajāt masʿalah nisbiyyah," *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, July 20, 1987. Also: a study on the reception of Darwīsh's text in relation to the Palestinian Revolution by Moroccan contributor Si Muḥammad al-Bilbāl, "Ḥawla naṣṣ Maḥmūd Darwīsh: ʿArafāt wa-l-baḥr," *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, November 26, 1984; a review of a book by al-Laʿbī by the Iraqi contributor Yaḥyā Ḥasab Allah, "Qirāʿah fi "Majnūn al-amal" li-ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Laʿbī: hā anta ḥurriyyan yā Sindbad al-qālī' al-muẓlimah," *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, January 11, 1988; and a review of a collection of poetry by Bennis reviewed by Ilyās Ḥannā Ilyās, "Muḥammad Bennis fi dīwān jadīd: ʿabaq hunā ... wa hunāk mawtā," *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, May 16, 1988.

102 Al-Musbāḥī contributed an interview with Jabrā and Alain Robbe-Gillet which he conducted together with Selmi al-Sālimī, see Ḥassūnah al-Musbāḥī, "Ḥiwār sākhīn fi Baghdad: bayna Jabrā Ibrahim Jabrā wa-Alain Robbe-Gillet," *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ*, January 16, 1989.

103 See his analysis of the reception of the Palestinian Revolution in other Arab countries Basheer al-Baker, "Le soulèvement palestinien, un premier bilan," *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, 28 (1988).

104 "Nadwat al-taʿrīf bi al-adab al-falaṣṭīnī li-Alecso," *Al-Jadīd* 9 (1984): 10–14. The report also mentions ʿAlī al-Khalīlī and Hanān ʿAshrāwī as examples of writers who were denied participation in the event by the Israeli authorities. *Ibid.*, 11. Abd al-Laṭīf al-Laʿbī, "Muqtarahāt li-l-baḥth wa-l-ʿamal," *Al-Jadīd* 9 (1984): 14–18.

105 Beyond literature, several important artistic collaborations emerge from Darwīsh's Paris period. The Algerian artist Rashīd Qurayshī, who designed covers for *Al-Karmel*, for example issue 15 (1985), previously created large-scale etchings of Darwīsh's poetry as part of the *Une nation en exil* (A Nation in Exile) project. Qurayshī's etchings, along with

the flocking of some of the giants of Arabic poetry in the 1980s. The Moroccan poet al-La'bī, known for his foundational periodical *Souffles-Anfas* which ran between 1966–1971 and was one of the first North African periodicals to link Maghrebi culture and politics to the Palestinian question, was based in Paris from 1985.¹⁰⁶ The Syrian poet Adūnīs is another example, moving from Beirut to Paris in 1985, and relaunching his famous periodical *Mawāqif* in exile.

Darwīsh's noteworthy collaboration with the prominent Moroccan poet, Muḥammad Bennis, is representative of the reach of the Paris literary networks in facilitating further Maghrebi-Palestinian initiatives beyond France. After initially establishing *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah al-maghribiyyah* (*Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah* for short) in the city Mohammedia in 1974, Bennis moved it to Casablanca shortly thereafter where it continued to be published until 1984.¹⁰⁷ The periodical managed to attract widespread Arab literary interest, from both the Maghreb and the Mashriq. Many of the names associated with the Beirut literary scene, including Palestinian literary figures, can also be traced as contributors to *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah* from the late 1970s.¹⁰⁸ These include Salīm Barakāt, Ḥaydar Ḥaydar, Sarkūn Būluṣ, Sa'dī Yūsuf, and Liyānah Badr, to name a few.¹⁰⁹

Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah's engagement with Palestinian literature features many literary texts ranging from short story and novel extracts to poetry. 'Izz

calligraphy by artists Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī and Kamāl Ibrāhīm, and texts by Ilyās Ṣanbār and al-Khaṭībī, were published in book form in 2009 by Farouk Mardam-Bey's French publishing house Actes Sud. See: Mahmoud Darwich and Rachid Korāichi, *Une nation en exil: hymnes gravés* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2010). The book also includes texts and translations by Sanbār, Khatībī, and al-La'bī.

106 For further information see Olivia C. Harrison, *Transcolonial Maghreb: Imagining Palestine in the Era of Decolonization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015); Olivia C. Harrison, "Cross-Colonial Poetics: "Souffles-Anfas" and the Figure of Palestine," *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 128, no. 2 (2013): 353–369.

107 The journal was founded by Moroccan literary figures Bennis, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Shāwī, and Muṣṭafā al-Masnāwī. See Hafez; Labībah Shukrī, "'Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah': al-a'dād al-kāmilah ba'da 35 sanah 'alā al-ighlāq," *Al-'Arabī al-jadīd*, December 19, 2019. Bennis also founded the Moroccan Maison de la Poésie in Casablanca in 1996. Dirk Naguschweski, "Mohammed Bennis [Morocco]," *International Literature Festival Berlin*, accessed September 9, 2022, <https://literaturfestival.com/en/authors/mohammed-bennis>.

