Arabic and its Alternatives

Religious Minorities and their Languages in the Emerging Nation States of the Middle East (1920–1950)

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Edited by

HELEEN MURRE-VAN DEN BERG,
KARÈNE SANCHEZ SUMMERER, TIJMEN C. BAARDA

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Cover illustration: Assyrian School of Mosul, 1920s–1930s; courtesy Dr. Robin Beth Shamuel, Iraq.

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Preface

This publication marks the final stage of a project that originated in many meetings between Dr Karène Sanchez, a socio-linguist and historian from the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL), Prof dr. Johan Rooryck, a linguist in the same Institute, and myself, then a researcher at the Leiden University Institute for Religious Studies. What brought us together was our shared interest in missions in the Middle East, and especially the effects of these missions on language use and language policies in the intricate linguistic arrangements of the region. Karène Sanchez and myself decided to join forces and set up a research project in which our work on different regions (Palestine, Iraq, Syria), on different groups (Catholics, Syriac and Armenian Christians), and on different periods (Ottoman and Mandate period) was compared with emerging work on the Jews of the region – whose recent history, somewhat surprisingly, often was treated as a case *sui generis*. The main question in this project concerned the relationship between language, religion and communal identifications. What role did language play in the formative years of the modern Middle East? What languages were preferred in the context of the British and French Mandates? What was the role of Arabic in the emerging Arab states when statehood was fashioned out of the remains of the Ottoman Empire, the heritage of Islam, local and regional identities, and language? Arabic in its newly modernized form became the unifying force of Arab nationalism, but also functioned as the pragmatic choice for those who governed and for those who wanted to join the new states. In turn, it became the model upon which other communal languages fashioned themselves.

We decided on three case studies to probe these questions in more detail, each focusing on a specific non-Muslim minority in areas initially governed by the British: the Jews of Baghdad, the Catholics of Palestine and the Syriac Christians of Iraq. These case studies became the foundation upon which a larger comparative project was built which was funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and which started in the summer of 2012. Early results of the project were brought together in a volume entitled *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East* (2016) in which we compared our work on these three communities with case studies brought in by colleagues from around the world. These additional cases took other cultural practices as a starting point, including city planning, sartorial practices and music – practices that like language were able to create common ground between various communities at the time of nation building

but at the same time could (and were) put to work to create distinction and difference. Two dissertations, by Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah and by Tijmen Baarda, provide in-depth studies of two of the three case studies, while a monograph on the Catholics of Palestine by Karène Sanchez is on its way.

The current volume and its introduction conclude the project, although the material is far from exhausted. We sincerely hope that others will continue to add examples, compare with what is here, criticize our conclusions and continue the discussion about how to understand the complicated and sometimes violent interactions between majorities and minorities, between Muslims and non-Muslims, and between Arab speakers and non-Arab speakers in the Middle East. Finally, the fact that many of the encounters and conflicts that we discuss in this volume assume significant Western influence – through missionaries, colonialists and others – should remind us that we are not speaking about an isolated episode of Middle Eastern history, but about a history that should be part of European and American historic consciousness as much as it is of those who are born and raised in the Middle East. We hope that our thinking, reading and writing about it will contribute to an increased sense of shared history. This creation of a shared history includes the analysis of painful episodes in which Western and Middle Eastern majorities were quick to sideline and sometimes erase the voices of minorities in order to advance particular rather than common interests. We hope that this volume, to which authors from many different countries and many different academic, linguistic and cultural contexts have contributed, may serve to re-read and re-appropriate this shared history, not to offer a final conclusion, but to stimulate discussion and ongoing reflection on how different kinds of people may live together, in the Middle East as much as in Europe or anywhere else in this world.

At this time and place, I would like to thank all those who contributed to the project over the past years. The most important of these has been Karène Sanchez who contributed in innumerable ways: she was vital in conceptualizing and developing the project, in writing the research proposal and contribute her own post-doc research. She also took a big share in supervising our two PhD candidates, especially after I took on a position at Nijmegen's Radboud University in the summer of 2015 and thus no longer was available for day to day supervision in Leiden. The two PhD candidates, Tijmen Baarda and Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah, also have been a great help in pushing the project forward – through their own research and the questions that arose from it, and through their help in organizing conferences and publishing our results. During both conferences we were supported by many different people, but especially by

research assistant Farah Bazzi, at the time Research Master student in Leiden, now a graduate student at Stanford University.

This is also the place to thank so many people in Leiden, Nijmegen and elsewhere who through their contributions to conferences and meetings, over many coffees and drinks, and through extended email conversations over the years, helped us to flesh out our questions and concerns. Among these Johan Rooryck, Ernestine van der Wall, Ab de Jong and Léon Buskens deserve special mention. In addition to the scholars who participated in the two conferences that resulted in edited volumes, other scholars took up our invitation to come and discuss our findings with us. We heartily thank Yasir Suleiman, Heather Sharkey and Jacob Norris for their stimulating engagement with our project and we gratefully remember Peter Sluglett (d. 2017) for his support. Finally we thank the colleagues who contributed to this volume in particular, those who published, and those who for various reasons could not write but contributed to our discussions during the conference in June 2016. We thank Robin Beth Shamuel for sharing the wonderful image of the Assyrian School of Mosul for the cover of this volume, Ineke Smit for her fine editorial labor that lifted our work to a higher level, the Hans Sigrist Prize fund (Bern) for its contribution in addition to the NWO grant, and finally the support of Leiden University and of the Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen.

> *Heleen Murre-van den Berg*
> Leiden/Nijmegen, 22 September 2019

Note on Transcription

In the volume we have opted for different transcription standards, with Arabic and Turkish according to IJMES table, Syriac according to the standard of the *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (GEDSH), and Hebrew in an anglicized transcription. For personal and place names full transcriptions as well as simplified and/or anglicized forms have been allowed, depending on the sources and general familiarity with one or another transcription.

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Arabic and its Alternatives: Language and Religion in the Ottoman Empire and its Successor States

Heleen Murre-van den Berg

1 Introduction[1]

When in the mid-eighties I entered the field of Semitic Studies via the study of Hebrew and Aramaic, "Classical Syriac" was one of the obligatory courses of the program. Through the careful study of grammar and a variety of texts these classes took me into the world of the Syriac churches. It was to take me some years to start getting the bigger picture of their histories and contemporary situation, but one thing I accepted as a given from the earliest stages of my studies: that there was an undeniable link between the "Syriac" language and the "Syriac" churches. This message was conveyed by the texts we read, by the convenient subdivision into "East" and "West" Syriac scripts and "East" and "West" Syrian Churches,[2] and by the references made by the contemporary churches (which at that period were settling in Europe, including the Netherlands) to Syriac as 'their' language. This conceptual link was further strengthened by the fact that for the closely related Aramaic languages used by other religious communities ("Jewish," "Samaritan," "Mandaic"), different scripts were used and separate literatures had emerged.[3]

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1 I thank the many colleagues who read and commented on earlier versions of this paper, first and foremost Lucas van Rompay, the co-editors of this volume, and the other contributors. Outside this circle, Matthias Kappler and Stelios Irakleous from the field of Karamanli studies have added their critical advice. I also thank the anonymous reviewer who kindly provided a number of critical suggestions for further improvement. All remaining faults and misperceptions of course are entirely my own.

2 Note that at the time "Syrian" rather than "Syriac" was the usual term; in Dutch ("Syrisch") no distinction can be made between "Syriac" as referring to the language and "Syrian" referring to cultural, ethnic and/or national aspects. The adjective "Syrian" was used referring to Syriac Orthodox and Syrian Arab Republic matters, until in April 2000, the church officially allowed its name to be translated in English as Syriac Orthodox Church (Syriac Orthodox Resources http://sor.cua.edu/SOCNews/2000/00040301.html; last seen 26/11/2017).

3 On the history of Aramaic and related literatures, see Holger Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); on Arabic, Hebrew, Mandaic and Aramaic, see Stefan Weninger (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International*

That this exclusive link between Syriac churches and the Classical Syriac language in the modern and contemporary period is as much a matter of ideology as of practice, I began to realize when I started a specialization in so-called Modern or Neo-Aramaic, the variety used by the (East Syriac) Assyrian Christians of Urmia in Iran. Whereas most linguists prefer to emphasize the connection of these modern languages to the wider Aramaic language group, Syriac Christians usually prefer the term *Sureth/Surait* ("Syriac") for both the Classical and the Modern language – thereby conceptualizing the modern language form as firmly part of their Syriac heritage. Linguistically, however, the boundaries between the 'Syriac' of the Syriac churches and other Aramaic languages and cultures were much fuzzier than I had previously assumed. The most important realization, however, came when I engaged with Arabic as part of the Christian heritage of the Middle East. I learnt that when in the early twentieth century the Syriac churches put a strong emphasis on the importance, and hence preservation, of their "Syriac heritage,"[4] in fact most of the writings about this heritage were in Arabic rather than in Syriac. Thus, while Syriac was shaped more and more into the most important common identifier of Syriac Christianity, Syriac Christians were making use of a variety of other languages in religious as well as secular contexts. Alongside a host of languages including English, French, German, Persian, Turkish and Kurdish (to name a few), it was Arabic that prevailed in most of the Syriac communities.[5]

The question is, therefore: if Arabic was in actual practice as important as Syriac, despite all the attention the latter receives in ecclesial as well as secular circles, what would explain this gap between language ideology and language practice? And, if indeed there is a gap between ideology and practice, is it the same for all Syriac churches? Further, do we find a similar divergence between ideology and practice in other Middle-Eastern communities? And how is this related to the role Syriac and Arabic play as religious, ritual, languages? And what has all of this to do with the rise of new Middle-Eastern nationalisms in which language and language reform play crucial roles: Turkish, Arab, Iranian, Armenian, Assyrian and Zionist? And, finally: what does the case of Arabic in

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Handbook (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), in particular John F. Healey, "34. Syriac," 637–652, and Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, "35. Syriac as the Language of Eastern Christianity," 652–659.

4   Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz, Lucas Van Rompay, *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011).

5   Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "Classical Syriac and the Syriac Churches: A Twentieth-Century History," in *Syriac Encounters: Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium, Duke University, 26–29 June 2011*, ed. M. Doerfler, E. Fiano, K. Smith (Peeters: Louvain, 2015), 119–148.

the Middle East tell us about persisting but varied and varying connections between language, religion, and communal identities more generally?

It is this cluster of questions that formed the impetus to a comparative project that was financed by the Dutch Research Council NWO, under the title "Arabic and its Alternatives: Religious Minorities in the Formative Years of the Modern Middle East (1920–1950)." In September 2013, the group organized its first conference under the title "Common Ground: Changing Interpretations of Public Space in the Middle East among Jews, Christians and Muslims in the 19th and 20th Centuries," the proceedings of which were recently published.[6] During this conference as well as in the ensuing volume, the language issue was contextualized within larger questions of changing ideologies and practices of public space. It addressed the ways in which language (in schools, journalism, and publishing) as much as other cultural practices (dress, urbanization, the resettlement of WWI-refugees, funeral practices, religious processions, music) in the period following WWI was used simultaneously to include some and exclude other non-Muslims in the newly emerging public sphere of the Mandate and early independent states. It is the changing interpretations of the so-called *millet* system under the influence of modernization, secularization, and competing nationalisms, as well as the contextualized concept of the term 'minority' as it developed in the twentieth century, that underlie the discussions in the present volume.[7] In June 2016, the research group organized a second conference in Leiden and The Hague, this time zooming in on the issue of language, with a slight variation on the title of the program as a whole: "Arabic and its Alternatives: Religious minorities and their languages in the emerging nation states of the Middle East (1920–1950)." In this volume most of the contributions of the 2016 conference are collected, complemented with relevant essays by the conference organizers that were not presented during the conference.

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6 S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah, H.L. Murre-van den Berg (eds.), *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

7 Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "Searching for Common Ground: Jews and Christians in the Modern Middle East," in Goldstein-Sabbah, *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere*, 3–38. On the introduction and subsequent changes of the term 'minority' in the Middle Eastern context, see especially Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), and Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016); for a discussion of the structural connection to the ideals of Enlightenment, secularism, and modernity, see Aamir R. Mufti, "Secularism and Minority: Elements of a Critique," *Social Text* 45 (1995): 75–96.

The first impetus to the project and this volume came from the observable gap between language ideology and language practice, the second came from the equally observable ambiguous role of Arabic in the formation of Arabic nationalism in the early twentieth century. On the one hand, 'Arabic' is posited by most nationalist authors as the one undisputed element of 'Arab identity,' to be preferred over and above fuzzy or potentially exclusive concepts such as Arab 'ethnicity' or 'race,' Islam as the quintessential 'Arab' religion, or that of a primordial 'Arab nation.' Indeed, the linguistic approach promised to bridge the societal and regional cleavages that the new nationalism intended to heal, especially those of religion and religious denomination.[8] On the other hand, however, 'Arabic' is a much less clear category than nationalists and historians tend to assume. Not only is there an ongoing debate on what kind of Arabic could function as the language of the Arab nation (especially the question where on the continuum between the highly formalized classical and the barely standardized local colloquial forms it is situated), but also whether indeed 'Arabic' is the one and only parameter of Arabness: do all who speak Arabic consider themselves Arabs, and can everyone who speaks and writes Arabic be considered part of the Arab nation?[9] As will become clear in this volume, these questions were not settled in the early decades of the twentieth century nor in the heydays of nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s. If indeed, as I posited, the inclusion of non-Muslims was one of the primary motives behind the creation of this particular concept of Arabness and Arab nationalism,

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8 So, e.g., George Antonius (*The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938) and Edmond Rabbath (*Unité Syrienne et devenir arabe*, Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1937) who wrote in English and French, respectively, but also authors like Fu'ad al-Khatib who is discussed by Peter Wien in this volume. Albert Hourani (*Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, Cambridge, CUP, 1983/2014; 1st ed. Oxford 1962) similarly takes his starting point in the language. Adeed Dawisha (*Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, esp. 13–15) has a more political approach, taking 'Arabic' as a starting point for 'Arabism,' but pan-Arabic political unity as the driving force of 'Arab nationalism.' See also Rashid Khalidi et al., *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), on Iraq, see Peter Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian, and pro-fascist Inclinations, 1932–1941* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2006).

