

A MAMLUK HOUSEHOLD IN JAFFA: THE CASE OF ABU NABBUT (1805–1819)

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Abstract | After the death of Dahir al-ʿUmar in 1775, a local Galilean leader, Ahmad Paşa al-Jazzar, a manumitted Bosnian *mamluk* was nominated *wali* (governor) of the *wilaya* (province) of Sidon/Acre. He set up a *mamluk* household that governed various districts in Palestine. Abu Nabbut, a manumitted *mamluk* of Jazzar, became the *mutasallim* (governor of a district) of Jaffa in 1805, under Sulayman Paşa, who was also a manumitted *mamluk* of Jazzar. Abu Nabbut's *mamluk* household in Jaffa governed Jaffa and Palestine's southern sub-districts. Abu Nabbut's monumental construction efforts in Jaffa between 1805 and 1817 were intended to make Jaffa look different from other localities in the southern *sanjaq*, and give it the semblance of a capital similar to Acre, the capital of the *wilaya*.

THE FOUNDATION OF A NEW MAMLUK HOUSEHOLD

After a long period of ups and downs, sieges and occupations that started in the 1770s, in 1805 Jaffa's new *mutasallim* (deputy governor; Ott. Turk. *mütesellim*) Muhammad Agha Abu Nabbut, inaugurated a new chapter of stability and prosperity in this city's history. Strategically, by annexing Palestine's southern *sanjaqs* including Jaffa to the *wilaya* of Sidon, the *walis* of Acre stopped regarding Jaffa as a possible threat¹ but rather as Acre's southern shield against possible incursions from Egypt. Thus the *walis* of Acre did not hesitate to strengthen Jaffa's defenses and walls (see Figure 1). This was the atmosphere in which Abu Nabbut started his career in Jaffa in 1805.

Very little is known about the life of Muhammad Agha Abu Nabbut before his appointment to Jaffa, except that he was a non-Muslim converted slave of Ahmad al-Jazzar's house-

hold. When manumitted by his master, he rose to be one of the senior *mamluks* in al-Jazzar's household in Acre. He was equal in rank to Sulayman Paşa, another *mamluk* of al-Jazzar, who upon al-Jazzar's death became the *wali* of *wilayat* Sidon.² Before his appointment to Jaffa, Abu Nabbut served his patron as *amin al-jumruk* (controller of customs) of Acre from 1790, and later as the *mutasallim* of Damascus.³ The former post provided him with practical knowledge and direct contact with the flourishing Mediterranean trade. The latter, although it only lasted a few months, provided him with governmental experience in a *wilaya* known for its complicated politics. Thus, on the eve of his appointment to Jaffa, Abu Nabbut was already familiar with the administrative and fiscal aspects of provincial government.

His letter of appointment as *mutasallim* of

1 The annexation of Jaffa to the *wilaya* of Sidon started in 1803. Prior to that time, it was part of the *wilaya* of Damascus. See *sijill* of Jaffa, vol. 2, p. 130, 11 Muharram 1218 AH/ 3 May 1803.

2 Ibrahim al-'Ura, *Tarikh wilayat Sulayman Paşa al-'adil* [History of the Rule of Sulayman Paşa the Just] (Sayda: Matba'at Dayr al-Mukhallis, 1936), pp. 85, 253–254 [in Arabic].

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 276, 353; Haydar Ahmad al-Shihabi, *Tarikh al-Amir Haydar al-Shihabi* [History of Amir Haydar al-Shihabi] (Beirut: Dar Nazir Abbud, 1993), pp. 100, 112 [in Arabic].



Figure 1: Jaffa in the 1860s.

Source: Louis Vignes, "Vue Panoramique de Jaffa (Porte de Jérusalem)," 1860, Photograph, Département Estampes et photographie, Bibliothèque nationale de France, PET FOL-EO-483 (2), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8458208x> (accessed 14 September 2020).