108 In the opening editorial, the editors emphasize the support for Arab nationalism and the unity of Maghreb and Mashriq, see Editorial board, "Muqaddamah li-l-qārī," *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*, 1 (1974): 3–5, 4.

109 See Salīm Barakāt, "al-Barārī," *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*, 9 (1978): 125–138; Ḥaydar Ḥaydar, "al-Tamawwujāt," *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*, 15 (1980): 24–49; Sarkūn Būluṣ, "Qaṣā'id," *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*, 16 (1980): 102–107; Liyānah Badr, "al-Nahār—Qīṣṣah," *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*, 28 (1983): 94–101.

al-Dīn al-Manāṣarah contributed a seven-page-long poem engaging with the theme of return which he wrote in 1978 while in Bulgaria.¹¹⁰ It also includes interviews with non-Palestinian writers affiliated with the Palestinian cause, such as a conversation with Iliās Khūrī on the overlaps between creative writing and political activism.¹¹¹ In 1984, the rich and versatile literary platform that *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah* managed to foster was abruptly cut short. The periodical was forced to cease publication by official order of the Minister of the Interior when the bread riots broke out across North Africa.¹¹² Bennis, and the periodical's editors and contributors, regarded this as a flagrant violation of freedom of expression, and resolved to defy the ban by finding alternative routes for publishing.

In an effort led by Darwīsh, *Al-Karmel*, the then Nicosia-based literary periodical edited by Darwīsh, took on the publication of a joint issue with *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*. *Al-Karmel*, in its 11th issue of 1984, featured a short note stating that it had to publish the originally collaborative issue on its own, because its partner was forced to cease publication two months prior to the planned release date.¹¹³ Thus, *Al-Karmel's* 11th issue becomes the very last issue of *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*. This final issue of *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah* is dedicated to Moroccan culture and features contributions by key Moroccan intellectual and literary figures, including Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, al-Khaṭībī, al-Laʿbī, and Bennis himself.¹¹⁴ Among other contributions, it also features selected translations of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze.¹¹⁵ The French Marxist historian, Maxime Rodinson, a regular contributor to REP, writes an essay on the importance of Palestinian “Why Palestine?” (“Limādḥā

110 ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Manāṣarah, “Lā tazāl al-ashjār ... ḥattā aʿūd,” *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*, 12 (1979): 106–112.

111 Ilyās Khūrī, “Lā namluk ghayr al-suʿāl,” *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*, 8 (1977): 8–27.

112 ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Mīnāwī, “Majallat “Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah” al-maghribiyyah fī 8 mujalladāt,” *Al-Sharq al-awsaṭ*, January 6, 2020. Al-Mīnāwī quotes Bennis on this matter from *Al-Karmel*, issue 11 (1984).

113 *Al-Karmel*, 11 (1984), 111:

“هذا الملف الخاص عن المسألة الثقافية في المغرب، تم إنجازها نتيجة التعاون بين مجلة “الكرمل” ومجلة “الثقافة الجديدة” المغربية، ولكن توقف الزميلة المغربية عن الصدور جعل “الكرمل” تنفرد بنشر أهم موضوعات الملف.”

114 Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, “Masār kātib,” *Al-Karmel* 11 (1984): 152–169; Muḥammad Bennis and Aḥmad al-Radwānī, “al-Qirāʿah wa-l-qurrāʾ fī al-Maghrib,” *Al-Karmel* 11 (1984): 238–271; ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Khaṭībī, “al-Bāhith al-nāqid,” *Al-Karmel* 11 (1984): 194–197; ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Laʿbī, “Makānān li-l-qirāʿah,” *Al-Karmel* 11 (1984): 204–220.

115 Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Freud, Marx,” *Al-Karmel* 11 (1984): 299–310; Gilles Deleuze, “al-ʿUḥmah al-mutawaḥḥidah,” *Al-Karmel* 11 (1984): 289–291.

Filasṭīn?")¹¹⁶ which also appears as part of the morphed *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah/Al-Karmel*. Beyond the important collaboration between *Al-Karmel* and *Al-Thaqāfah al-jadīdah*, Bennis, whether as an editor, contributor, or through his literary texts, continued to play an important connecting role, especially in the context of Palestinian and Maghrebi literature. In 2017, Bennis was awarded the Medal of Culture, Creation and Art by the Palestinian president Maḥmūd Abbās.¹¹⁷