9 Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press 1997/2014), Reem Bassiouney, *Arabic Sociolinguistics: Topics in Diglossia, Gender, Identity, and Politics* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), Clive Holes, *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties*, Rev. Ed. (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2004), and Reem Bassiouney, *Language and Identity in Modern Egypt* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

understanding non-Muslim involvement in Arabic may give us important insight into non-Muslims' relationship with the newly emerging Arab states.

2   Language, Religion and Communal Identities

As stated above, it has been one of the major aims of the project underlying this book to better understand the role of the non-Muslim communities in the development of the modern Arab states, both in their important contributions to these states and in the ongoing uncertainties about whether they are actually fully participating citizens, or whether implicit and explicit forms of exclusion continue to be at work. One of the major difficulties in studying these complicated and varied patterns of inclusion and exclusion, of assimilation and isolation, is that depending on sources and starting points it is either inclusivist or exclusivist interpretations that dominate. When the focus is on identity formation and diaspora politics, Christians' and Jews' separation from the rest of the population will come to the fore. However, if we concentrate on modern secular literature in Arabic, Christian and Jewish authors come across as full participants in the Arabic public space. The basic assumption of the project has been that a study of language ideologies and practices might provide a way to include inclusivist and exclusivist perspectives within one and the same conceptual framework, with language ideology and practice as reliable indicators of the varied and sometimes conflicting ways in which non-Muslims relate to societies that by and large are dominated by Muslims.[10] Our goal with this approach is to bring these different perspectives into one study. Therefore, the starting point is Arabic, which is then contrasted with a variety of other languages that play a role in these communities – i.e., starting from the potential communalities to see where these are complemented and contradicted by exclusivist practices. Put differently: in this approach the crucial importance of language for all kinds of identity formation processes is accepted, with as a necessary corollary the assumption that multilingualism in individuals and groups may indicate patterns of multiple identification that not necessarily exclude each other.[11] At the same time, by taking our analytic

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10   For an introduction into matters of language ideology, see Kathryn A. Woolard & Bambi B. Schieffelin, "Language Ideology," *Annu.Rev.Anthropol.* 23 (1994): 55–82. For the connections between language ideologies and concepts of modernity and group identity, see Richard Bauman, Charles L. Briggs, *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

11   Rogers Brubaker, Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'," *Theory and Society* 29 (2000): 1–47. On language, see Jennifer Dickinson, "Languages for the Market, the Nation, or the

starting point in what in the socio-political and legal parlance of most Middle Eastern states is referred to as "religious communities," we assume that religious identification continues to be of importance – but *how exactly*, is one of the main questions of this essay and this volume.

Two authors need a brief introduction here, because their work has been crucial in developing the themes of the project. The first of these is Yasir Suleiman, whose numerous publications on the role of Arabic in Arab nationalism proved important for the project, in particular *The Arabic Language and National Identity* (2003).[12] Though in the historiography of Arab nationalism there is an overall tendency to take the role of Arabic in nationalist ideology for granted, Suleiman convincingly unpacks this seemingly straightforward connection. He discusses the early identification between Arabic and Islam, the way Jewish and Christian contributions to Arabic literature were perceived in the mediaeval and pre-modern period, and how their contributions were viewed by the twentieth-century nationalists who often considered themselves the true guardians of the Arabic language. He also describes how in the modern period most nationalists saw Arabic as the defining factor of Arab nationalism, the "unified and unifying language" in Satiʿ al-Husrî's terms.[13] Finally, he addresses the tension between regional Arabism and pan-Arabism, often but certainly not always linked to tensions between local varieties of Arabic and the modernized, standardized and interregional *fuṣḥa* or "purified" language usually called Standard Arabic (SA) by linguists. As Suleiman notes in the introduction, his work is mostly on language ideology, much less on language practice.

Margins: Overlapping Ideologies of Language and Identity in Zakarpattia," *Int.L. J. Soc. Lang* 201 (2010): 53–78.

12   Other relevant works include Yasir Suleiman, "Charting the Nation: Arabic and the Politics of Identity," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (2006) 26: 125–148, Suleiman, *A War of Worlds: Language and Conflict in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Suleiman, *Arabic in the Fray: Language Ideology and Cultural Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013). He mostly addresses contexts in which SA is put up against other forms of Arabic, in the Arabic world in the wider sense, from the early twentieth c. onwards; in addition he discusses the language situation in contemporary Israel/Palestine, with SA up against Hebrew.

13   Suleiman, *The Arabic Language*, 143; see also Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "The Language of the Nation: The Rise of Arabic among Jews and Christians (1900–1950)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43(2) (2016): 176–190.

This is different in the seminal work by Sheldon Pollock (2006), *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India.* This work describes in much detail how in the Indian subcontinent, mostly in the early second millennium, an impressive vernacularization process took off in which Sanskrit became wedded to cultural cosmopolitan imagination alongside more localized vernacular literatures and imaginations. For Pollock, much more so than for Suleiman, religion is an important factor to take into account, although in fact one of Pollock's main conclusions is that in the vernacularization processes at the beginning of the second millennium religion played less of a role than generally is assumed, with courts and political power being much more important than religion and religious leadership. It is exactly the complex power dynamics between religious 'sacred' languages that tend to secularize and standardize on the one hand, and vernacular languages that undergo *literization* (creating a written language) and *literarization* (developing a corpus of texts, 'literature') on the other, that is so important for pre-modern India. However, understanding these processes will also contribute to a better understanding of the developments in the early modern and modern Middle East. The parallels, however, are not straightforward, especially because religion and religious culture play a fundamentally different role in the Middle East than in the cultural-linguistic dynamics in India. We will return to the role of religion below, but for now it is important to note Pollock's differentiation between *vernacular*, localized and 'national' impetuses on the one hand, and the *cosmopolitan*, 'civilizational,' impetuses on the other. These two processes, which often take place at the same time and the same place, influencing each other, sometimes as rivals, sometimes as allies, constitute the fundamental framework of this volume. As Pollock sees it, these developments often concern long-term processes that started long before the modern period. Our case of the twentieth-century Arab states, therefore, needs the perspective of the *longue durée*, if only of the Ottoman period that preceded it.

Finally, taking Pollock as a starting point also means that the theme of modernity in relation to the themes of this volume are put in a somewhat different light. Pollock's study of linguistic developments in the pre-modern Indian subcontinent convincingly shows that issues of vernacularization and cosmopolitanism, standardization and hybridization, conservatism and modernization, are part and parcel of historical dynamics over long periods of time. These dynamics in and of themselves, in language as much as in other cultural ideologies and practices, are nothing new. What is new, though, is the way in which some aspects of these ideologies and practices not only contributed significantly to the modernizing practices of the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries, but were also constitutive of what modernity came to be. If anything, a very specific type of language ideology and practice is one of the constitutive forces without which our modern world, predicated on ideas about ethnic and national groups, would look very different.

The same is true for 'religion,' another of these concepts that in some of its ideas and practices has been among humans from their earliest history, but which in the form encountered in this volume is shaped by the modern world as much as it constitutes a formative part of it, on a par with language and ethnicity.[14] With this volume we hope to contribute to the ongoing discussion about the relationship between the two concepts of religion and language, and their relationship with identity formation, or, borrowing Brubaker's term, the creation and maintenance of "groupness." Earlier work, such as that of Omoniyi and Fishman, Joseph and Myhill, tends to see rather straightforward connections, in which language is a fairly automatic corollary to 'ethnicity' and is then, together with religion, easily put to work in undergirding 'national' identities. However important these links are and whatever precursors of such links between language, religion and nation/ethnic group can be recognized, taking the broader view of the Middle East starting from the Ottoman Empire provides so many exceptions to this one-to-one rule that as a heuristic device it obscures rather than enlightens. In fact, such theories tend towards an anachronistic approach in which current or historical ideologies of links between language, religion and community are taken as a given, and which then looks backwards for proof of their pre-existence, thereby excluding other options from the analysis.[15]

Conversely, the historical context is mostly excluded from Wein and Hary's sociolinguistic "religiolect." This concept underlines the importance of religious boundaries for the description of varieties of language. However, when looking at language varieties from the perspective of religious boundaries one

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14   Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Theodore Vial, *Modern Religion, Modern Race* (Oxford, OUP, 2016), Bauman and Briggs: *Voices of Modernity*. For a discussion of both the parallels and differences between 'religion' and 'language' in identity formation and nation building see Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2015) and Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

15   John Earl Joseph, *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious* (Houndmills/ New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), John Myhill, *Language, Religion and National Identity in Europe and the Middle East* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006), Tope Omoniyi, Joshua A. Fishman, eds, *Explorations in the Sociology of Language and Religion* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2006).

easily overlooks not only the historical dynamics that change the meaning of certain distinctive linguistic or orthographic traits within the religious group, but also the ongoing exchange with the larger linguistic context outside the group under discussion.[16] One of the underlying issues that Wein and Hary's important essay brings to the fore, however, is the fact that linguists have been trained to connect language to 'ethnic' or 'national' groups, taking such groups as the starting point for their analysis. This presents scholars of languages primarily located within *religious* groups with the problem of how to describe these groups, especially in the case of religious groups with strong distinct communal identities based not only on religion but also on language (and less on geography). It is here that an integral look at the linguistic developments in the Ottoman Empire and its successor states, from the perspective of mostly non-Muslim sub-groups, can add significantly to our thinking about a very fundamental aspect of how communal identities are formed and changed over time.

Starting from the basic question of how non-Muslim communities in the Middle East used language to re-define their position in the newly emerging Arab states between 1920 and 1950, we will in this introduction, based on a wide range of studies in this burgeoning field, first look back at processes of language change in the Ottoman period, especially at a number of important instances of the literization and literarization of a vernacular language (in short: *vernacularization*), while also paying attention to what at first sight looks like its opposite, i.e., the cases in which non-Muslims chose to write in the majority languages of the time, mostly Turkish and Arabic (*cosmopolitanization*). Our focus will then move to the first half of the twentieth century, when processes of ongoing vernacularization were complemented and counteracted by cosmopolitan practices, be it by greatly extending the use of Arabic or by the increased use of French and English. The final section offers a first attempt at analysing these developments in view of long-term vernacular versus cosmopolitan trends, and their typically modern expressions in rivalling nationalisms and new forms of cosmopolitanism. Not unexpectedly, religion is an important component in all of these trends.

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16   Benjamin Hary, Martin J. Wein, "Religiolinguistics: On Jewish-, Christian- and Muslim-defined Languages," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (2013) 220: 85–108.

3   Vernacularization in the Early Modern Middle East

A superficial look at the linguistic situation in the Middle East seems to con-
firm that rather than local vernacularizations it is the dominance of a few
languages with a strong literary tradition, religious or otherwise, that set the
standard. Unlike Europe, where in the early modern and modern periods a
fair array of local languages, from Portuguese to Danish, from Dutch to Italian,
became the standardized languages of national communities, in the Middle
East only three languages acquired a similar status combining literary, schol-
arly and political usages: Arabic, Persian and (Ottoman) Turkish. In terms of
Pollock's categories these three are better described as religious, literary or ad-
ministrative cosmopolitan languages turning imperial, rather than as vernacu-
lar languages turning 'national.'

However, a closer look at the linguistic developments in the Ottoman and
Persian Empires quickly shows that the Middle Eastern situation is in fact not
so different from that in Europe. As Michiel Leezenberg, also taking his start-
ing point in Pollock's framework, has argued earlier, a great many "vernacular
moments" can be identified, some of which have been extensively described,
others less so.[17] Quite a few of these earlier vernacularization processes, while
mostly starting as religious innovations, became wedded to fully-fledged na-
tionalist movements, which in turn resulted in the creation of separate states
with separate languages in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is true
for the modern forms of Greek, Romanian, Serbian, Bulgarian and Armenian,
all of which have their origins in the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries.
In all of these cases, a new written language was developed alongside the clas-
sical language in which the bulk of religious and scholarly literature had been
written, and which in most cases still functions as a liturgical language until
today. In some cases, the classical languages were modernized and simplified
with an eye towards the vernacular (Greek *Katharevousa*, Armenian *Grabar*).
Over time, however, these forms lost their position to the new and purified
vernaculars in which the script and orthographic standards of the classi-
cal forms were used. In other contexts the modern vernaculars provided the
starting point of renewal, for instance standardized forms of Modern Aramaic
among Jews and Christians in Hebrew and Syriac script, and Kurdish modelled
along Persian lines in 'Arabic' script. Because the seventeenth and eighteenth
centuries were periods of increasingly frequent exchanges between Europe

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17   Michiel Leezenberg, "The Vernacular Revolution: Reclaiming Early Modern Grammatical
      Traditions in the Ottoman Empire," *History of Humanities* (2016) 1,2: 251–275; and
      Leezenberg in this volume.

(including Russia) and the Ottoman Empire, with diplomats, merchants and missionaries interacting intensively with religious and secular leadership, especially Christian leaders, it has often been suggested that Western contacts were the primary cause of these vernacular developments. However, their wide regional spread, also in areas where foreigners were hardly present, as well as the use of mostly indigenous models for literization and literarization, suggests that western inspiration can only have been one factor among many.