the *wali* of Sidon in Jaffa put all spheres of governance under his control in Palestine's southern *sanjaqs*: he became the *mutasallim* of the *liwa* (*sanjaq*) of Gaza, *amin al-jumruk* of Jaffa, and *mutawalli al-waqf al-sharif* (administrator of a special *waqf* of the Sultan). In other words, he was entrusted with supreme control over all governmental, administrative, financial, economic and military spheres in the Jaffa region and the *sanjaq* of Gaza. This meant that he was responsible for all kinds of tax collection in the *sanjaq's* four towns: Jaffa, Ramla, Lydda, and Gaza including the *jizya* and the *jumruk* (customs). In addition, he oversaw tax collection from the rural areas under his jurisdiction. He was in charge of security in this area, as well as day-to-day governance.⁴ To fulfill these huge

tasks, Abu Nabbut appointed salaried deputies (*mutasallims*) of his own in the main towns/districts,⁵ who remitted their tax collections in full only to him. In Jaffa itself, Abu Nabbut had a deputy who collected taxes on his behalf. Abu Nabbut's military role was very important in many respects: given that the *sanjaq* of Gaza bordered Bedouin tribal lands, he invested considerable efforts in keeping the area peaceful. To ensure the security and defense of the port of Jaffa, the Empire maintained around a hundred Janissaries in Jaffa castle, who were paid out of the Jaffa treasury.

By amalgamating these administrative, fiscal, and military positions, Abu Nabbut had a complete monopoly over the collection of taxes from the whole region and played a major role

4 For the full text of his appointment, see *sijill* of Jaffa, vol. 2, p. 192, 8 Shawwal 1805 AH / 30 December 1805.

5 *Sijill* of Jaffa, vol. 4, p. 138, Rabi' al-Awwal, 1233 AH / 24 January 1818.

in maintaining the security of the southern border of Palestine. Since he was the *amin al-jumruk* in Jaffa, he controlled the town's trade as well as other aspects of its daily life. With this combination of power, Abu Nabbut had almost free rein in the *sanjaq*. During Abu Nabbut's rule, the sources make no reference to any serious uprisings or violations of general security in the *sanjaq*. The strong local militia, and the *mamluk* household he established played an important role in maintaining law and order.

The available information about Abu Nabbut's *mamluk* household and retinue is based on information in the *sijill* records. These can be divided into two main groups: a non-Muslim group that had been converted to Islam (*mutasharrif bi-l-Islam* or *al-muhtadi*), and his manumitted slaves (*ma'tuq*). These *mamluks* had Georgian, Albanian, Bosnian, and Egyptian backgrounds. Locals from Acre and Damascus also served in Abu Nabbut's army and were referred to as followers (*atba*). In addition, there was a group of black slaves serving only in his private household. Local followers who joined him from Acre and Damascus and took part in the Jaffa administration belonged mostly to Christian families who had converted to Islam, such as the Bidaras.⁶ Egyptian *mamluks*, were originally owned by an Egyptian *mamluk* household who entered the service of Abu Nabbut after the death of their original master.⁷ While the administration of Jaffa was comprised of local Arabs during the brief rule of the local leader Muhammad Abu Maraq (1800–1803), and his military forces included locals and *maghribi* mercenaries, this changed dramatically under Abu Nabbut. The *mamluk* regime introduced to northern Palestine by al-Jazzar was expanded by Abu Nabbut to include Palestine's southern *sanjaqs* as well.

Since he himself was a *mamluk* and responsible for the governance and tax collection of a large area, Abu Nabbut's policy was to control the area through his own *mamluk* household. For that purpose, he married Khadija, a daughter of Kinj Ahmad, a *mamluk* and member of al-Jazzar's administration, who served as *amin*

al-jumruk in Jaffa in 1803 and as *mutasallim* in Damascus in 1804.⁸ Abu Nabbut entrusted to his manumitted slaves the highest administrative and military posts within the *sanjaq*, and forged ties with them through marriage. For example, Husayn Agha, a manumitted slave (*ma'tuq*) of Abu Nabbut, who served as his *mutasallim* in Lydda, married 'A'isha, Abu Nabbut's sister-in-law.⁹ Upon the death of Husayn Agha, his widow married 'Uthman Agha, Abu Nabbut's *ma'tuq*, who served as his treasurer and *mutasallim*, and also became his brother-in-law.¹⁰ The *sijill* provides more examples of similar marriages between Abu Nabbut's *ma'tuqs* and his manumitted slave women. Such marriages were common practice in established *mamluk* households to create and cement factional cohesion within a *mamluk* household.¹¹

To strengthen his guardianship over his *mamluk* household, Abu Nabbut bought them private homes. These homes were given as gifts (*hiba*) to help his men establish their own families. Some *mamluks* were given shops or other assets to be rented out to enable them have sources of income. In this respect, he treated his *mamluks* as he did his own family members. For example, after allotting some of his assets to his wife, son, and daughter, he engaged in the same practice with his *mamluks*. In other words, Abu Nabbut invested much of his economic resources to enable his own family members and his *mamluk* household to have access to sources of local wealth. By doing so and by encouraging intermarriage among his *mamluks*, Abu Nabbut consolidated his image as a "father" who took care of all his family members.