The commitment to Maghrebi literature and culture continues to be present in *Al-Karmel* beyond the joint 11th issue. In July 1987, *Al-Karmel* released its 25th issue titled "al-Adab al-maghribī al-ḥadīth" (modern Moroccan literature) including several contributions exploring the encounters between Maghrebi and Mashriqi literature.¹¹⁸ In his editorial, Maḥmūd Darwīsh references the 11th issue, affirming a sense of continuity and ongoing collaboration.¹¹⁹ The special issue features the work of Muḥammad Barrādah, a regular contributor to *Al-Karmel*, and an important bridging figure between the Maghreb and Mashriqi periodical and literary scenes.¹²⁰ The issue also comprises contributions by Moroccan authors who are less known such as an article relating to Maghrebi theatre by Ḥasan al-Manīī and a short story by Idrīs al-Khūrī.¹²¹ The publication of this special issue is covered by *Al-Yawm al-sābi'* in the same month, revealing a dynamic web of interconnections between North Africa, Paris, and the transnational Palestinian periodicals.¹²²

Following Maḥmūd Darwīsh's literary itineraries and activities leads us to yet another parallel literary locale: Nicosia, where *Al-Karmel* moved its operations after the PLO left Beirut for Tunis in 1982. Nicosia was much closer to Beirut than Tunis, and cultural initiatives such as publishing houses and periodicals were easier to re-establish as commercial entities in Cyprus. Despite the fact that Darwīsh, its editor-in-chief, did not move to Cyprus but lived in between Paris and Tunis, *Al-Karmel* offers insights into another parallel literary

116 Maxime Rodinson, "Limādhā Filasṭīn?," *Al-Karmel* 11 (1984): 276–283.

117 Safaa Kasraoui, "Moroccan Poet Mohammed Bennis Receives High Palestinian Honor," *Morocco World News*, March 17, 2017.

118 *Al-Karmel*, 25 (1987).

119 Maḥmūd Darwīsh, "al-Adab al-maghribī: 'adad khāṣṣ," *Al-Karmel* 25 (1987): 4.

120 Muḥammad Barrādah, "al-Khiṭāb al-thaqāfi wa-l-takhayyuli, aw al-taghyir al-ṭubawī," *Al-Karmel* 25 (1987): 12–36.

121 Ḥasan al-Manīī and Idrīs al-Khūrī, "al-Masraḥ al-maghribī bayna al-naṣṣ wa-l-'arḍ," *Al-Karmel* 25 (1987): 148–156.

122 The special issue is reviewed by *Al-Yawm al-sābi'*, November 2, 1987.

sphere.¹²³ *Al-Karmel* published its first issue from Nicosia in the first quarter of 1983. The new location is clearly marked in the first sentence of Darwīsh's opening editorial: "From Nicosia, this time, our voices come."¹²⁴ Nicosia, in this case, appears to function as a safe commercial base for the production and printing of *Al-Karmel*. This technical and logistical presence did not lead to the emergence of a Palestinian literary scene in Nicosia, at least not one as rich, varied, and vibrant as the Paris literary locale that Darwīsh was immersed in. Combined with a survey of the periodical's contents and contributors, it becomes clear that *Al-Karmel* was able to transcend its location of publication and to position itself as a transnational Palestinian and pan-Arab literary publication. In fact, *Al-Karmel* stands out during this period as one of the most important Palestinian periodicals to survive and emerge from the wreckage of Beirut to establish itself as a central interlocutor within intellectual and literary debates in the Arab world. While *Lotus* celebrated Palestinian literature as part of an agenda to promote Palestine as an internationally celebrated revolutionary cause, it is ultimately *Al-Karmel* that best captures and reflects the transnational literary reach, constellations, and networks of Palestinian literature during the Tunis period.

The transnational and pan-Arab positionality is reflected in *Al-Karmel's* tables of contents, network of contributors, the expansive topics it covered, as well as its special issues, examples of which were discussed in the previous section. A survey of the tables of contents showcases a wide range of Arab contributors, including an overall high number of Maghrebi writers from the 1980s onwards, coinciding with Darwīsh's Tunis/Paris period. The list of Maghrebi contributors to *Al-Karmel* is truly impressive. We find the names of the regular contributors present, such as al-La'bi, Bennis, Barrādah, and al-Khaṭībi.¹²⁵ Other key Moroccan literary figures also make an appearance on the pages of *Al-Karmel*, including Tāhir Bin Jallūn (in translation), 'Abd al-Fattāh Kilitū, and Muḥammad al-Ṭūbi.¹²⁶ The Tunisian contributors include novelists such

123 Though Darwīsh did not himself relocate, several Palestinian literary figures did live in Nicosia following the cultural initiatives they were involved in.

124 Maḥmūd Darwīsh, "Ḥulm musayyaj bi-l-madā al-maftūh," *Al-Karmel* 7 (1983): 4–8.

125 'Moroccan contributors: Abd al-Laṭīf al-La'bi, "al-Fikr al-'arabi wa-l-taḥaddī al-filastīnī," *Al-Karmel* 7 (1983): 262–276; Muḥammad Bennis, "Qaṣā'id," *Al-Karmel* 34 (1989): 96–102; Muḥammad Barrādah, "Thawrat al-dhākīrah wa-shahādāt al-ma'īsh," *Al-Karmel* 19/20 (1986): 291–294; 'Abd al-Kabīr al-Khaṭībi, "al-Mustawayāt al-muta'addidah li-l-kitābah," *Al-Karmel* 17 (1985): 112–114.