A notable example of such a vernacular process under mostly local incentives concerns Kurdish, the main topic of Leezenberg's contribution in this volume. He describes three distinct moments of Kurdish vernacularization in the early modern period. The process started in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries at the Erdelan court in Senneh/Sanandaj, current-day Iran. The local Hawrami (or Gorani as it is termed in the West) *koine* was put into writing and used for learned poetry, alongside Persian, which remained the language of administration. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Northern Kurmanji was put into writing in the Diyarbakir and Hakkari regions, with a wider (though still mostly religious) range of texts, which besides poetry included history and grammar. Around 1800, the Central Sulaymaniyah dialect (Sorani Kurdish) was put into writing, again with a focus on local religious learning, and with little that foreshadowed its later central position in North Iraq.[18]

Although there is no proof of mutual influence, the patterns of Kurdish vernacularization resemble those that we see in two Aramaic-speaking communities in the Kurdish area. In Zakho and Nerwa, two small cities in the Northwestern part of what today is Iraqi Kurdistan, from the sixteenth century onwards texts were produced in a literary language based on the local Northeastern Neo-Aramaic vernacular, the spoken language of the Jewish communities of the region. In the same script that was used for Hebrew texts, local rabbis wrote Aramaic translations of the Bible (reminiscent of, but different from the earlier *Targumim*) as well as midrashic commentaries on the Bible.[19] These are precisely the genres that, while cherishing the Hebrew literary and religious heritage, also in earlier periods of Jewish history made use of

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18   See also Michiel Leezenberg, "Eli Teremaxi and the Vernacularization of Medrese Learning in Kurdistan," *Iranian Studies* 47 (2014): 713–733.

19   The most important texts of this early have been edited and translated by Yona Sabar (*The Five Scrolls in Jewish Neo-Aramaic Translations: Dialects of ʿAmidya, Dihok, and Urmiya. A Critical Edition Based on Recordings and Manuscripts, Comparisons with Old Aramaic Bible Translations, Commentaries and Midrashim* (*Ēdāh w-lāšon*: Jerusalem, Magnus Press, 2006), and *Jewish Neo-Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Liturgical Poems: A Critical Edition* (*Ēdāh w-lāšon*: Jerusalem, Magnus Press, 2009)); for a general overview of Jewish

vernacular forms of Aramaic in order to make this heritage accessible to lay people who did not know Hebrew.

A similar vernacularization process was started on the basis of a close cognate of Jewish Northeastern Neo-Aramaic, the Aramaic vernacular of the Christian communities in the Hakkari region and the northern Mesopotamian plains also known as 'Modern Syriac' or *Sureth*. These Ottoman texts in Christian Neo-Aramaic originated not far from the centres of Jewish learning, in the provincial towns of Alqosh and Telkepe. The oldest surviving manuscripts date from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but their scribes explicitly date the origins of the Neo-Aramaic texts to about one century earlier. This small corpus consists mostly of religious poetry attributed to individual poets (different from much of the medieval anonymous liturgical hymns), who recount stories from the Bible and from the Syriac hagiographic and narrative tradition in a standardized form of the vernacular Aramaic. These texts were studied extensively by Alessandro Mengozzi, who shows that rather than aiming to expand or even supplant the Classical Syriac Christian heritage and learning, its authors intended to introduce, explicate and transmit it. In addition to poetry, some remnants of biblical commentary and a few fragments of grammar have survived.[20]

As in the Kurdish case, where Persian and Arabic maintained much of the functions they had before, Classical Syriac remained important in the domains in which it was used before priests started to write the vernacular: in the colophons of manuscripts, in formal letters, in new hymns for the liturgy, and in the amulet texts that protected against all kinds of evil. Thus, the functions of the newly written vernacular remained fairly limited compared to those of the classical language. It was only in nineteenth-century Urmia (Persia) that

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Neo-Aramaic in their wider context, see Geoffrey Khan, "40, Northeastern Neo-Aramaic," in *The Semitic Languages*, ed. Weninger, 708–724.

20   Alessandro Mengozzi, *Israel of Alqosh and Joseph of Telkepe. A Story in a Truthful Language, Religious Poems in Vernacular Syriac (North Iraq, 17th century)* (CSCO 589–590, Scr. Syr. 230–231; Louvain: Peeters 2002), and *Religious Poetry in Vernacular Syriac from Northern Iraq (17th–20th Centuries): An Anthology, Introduction and Translation* (CSCO 627–628 / Scr. Syr. 240–241; Louvain: Peeters 2011). See further Heleen Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures: The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces (1500–1850)* (Louvain: Peeters, 2015). Printing in Classical Syriac was mostly done outside the Middle East or in Maronite circles in Lebanon, see J.F. Coakley, *The Typography of Syriac: A Historical Catalogue of Printing Types, 1537–1958* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2006) and Coakley, "Printing in Syriac, 1539–1985 / Drucken in Syrisch, 1539–1985," in Eva Hanebutt-Benz, Dagmar Glass, Geoffrey Roper, *Sprachen des Nahen Ostens und die Druckrevolution: Eine interkulturelle Begegnung / Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution: A Cross-cultural Encounter* (Westhofen: WVA-Verlag Skulima, 2002), 93–116.

a fully-fledged modern literary language was developed. With the support of Protestant and later also Catholic missionaries, this modernized and standard-ized form of the vernacular served not only the religious and educational aims of the missionaries, but also the emerging "Syrian" (later "Assyrian") ethno-national community as a whole.[21]

Among the Armenians, vernacularization processes started in the eigh-teenth but did not catch on until the nineteenth century. Already in the sev-enteenth and eighteenth centuries, both the Western and Eastern vernaculars were described and literized to some extent, in the west by the founder of the Armenian-Catholic Mekhitarist Order (est. Constantinople, 1701), Mekhitar (Mxit'ar) of Sebaste (Sivas). His *Grammar of Western Armenian* was published in Venice in 1727. The Eastern vernacular was first described by the German scholar Iohann Ioachim Schroeder in 1711. However, the central position of the modernized Classical Armenian *Grabar* remained uncontested, and both the Mekhitarists, in their aim to elevate people, and clergy and Eastern Armenian authors in Eastern Anatolia and Russia preferred Classical Armenian for their publications. In the nineteenth century, however, both the Western and Eastern vernaculars were literarized. Religious and secular publications were printed within the Ottoman, Persian and Russian empires, but also further away, in Venice (Arsēn Aytĕnean) and Smyrna, in what was to be called *Ashkharhabar*, the "civil language."[22]

21   Heleen Murre-van den Berg, *From a Spoken to a Written Language: The Introduction and Development of Literary Urmia Aramaic in the Nineteenth Century* (De Goeje Fund XXVIII, Leiden, 1999); Adam Becker, *Revival and Awakening: Christian Mission, Orientalism, and the American Evangelical Roots of Assyrian Nationalism (1834–1906)* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015). A similar movement did not emerge among the Syriac Orthodox of Eastern Anatolia, but there was some interest in printing, see Ahmet Taşğın and Robert Langer, "The Establishment of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate Press," in *Historical Aspects of Printing and Publishing in Languages of the Middle East. Papers from the Third Symposium on the History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, University of Leipzig, September 2008,* edited by Geoffrey Roper (Leiden/Boston: Brill 2014), 181–192.

22   Méline Pehlivanian, "Mesrops Erben: die Armenischen Buchdrucker der Frühzeit / Mesrop's Heir's: The early Armenian Book Printers," in Hanebutt-Benz et al., *Sprachen des Nahen Ostens und die Druckrevolution*, 53–92, Marc Nichanian, *Ages et usages de la langue arménienne* (Geneva: Éditions Entente, 1989); Agop Hacikyan, Gabriel Basmajian, Edward S. Franchuk, Nourhan Ouzounian, eds, *The heritage of Armenian literature. Vol. 3: From the Eighteenth Century to Modern Times* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), Jasmin Dum-Tragut, *Armenian: Modern Eastern Armenian* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co, 2009), J.F. Coakley, "Printing in the Mission Field," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 9.1 (1998): 5–34, Barbara J. Merguerian, "The ABCFM press and the devel-opment of the Western Armenian language," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 9.1 (1998): 35–49.

The wedding of the literarized Bulgarian (South Slavonic) language to the emerging nationalist movement in the nineteenth century is the last example from within the Ottoman Empire.[23] Like Kurdish and Aramaic, vernacular Bulgarian saw an initial phase of literarization starting in the seventeenth century. After that, "religious edifying literature" started to be published, collectively referred to as "the damascenes" after Damaskinos Studites, the Greek author of a text collection (*Thesauros*) that was translated into New Bulgarian in the early seventeenth century. These and later translations of other religious texts had their origins in monastic circles, with monks in the centre of the movement, focusing on the "religious and didactic message."[24] This was also the case in a curious contribution from the mid-eighteenth century by the Athonite monk Paisij Hilendarsky. His proto-nationalist historical work, based on Bulgarian sources available in the monasteries, does not seem to have found much resonance at the time, and although it was printed in 1844 the book (in a mixed language closer to Church Slavonic than to vernacular Bulgarian) had little impact on the so-called Bulgarian Renaissance that was to follow in the nineteenth century. During this "Renaissance" anti-Greek nationalist themes and aims were connected to standardization and literarization of the modern language. Only then did Modern Bulgarian develop into a truly supra-regional standardized literary language.[25]

4   Imperial Languages among Non-Muslims

So far, all these examples represent cases in which literized vernaculars of specific communities (mostly but not exclusively non-Muslim) succeeded in gaining ground *vis-à-vis* the classical (liturgical) language in that same community. In some instances the newly literized vernacular replaced the classical language for scholarly and religious communication, but more often the existing religious functions of the classical language remained intact while the vernacular was used to expand the literary and scholarly genres within that community, usually starting in the field of religion with new types of hymns, saints' lives, Bible translations and catechisms. In a subsequent stage, mostly in

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23   Roger Gyllin, *The Genesis of the Modern Bulgarian Literary Language* (Ph.D. Uppsala University: Stockholm 1991), Denis Vovchenko, *Containing Balkan Nationalism: Imperial Russia and Ottoman Christians, 1856–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). According to Gyllin, "codification" and "standardization" in grammars did not take place until the 19th c. (25–7).

24   Gyllin, *The Genesis,* 46–69, esp. 60–1.

25   Gyllin, *The Genesis,* 69–103.

the second half of the nineteenth century, the new language was used to create a secular literature, including novels as well as scholarly and political texts, translations of Western originals as well as original texts in these vernaculars. However, despite the dominance of this pattern in a number of Christian and Jewish communities, it was not the only pattern available. As important in accommodating the needs of modernizing Jewish and Christian communities was the ongoing adoption and adaptation of the most important literary and political languages of the region, that is, Turkish and Arabic.[26]

Although Christian literature in Arabic is most relevant to the discussion of the use of Arabic in the twentieth century, we should also pay attention to the various literatures in Ottoman Turkish. At least four non-Muslim communities are known to have produced Turkish texts, texts which only recently have started to receive proper scholarly attention.[27] This is especially true for the Turkish texts produced in the "Rum" or "Greek" Orthodox communities of Anatolia and Istanbul. This text corpus is usually called "Karamanlidika," referring to the original centre of this community in the Karaman region in Southern Anatolia. The term Karamanlidika came to refer especially to the defining characteristic of this corpus, i.e., these Turkish texts are written in Greek rather than in Ottoman (Arabic-based) script.[28] Though the bulk of these texts

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26   A similar cause could be made for the use of Persian by Jews and Christians in the Iranian world; the literature on this phenomenon is more limited, perhaps because of the relatively small communities. See Vera Moreen *In Queen Esther's Garden: An Anthology of Judeo-Persian Literature* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2000), esp. 9–21.

27   For a general overview of these literatures (except for Syro-Turkish), see Johann Strauss, "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th–20th Centuries)?," *Arabic Middle Eastern Literatures* 6,1 (2003), 39–76, and three recently edited volumes: Evangelia Balta, Mehmet Ölmez, eds, *Between Religion and Language: Turkish-Speaking Christians, Jews, and Greek-Speaking Muslims and Catholics in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: Eren, 2011), Evangelia Balta with Mehmet Ölmez, *Cultural Encounters in the Turkish-Speaking Communities of the Late Ottoman Empire* (the ISIS Press Istanbul, 2014), and Evangelia Balta, Matthias Kappler, eds, *Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Karamanlidika Studies* (Nicosia, 11th–13th September 2008) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2010). Some of its earliest students included members of the Assumptionists in Istanbul and Athens, see Stavros Th. Anestides, "The Centre for Asia Minor Studies and Books Printed in Karamanli. A Contribution to the Compilation and the Bibliography of a Significant Literature," Balta & Kappler, *Cries and Whispers*, 147–153 and Johann Strauss, "Is Karamanli Literature Part of a 'Christian-Turkish (Turco-Christian) Literature'?," Balta & Kappler, *Cries and Whispers*, 152–200, here 160; they refer to the work of the Fathers Séverien Salaville, Eustace Louis (Louis Corn) and Eugène Daleggio (Athens).