The honorary titles attributed to Abu Nabbut's *mamluk* household show that they represented the highest social rank in Jaffa, suggesting that the establishment of this household changed the social fabric of the town dramat-

8 *Sijill*, vol. 3, 15 Dhu l-Hijja 1229 / 28 November 1814; vol. 4, p. 226, 1 Jumada l-Ula 1234 / 26 February 1819.

9 *Sijill*, vol. 3, p. 254, 15 Dhu l-Hijja 1229 / 28 November 1814.

10 *Sijill*, vol. 3, p. 174, 15 Dhu l-Qa'da 1229 / 29 October 1814; vol. 3, p. 117, 15 Dhu l-Qa'da 1227 / 20 November 1812; vol. 10, p. 245, 15 Muharram 1251 / 13 May 1835.

11 Jane Hathaway, "Marriage Alliances among the Military Households of Ottoman Egypt," *Annales Islamologiques* 29 (1995), pp. 144–148; Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 69–70.

6 *Sijill*, vol. 4, p. 226, 1 Jumada l-Ula 1234 / 24 February 1819.

7 *Sijill*, vol. 3, p. 164, 1 Jumada l-Thaniya 1229 / 21 May 1814. The example used here is al-Alfi, an Egyptian *mamluk* household.

ically. Up to then, the local social elite, as well as high-ranking officialdom, were made up of local elements. Abu Nabbut introduced a new stratum of non-local *mamluks* to Jaffa society, who also governed the southern parts of Palestine.

Abu Nabbut's guardianship of his *mamluks* and their offspring extended to all members of his retinue. Frequently, upon the death of one of his *mamluks* or a member of his retinue, Abu Nabbut became the legal guardian of the deceased's minor children and the superintendent of their estates. In short, as patron of a *mamluk* household, and a product of the *mamluk* system, Abu Nabbut treated his *ma'tuqs* like members of his own family whose loyalty was the foundation of his power.

To achieve full control over the *sanjaq*, Abu Nabbut set up a large local militia comprised of more than five hundred *mamluks*, soldiers and followers (*atba*).¹² This was done by making full use of his post, which entitled him to maintain a private force paid from the *sanjaq's* treasury.¹³ Abu Nabbut's splendid *mamluk* retinue in Jaffa was perceived by his contemporaries as an attempt to imitate the lifestyle of his late patron, al-Jazzar.¹⁴ Al-'Ura, a chronicler and employee in the *wali's* office in Acre, estimated that the expenses of Abu Nabbut's kitchen were more than twice those of the *wali*.¹⁵ Abu Nabbut's lifestyle as a *vezir* was also reflected in the governor's mansion he built (the *saray*), with its separate private and public quarters, which imitated the fort-like homes of old local families.¹⁶ This *saray* had a separate harem, with a separate budget that was overseen by a *harem aghasi*.¹⁷

12 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, *Ajaib al-athar fi l-tarajim wa-l-akhbar* [The Marvelous Chronicles: Biographies and Events] (Beirut: Dar al-Faris, 1970), vol. 3, p. 604 [in Arabic]. Hathaway argues that the term *tabi* is a generic term for clientage. See Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlıs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 22–24.

13 al-'Ura, *Tarih wilayat Sulayman Paşa*, p. 362.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 330–331.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 362.

16 For a detailed discussion of the architectural characteristics of Abu Nabbut's *saray*, see Ruba Kana'an, "Waqf, Architecture, and Political Self-Fashioning: The Construction of Jaffa by Muhammad Aga Abu Nabbut," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001), pp. 120–140.

17 al-'Ura, *Tarih wilayat Sulayman Paşa*, pp. 361–363.