126 Tāhir Bin Jallūn, "Shams tubzigh li-tasammīhim," *Al-Karmel* 13 (1984): 174–179; 'Abd al-Fattāh Kilitū, "Bayna al-riwāyah wa-l-sard al-klāsīkī," *Al-Karmel* 10 (1983): 316–318; Muḥammad al-Ṭūbi, "al-Taghrībah al-sābi'ah," *Al-Karmel* 31 (1989): 97–99.

as Ḥassūnah al-Muṣbāhī and Ḥabīb al-Sālīmī, and poets such as Muḥammad al-Saghīr Awlād Aḥmad and Ādam Faṭḥī.¹²⁷ Other central voices from the Tunisian literary scene, such as Maḥmūd al-Mas‘adī, the founder of *Al-Ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyyah*, and the literary critic Tawfīq Bakkār, are also present on the pages of *Al-Karmel*.¹²⁸

Al-Karmel saw regular contributions from the Paris circles, including writers Subḥī Ḥadīdī and Ilyās Sanbār.¹²⁹ Tunis-based Palestinian writers, such as Yakhluf, al-Manāṣarah, Abū Shāwar, Daḥbūr, and Dānyāl published their literary works in *Al-Karmel* during the Tunis period. *Al-Karmel* was all-inclusive when it came to Palestinian contributions, whether from Tunis, other exiles, or from the ‘inside’ Palestinian literary locales like Haifa and Jerusalem, and later, the West Bank and Gaza after *Al-Karmel*’s relocation to Ramallah in 1994.¹³⁰

The contributions to *Al-Karmel* show that the periodical did not exclusively focus on Palestinian literature but was engaged in discussing the most pertinent topics in Arabic literature at the time. The network of its contributors positions the periodical as a point of connection for all the scattered Palestinian literary locales in exile and ‘inside’, as well as a bridge bringing together the Maghreb and the Mashriq. In this regard, *Al-Karmel* can be described as the most important literary address for Palestinian literature during this period, as well as being an important lynchpin periodical to the most significant literary discussions taking place on the level of modern Arabic literature at the time. As an illustration of constellations of literary figures within and across the different literary locales discussed in this article, see the network visualization in Figure 2. An alternative entry point to the articles published across the literary geographies in this period, Figure 3 is an interactive map whose features allow users to explore the titles of articles published in each of the cities covered in this article.

While periodicals edited in Tunis, Paris, and Nicosia engaged with Palestine as a literary locale, Palestinian periodicals published within historical Palestine

127 Ḥassūnah al-Muṣbāhī, “al-Layl al-nā‘im,” *Al-Karmel* 26 (1987): 104–105; Ḥabīb al-Sālīmī, “Imra‘at l-sā‘āt al-arba‘ah,” *Al-Karmel* 16 (1985): 88–91; Muḥammad al-Saghīr Awlād Aḥmad, “A‘rifu khātimatī jayyidan,” *Al-Karmel* 21/22 (1986): 235–236; Ādam Faṭḥī, “Kull shay’,” *Al-Karmel* 23 (1987): 120–122.

128 Maḥmūd al-Mas‘adī, “Karāmat al-wujūd,” *Al-Karmel* 40/41 (1990): 276–282; Tawfīq Bakkār, “Taḥlil naṣṣ,” *Al-Karmel* 10 (1983): 308–315.

129 Subḥī Ḥadīdī, “Qirā‘at Afrīqiyah min khilāla Foucault,” *Al-Karmel* 42 (1991): 165–173; Subḥī Ḥadīdī, “Rumūz filastīniyyah ... laysat bi-ḥajah li-l-baḥṭh ‘an huwwiyyah,” *Al-Karmel* 55/56 (1998): 362–391.

130 Imīl Ḥabībī, “al-‘Araq dassās, wa-l-muḥtadd ‘arīq,” *Al-Karmel*, 27 (1988), 13–18; Samīḥ al-Qāsīm, “Ahādḥā huwa al-makān?,” *Al-Karmel*, 22/21 (1986), 237–247.