28   On this discussion, see Matthias Kappler, "Transcription Text, Regraphization, Variety? – Reflections on 'Karamanlidika'," in Éva Á. Csató, Astrid Menz, Fikret Turan, *Spoken Ottoman in Mediator Texts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 119–128.

were published and printed in the nineteenth century, the origins of the corpus go back to the eighteenth century. The texts often resulted from the efforts of a few intrepid priests or monks intending to elevate their flocks.[29] In the nineteenth century, the emerging rivalry with and opposition to the upcoming Hellenization (Pan-Hellenic) movement gave further impetus to the use of an additional, non-Greek, language.[30] Already in its earliest phase grammatical studies played an important role.[31]

The same had happened in the Anatolian Armenian and Anatolian Syriac Orthodox communities. Many of these Christians were Turkish-speaking, perhaps partly because in earlier periods some Turkish speakers had converted to Christianity and retained their language, partly because for a variety of socio-economic and cultural reasons Christians of Anatolia had adopted the Turkish *lingua franca* of the region. The Syro-Turkish corpus is fairly small and dates mostly to the second half of the nineteenth century, when some Syriac Christians began to adopt Turkish in their communities. Most important are the journals that were published towards the end of the nineteenth century.[32] The Armeno-Turkish corpus is larger, with precursors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here too, the bulk of publications date from the nineteenth century, including a number of prominent journals. American Protestant missionaries played an important role in publishing

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29   For earlier examples in Anatolia, see Anna Ballian, "Karamanli Patronage in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: the Case of the Village of Germir/Kermira," Balta & Kappler, *Cries and Whispers,* 45–62, as well as various articles on the activities of the eighteenth-century priest Serapheim Pissidios, Ioannis Theocharides, "Unexploited Sources on Serapheim Pissidio," Balta & Kappler, *Cries and Whispers*, 125–134.

30   For an extensive overview, see Strauss, "Is Karamanli Literature ...?," 152–200; for the nineteenth-century nationalization and standardization in opposition to Greek, see Sia Anagnostopoulou, "Greek Diplomatic Authorities in Anatolia," in Balta & Kappler, *Cries and Whispers* 63–78 and Şehnaz Şişmanoğ-lu Şimşek, "The *Anatoli* Newspaper and the Heyday of the Karamanli Press," in Balta & Kappler, *Cries and Whispers*, 109–123.

31   Matthias Kappler, "The Place of the *Grammatiki Tis Tourkikis Glossis* (1730) by Kaneloos Spanós in Ottoman Greek Grammarianism and its Importance for Karamanlidika Studies," in Balta & Ölmez, *Cultural Encounters*, 105–117.

32   Benjamin Trigona-Harany, "Syro-Ottoman: a description of Ottoman Turkish in Syriac Letters," in Balta, Ölmez (eds.), *Between Religion and Language* (2011), 15–41; Benjamin Trigona-Harany, "A Bibliography of Süryânî Periodicals in Ottoman Turkish," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 12.2 (2009): 287–300. Note that Turkish had been used by Syriac Christians in the Mongol period, in Persia and Central Asia, see Pier Giorgio Borbone, "Syroturcica 1: The Önggüds and the Syriac Language," in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone. Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, edited by George A. Kiraz (Piscataway, NY 2008) and Borbone, "Syroturcica 2: The Priest Särgis in the White Pagoda," *Monumenta Serica* 56,1 (2008): 487–503.

such texts, especially in Istanbul, where Turkish was the dominant language among Armenians.[33]

The Jewish community of Istanbul, while retaining the use of Spanish-based Ladino that reflected their origins in the Iberian Peninsula, Turkish had become the first or second language of a large part of the community. In the seventeenth century, Turkish had been written in Hebrew letters, most notably in a translation of the Bible produced in Constantinople, although this may represent an isolated work commissioned in the context of a learned circle of mostly Dutch and British scholars.[34] Again, the nineteenth century became the period in which the number of such publications increased considerably.[35]

Therefore the terms Greco-Turkish or Karamanlidika, Armeno-Turkish and Syro-Turkish refer to the use of a specific communal *script* familiar to the religious group that is using it, *not* to a specific form of the language in grammatical, syntactical or semantic terms. At the same time, however, the ongoing study of these various corpora indicates that there are indeed significant differences between the linguistic characteristics of these texts and those of the Ottoman Turkish corpus in general.[36] Some of these differences concern the semantic field of the vocabulary (biblical and liturgical terminology), whereas in other cases there is grammatical influence from the texts that were translated (i.e., in translations of the Greek/Hebrew Bible). More important for the topic of this introduction is the fact that a number of Greco-Turkish texts display elements of a more vernacular, local Anatolian form of Turkish *vis-à-vis* the standardized Ottoman Turkish. Usually these belong to the older strata of the corpus. In general, it seems that the texts written in communal scripts, especially the more formal or literary, often were closer to the standardized Ottoman Turkish and to each other than the different scripts would suggest. Thus, whereas some texts from these corpora when transcribed into the standard Ottoman, Arabic-based script would be difficult to understand for a cosmopolitan reader of Ottoman Turkish, the bulk would be readable – in some cases easily so. In fact, it has been suggested that nineteenth-century Armeno-Turkish novels,

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33   Masayuki Ueno, "One script, two languages: Garabed Panosian and his Armeno-Turkish newspapers in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 52:4 (2016): 605–622; Benjamin Trigona-Harany, *The Ottoman Süryânî from 1908 to 1914* (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), Hacikyan, *The Heritage of Armenian literature*, vol. 3, 58–60.

34   Hannah Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible Translation by Yaḥya bin ʾIsḥaḳ, also called Ḥaki (1659)* (Leiden: Het Oosters Instituut 4, 1994). The primary commissioner was the well-known Johannes Amos Comenius from Bohemia who in the 1650s–60s was active in Amsterdam.

35   J.P. Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 26–30.

36   Strauss, "Is Karamanli Literature …?," 190–194.

among which translations of Western novels, stimulated non-Armenians to learn the Armenian script in order to be able to read them.[37]

In all four of these groups, the use of Turkish in communal script became less popular in the late nineteenth century. At that time, Ottoman ideologies expressly aimed at including non-Muslims as full citizens of the Ottoman state encouraged Jews and Christians to fully participate in the literary production of the state. This made the Arabo-Ottoman script a logical choice over and above the communal alphabets, especially for texts that were not specifically religious. This practice reached its culmination in the early days of the Young Turks, when after the revolution of 1908 the ideal of Ottoman citizenship encouraged the creation of publishing houses and journals in which a modernized form of Ottoman Turkish was used. However, this brief period came to an end when in the years leading up to the First World War the Young Turks increasingly advocated an ethnicized and Islamicized Turkification, rather than the earlier inclusive 'Ottomanization.' Soon this was followed by accusations of treason and disloyalty to the state directed at many who were considered non-Turk and non-Muslim, especially the Armenians. During the war, Armenians and other Christians in the Turkish-speaking regions became suspect and suffered various degrees of massacre, rape and expulsion. For the Rum Orthodox Christians the culmination came during the League of Nations-supervised population exchange of 1923, when they were expelled *en masse* to Greece. Thus, by 1924, when the Ottoman state was abolished and replaced by the Turkish Republic, most of Anatolia was purged of its Christian population. The non-Muslim Turkish-speakers that survived usually ended up in environments in which they were forced quickly to learn other languages: mostly Arabic for those in the emerging Arab states, and Armenian and Greek for those in Soviet Armenia (alongside Russian) and Greece. The few Jewish and Christian Turkish speakers that remained in Turkey adapted quickly to the newly modernized Turkish language with its Latin alphabet, thus relinquishing their Ottoman heritage, as did most Turks of the time. At the same time, the classical religious languages in their traditional forms were cherished and taught in churches and synagogues as much as was possible under Turkish governmental control.[38]

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37   Strauss, "Who Read What," 53–55.

38   Whereas the Armenian and Syriac genocides and the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923 have generated a considerable amount of research, the history of the non-Muslim communities in the Turkish state has so far been underresearched. For the Armenians, see Bahar Rumelili and Fuat Keyman, "Enacting multi-layered citizenship: Turkey's Armenians' struggle for justice and equality," *Citizenship Studies* 20,1 (2016): 67–83, for the Syriac-Orthodox see Naures Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses Among the Assyrian/Syriac Diaspora* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011).

The developments in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire were similar to those in the Turkish-speaking regions. In the regions where Arabic was the dominant religious, cultural and administrative language, Jews and Christians had for many centuries participated in the language of the majority by writing, copying and later publishing books in it. Here, too, significant parts of this literature were written in communal scripts: Hebrew for Judeo-Arabic, Syriac for Syro-Arabic (usually called *Garshuni*, also spelled *Karshuni*). The two largest groups of Christians, however, i.e., the Rum Christians of the patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch and the Copts of Egypt, who wrote all or most of their new texts in Arabic, had from an early stage used the Arabic alphabet for their Arabic texts. This was not for want of a suitable communal script: the Greek and Coptic scripts continued to be used for the (mostly liturgical) texts in those languages.

The different linguistic practices among the Rum Orthodox Christians of the Levant may be explained, at least to some degree, from the early date at which they adopted Arabic as their primary spoken and literary language: probably in the late seventh or eighth century, soon after the Muslim conquests. The fact that there were already Christian Arabic-speaking groups *before* the rise of Islam helped Arabic to quickly gain ground among the Christians of the Levant, for cultural as much as socio-political reasons.[39] This enabled the upper layers of the Christian communities to participate in the emerging Arabic culture of the Omayyad and Abbasid courts, with Christians in the roles of political advisors, personal physicians, and prominent scholars of science, philosophy and translation. Scholars have used the term "Christian Arabic" to characterize the particular form of Arabic of these writings, because it tends to deviate from the stated norm of Quranic Classical Arabic used in Muslim texts.[40] When texts written by Jews are included as well these types in 'substandard' Arabic are often styled "Middle Arabic," as opposed to "Classical Arabic."[41] As Khan notes, "Middle" here refers to its position on a continuum between "Classical"

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[39] On the origins of Arabic Christianity and its relation to Syriac Christianity, see Sidney Griffith, "What does Mecca have to do with Urhōy? Syriac Christianity, Islamic Origins, and the Qurʾān," in *Syriac Encounters: Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium, Duke University, 26–29 June 2011*, edited by M. Doerfler, E. Fiano, K. Smith (Peeters: Louvain, 2015), 369–99.

[40] The basic source for Christian Arabic texts continues to be Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–1951); the most recent bibliographical update is found in Herman Teule and Vic Schepens, "A Thematic Christian Arabic Bibliography, 1940–1989," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* (2015) 67–1/2, 143–224. On Judeo-Arabic, see Benjamin Hary, "Judeo-Arabic in its Sociolinguistic Setting," *Israel Oriental Studies* 15 (1995): 129–155.

[41] Geoffrey Khan, "47. Middle Arabic," in Weninger, *The Semitic Languages*, 817–835.

and "vernacular," not to a certain period of time between the "Classical" and the "Modern" period. Just as important, the use of this "middle" form was not restricted to non-Muslims. Even though Islamic texts generally tended to conform to the classical norm more strictly than the average Christian or Jewish text would, Muslim authors occasionally also employed a more vernacular register. As with Christians and Jews, this choice depended on genre and intended audience as much as on the writing skills of the author.[42] Unlike Turkish written by Christians and Jews, many Middle Arabic texts were written in the Arabic script, especially in the Rum Orthodox and Coptic communities. While most of these texts were written primarily for internal audiences, more than was the case with Turkish, Christian Arabic writing became part of Arabic literature, creating a 'Republic of Letters' that was not confined to co-religionists, but open to all who could read and write Arabic.[43]

The other way around, Rum Christians in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire were increasingly described as "Arab Christians," with Arabic being seen as more important than Greek. This was further stimulated by Russian Orthodox support for Rum Christians; they too favoured Arabic over Greek in their educational programs.[44] We will return to the Greek-Arabic struggles in the next section, but here it is important to note that many of the Rum Orthodox clergy had already adopted Arabic for parts of the liturgy in an earlier phase. The use of Arabic was furthered by Catholic missionaries, even

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42   Jacques Grand'Henry, "Christian Middle Arabic," in: *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, edited by Lutz Edzard, Rudolf de Jong; J. Lentin & J. Grand'Henry, *Moyen arabe et variétés mixtes de l'arabe à travers l'histoire* (Peeters, Louvain-la-Neuve, 2008), Holes, *Modern Arabic*, 36–50; Kees Versteegh, "Religion as a Linguistic Variable in Christian Greek, Latin, and Arabic," in Nora S. Eggen and Rana Issa, *Philologists in the World: A Festschrift in Honour of Gunvor Mejdell* (Oslo: Novus Press, 2017), 57–88.

43   Muhsin J. al-Musawi, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters: Arabic Knowledge Construction* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015).

44   Denis Vovchenko, "Creating Arab Nationalism? Russia and Greece in Ottoman Syria and Palestine (1840–1909)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 49 (2013): 901–918, Elena Astafieva, "Imaginäre und wirkliche Präsenz Rußlands im Nahen Osten in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts (avec résumé français)," in *Europäer in der Levante – Zwischen Politik, Wissenschaft und Religion (19.-20. Jahrhundert) / Des Européens au Levant – Entre politique, science et religion (XIXᵉ–XXᵉ siècles)*, edited by Dominique Trimbur (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004), 161–186. On the Russian impact on Palestine, see earlier literature including Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914: Church and Politics in the Near East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969) and Walter Zander, *Israel and the Holy Places of Christendom* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson: 1971).

more so when printing of these liturgies became possible.[45] While much printing of the earlier days was done in Rome or Vienna, some churches established their own Arabic presses, the Maronites in Quzhayya (Lebanon) in 1610, the Rum Christians in Aleppo in 1706, and ash-Shuwayr (Lebanon) in 1733. These presses published a wide range of religious literature.[46] In the nineteenth century, authors such as Butrus al-Bustani (who was closely connected to the Protestant mission in Beirut) contributed to the further development of Arabic literature, which included all kinds of new scholarly, scientific, political and literary genres, as part of the movement that now commonly is called the *Naḥḍa*.[47] Though Levantine Christians of various denominations played important roles in these early phases of the *Naḥḍa*, these Christian authors self-consciously inscribed themselves in an already existing secularizing movement of authors from all religious and political backgrounds who sought to emancipate Arabic from its classical heritage, and transform it into a modern language of literature, science and politics.[48] And indeed, politics was an important part of it, because it also became an instrument of the emancipation of the 'Arabic' provinces *vis-à-vis* the Ottoman centre, providing Arab nationalists of the early

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45 Constantin A. Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans: 1516–1831* (Jordanville NY: Holy Trinity Seminary Press, 2016; tr. Russian, Moscow 2012), Carsten Walbiner, "Monastic Reading and Learning in Eighteenth-Century Bilad al-Sham: Some Evidence from the Monastery of Al-Shawayr (Mount Lebanon)," *Arabica* 6,4 (2004): 462–77, and Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001); it is not always clear whether manuscripts and printed books with Arabic translations of the liturgy testify to existing practices, or should be seen as attempts to change current practices initiated by local clergy or church hierarchies, sometimes in the context of Catholic missions.