NEW MONUMENTAL BUILDINGS

In addition to the major changes in the social fabric of the town, Abu Nabbut radically altered the Jaffa skyline. During his relatively long reign, the town and the area enjoyed a continuous period of political stability and security. These proved essential for the development of Jaffa, and especially its commerce. Aware of the strategic and economic importance of the town, Abu Nabbut invested large sums and made considerable efforts in the early phases of his rule to make it look more like an urban center and a regional capital rivaling Acre. The large sources of wealth at his disposal allowed him to work in this direction. Through large public *waqf* endowments, over a period of eight years (1809–1816) he built and renovated the city walls, the Grand Mosque (see Figure 2), a *madrassa*, a public library (*kutuphane*), four *sabils*, two *khans*, two *suqs*, 65 shops, and several stores and houses.¹⁸

The first step in his plan was to buy homes for his *mamluk* household. After accumulating large assets, Abu Nabbut purchased a plot of land outside the walls and dedicated it a *waqf* to be used as an Islamic cemetery so he could displace the existing Islamic cemetery located within the city limits.¹⁹

In 1809, Abu Nabbut finished building a large religious complex, which included a Grand Mosque and a *sabil*.²⁰ In comparison with other public buildings in Jaffa, it was the largest and the most highly decorated in town. This spate of monumental building was intended to make Jaffa look different from other towns in the southern *sanjaq*, and to give it the semblance of a capital. The Grand Mosque (al-Mahmudi) was built on the ruins of an old mosque, also known as the Grand Mosque, which had been built in 1756²¹ but was heavily damaged during the French invasion. In his *waqfiyya*

18 The information on Abu Nabbut's construction activities is culled from his *waqf* register. See *al-Sabil al-mubarak*, the Library of al-Najah University, Nablus, manuscript number 234.

19 *Sijill*, vol. 2, p. 230, 1 Dhu l-Qa'da 1220 / 20 February 1806.

20 *Sijill*, vol. 2, pp. 282–83, 15–19 Dhu l-Hijja 1223 / 1–5 January 1809.

21 Amnon Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century: Patterns of Governance and Administration* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), pp. 154–155.



Figure 2: Jaffa's Grand Mosque. Photo by Samuel Giler.

(endowment deed), Abu Nabbut states that this mosque “had been demolished, was narrow, ruined, had fallen into oblivion, and had no water or furniture.”²² Abu Nabbut enlarged the old mosque, supplied it with running water, furnished it with carpets, and made provisions for management and maintenance staff. He also built and endowed new revenue-bearing properties to supplement the *waqf* income. Abu Nabbut’s reconstruction of the Grand Mosque of Jaffa transformed the building from a simple mosque into an elaborate edifice with a double-domed prayer hall, a courtyard surrounded by *riwaqs*, a *madrassa*, and two integrated *sabils*.

Along with the mosque’s reconstruction, Abu Nabbut endowed two *sabils* located within the city walls in 1809. The first is described as a well with running water located within the

courtyard of the Grand Mosque.²³ The second was known as the Mahmudi Sabil (or *al-juwani*, see Figure 3)²⁴ and was set into a wall within the city gates.²⁵ The Mahmudi Sabil was built in the form of an arched recess. Water was supplied to passers-by by spigots that let

23 Mahmoud Yazbak, “The Islamic Waqf in Yaffa and the Urban Space: From the Ottoman State to the State of Israel,” *Makan 2* (2010), pp. 23–46.

24 *Sijill*, vol. 3, p. 72, 1 Muharram 1224 / 16 February 1809. The document lists the accounts of the income from the *waqf* endowed to the *sabil* for the year 1823/1808/1809.

25 The *sabil* was mentioned and described by travelers. See for example, James Silk Buckingham, *Travels in Palestine through the Countries of Bashan and Gilead, East of the River Jordan* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1822), p. 228; see also Moshe Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae (CIAP)*, vol. 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 71–78.

22 Manuscript *al-Sabil al-mubarak*, p. 24.



Figure 3: The Mahmudi Sabil. Photo by Samuel Giler.

water flow into marble basins at the foot of the receding arch.²⁶

In his efforts to facilitate the movement of travelers and camel caravans to and from Jaffa, Abu Nabbut built another two *sabils* in 1815. The first, known as Sabil al-Shifa' (see Figure 4), was located in a separate building seven kilometers east of the city proper, on the road to Jerusalem. It comprised a room, two *iwans*, and a water-supply system fed from a running-water well. The second *sabil* was built in Sarafand, a village on the main road connecting Jaffa with Ramla, for the usage of "travelers on the main road." Abu Nabbut put the heads of the village in charge of the

maintenance of this *sabil*. For this purpose he deducted 200 *qurush* from the annual taxes collected in this village²⁷ and dedicated the revenues of a nearby *bayyara* (orchard) to the Sarafand *sabil*.