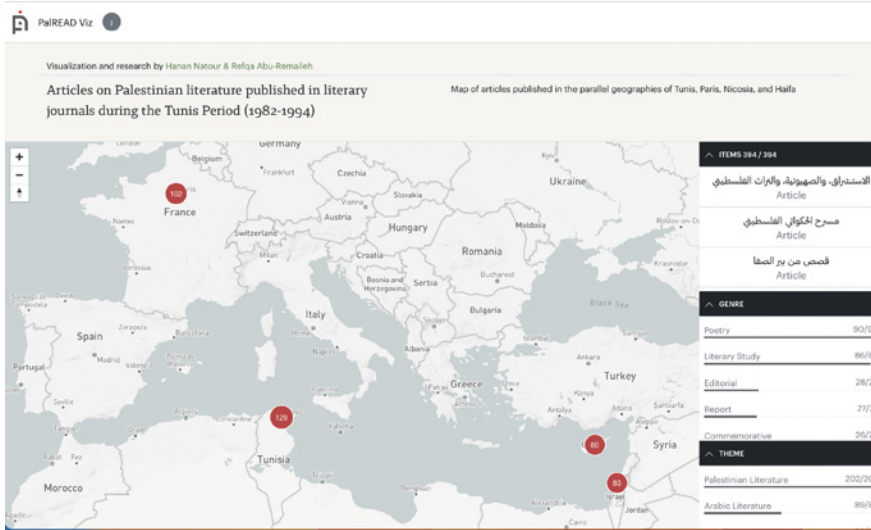


FIGURE 3 Screenshot of an interactive map showing articles published on Palestinian literature or by Palestinian literary figures in the literary locales of Paris, Tunis, Nicosia, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Access link: <https://palread.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/view/84>

COURTESY OF THE PALREAD PROJECT

partook in the literary discourse and provided voices and reflections from the ‘inside’. The occupation effectively meant that for most Palestinians ‘inside’ communication across historic Palestine, let alone with other Arab countries and the rest of the world, became extremely difficult, and in many cases impossible or outlawed. Despite witnessing the era of Israeli occupation, contributors from the ‘inside’ still reached outwards, offering a perspective from within and contributing to the transnational debates at the same time. The literary lives and struggles of Palestinian literary figures ‘inside’ are reflected in the periodicals of the two semi-isolated and culturally stranded cities of Jerusalem and Haifa.

The three Jerusalem periodicals that stand out during the 1980s are *Al-Bayādir*, *Al-Kātib*, and *Al-Fajr al-adabī*.¹³¹ Through these three periodicals we can trace the emergence of terminology and categories that developed specifically to define and discuss Palestinian literature ‘inside’. The use of terms such as “al-dākhil” (inside) and “al-khārij” (outside, in exile), “adab maḥallī” (local literature), “al-adab al-filastīnī taḥt al-iḥtilāl” (Palestinian literature

131 Despite the difficulty of locating full issues of periodicals in the occupied Palestinian territories during this period, we were able to access and survey the tables of contents of three Jerusalem literary periodicals, closely reading opening editorials, where possible.

under occupation), and “adab al-intifāḍah” (Intifada literature) all emerge from the pages of these periodicals.

Al-Bayādir was founded in 1976 as a monthly magazine edited by Jacques Khazmo. *Al-Bayādir* was the first literary-cultural periodical to be published inside the occupied territories. From the very first issue of *Al-Bayādir* in March 1976, the table of contents, masthead, and editorial information reveal the language of the ‘inside’. For example, the annual subscription information lists prices for “al-dākhl” (inside) and “al-khārij” (outside). The table of contents points to the category of local literature in reference to “al-masrah al-maḥallī” (local theatre) and “al-thaqāfah al-maḥalliyya” (local culture).¹³² In its April 1977 issue, we see mention of “al-qiṣṣah al-qasīrah al-maḥalliyya” (the local short story).¹³³ Later issues introduce the category of literature under occupation with a study exploring the features of “al-shi’r al-filasṭīnī taḥt al-iḥtilāl” (Palestinian poetry under occupation).¹³⁴

An important feature of *Al-Bayādir* is the section entitled “Shahriyyāt al-Bayādir” (*Al-Bayādir* monthly) which is a repository and record for literary events, allowing unique insight into Jerusalem as a Palestinian literary locale and counterpart to what was happening in Tunis and Paris during the same period. Although most of the contributors were Palestinians from the ‘inside’ (occupied territories as well as the areas of 1948), in *Al-Bayādir*’s July 1977 issue, we notice in the masthead the addition of the artist Kamāl Bullāṭah as an editor and correspondent based in Washington D.C.¹³⁵ Later issues begin to include a small scattering of Palestinian writers from the ‘outside’, as well as Arab authors, primarily those known to be linked, directly or indirectly, to the Palestinian Revolution, such as the Iraqi poet Sa’ādī Yūsif.¹³⁶

In November 1979, the first issue of *Al-Kātib* appears, edited by As’ad al-As’ad who was formerly listed as a contributor to and editor in *Al-Bayādir*.¹³⁷ In the opening editorial, al-As’ad states that the mission of the periodical is to enrich the Palestinian literary and cultural movement by: embracing the intellectual and humanist issues of “al-jamāhīr al-‘arabiyyah al-maḥaliyyah” (the local Arab audiences); linking local literature to exilic Palestinian literature, and to Arab, socialist, and progressive culture and thought more broadly.¹³⁸ Particularly,

132 *Al-Bayādir* 1 (1976): 1.

133 “Nadwat al-shahr: Ḥawla al-qiṣṣah al-Qasīrah al-maḥalliyya,” *Al-Bayādir* 4 (1977): 38–46.