46 Geoffrey Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe / Arabischer Frühdruck in Europa," in Hanebutt-Benz et al., *Sprachen des Nahen Ostens und die Druckrevolution*, 129–150 and Dagmar Glass & Geoffrey Roper, "Arabischer Buch- und Zeitungsdruck in der Arabischen Welt / Arabic Book and Newspaper Printing in the Arab World," *idem*, 177–226.

47 Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), Geoffrey Roper, "The beginnings of Arabic printing by the ABCFM, 1822–1841," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 9.1 (1998): 50–68. On the *naḥda*, see also Rana Issa, "The Arabic Language and Syro-Lebanese National Identity: Searching in Buṭrus al-Bustānī's *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*," *Journal of Semitic Studies* LXII/2 (2017): 465–484, and Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus Al-Bustani," *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 11 (1980): 287–304.

48 See especially the work of Stephen Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), "Towards a Critical Epistemology of the Nahda," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 269–298 and "Butrus al-Bustani's Nafir Suriya and the National Subject as Effect," in *Butrus al-Bustani: Spirit of the Age*, edited by Adel Beshara (Melbourne: Phoenix Publishing 2014), 275–309.

twentieth century with a convenient tool not only for communication, but also with an instrument to forge an 'Arab' people out of the ethnic, regional and religious diversity of these Arab provinces.[49]

Compared to the Levantine Rum and Maronite Christians, the (East) Syriac Christians of the Church of the East, the (West) Syriac Orthodox Church, and their respective Catholic offshoots the Chaldean Church and the Syriac Catholic Church, went through a somewhat different development. In the Middle Ages, in both the East and West Syriac Church, Arabic was an important language although it never completely replaced Classical Syriac. The ongoing significance of Syriac also showed in the popularity that Syro-Arabic or Garshuni (which co-existed with texts transmitted in Arabic script) enjoyed in both churches. The major upheavals of the fourteenth century, however, considerably reduced the geographical spread of the Syriac churches. The Church of the East was hit particularly hard, especially in Arabic- and Persian-speaking areas. Early in the fifteenth century its remaining dioceses were found mostly in the Kurdish region, with modest communities in the plains surrounding it, roughly corresponding to the eastern Ottoman provinces Diyarbakir, Van and Mosul and Northwestern Persian Azerbaijan. In most of these remaining dioceses, a modern vernacular of Aramaic (the Neo-Syriac or Neo-Aramaic mentioned above) was used. Speakers of Arabic were found mostly in the Mosul area. For the Syriac Orthodox the number of Arabic speakers was slightly higher, with more substantial communities remaining in the heartland of today's Syria, in and near cities such as Homs, Damascus and Aleppo. In parts of southeastern Turkey, in and around the city of Mardin, Arabic was also still spoken. Although Classical Syriac was the main language of writing, Arabic continued to be used, mostly in Garshuni forms.[50]

In the Ottoman period Arabic started to gain ground. Alongside the first attempts to write the vernacular Aramaic (as discussed above), it was Arabic that became the most important language of religious and cultural innovation, mostly in connection with the Catholic movement. Especially among the Church of the East, Arabic speakers were the first to be interested in contacts with the Catholic Church. As with all Catholic movements among Middle Eastern Christians various factors were at play, such as the wish to establish contacts with the wider Christian world in the Middle East and beyond, the wish to modernize religion by taking inspiration from other Christian

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49   Dagmar Glaß, "48. Creating a Modern Standard Language from Medieval Tradition: The *Naḥda* and the Arabic Academies," in Weninger, *The Semitic Languages,* 835–844.

50   Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures.* On Garshuni, see George Kiraz, *Tūrāṣ mamllā; A Grammar of the Syriac Language* (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 291–322.

traditions, and the wish to acquire political and economic allies in a world in which the downsides of Ottoman rule, which tended to favour Muslims, could be mitigated by the interventions of Western consuls and foreign missionaries. Arabic served these aims well and there is a fairly strong correlation between the groups that over the centuries converted to Catholicism, and those that used Arabic as their primary language of speaking and writing.[51]

All over the Arab-speaking Middle East, the vast majority of Jewish communities over the centuries had adopted Arabic as their mother tongue and as an important written language. While Hebrew and Aramaic continued to be used for specific religious purposes, and while at the boundaries of the Arab world other vernaculars were in use (Aramaic in Kurdistan, Berber in North-Africa), most Jewish communities lived in urban environments in which Arabic was the norm. Thus, the cover term "Judeo-Arabic" for Arabic in Hebrew (*Rashi*) script refers to a linguistic practice that comes in different shapes and forms, depending on where in the Arab world it originated. On the whole, however, it differs from Classical Arabic in the same way as Christian Arabic does, and therefore is usually defined as "Middle Arabic," distinct from "Classical Arabic" in vocabulary and semantics, in grammar and in orthography. Depending on local developments Judeo-Arabic texts display more or less influence from local Arabic vernaculars, vernaculars that in many places were somewhat different from the Arabic vernaculars of their Muslim and Christian neighbours. Unlike what happened in the Christian communities, however, it seems that the first wave of communal and linguistic modernization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not lead to a further standardization and printing of the written Arabic of the Jews in the Middle East. The difference between Jews and Christians in this respect became even more pronounced when in the nineteenth century organizations such as the France-based Alliance Israélite, and later also the Great Britain-based Anglo-Jewish Association, started to invest heavily in Jewish education in the Middle East. Their main emphasis was on French, alongside Hebrew, with English becoming more important in the twentieth century. Rather than Arabic, therefore, French and English were

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51   Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures;* Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "Classical Syriac, Neo-Aramaic and Arabic in the Church of the East and the Chaldean Church between 1500 and 1800," in *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting*, edited by Holger Gzella, Margaretha L. Folmer, (Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission 50; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 335–352, Amir Harrak, *Syriac and Garshuni Inscriptions of Iraq, vol. 1: Text; vol. 2: Plates* (Recueil des inscriptions syriaques; Paris: de Boccard, 2010), Bernard Heyberger, "Livres et pratiques de la lecture chez les Chrétiens (Syrie, Liban), xvie–xviiie siècles," in "Livres et lecture dans le monde ottoman," edited by Frédéric Hirzel, *remmm* 87/88 (2007), 209–23.

added to Hebrew as languages of communication among the Jewish communities of the time.[52]

In this regard, the Jewish communities, perhaps by virtue of their already extensive transnational networks and the ongoing dominance of Hebrew in religious circles, were ahead of the Christians and later also of Muslims who made a similar move to French and English in the early twentieth century. Compared to the early Ottoman period, when Arabic and Turkish as cosmopolitan languages (in Pollock's sense of languages that created trans-local and trans-regional linguistic communities) competed with local vernaculars and sacred languages, the late-Ottoman modernization added colonial languages such as Italian, French and later English to the mix. These new colonial cosmopolitan languages provided an alternative not only to nationalist vernaculars such as Armenian and Modern Aramaic, but also to nationalist and vernacular interpretations of Arabic and Turkish.[53] From the late eighteenth century onwards, Italian, French and Russian as used by the European powers gradually extended their influence over the Middle East. Whereas in the early Ottoman period Italian was still very important due to the trading connections with the Viennese and Genoese, French gradually replaced Italian for diplomatic and ecclesial purposes, although both Latin and Italian lingered on as languages of the Roman Catholic Church, as described by Leyla Dakhli in this volume. Russian grew in importance in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the interactions between the Orthodox Middle East and imperial Russia intensified. While the full impact of these languages did not reach the majority of the population until far into the twentieth century, when French was forced to yield to English, in the Christian and Jewish worlds the impact of European languages and literature was felt already long before that. Translations, initially from Italian and French, later also from English, played an important role in missionary work, and these mostly religious productions in turn stimulated the emergence and development of a secular literature in Arabic, Turkish and the various vernaculars.

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52   Goldstein-Sabbah, this volume; Jacob Mansour, *The Jewish Baghdadi dialect: Studies and Texts in the Judaeo-Arabic dialect of Baghdad* (Or Yehuda: The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, the Institute for Research on Iraqi Jewry, 1991), Benjamin Hary, "Judeo-Arabic: A Diachronic Reexamination," *International Journal for the Sociology of Language* 163 (2003): 61–76.

53   Cf. Hoda A. Yousef, *Composing Egypt: Reading, Writing, and the Emergence of a Modern Nation, 1870–1930* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 140–1: "In this atmosphere [colonial Egypt, ca 1900], language became a natural arena of cultural, economic, and political competition: Arabic became the language of national and cultural pride, just as English and French were the languages of social and political power."

5   A Few Conclusions on the Ottoman Period

Looking back on the various Ottoman cases discussed so far, the first conclusion must be that vernacularization played a much larger role than has been recognized so far, not only in the nineteenth century, but also in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Religious specialists everywhere took vernacular languages as their starting point in developing new forms of written language. Some of these newly written vernaculars were unique to the specific groups using them, for instance Aramaic, Kurdish, Armenian or Bulgarian. Others took up or continued to write in the major literary languages of the region: Turkish, Arabic and Persian. Notably, many of the texts written by Christians and Jews in this period self-consciously used vernacular forms of these cosmopolitan languages rather than adopting the most formal and standardized levels of the language. The distinction, therefore, between writing vernacular and cosmopolitan languages, however important for initial analysis, creates the risk of overlooking the shared interest in modernization and vernacularization, in developing a form of writing that is close to the spoken language of the majority of the people, with the explicit aim of engaging a larger group of people in the modernization of religion and society.

This leads to the second observation, namely that all these forms of linguistic and literary innovation in one way or another were initiated by religious men and a few women. It was local bishops, priests, monks, nuns, mullahs, rabbis and religious teachers of all kinds, in tandem with or in opposition to missionaries and educationalists from outside, who initiated this important phase of linguistic and educational renewal. They, rather than secular rulers, were the ones that spurred this important phase of what for the Middle East (as for Europe) is as much "early" as it is "pre"-modern. The first impetus to literarization and wider education was intimately connected with the essentially religious aim of deepening religious knowledge and religious commitment. As Leezenberg reminds us: this process "also involves new linguistic ideologies that present vernaculars as eloquent, expressive and worthy for the writing of high literature."[54] Note that whereas we have stressed the local impetuses for these developments, the above also makes clear, in line with Pollock, that vernacularizations always in one way or another react to cosmopolitan models of literature and literization and so never develop in a vacuum.[55]

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[54]   Leezenberg, this volume.

[55]   Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*, 26.

Thirdly, this educational and paraenetic aim explains the preferential use of communal scripts for the cosmopolitan languages as much as for the local vernaculars. This habit has often been explained as a form of early identitarian practice, as setting oneself visibly apart from others who use the same language. In the same identitarian vein it has been suggested that the practice of using communal scripts might have been a way to hide what was written from outsiders who had no business with it. In light of the overall religious-educational impetus of these early forms of vernacularization and literarization, it seems more likely that the primary reason for the use of communal scripts was a pragmatic one: the fact that this was the script that was easiest for people to use. It was the script authors from an early age had been trained to read and write, and it was the script that its potential readership would have known, if only superficially, since childhood. Every other script would have been more difficult to write and teach. This rootedness in existing educational practices is confirmed by the fact that as soon as general and standardized education took hold in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the communal scripts in use for Arabic started to disappear. From then on, for the majority of readers and writers their first letters were Arabic (for both Arabic and Turkish), and hence the practical need for a different script disappeared. It is only when in the first decades of the twentieth century other scripts became the pragmatic option that these communal scripts in some contexts (for example the Syro-Ottoman and Syro-Arabic) became part of identitarian practices, as a conscious choice over and against the pragmatic use of the everyday scripts.[56]

Fourthly, it is important to note that the near-disappearance of the communal scripts for Arabic and Turkish is related to, but does not exactly parallel, the gradual disappearance of the communally distinct forms of Arabic and Turkish. Already in the nineteenth century these communal forms of Arabic and Turkish started to give way to forms much closer to the literary forms of the majority, with the various forms of language being used alongside each other, depending on author and intended audience. In this way, the more informal and modern forms of Arabic and Turkish that were used by Armenian, Syriac and Rum Orthodox communities may have contributed considerably to the new forms of Ottoman Turkish and Ottoman Arabic that emerged in the

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56   Tijmen Baarda, "Standardized Arabic as a Post-Nahḍa Common Ground: Mattai bar Paulus and his Use of Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni," in Goldstein-Sabbah, Murre-van den Berg, *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere*, 71–95; Kiraz, *Tūrāṣ mamllā*; Moreen, *In Queen Esther's Garden*, 10–11, for Judeo-Persian in Hebrew script adds that this writing tradition existed prior to the introduction of Arabic script in Iran, and thus speaks of "retention" rather than adoption of Hebrew script for this language.

nineteenth century. Over time, these intercommunal and modernized forms of Arabic and Turkish formed the basis for the standardized and nationalized languages of the twentieth century, being forged out of the contributions of writers and readers from most if not all communities of the Ottoman Empire.