In his efforts to make Jaffa a capital comparable in status to Acre, Abu Nabbut reestablished a *madrasa* as part of the Grand Mosque complex. A *madrasa* had been built within the Grand Mosque as early as the mid-18th century, but was demolished during the French occupation. In the refurbished *madrasa*, Abu Nabbut founded a library (*kutuphane*), the first ever in Jaffa, to serve students, scholars, and the general public for the "acquisition of knowl-

26 See Ruba Kana'an, "Two Ottoman Sabils in Jaffa (c. 1810–1815): An Architectural and Epigraphic Analysis," *Levant* 33 (2001), pp. 189–204.

27 *Sijill*, vol. 4, p. 176, 19 Jumada I-Ula 1233 / 27 March 1818.



Figure 4: Sabil al-Shifa'. Photo by Samuel Giler.

edge.”²⁸ He earmarked large *waqf* revenues for the maintenance of the library and the salaries of “those who pursue the acquisition of knowledge (*ilm*), the teaching of law, and the teaching and the instruction of Qur’an, and were qualified for that purpose.”²⁹ In addition, the revenue from the endowment covered the salaries of thirteen non-resident students according to their level of education,³⁰ and he also set up stipends for an unspecified number of non-local students who lived in the *madrassa*’s dormitories (*al-mujawirun fi l-hujurat*) throughout their studies.

Managed by a librarian (*amin al-kutubhane*), the library collection comprised around 700 manuscripts.³¹ Almost all the books were in Arabic, with a few in Ottoman-Turkish, and they covered such topics as religion, Qur’an, tradition (*hadith*), theology (*tawhid*), exegeses (*tafsir*), jurisprudence (*hanafi* and *shafi’i fiqh*), legal opinions (*fatawa*), grammar (*nahw*), philology (*lugha*), rhetoric (*balagha*), poetry (*nazm*), and history (*ta’rikh*). In addition, there were a few books on logic (*mantiq*) and medicine.

The *waqf* endowments for the stipends, salaries, and maintenance of the library and the *madrassa* make it clear that Abu Nabbut had a special interest in running these institutions successfully. He endowed seven water mills in the region of Jaffa.³² The *waqfiyya*

indicates that Abu Nabbut bought the demolished mills from the leaders of the *Jamma’in nahiya* (sub-district),³³ and renovated them. The revenues of the seven mills were distributed as follows: the income from five mills was allocated to stipends for the teachers and students at the *madrassa* and the library, and the income from the other two was to be given directly to the administrator (*mutwalli*) of this *waqf* in return for the administration, guarding, and upkeep of the mills. Because the mills “are located in a difficult area (far from Jaffa),” Abu Nabbut appointed “whomever is the governor of the *wilaya* [of Sidon] at any time because they cannot be protected except by him”³⁴ for the administration of this *waqf*.

The Grand Mosque, the *sabils*, the *madrassa*, and the library required large budgets and salaried staff to maintain and run them efficiently. Abu Nabbut endowed them with substantial assets, which he built or bought and earmarked the income from their rental for the *waqf* budget. This *waqf* included 67 shops, two *suqs*, seven mills, two *khans*, two storehouses, eight houses, two coffee houses, three plots of land, two *jirinas* platforms,³⁵ a tannery, an olive press, and two *bayyaras*.³⁶ The nature, number, and diversity of the assets established by Abu Nabbut and dedicated to the maintenance of his *waqf* clearly had a significant impact on the city and its spaces. The development of the *waqf* was organic and gradual. Data from the *sijill* and Abu Nabbut’s *waqfiyya* show that the accumulation of *waqf* property started as early as 1806, shortly after he was appointed to his post in Jaffa, and continued even after he was ousted from office in 1817.

28 *Sijill*, vol. 3, pp. 83, 85, Dhu l-Hijja 1228 / November 1813; manuscript *al-Sabil al-mubarak*, pp. 42–45.

29 Manuscript *al-Sabil al-mubarak*, p. 77.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

31 A list divided into topic headings, with the titles of each book and number of volumes can be found in *sijill*, vol. 3, p. 83, Dhu l-Hijja 1228 / November 1813.

32 *Sijill*, vol. 10, p. 88; the endowment is dated 22 Dhu l-Qa’da 1227 / 18 February 1813.