134 ‘Alī al-Khalīlī, “Malāmīḥ min al-shi’r al-filasṭīnī taḥt al-iḥtilāl,” *Al-Bayādir* 10 (1977): 2–12.

135 *Al-Bayādir* 7 (1977): 1.

136 See *Al-Bayādir* 6 (1979).

137 As of *Al-Bayādir* 11 (1977), the names of the editorial committee are no longer regularly included in the masthead.

138 *Ibid.*, 2.

Al-Kātib sought to appeal to “al-muthaqqafīn al-maḥaliyyīn” (local intellectuals), including students, laborers, and women.¹³⁹ No doubt, *Al-Kātib* features some of the same contributors as *Al-Bayādir*, but with time the former leans further towards covering labor and union issues, meetings of various communist parties around the world, social and political topics, in addition to publishing short stories, poetry, and literary studies. *Al-Kātib* published several special issues, including one on Algerian culture in 1980 (issue 9/10), and one dedicated to Palestinian literature under occupation in 1987 (issue 89).

On the pages of ‘inside’ periodicals in Jerusalem and Haifa we can trace the impact of the Palestinian North Africa foray through the publication of special issues dedicated to Maghrebi literature and an increased network of Maghrebi contributors. But it is the emphasis on the “maḥallī”, the local, that clearly dominates in the face of discrimination, occupation, isolation, and censorship. Hurdles to the freedom of movement, communication, expression, and exchange are reflected in these periodicals, particularly in their inability to fully cover and discuss impact of momentous events, such as the *intifāḍah*, on Palestinian literature. *Al-Fajr al-adabī*, a monthly periodical and literary supplement of the daily newspaper *Al-Fajr*, was founded by Ḥannā Sanyūrah and ‘Alī al-Khalīlī in 1980. The stated aim of the periodical was to widely disseminate “al-adab al-maḥallī” (local literature); develop a progressive Palestinian literary movement in the occupied territories that can transcend its difficult context; support local literary figures and stay in sync with the literary movements in the Arab and wider world.

In the editorial of the March 1982 issue, “Hāmish fī marḥalat al-istithnā” (Margin on a state of exception), Palestinians are described as living under siege and oppression during a period that is referred to as a phase of exception and occupation.¹⁴⁰ Despite these extenuating circumstances, *Al-Fajr al-adabī* commits itself to bringing about the meeting, through its printed pages, of Palestinians inside and in exile, as well as other Arabs and peoples struggling against exceptional circumstances, in the hope of contributing to a culture of progress and peace worldwide.¹⁴¹ In spite of the communication hurdles, *Al-Fajr al-adabī* includes contributions from Palestinian writers outside of Palestine, such as those in Tunis, as well as writers from the Maghrebi and Parisian literary circles. For example, besides several poems published by

139 Ibid.

140 “Hāmish fī marḥalat al-istithnā,” *Al-Fajr al-adabī* 18 (1982): 7.

141 Ibid.

Darwīsh,¹⁴² it also comprises interviews with Daḥbūr,¹⁴³ and literary studies by al-Laʿbī and Barrādah, one of which focuses on movements within contemporary Tunisian literature.¹⁴⁴

In contrast to Paris, Nicosia, and Jerusalem, Haifa—another important Palestinian literary hub and the home of Imīl Ḥabībī and *Al-Jadīd* journal—was an island of cultural activities in a disconnected context. Palestinian literary life in Haifa was severely limited in scope because of the difficult conditions Palestinians inside Israel experienced, ranging from a military occupation to second-class citizenship in a state that did not allow them equal rights. Nonetheless, *Al-Jadīd* stands out as an important Palestinian periodical that opens a window onto Palestinian literary life in Haifa. *Al-Jadīd* was first published in 1951 as a literary supplement of the Arabic-language Communist Party newspaper *Al-Ittiḥād*, and as of 1953 as an independent literary periodical. It was founded and edited by the lawyer Ḥannā Naqqārah, with the support of Imīl Ḥabībī who was the editor-in-chief of *Al-Ittiḥād* and played a crucial role in the establishment and editing of *Al-Jadīd*.¹⁴⁵

As a Palestinian Arabic-language periodical published within Israel, *Al-Jadīd*, as well as many of its editors and contributors, was effectively cut off from the rest of the Arab world due to the Israeli military occupation that lasted until 1966. Thereafter, the second-class Israeli citizenship that was reluctantly granted to Palestinians inside Israel became a citizenship which effectively and automatically barred them from entry into other Arab countries. One of the few avenues of contact with other Arab literary figures was via Communist party activities that took place abroad. An example is the first meeting of the Tunisian novelist Ḥassūnah al-Muṣbāḥī and Imīl Ḥabībī during the East-West Festival, which was held in Berlin 1989.¹⁴⁶

Given the conditions in which *Al-Jadīd* was published as a local Haifa literary periodical in a semi-sealed environment, contributions from other

142 *Al-Fajr al-adabī* issues 21 (1982); 51 (1984); and 69 (1989).