Fifth and finally, the above overview also indicates that the linguistic situation in the Middle East was not only complex but also extremely fluid. If anything becomes clear from the above, it is that belonging to one community does not a priori lead to the use of one specific language (or language variety) and literary tradition. At the same time communal choices and communal boundaries remain important for understanding the developments of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. While recent scholarly discussions about the nineteenth-century transformations of the Ottoman communal system in the context of the Tanzimat reforms have focused on the hardening and politicization of communal boundaries,[57] the literary developments indicate that at the same time, and not necessarily in opposition to it, the first outlines of a common, overarching literary world were created. Some of the very local and communal vernacular impulses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries transformed into separatist nationalisms, as with the Greeks, the Bulgarians and the Armenians. At the same time, however, parts of the Rum-Greek and Armenian communities participated in the emerging Ottoman literary world, writing in Turkish and Arabic in ways that were not strictly communal. A variety of influences, from within the communities, from co-religionists elsewhere and from inside and outside the region, subtly pushed language use in this or that direction, especially because little to no governmental or communal force was applied to stimulate the use of one language or another, or one form of a particular language or another.

6   Nationalizing Language

Although the role of the state in language matters was fairly limited up to the early twentieth century, this changed after the First World War. Language became a political tool in the hands of the British and French Mandate governments entrusted with the task of setting up new states, and just as much in the hands of local and regional nationalists within and outside the governmental structures. As one may expect, these tendencies were in no way clear-cut or

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57   Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism. Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000). Makdisi himself describes the opposite movement in *Artillery of Heaven* (quoted above).

unidirectional, even if all of them were guided by ideals of homogenization, standardization and vernacularization. The Foucauldian term "governmentalization," as used by Leezenberg to characterize the developments of Kurdish in North Iraq, attempts to capture this characteristic amalgam as it developed in the first half of the twentieth century, stressing the mutual dependence and interaction between governmental and non-governmental actors.[58]

Before we zoom in on the nascent Arab states it is worthwhile to start with a brief look at the developments in Anatolia, where the new Turkish state transformed Ottoman Turkish into the Turkish of the new state. In a radical departure from earlier phases of the language, a new Latin alphabet-based script was forced upon readers and writers in 1928. In addition, the vocabulary was purged of 'foreign' words as much as possible, chiefly among them words from Arabic and Persian. This radical modernization, standardization and simplification of the language certainly made it accessible to a much wider readership than in the pre-war period, but it also barred modern readers from earlier Turkish literature in its wide variety. What is more, symbolically if not effectively, it separated the new Turkey from the wider Middle East, its former Arab provinces and its neighbour Persia, implying that the new Turkey looked north and west more than south and east.[59]

This radical linguistic reform paralleled the wished-for Turkification of society as a whole, which even after massacre, expulsion and population exchange was not homogeneously Turkish in the ethnic sense. In addition to small remnants of the communities that had been targeted during the First World War and after, i.e., Greeks, Armenians, Syriacs and Chaldeans, Jews and especially Kurds were now also more conspicuous than ever as outsiders *vis-à-vis* the Turkish state. While the possibilities for using their communal languages and scripts were severely limited by the state, Turkish became the norm for reading and writing all over the country by virtue of an obligatory school system. As described by Emmanuel Szurek in this volume, one of the elements of Turkification was the proposal for a general introduction of Turkish or Turkified surnames.[60] His contribution makes clear that this plan contained some contradictory elements and was not only targeted at non-Muslim minorities. In the first phase, in the summer months of 1934, the aim was to have everyone change their names to fit to Turkish patterns, that is, to discard names reflecting what were perceived as foreign identities. This included names such

58   Leezenberg, this volume.

59   Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

60   Emmanuel Szurek, this volume.

as Mehmet-the-Kurd, but also name endings reflecting the Ottoman past, such as *-pasha* and *-bey*, and those specific to particular subgroups, such as the Armenian *-ian/-yan* or Persian *-zade*. The Surname Reform proposal was coupled with a reform of place names, in which non-Turkish names were replaced by Turkish ones. Rather surprisingly, and hardly noticed by scholars so far, by the end of 1934 the phrase demanding removal or change of all foreign names and suffixes was replaced by a much less far-going phrase, mentioning only "names of foreign races and nations" (thus, from the examples above, only "Mehmet-the-Kurd"). Szurek interprets this rather sudden change as simultaneously allowing non-Muslim minorities to keep their own names *and* keeping them separate and distinct, barring them from assimilation, and focusing on differentiation. More research is needed here, but it seems that over time the drive towards linguistic homogenization again became dominant, excluding most non-Turkish names from public and legal use.

Such large-scale governmental homogenizations were never attempted in the regions that were governed by the British and French, although there, too, linguistic ideologies and practices played a fundamental role in the creation of the new nation states. The main focus of this volume is on the areas that were under British-Mandate government, and therefore the French areas provide some interesting material for comparison. This is particularly true for Lebanon, which provides a fascinating, if unique, case of a linguistic conundrum. As in many other regions where French rule was instated,[61] French became the language of choice in government and education, even if Arabic was taught in most schools at the initial levels. Higher education, however, was conducted solely in French, so that "being educated" became almost synonymous with "being Francophone." This focus on French was accompanied by a somewhat convoluted relationship with the newly standardized *fuṣḥa*. This form of Arabic, as was indicated in the previous section, had strong connections to Beirut and Lebanon as a whole, with Christians such as Butrus al-Bustani being among those espousing it. As mentioned in Salameh's article in this volume and in his more extensive monograph on the same topic, in the 1920s and 1930s *fuṣḥa* or Standard Arabic became politically associated with a pan-Arab nationalism that connected Lebanon with the wider Arab world, in particular

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61   Hans-Georg Wolf, "British and French language and educational policies in the Mandate and Trusteeship Territories," *Language Sciences* 30,5 (2008): 553–574. Although he writes about the C-Mandates, Wolf's analysis of the differences between the French (top-down francophonie) and the British areas (more space for local actors and local languages) basically seems to hold true for the Middle Eastern Mandates as well.

with Syria as a whole.[62] Peter Wien's contribution on Fu'ad al-Khatib, who was originally from Lebanon (the Shouf) introduces the case of one such Sunni Muslim contributor to a linguistically based pan-Arabism. According to Wien, al-Khatib was an uprooted man seeking the foundations of communal identity in the pure language of the Hejaz, creating the "chronotope of an idealized, historically and geographically defined location intersecting with that of the author."[63]

To many, the French language symbolized the opposite: not an Arab identity looking southeast to the Hejaz, but a distinct Lebanese identity that stood at the crossroads of (Middle) Eastern and Western influences. This was usually framed as the typical "Phoenician heritage" of the country that separated it from the rest of the Arab Middle East. In turn, this Phoenicianism gave birth to new linguistic theories supporting a uniquely Lebanese language: either a "Syriac" or "Aramaic" language that supposedly was only recently lost as a vernacular and whose memory was kept alive in the (Classical) Syriac elements of the liturgies of the Maronite and Greek churches, or the Arabic Lebanese vernacular, but then interpreted as a creole language which had fused elements of Phoenician, Syriac and Arabic. While the latter is linguistically unconvincing and the former rather impractical, the combination of new historical interpretations with linguistic data provided further basis for a separatist, Lebanese, non-Arab identity that has inspired politicians, activists and intellectuals until today. Religion was an important factor in these identitarian practices. Christians, especially of the Maronite Church, were more inclined to variations of the Phoenician theory. Muslims, both Sunni and Shiite, tended towards the Arabic-based versions of Lebanese or pan-Arab nationalisms. However, these connections were not exclusive, because they ran along denominational (Rum versus Maronite) as much as religious (Muslim versus Christian) lines, and because linguistic choices were strongly influenced by socio-economic and regional parameters that did not run parallel to religious ones.[64]

One other noticeable aspect of linguistic practice in Lebanon is that despite an overall tendency towards French and SA as the major languages of

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62   Franck Salameh, *Language, Memory, and Identity in the Middle East: The Case for Lebanon* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), Salameh, this volume.

63   Peter Wien, this volume. Notably, George Antonius, a Lebanese/Palestinian Christian, also saw the Hejaz as the original region of the idealized Arab and Arabic, see Murre-van den Berg, "The Language of the Nation.".

64   On Phoenicianism, see Salameh, this volume; Asher Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia: The Search for Identity in Lebanon* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2004/2014). Suleiman, *The Arabic Language*, 204–219, and Joseph, *Language and Identity*, esp. "Case Study 2: Christian and Muslim Identities in Lebanon," 194–223.

the country, there was ample space for other languages. In fact, as Nicola Migliorino concludes in his study on the Armenian communities of Lebanon and Syria:

> The comparatively successful preservation of Armenian ethno-cultural diversity in Lebanon and Syria may be described – rather paradoxically – as a "by-product" of the two states' unresolved search for a solution to the political problems raised by the non-homogeneity of their society [...] because the stability of the state could not do without it until a more solid legitimacy, based on cross-cultural allegiances and cleavages could be found.[65]

The majority of Armenians in Lebanon, clustering together in the northern suburbs of Beirut, were survivors or children of survivors from the Anatolian genocide. Many of them had Western Armenian as their primary language, so that those who used to speak Turkish had to learn a new language. While some in the community quickly adopted Arabic and French and integrated in the wider Lebanese community, others remained in the safety of the Armenian community, learning Armenian and sometimes French in communal schools, praying, working and living family lives completely in Armenian. The community of Beirut was in close contact with that of Aleppo, the largest one in the Arab Middle East, where a similar situation of multilingual practice was maintained even after the creation of the Syrian state. Printing presses in Aleppo and Beirut catered for the wider Armenian community, in Syria and Lebanon, but also in Iraq, Turkey, Palestine and in the West, especially in the United States. Locally, theatres staging Armenian plays were important in sharing Armenian language, traditions and socio-political concerns. Thus, the Mandate period allowed the Armenians to take a new step in creating a transnational community that tended to refrain from getting involved in local nationalist politics, in Lebanon, Syria or elsewhere, and rather focused on maintaining, strengthening and expanding a strong transnational Armenian communal identity based on the two pillars of language and religion.[66]

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65 Nicola Migliorino, (Re)Constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria: Ethno-Cultural Diversity and the Sate in the Aftermath of a Refugee Crisis (New York: Berghan Books, 2008), esp. 223.

66 For political and literary trends in this period, see Migliorino, (Re)Constructing Armenia; for the political context in Syria, especially Aleppo, see Keith David Watenpaugh, Being Modern in the Middle East. Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism and the Arab Middle Class (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

For the Syriac Christians the situation was similar, though overall the Syriac communities were smaller and divided over more churches. The Syriac Orthodox Christians that survived the genocide of 1915 settled in much the same places as the Armenians, although a small group remained in southeast Anatolia, in the Tur 'Abdin area. Others ended up in Lebanon, Syria (mostly Aleppo and the northeast) and Palestine, while the northern-Iraqi community more or less kept in place. They too tended to focus on the survival of their communal language and religion rather than invest in the nationalist discourses of the host-states in which they ended up after the war. As among Armenians, printing presses became active in Beirut, Aleppo and Jerusalem, new dioceses were created, and schools were maintained. Arabic played a larger role among the Syriac Orthodox than among the Armenians, probably because the pre-war percentage of Arabic speakers among them was larger, and there was no working equivalent to modern Western Armenian among the Syriac Orthodox. Nevertheless, Syriac Orthodox clerics in Syria and Iraq endeavoured to promote Classical Syriac as the most important language of the community. This included attempts to write the language in a modernized form for non-clerical purposes.[67]

Arabic in its modern form was dominant in Iraq. From 1931 onwards, Standard Arabic became the language of education in all schools with government funding. Communal schools that additionally taught other languages, however, were allowed and often thriving.[68] Baarda describes how in the Syriac community the use of and commitment to Syriac varied considerably. In the Assyrian schools Syriac in its modern and classical forms was taught alongside French and English, although there, too, Arabic was the dominant language from 1931 onwards. The clergy on the whole supported Syriac rather than Arabic, though most mastered both languages. At the other end of the spectrum, the Chaldean hierarchy, in cooperation with the Dominican missionaries in Mosul, espoused the use of Arabic within their communities, also in ecclesiastical contexts. They saw themselves as loyal citizens of the new state and the promotion of

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67   Khalid S. Dinno, *The Syriac Orthodox Christians in the Late Ottoman Period and Beyond: Crisis then Revival* (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2017) (especially Ch. 6 on the literary innovators of the early twentieth century, Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum, Bishop Philoxenus Yuhanna Dolabani, Ni'matullah Denno and Na'um Faiq), Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "Classical Syriac and the Syriac Churches," and Murre-van den Berg, "A Center of Transnational Syriac Orthodoxy: St. Mark's Convent in Jerusalem," *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3,1 (2013): 61–83. See further Isaf and Baarda in this volume.

68   Baarda, "Standardized Arabic," and Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah, "Jewish Education in Baghdad: Communal Space vs. Public Space," both in Goldstein-Sabbah, Murre-van den Berg, *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere*, 71–95 and 96–120.