33 The leaders of the *Jamma’in nahiya* (sub-district) played an important role in local politics during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. See Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 157–165; Ihsan al-Nimr, *Ta’rikh Jabal Nablus wa-l-Balqa’* [History of Jabal Nablus and the Balqa] (Nablus: Matba’at al-Nasr al-Ta’rikhiyya, 1938–1961), vol. 1, pp. 260–261 [in Arabic].

34 *Sijill*, vol. 10, p. 88; the endowment is dated 22 Dhu l-Qa’da 1227 / 18 February 1813.

35 Public open space for selling different kinds of grains.

36 Data mentioned in the *waqfiyya*, Manuscript *al-Sabil al-mubarak*, p. 120.

NEW COMMERCIAL CENTERS

The large number of shops endowed by Abu Nabbut is indicative of the importance of this source of income for running the *waqf*. The renovated and newly built commercial centers of Jaffa during his time reflect the dual nature of the town's economy: although import-export trade through the town's port was the main commercial activity, it led to an increase in commercial activity in local markets for supplies and luxury items. Unlike previous periods, when Jaffa had only two *suqs* (al-Fawqani, the upper, and al-Tahtani, the lower), the market space during Abu Nabbut's era attests to an increase in its complexity and the grouping of trades into specialized *suqs*. The records refer to seven specialized *suqs*; al-Haddadin (blacksmiths), al-Sagha (jewelers), al-Attarin (spice market), al-Laban (milk market), al-Qamh (wheat market), al-Khudar (vegetable market), and al-Satr (for women coming from nearby villages to sell local products).

These specialized *suqs* appeared in Jaffa in response to Abu Nabbut's new projects. They complemented the refurbishment of several shops on the main road (al-Tariq al-Sultani) that passed through the town gate in the Christian and the Qal'a (fortress) neighborhoods, and the building of new shops in the area that became known as Suq al-Amud. There were coffee shops and shops grouped by goods and crafts on al-Tariq al-Sultani, the main road in the city.

To accommodate the large number of shops he owned and to endow part of the revenue to run his *waqf* institutions, in 1815 Abu Nabbut built two new *suqs*:³⁷ Suq al-Faraj and Suq al-Satr. The location of Suq al-Satr (the hidden or covered market) was previously known as Ard al-Raml (the sandy land), located to the south of the Grand Mosque, behind Suq al-Faraj. It was a specialized market built specifically for the use of women who came to Jaffa to sell their agricultural products, so as to shelter them and protect their dignity (*satran lahunna*).³⁸ In most cases, the new buildings made use of spaces opened up after the partial demolition of buildings during the French occupation. Others were built on previously vacant land.

37 *Sijill*, vol. 3, p. 392, 25 Muharram 1231 / 27 December 1815.

38 Manuscript *al-Sabil al-mubarak*, p. 12.

By building the *suqs*, Abu Nabbut incorporated this vacant land into the new urban fabric. In contrast, Suq al-Faraj was built on the site of an old demolished *khan* (caravansary). Suq al-Faraj had 36 shops. It replaced an old *khan* and several shops located near the town gate that had been demolished along with other properties during the French destruction of the city. In 1815, Abu Nabbut bought the ruins of the old *khan* and the nearby shops from its previous owners, the Husayni family of Jerusalem,³⁹ and built the active Suq al-Faraj with its elaborate central *sabil*. These new *waqf* foundations, which formed large complexes, acted as the cores for new neighborhoods, and were the seeds for urban growth. Abu Nabbut's new commercial centers were concentrated mainly in an area surrounding the Grand Mosque at the top of the hill. This area was originally a commercial center, but had been almost entirely demolished during the French occupation. Abu Nabbut, through his *waqf* initiative, renovated the area and added new commercial centers and monumental buildings to make it the main active economic center of Jaffa. His building activity encouraged others to renovate their properties and build new shops and houses.

Behind the commercial center of the main *suqs*, Abu Nabbut built two new *khans*. Since the *khan* functioned as a hotel for travelling merchants and others as well as a warehouse for products and goods for export-import, it is also indicative of the revival of the transit trade through Jaffa. Various *khans* had existed in Jaffa from the previous century, but most of them did not survive the destruction caused by the French invasion, and no longer fulfilled their purpose. As part of his *waqf* endowment and to meet the demands of the thriving export-import activity in the port, especially cotton and wool,⁴⁰ Abu Nabbut built two new *khans* in the commercial area. The first was part of his endowment for the maintenance of the Mahmudi Sabil. The revenues from the second *khan* were endowed for the maintenance of the Grand Mosque.⁴¹

39 *Sijill*, vol. 3, pp. 390–399, 30 Muharram - 15 Safar 1231 / 31 December 1815 - 15 January 1816.