143 *Al-Fajr al-adabī* issues 38 (1983); and 65 (1986).

144 *Al-Fajr al-adabī* issues 51 (1984); 69 (1989); and 65 (1986).

145 For a close reading of one of *Al-Jadīd*'s tables of content, see Hana Morgenstern, "An Archive of Literary Reconstruction after the Palestinian Nakba," *Middle East Research and Information Project* 291 (Summer 2019), <https://merip.org/2019/09/an-archive-of-literary-reconstruction-after-the-palestinian-nakba/>.

146 Ḥassūnah al-Muṣbāḥī, *Rasā'il ilā asdiqā' ba'dīn* (Tunis: Dar āfaq li-l-nashr bi-Tūnis, 2013), 27. Al-Muṣbāḥī later interviewed Ḥabībī in Tangier in 1994, as he describes in Ḥassūnah al-Muṣbāḥī, "Ḥiwār ma'a al-kātib al-filasṭīnī al-kabīr Imīl Ḥabībī: lā yajib 'alā al-insān an yundim 'alā shay' fi'līhi 'an qanā'ah," in *al-Dukhūl fī-ḥālat al-ghaymah: ḥiwarāt Ḥassūnah al-Muṣbāḥī* (Tunis: Dar saḥar li-l-nashr, 2005).

Arab writers, as well as exiled Palestinian writers, not to mention Palestinian writers under occupation, were logistically difficult and uncommon. As a periodical, *Al-Jadīd* mostly comprised of primary literary texts, particularly poetry and short stories, contributed by local authors, as well as literary studies, and reports on local cultural events. In the issues we had access to from the Tunis period, we were able to trace contributions featuring Muʿīn Bsīsū on the fourth anniversary of his death,¹⁴⁷ as well as poetry by Maḥmūd Darwīsh and Aḥmad Daḥbūr,¹⁴⁸ all of whom had Tunis connections. Interestingly, however, a link to the Paris-based *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ* was also traced in a 1988 issue of *Al-Jadīd*. The periodical re-printed an interview originally published in *Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ* conducted by Riyāḍ Baydas with *Al-Jadīd*'s editor at the time, Salīm Jubrān.¹⁴⁹ This points to the irony of the situation of Palestinians inside Israel—it may have been easier to access and collaborate with Paris-based periodicals than with those published in other Arab countries or in the occupied territories.

Tunis-based Palestinian literary figures contributed mostly poetry to *Al-Jadīd*. Even more telling than the network of contributors to demonstrate *Al-Jadīd*'s reach is the section of collected cultural notes at the end of each issue. This is where we find reports on literary events such as the previously mentioned 1984 ALECSO event in Paris, as well as information on new publications or reprints. The locations from which reports are included cover many of the places explored in this article, and many more—from Beirut to Nicosia, but also Berlin, Sanaa, Damascus, and London, as well as 'inside' locations such as Taybeh and Tel Aviv. In fact, *Al-Jadīd* includes a literary awareness of the wider Maghreb, for example by publishing a supplement devoted to the Algerian novel.¹⁵⁰ One of the few mentions of the other 'inside', the occupied Palestinian territories, is the publication of a bibliographic list of books on the *intifāḍah*, among which is a Moroccan publication, in a 1990 issue of *Al-Jadīd*.¹⁵¹

Although Ḥabībī's Haifa-based periodical *Mashārif*, founded in 1995, falls outside the Tunis period, it nonetheless provides a window into the wider networks he cultivated before, during, and after the Tunis period. Ḥabībī

147 Muʿīn Bsīsū, "al-Maʿrakah," *Al-Jadīd*, 37, no. 2 (1988).

148 Maḥmūd Darwīsh, "Hudnah maʿa al-mughūl amāma ghābat al-sindiyān," *Al-Jadīd*, 40, no. 1 (1991); Aḥmad Daḥbūr, "al-Kusūr 'ashriyyah," *Al-Jadīd* 3 (1991): 57–58. Other examples of authors contributing poetry are Bennīs and al-Manāsharah in *Al-Jadīd* 5/6 (1990): 120 and 125.

149 Riyāḍ Baydas, "Ṣaḥīfat "Al-Yawm al-sābiʿ" al-filasṭīniyyah taltaqī al-shāʿir Salīm Jibrān," *Al-Jadīd*, 37, 1 (1988), 26–31. The original interview was titled "Maʿrakat al-baqāʾ ḥawwalat al-shuʿarāʾ ilā siyāsiyyīn".

150 *Al-Jadīd* issues 6 (1988).