Arabic was part of that. Among the Syriac Orthodox of Iraq similar trends can be noted, though less pervasive than among the Chaldeans. Baarda argues that the use of and commitment to standardized Arabic was mostly a phenomenon found among the Chaldeans and Syriac Orthodox in the urban areas. In the rural hinterland, Sureth (Modern Aramaic/Syriac) remained the majority language within all three communities. In the Assyrian Church of the East, Sureth was dominant even in the cities, and only a small group of Assyrians in some way or another were involved in the emerging Arabic Republic of Letters.[69]

Despite the relative freedom in the early Mandate years to teach other languages in addition to Arabic, Leezenberg argues that the further literarization of Iraqi Kurdish varieties, most importantly the Sorani dialect, owed most to private initiatives outside the educational system.[70] Plays and poetry, both written and performed, were much more important in furthering the use of Sorani than attempts to standardize and homogenize the language via the writing of grammars. The Local Languages Law of 1931, as instated by the British, contained provisions for the teaching and use of Arabic, Turkish and Kurdish (but none of the other languages such as Syriac or Armenian), but already in the 1940s "Kurdish was removed from the primary school curriculum altogether."[71] The Baathist years made teaching of and in Kurdish increasingly difficult and though this changed radically after the semi-independence of 1991, both political and practical issues prevented the development of a fully-fledged standardized and homogenized literary language that encompassed at least the Iraqi varieties of Kurdish.

As described earlier by Sasha Sabbah-Goldstein the situation was very different in the Jewish schools, with gender and class accounting for some of the differences. In addition, the schools sponsored by the Alliance Israélite Universelle were strongly French oriented, to the detriment of Arabic, which in the schools of the British Anglo-Jewish Association received more attention.[72] In her contribution to this volume, considering the important status of Arabic in some of the schools and noting its overall increase during the 1930s, Goldstein

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69   Tijmen Baarda, this volume. For the Assyrians, this was to change with the onset of the large-scale migration to the cities, especially to Baghdad, in the 1960s – from that time onwards, their men and a few women of letters participated in the Arabic Republic of Letters. One of the most famous in the literary sphere was the poet Sargon Boulos (1944–2007).

70   Leezenberg, this volume.

71   Leezenberg, this volume.

72   Goldstein-Sabbah, "Jewish Education in Baghdad;" on Jewish participation in SA in Iraq, see Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

describes the linguistic situation as one of "linguistic pragmatism" encouraged by the strong focus of the mercantile upper classes on English and the British Empire. In a development starting in the 1860s, by the 1930s economically and socially leading families had firmly settled in Hong Kong, Shanghai, India and England. From there, they kept in close contact with their family members back in Baghdad and actively supported communal and educational ventures there. Thus, by supporting the local Jewish community of Baghdad, these expatriate Baghdadis simultaneously undermined such a purely local commitment and outlook. Through the mercantile settlements abroad, where English was the main language of communication, the Sassoons and the Kadouries (to mention only two of the most important families), allowed the Baghdadi Jews not to put all their hopes on the Arab Iraqi state by providing opportunities for transnational travel and identification with a larger Jewish community.

This also included solidarity with the emerging Jewish colony in Palestine, where the linguistic situation was the most complicated of all. More than half of the contributions in this volume focus on Palestine. At the official level, British policy was fairly straightforward, with three languages, Arabic, Hebrew and English used alongside each other for all official communication, as evidenced amongst others by the stamps that were used in this period.[73] As such, the British Mandate stimulated not only the use of English (in addition to and instead of French, German and Italian), but also the further modernization and nationalization of Arabic and Hebrew. At the beginning of the Mandate, both languages in their modernized forms were far from uncontested within Muslim, Christian and Jewish circles. Among the Jews in Palestine, Modern Hebrew was just one among many other languages, which included German, Yiddish, French, English and Arabic. Among Muslims and Christians, it was not only French and English, but also different varieties of Arabic that played a role. The mere fact, therefore, of the British Mandate's official endorsement of SA as the language of the "Arabic" community, and "Hebrew" for the Jewish community, endorsed and supported specific nationalist tendencies in each of these groups, the rhetoric of those who saw Hebrew as the one and only language of the Zionist settlement, with Standard Arabic in a similar position for the emerging Palestinian nation. How the various languages competed with each other within the Jewish community is the subject of Liora Halperin's monograph *Babel in Zion*. In the current volume she follows this up with a discussion of the role of Arabic in the Jewish community. Halperin analyzes the role of Arabic in the earliest Zionist settlements in which spoken Arabic

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73   Yair Wallach, "Creating a Country through Currency and Stamps: State Symbols and Nation-building in British-ruled Palestine," *Nations and Nationalism* 17,1 (2011): 129–147.

had been an integral part of the linguistic repertoire, used especially to communicate with Arab labourers. In hindsight, when some in Jewish settlements had started to prefer separation and "Hebrew labour" over and above more entangled forms of coexistence between Jews and Arabs, these early forms of cooperation, which often had been mediated by Jews with Middle Eastern backgrounds, were nostalgically presented as early examples of Ashkenazi Jewish engagement with the local Arab world.[74]

Two further contributions address the well-known tensions between Greek- and Arabic-speakers among the Rum Orthodox Christians of Palestine. Konstantinos Papastathis situates the importance of Arabic among the Rum community within its larger historical context, focusing on the tensions between Greek-speaking and Greece-trained clerics and Arabic-speaking lay people of Palestine.[75] Merav Mack adds an important dimension to this by looking at the Greek-speaking lay communities, mostly descendants of Greek merchants that settled in the Levant in the late nineteenth century. She shows that while the majority of lay Rum Christians were Arabic speaking, this was not true for everyone.[76] Both authors, however, point out that as a result of intermarriage, socio-economic ties, and geographical overlap, there was in practice no absolute division between the two communities. Over the Mandate years Arabic grew in importance for everyone, even if Greek, and sometimes also a continuing bond with the Greek state, never disappeared completely from lay circles.

Finally, Layla Dakhli discusses the linguistic situation among the "Latin" and other Catholic Christians of Palestine. As Karène Sanchez argued elsewhere, for these Catholics it was French rather than Arabic or English that initially dominated the scene. Sanchez describes how Arabic replaced French as part of the rising nationalist tide, contributing to the build-up of a common front against the growing socio-political and economic dominance of the Jewish communities. English also made its way into the Latin Catholic communities, mostly as a means to acquire jobs within the Mandate government. French continued to be taught, however, though much less intensively so, but in many

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74   Liora Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948* (Yale: YUP, 2015); Liora Halperin, this volume. On Arabic in the Jewish communities of Palestine, see Ori Shachmon, "Ḥalabi Arabic as a Contact Dialect in Jerusalem," *Journal of Jewish Languages* 5 (2017): 49–80.

75   Papastathis, this volume; Papastathis, "Religious Politics in Mandate Palestine: The Christian Orthodox Community Controversy in the Thirties," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43,3 (2016): 259–284; for background, see Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians*.

76   Mack, this volume.

ways it remained an important second language in addition to vernacular and standardized Arabic.[77] Sanchez in particular stresses the important role of the Roman Catholic missionary schools in this process. More or less tied to Vatican-based linguistic policies, the schools slowly adapted to the increased demand for teaching of and in Arabic. These languages all found their way to the printing press of the Franciscans, in the Old City of Jerusalem. In this volume, Leyla Dakhli describes how the Franciscan press in the Mandate period (somewhat surprisingly considering its ongoing ties to the clerical Catholic establishment) functioned mostly as an independent commercial press that used its expertise in multilingual printing to work for the British government as much as for private organizations (including churches and missionary congregations) and individuals. Perhaps less surprising, its Italian connections also made it a preferred venue for printing work ordered by the Italian government for their North-African colonial adventures, thus serving the fascist government which for most of the period was among the political opponents of the British Mandate government. If anything, those deciding on the production of the Franciscan press took to its extreme the actual linguistic pragmatism that many of the authors represented in this volume have noted.

7　　　Conclusions

If only one thing was to be underlined at the end of this introduction, it would be the fact that, as in the case of the Syriac Christians with whom we started, for many people living in the Middle East there are no exclusive connections between religion, ethnicity, nationality, and language, even if at the same time languages continue to be used as important markers in ethno-religious identity debates. The inherent instability that results from these ever-changing connections makes it impossible to provide a representative snapshot, whether concerning pragmatic linguistic choices or political loyalties. It is the *movement* in one direction or another that is more telling than the actual situation at any given moment, and it is patterns and parameters that have explanatory power rather than straightforward causal relations. It is precisely for that reason that we took the time (in this introduction but also in several of the contributions) to start our discussion of the Mandate period with the Ottoman period that

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77　Karène Sanchez, "Linguistic diversity and ideologies among the Catholic minority in Mandate Palestine. Fear of confusion or powerful tool?," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43,2 (2016): 191–205 and Sanchez, "Preserving Catholics of the Holy Land or integrating them into the Palestine nation? Catholic communities, language, identity and public space in Jerusalem (1920–1950)," in Goldstein-Sabbah, *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere*, 121–151.

preceded it, laying bare some of the longer ongoing trends and developments that not only set the scene for what happened from the 1920s onwards, but also uncover the parameters along which the interplay between religion, language and nationalism developed.

The Ottoman period saw many instances of what Sheldon Pollock has called *vernacularization*, in the sense of adapting spoken or existing written languages to a form that was understandable to and learnable for more people than merely the small educated classes of priests, religious experts or government officials. Often this started with paraenetic writings serving as a memory aid for religious experts, but soon these new written forms were also used in education and thus contributed to the spread of reading and writing. In many places these attempts at vernacularization were accompanied by the establishment of printing presses, either in the region (Istanbul, Mount Lebanon) or outside it (Venice, Vienna, Amsterdam). The cases of the Jewish, Syriac Christian, and Muslim Kurdish communities of North-Iraq show that vernacularization could also start without printing presses, by expanding and modernizing existing manuscript cultures.

Another major conclusion of the above is that vernacularization in this general sense encompasses a number of *different* linguistic choices, grounded in different starting points. Some started from a long history of participation in the cosmopolitan languages of the region in their written and spoken forms, with more authors gradually joining while expanding the range of genres. Thus these non-Muslim authors became crucial contributors to the later modernized and standardized forms of Arabic and Turkish, even if for most of the Ottoman period they wrote in their communal scripts. Others prioritized their communal languages in written and spoken forms, and either chose to vernacularize the classical liturgical language or started to standardize and literize the spoken vernaculars. The first option usually was too closely linked to religious specialists to survive the secularizing trends of the nineteenth century; the second became wedded to the nationalist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Depending on political circumstances, these efforts were more or less successful in creating fully-fledged communal and literary languages. Despite their differences, these three forms of vernacularization share a rootedness in the religious modernization of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their initial religious paraenetic aims (hence also the use of communal scripts), and their mostly nineteenth-century adoption of additional secular and nationalist goals, aiming at modernizing and transforming the community as a whole. Their protagonists were certainly influenced by European (including Russian) examples, but we may conclude that especially in the early phases of vernacularization local needs and local impulses were dominant.

The study of these three types of vernacularization alongside each other allows us to discern the underlying tensions in the nineteenth-century nationalist projects. Indeed, in a number of communities, among which Middle Eastern Jews, Armenians and Syriacs, all three trajectories of vernacularization were explored and developed simultaneously. While this was hardly a problem in the paraenetic phase, when language choice was very much guided by local concerns and local aims, this became more complicated in the nationalist phase. At that point, language came to be seen as a tool for unifying and strengthening the newly conceptualized 'nation,' as it did in Arabic, Turkish and Persian circles, along the lines of Satiʿ al-Husrî's often quoted phrase that Arabic was to be seen as "a unified and unifying language." This forced literary elites to argue against such instable and multiple linguistic norms, because these could easily be interpreted as undermining nationalist unity. Thus, from the early twentieth century onwards what used to be pragmatic choices of one language over another became increasingly imbued with political meaning.

However, the nationalization and governmentalization of languages during the Mandate period had fewer straightforward effects on the use of additional languages than one may have expected. This is particularly true for Arabic, the central subject of this volume. Undoubtedly, the use of Arabic, with its newly gained governmental status, increased among all segments of the population. The simple but effective control of language education in schools and the use of modernized Standard Arabic in government ensured that every citizen was forced to learn the language. This was true also among those rural populations that prior to the Mandate period had had little or no interest in learning to read and write in Arabic – the Jews of Iraq, in Kurdistan as well as in Baghdad, the Syriac Orthodox Christians of the Nineveh plains and the Kurdish mountains, the Assyrians of North-Iraq and northeast Syria. Similarly, the Anatolian and Hakkari Armenians, Syriac Orthodox, Assyrians and Catholics of the various denominations that after 1915 ended up in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, were forced to learn Arabic in order to thrive in their new homelands. While for the majority of these new users of Standard Arabic this comes across as a very pragmatic choice, some among them, for intellectual, political and socio-economic reasons, put their full force behind it and actively participated in and engaged with the newly created Arabic Republic of Letters, making it into an interreligious, even secular, space for exchange and nation building.

At the same time, however, when Arabic became the preferred language for political and societal modernization, other languages were practiced: the spoken vernaculars (which also included non-standardized forms of Arabic), a variety of communal religious languages, and the cosmopolitan colonial languages that came with the Mandate governments, French and English. While

in all non-Muslim communities there were those who publicly advocated the exclusive use of one or another language (either to join state nationalisms, or to promote separatist nationalisms of the Zionist, Armenian or Assyrian types), in practice the majority of readers and writers went on juggling a variety of languages alongside one or more spoken vernaculars, often participating in more than one Republic of Letters: Arabic on the one hand, and Syriac, Armenian, English, French, Hebrew, Yiddish or German on the other. Distinct Republics of Letters, which, however, due to the geographical and human proximities, continued to mutually influence each other.