40 Henry Light, *Travels in Egypt, Nubia, Holy Land, Mount Lebanon, and Cyprus in the Year 1814* (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1818), p. 143.

41 Manuscript *al-Sabil al-mubarak*, pp. 4, 26, 62, 69.

THE END OF ABU NABBUT'S ERA

According to al-'Ura, Abu Nabbut's lifestyle was part of his strategy to earn the rank of *vezir* and the title of *paşa*. His opportunity to make this a reality came in 1815 upon the death of 'Ali Paşa, Sulayman Paşa's deputy and treasurer (*khazinedar*). As a senior *mamluk* of al-Jazzar, and considered by other members of the al-Jazzar household as equal in status to Sulayman Paşa and the deceased 'Ali Paşa, he hoped to inherit 'Ali Paşa's post. As a result of complicated court intrigues related in detail by al-'Ura, Sulayman Paşa chose 'Abdallah Paşa, the son of the deceased 'Ali Agha, for the post instead.⁴² From this time on, the frustrated Abu Nabbut took a different attitude towards the advancement of his career, and started circumventing his master, the *wali*. An opportunity arose in late 1816, when a high official from Istanbul visited Jaffa and Jerusalem on his return from a pilgrimage. According to al-'Ura, Abu Nabbut gave his guest many gifts and asked him to intervene on his behalf with the Porte to separate Gaza and Jaffa from *wilayat* Sidon, and create an independent *wilaya* that would be granted to him, as had been the case for Abu-Maraq.⁴³ Abu Nabbut's plan eventually failed since Istanbul granted the title of Paşa to 'Abdallah, whereas he was only given a second-class court title, *kapucubaşı*, which was the appropriate title for a *mutasallim*. Abu Nabbut attempted other tactics to achieve his goal, but these also failed. However, as his ambitions and plans were transparent to his competitors in the *wali's* court, it made the intrigues against him fiercer.⁴⁴ In fact, Abu Nabbut accused Haim Farhi, the Jewish treasurer and an influential member of the *wali's* court of being an obstacle to his advancement and for colluding with 'Abdallah Paşa to get rid of him. From their perspective, Abu Nabbut's plan to strengthen Jaffa's fortifications in 1817 was a dangerous step designed to enhance his control over Jaffa and as part of a plot to revolt.⁴⁵ In that year, Abu Nabbut asked Sulayman Paşa for permission to build a sea wall to counter the destructive effects of high waves

that struck the harbor area each year. Al-'Ura, who did not like Abu Nabbut, argued that, after he had lost all hope of securing Palestine's southern *sanjaqs* as his *wilaya* peacefully, Abu Nabbut thought that by fortifying the city he would be able to obtain his goal by force. Despite al-'Ura's concerns, Sulayman Paşa agreed to the building of the wall "for the protection and the well-being of the city,"⁴⁶ and sent 15 canons to Jaffa to be stationed on the town's walls.⁴⁷ As the construction of the wall neared completion, the fears of the anti-Abu Nabbut alliance increased and a plan was concocted to oust him from Jaffa before it was too late. His opponents decided that this should take place when he was absent so he would not be given a chance to entrench himself within the new fortifications. The plan was set in motion when Abu Nabbut departed for Gaza to lead the *cerde*, or safeguarding of the Hajj caravan on its way to Damascus. At this stage, Abu Nabbut's enemies convinced Sulayman Paşa that he should seize the moment.

On 6 Jumada I-Thaniyya 1234/2 April 1819 Sulayman Paşa issued an order relieving Abu Nabbut of his post as *mutasallim*, and appointed Kuçuk Mustafa Agha from the Albanian militia of Acre as temporary *mutasallim*.⁴⁸ According to the edict, Abu Nabbut would still be the *mutasallim* of Gaza and Ramla but he was ousted from his power base in Jaffa. When he returned to Jaffa after his mission, he found the main gate of the city barred against him and his troops.⁴⁹ The edict was read to him and he was ordered to go back to Gaza. Realizing that he could do nothing in these circumstances, he left Jaffa calmly. He was given permission to arrange for his family, belongings, and followers to leave Jaffa, but was not allowed to enter the city himself. His money and his huge amounts of belongings were listed and registered in the *sijill*⁵⁰ and loaded onto hundreds of camels and other beasts of burden.⁵¹

46 *Sijill*, vol. 4, p. 98, 23 Sha'ban 1232 / 8 July 1817.