151 *Al-Jadīd* issues 11/12 (1990).

passed away in May 1996, a year after establishing *Mashārif*, and in 1997, a special issue was published in commemoration. The list of contributors to this special issue gives insight into Ḥabībī's Arab literary networks. Among the studies, elegies, and obituaries published in this special issue, it is easy to spot the now-familiar names of Maghrebi literary figures: Ḥassūnah al-Musbāḥī, Muḥammad Bennīs, Ṭāhir Bin Jallūn, and Muḥammad al-Tūbi. A closer look at the table of contents reveals links to other Arab writers such as Raḍwā 'Āshūr, Sabry Hafez, In'ām al-Jundī, Karīm Muruwwah; diaspora Palestinian writers such as Māhir al-Sharīf, Muḥammad Dakrūb, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yāghī, as well as local Palestinian literary figures such as Muḥammad Ghanāyim and Basilius Bāwārdī.¹⁵² Although Ḥabībī may have been exceptional within the Haifa context for his far-reaching networks, the special *Mashārif* issue gives insight into the links that were possible for Palestinians in Israel despite writing and publishing in conditions that isolated them from their Palestinian and Arab literary peers.

Conclusion

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the city of Tunis was the site of a Palestinian literary congregation of sorts, albeit one already fatigued and restricted after emerging from the wreckage of the Lebanese civil war. The Tunis period, however, remains obscure, hardly making an appearance in Palestinian literary histories. In probing a neglected period and place, this article undertook a multilayered exploration to uncover and re-map the contours of Palestinian literary history during the Tunis period both within and outside of Tunisia. Through an interdisciplinary approach combining literary history, periodical studies, and Digital Humanities, the article drew the main features of a period that typified the deterritorialization and decentralization of a Palestinian literature-in-exile. Surveying the literary periodicals of this period provided a crucial gateway to understanding the literary circulations, debates, and networks that spanned regional and international geographies. The literary trajectories and activities of key figures during this period presented another portal through which we traced networks of collaboration and discovered important literary locales. The process of engaging with the complexities of a literature operating outside the confinements of the nation state without

152 *Mashārif* 16 (1997).

centralized national institutions and infrastructure highlighted the challenges but also the possibilities of writing transnational literary histories.

The question that initiated the investigation was whether the Palestinian physical presence in Tunis had an impact on the local Tunisian and the wider Maghrebi literary scenes. In the process of answering this question, a complex and transnational web of cities emerged. In understanding the aftermath of the exodus from Beirut and its resulting fragmentation, Tunis serves as a first stop on the transnational itinerary of Palestinian literary history during that period. As a literary locale, Tunis allowed us to reveal that despite political restrictions and the geographical distance from historic Palestine, literary production, debate, and circulation not only continued, but were re-invented in a transnational sense expressed throughout the many periodicals surveyed—whether based and edited in Tunis by Tunisians or the PLO, or in Paris, Nicosia, Haifa or Jerusalem. The Tunisian periodicals surveyed reflect the reality of a restricted and isolated Palestinian literary presence in Tunis, compounded by the diminished cultural capacities of the PLO. Quite telling is the fact that many of these periodicals revealed a ‘delayed impact’, showing an increased engagement with Palestinian literature after the departure of the PLO from Tunis in 1994. Literary figures who remained in Tunis had a more perceptible impact on the Tunisian literary scene, contributing original literary works to Tunisian periodicals, publishing studies on Tunisian literature, organizing cultural events related to Palestinian literature, and establishing publishing houses that publish the works of Tunisian, Palestinian, and other Arab writers.

The multiple forms of exile that mark this period are underlined by efforts to reconnect the ‘inside’ with the ‘outside’. Access to the literary ‘inside’ proved more difficult and challenging than tracing the transnational literary networks in exile. Nonetheless, the two cities of Jerusalem and Haifa, each stranded in its own way, either under occupation or under oppressive conditions of isolation, emerge as two lonely local literary capitals of sorts. In Jerusalem, we saw the literary ‘inside’ trying to reach out to the ‘outside’, but at the same time working to buttress a local literary scene despite extenuating conditions. In Haifa, another local literary scene was struggling to keep afloat. Although the Communist party networks and publications provided an outlet to the ‘outside’, the links to the other ‘inside’, to Jerusalem, were difficult to trace. In this sense, not only was it difficult to reconnect the Palestinian ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, but it was an even bigger challenge to connect the two ‘insides’ of Jerusalem and Haifa. Tunis and Paris as parallel spaces allowed for a connection of these two poles from afar, through the meeting of writers and editors from both spaces and through their interactions with writers from other Arab countries, particularly from the Maghreb.

The transnational net cast to capture Palestinian literature during the Tunis period shed light on a relatively neglected period of Palestinian literary history. Palestinian literature's North African networks brought the Maghreb and Mashriq closer together. While the physical presence in Tunis yielded a delayed impact in the Tunisian literary context, the impact is much more perceptible on the pages of Palestinian periodicals, both 'outside' and 'inside', with increased Maghrebi contributions and content. Despite the intense fragmentation of Palestinian literary production during this period, literary periodicals provide a crucial window onto a thriving Palestinian literary scene and an overall growing engagement with Palestinian literary topics and themes that cross the borders of nation-states to exist in a truly transnational sphere.