47 *Sijill*, vol. 4, p. 100, 19 Ramadan 1232 / 2 August 1817; al-'Ura, *Tarikh wilayat Sulayman Paşa*, p. 320.

48 *Sijill*, vol. 4, p. 235, 6 Jumada I-Thaniyya 1234 / 2 April 1819.

49 al-'Ura provides a detailed reconstruction of the dialogue between the two as Abu Nabbut stood outside the gate, and Kuçuk Mustafa Agha behind the city walls.

50 *Sijill*, vol. 4, pp. 238–239, 9 Jumada I-Thaniyya 1234 / 5 April 1819.

51 al-'Ura, *Tarikh wilayat Sulayman Paşa*, p. 393.

42 al-'Ura, *Tarikh wilayat Sulayman Paşa*, pp. 253–257, 377.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 268.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 270.

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 318–319.

A month after Abu Nabbut was ousted from Jaffa, he reached Egypt. The Egyptian chronicler al-Jabarti noted that:

On the seventh [of Rajab 1234 / 2 May 1819] the governor of Jaffa, known as Muhammad Bey Abu Nabbut, reached Cairo after being dismissed from his post. He sent [a request] to the Paşa [Muhammad 'Ali] begging for his permission to go to Egypt, and he was given permission, and so he came. [The Paşa] let him and the approximately 500 *mamluks*, soldiers, and followers accompanying him stay in *al-Qasr al-'Ayni*.

[...]. The Paşa ordered that substantial salary be paid to him, and he also arranged sufficient provisions for him and his followers [...] ⁵²

Towards the end of 1819, and at the request of the Porte, Abu Nabbut left Cairo for Istanbul.⁵³ Later, he appears in *sijill* documents related to the transactions of his *waqf* in Jaffa, such as those of the *wali* of Salonica (1821), and the *wali* of Diyarbakir in 1826.⁵⁴ In other words, after he was ousted from Jaffa, he fulfilled his life's dream of becoming Paşa. Overall, Abu Nabbut gave Jaffa the "kiss of life." It continued to develop after his time and became the main urban center of Palestine.

⁵² al-Jabarti, *Ajaib al-athar fi l-tarajim wa-l-akhbar*, vol. 3, p. 602.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Sijill*, vol. 6, p. 128, 19 Rabi' al-Thani 1242 / 19 November 1826.

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OTTOMAN SHARĪA COURT REGISTERS: PUBLIC RECORDS AND SOURCES ON EVERYDAY LIFE

This chapter is primarily based on Jaffa's Ottoman Shari'a court records (*sijills*). *Sijills*, in general, provide historians with rich source material on the everyday life of all strata of the population in the Ottoman Empire from a variety of places over a relatively long period of time. Shari'a court records are legal documents that recorded discussions that took place in the courtroom, structured along highly uniform lines. The *sijills* are in fact volumes of documents summarizing legal proceedings that took place on a daily basis in the Shari'a courts throughout the Ottoman domains. All these legal proceedings were registered in the court records, either in Arabic or in Ottoman Turkish, and then filed at the courthouse. Some of these volumes have survived and are preserved in their respective courthouses or in libraries and archives. During most of the Ottoman period the Shari'a courts constituted the core of the judicial system of the Ottoman state, and thus a variety of legal matters were dealt with and recorded there. In addition, until the late 19th century, imperial decrees and

official appointments of local and provincial officials at various administrative levels were also recorded in the *sijills*, which thus served as local public records.

This chapter is based on data culled from Jaffa's Shari'a court records to recover social voices from this town. Drawing on different *sijills* from the first two decades of the 19th century, it examines the establishment of a new "Mamluk household" in the town during the rule of Abu Nabbut. The earliest volume of the *sijill* of Jaffa that has survived to this day is from the end of 1799. Previous volumes were burned by the French troops led by Napoleon Bonaparte during their occupation of the town on 6 March 1799. The Jaffa *sijill* series from late 1799 until the end of the Ottoman rule is composed of 110 volumes, and is housed today in the Israel State Archives (ISA). Some of these volumes have been digitized and are available online. Microfilm copies of these *sijills* are also available through the Library of the University of Haifa and at the University of Amman in Jordan.