All of this suggests that religious belonging in the legal sense in most Middle-Eastern states is not an independent factor that predicts the use of one language or another, or support for one language ideology or another. Belonging to one religion or denomination or another predicts a certain level of knowledge of the characteristic language of the community ('Armenian' in case of Armenians, 'Hebrew' in case of Jews), but this "certain level of knowledge" could vary from next to nothing to in-depth literacy combined with active writing skills. What this level is, and what other languages someone would be able to use, depends on additional factors such as region, socio-economic status, profession and gender. The main counterexample to this generally weak link between language and religion is the fairly strong connection between Catholicization and Arabization that various researchers have noted for the Ottoman period. However, while communities that converted to Catholicism at an early stage were often more Arabized and continued to Arabize after becoming part of the Catholic Church, and while Arabic became a language of inter-Catholic communication in the Ottoman period as well as later in the twentieth century, it is also clear that communal languages such as Syriac and Armenian survived and in fact flourished in Catholic circles. Thus, although Catholicism might be a contributing factor to Arabization (and vice versa, Arabization to Catholicization), it does not appear to be the overriding one. The same seems to hold true for Protestantism, within which Arabic is dominant but again with a sufficient number of counterexamples to make a one-to-one causal relationship untenable. What comes across much more strongly, however, when we survey material from the Mandate period, is that the closest correlations between the primacy of Arabic and the primacy (ideological and in practice) of another language are to be found along the boundaries between urban and rural, between those involved in the Arab nationalist projects and those either politically quietist or involved in one of the counter projects, Assyrian, Armenian or Zionist. These boundaries proved to be more important to explain language difference than those between religions or denominations.

In February 2017, Yacoub Shaheen from Bethlehem won the fourth edition of *Arab Idols* with impressive performances of classical and modern Arabic songs including nationalist Palestinian ones. He was hailed all over the Arab world and the Arabic-speaking diaspora as a representative of the Palestinian people. At the same time, Syriac Orthodox Christians hailed him as one of their own, doing some vigorous Facebook-campaigning to have the diaspora vote for him. Clips and images were shared of Shaheen singing as a deacon in the Syriac liturgy, marching as a Syriac scout in Bethlehem, and, most importantly, of Shaheen wearing the red-and-yellow Syriac/Aramean flag in addition to the Palestinian flag or black-and-white kufiyah that he also was photographed with. In interviews, Shaheen stressed that he spoke Aramaic as well as Arabic, refraining from choosing between the two, but in the Christian diaspora verbal fights focused on whether he was "Assyrian" or "Aramean." In these circles, his identification with the Palestinian cause was passed over, to the point that stories were told that he had been pressured into hiding his Aramaic identity on television.[78]

Language is one of the strongest cultural tools that groups have at their disposal, making what at first sight seems a straightforward matter of choosing the best means of communication into a specialized instrument for creating and maintaining group identities. However, it does so in two ostensibly opposing ways, both of which have been exemplified in the preceding essay. The first of these is the most obvious and explicit, aiming at the formation and strengthening of group identities by the propagation of one particular language or language form as the defining characteristic of the group. Those belonging to the group appropriate this language as their own and theirs only, irrespective of whether they read and write it, speak a variety of it, or merely acknowledge its importance for the group. Whether this group becomes a 'nation' with a 'state,' or remains a so-called ethno-religious group without a specific territory they can call their own, a specific form of language has become one of its prime banners. The second approach, situated at the level of both individual members and national or ethnic leadership, fully maintains multilingualism as the

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78   See, e.g., the articles on Al-Jazeera (http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/palestinian
      -christian-yacoub-shaheen-wins-arab-idol-170226180221063.html;   last   seen   27/2/17),
      The National Arts (http://www.thenational.ae/arts-life/television/palestinian-yacoub
      -shaheen-wins-fourth-season-of-arab-idol, last seen 27/2/17), Aramese Federatie (Dutch)
      (https://aramesefederatie.org/2017/02/27/arameeer-wint-arab-idol/, last seen 27/2/17),
      Haaretz (http://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/1.773855, last seen
      27/2/17) and Alex Shams, 'Yacoub Shaheen, the Assyrian singer from Palestine taking Arab
      Idol by storm,' (https://ajammc.com/2017/02/17/yacoub-shaheen-assyrian-palestine/, last
      seen 20/3/2019). I have not come across interviews in Hebrew or English, two other lan-
      guages Shaheen could be expected to be conversant in.

norm in the Middle East. This pervasive and mostly flexible multilingualism allows groups and their members to commit to different languages, to thus to different linguistic communities, without making final choices. By singing Arabic in the context of Arab idols and singing in Syriac in the context of the Syriac Orthodox church, Shaheen moves in different circles, which to some are mutually exclusive, but for others are sitting fairly comfortably next to each other.

If anything, the pervasive multilingualism of the Middle East as a whole and of non-Muslim communities in particular indicates their ongoing commitment to multiple identities, to multiple pasts, and multiple futures. Some of this is part of minority strategies worldwide, acknowledging and accepting that in order to survive one always has to steer a middle course between complete cultural and linguistic assimilation and unproductive isolation. Some of it, however, is part of the wider acknowledgement that multiple languages allow for multiple fruitful ways of engaging with the world, and for being part of multiple networks and groups, religious and otherwise. In this world of competing ideologies, be it in the Middle East or elsewhere, time and again language is politicized as the signpost of one exclusive identity or another, regional, religious, gendered, national, ethnic, socio-economic. On the one hand such politicizing contributes to the survival and development of specific languages (mainly by means of standardized education), but on the other it also tends to obscure the energizing power that this very struggle over multiple identities produces, the creativity that leads to new languages, to new texts, to new poetry, time and again.

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Vernacularization as Governmentalization: the Development of Kurdish in Mandate Iraq

Michiel Leezenberg

1 Introduction

In recent years, the notion of *vernacularization* has gained a wider currency, thanks in particular to Sheldon Pollock's impressive comparative explorations of what he calls the Sanskrit and Latin cosmopolitan orders.[1] It denotes the shift towards new written uses of vernacular languages that had hitherto exclusively been used for spoken communication. The shift from Latin to Romance languages such as French, Italian, and Catalan around the year 1000 CE is probably the best known and best documented example of vernacularization; rather less familiar, but hardly less dramatic, is the emancipation of vernacular languages such as Telugu and Kannada with respect to Sanskrit in the Indian subcontinent, which likewise occurred toward the end of the first millennium CE.

Although the work of Pollock and his associates focuses on the Indian subcontinent, it has also provoked comparative questions, such as whether similarly cosmopolitan orders and vernacularization processes may also be found elsewhere. Over the past years I have been working on vernacularization in the early modern and modern Ottoman empire, with many surprising results. This empire knew a complex linguistic order, dominated – even among the Muslim majority of the population – by not one but three languages: Arabic for legal and religious learning, Persian for high literature, and Ottoman Turkish for the administration. If one includes the Christian population groups in the empire, the linguistic situation becomes even more complex: classical liturgical languages such as *koinè* Greek, Classical Armenian (Grabar), Syriac, and Old Church Slavonic were still used among the Christians, but for liturgic and literate purposes only, and were incomprehensible to the vast majority of their respective congregations. Ottoman Jews generally used the "sacred language"

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1 See in particular Sheldon Pollock, "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History," *Public Culture* 12 (2000): 591–625 and *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 2006).

(*lashon ha-qodesh*) for liturgical purposes, but spoke a wide variety of local languages.

The most important empirical finding here was that virtually all population groups in the Ottoman empire appear to have witnessed a phase of vernacularization in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I will briefly discuss this process below, as I think it is highly relevant, not to say essential, to a better understanding of developments in the twentieth century. I also have a methodological axe to grind, however: I would like to propose a genealogical approach to vernacularization, which takes into account the roles of different forms of knowledge and power. Such an approach implies that one should take a long-term view to get a better grasp of the local dynamics involved. I would also like to suggest that, next to *vernacularization*, one should pay attention to what may be called the *governmentalization* of language, that is, the process of language becoming an object of knowledge and governmental concern. Coined by Foucault, the notions of governmentality and governmentalization have a number of conceptual and descriptive advantages.[2] Descriptively, they focus attention on how language has become an object of both knowledge and government; they also imply a shift away from the state and the associated view of power as sovereign, law-like and repressive. It should be noted, however, that Foucault himself never extended these notions to questions of language, nor did he ever present or even sketch out a genealogical approach to the modern linguistic sciences.

Looking at questions of language and national identity in terms of governmentality may help us look for answers in places and institutions other than the state, and in periods preceding modern state formation. It may also help to redirect our attention to dimensions of power and knowledge in the process of vernacularization: in the wake of becoming mediums for literate and learned communication, vernacular languages simultaneously became objects of study (primarily in the form of written, and in some cases printed, grammars) and objects of governmental concern (primarily captured in the – radically novel – propagation of native language education). These two processes of vernacularization and governmentalization may, but need not, coincide, so it is better to keep them analytically separate.

Hence, I would like to suggest a comparative, global, and interactional approach, which systematically abstracts away from, and thus questions, underlying assumptions of either a methodologically or a politically nationalist character – assumptions that still pervade much writing on the topic. By

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2 Michel Foucault, *Securité, territoire, population: Leçons au Collège de France, 1978–1979* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2004).

studying the development of a single language in isolation, one risks overlooking common and converging patterns, and taking for granted the nationalist identification of an imagined nation with a reified language that should be traced historically and scrutinized conceptually in the first place. I hope to do so in a very preliminary manner below, with a focus on the development of Kurdish in Mandate and Monarchical Iraq.[3]

2   Ottoman Vernacularization: the Role of Local Philologies[4]

As noted above, it was Pollock's work in particular that called attention to patterns of vernacularization in different parts of the world. Pollock has also pointed to the role of philology, broadly characterized as the scholarly study of texts and/or languages, and of grammar and literature, in these processes. For Western and Central Europe, the importance of modern philology for the rise of romantic nationalism has been studied in great detail. Relatively little attention has been paid, however, to vernacularization in the early modern Ottoman empire and to the role of local philological traditions in the rise of Ottoman nationalisms. Moreover, the few studies on early modern Ottoman learning tend to focus on works written in the cosmopolitan languages, such as Arabic and Ottoman Turkish.[5] Yet, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries one may observe a significant shift in these traditions towards the use of local vernaculars.

Next to the use of Arabic as the language of religious learning and Ottoman Turkish as the language of administration, the Ottoman empire also used Persian as the main language of literary civilization. As such, it plays a special role not only in the early modern Ottoman empire, but also in a far wider, and still relatively poorly understood, cosmopolitan constellation. This cosmopolitan constellation centred around Classical Persian-language poets such

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3   For empirical data this paper leans heavily on Amir Hassanpour's indispensable overview, *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918–1985*; I am also indebted to kak Amir for providing me with digital versions of some of his later writings. Thanks are also due to Hassan Ghazi, Ismail Barzinji, Kadri Yıldırım, and numerous others who have over the years shared with me their valuable insights on the linguistic situation in Iraqi Kurdistan.

4   A different version of this paragraph was included in Michiel Leezenberg, "The Vernacular Revolution: Reclaiming Early Modern Grammatical Traditions in the Ottoman Empire," *History of Humanities* 1,2 (2016): 251–275; it is reprinted here by permission of the editors.

5   See e.g. Khaled el-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and in the Maghreb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Ahmad Dallal, *Islam before Europe: Traditions of Reform in Eighteenth-Century Islamic Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

as Ferdowsi, Nizami, Jami, Rumi, Hafez, and many others. Originating on the Iranian plateau, this Persian-language tradition came to dominate all parts of the Islamic world where Arabic was not the spoken language of at least a substantial part of the population; for centuries, this cultural sphere extended all the way from the Balkans to Central and South Asia. Marshall Hodgson has qualified it as "Persianate," since it did not necessarily involve Classical Persian as the written, and in some cases spoken, language of courts and polite letters, but could also revolve around local vernacular languages that displayed a considerable Persian influence.[6] Linguistically informed studies of this cosmopolitan tradition (as of the other traditions mentioned above) are few and far between; at present we simply lack overviews that do justice to this cultural sphere as a coherent linguistic and literary whole, which nonetheless displays not only great regional variation and development, but also numerous local vernacular offshoots.[7]

More recently, Shahab Ahmad has characterized this space as the "Balkans to Bengal complex," also calling attention to its Persian-language religious and literary dimensions. Hamid Dabashi has likewise described this cosmopolitan and, as he calls it, humanist order in more detail; but he narrowly focuses on Persian-language literary production, at the expense of Persian-inspired vernacular literatures such as those in Pashto, Kurdish, and Baluchi, erroneously asserting that the latter only knew oral traditions.[8]

To some extent, Persianate and Arabic influences overlapped; but whereas Arabic was, and remained, the primary if not sole language of religious learning, Persian became the dominant language of literary expression, government, and mysticism. Initially, the Turkic dynasties in Anatolia, including the Ottomans, wrote their official correspondence as well as their poetry in Persian; but by the sixteenth century, Ottoman Turkish had largely replaced Persian as the language of the Ottoman bureaucracy, and had emerged as a language of refined courtly poetry in its own right. Despite this shift, however, Turkish never wholly sidelined Persian as a language of high literature; and in any case, official and literary uses of Turkish were and remained replete with Persian (and, of course, Arabic) loan words and loan constructions.

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6   Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2: *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 293.

7   For a summary overview, see Bert Fragner, *Die 'Persophonie': Regionalität, Identität, und Sprachkontakt* (Berlin: Das arabische Buch, 1999).

8   Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), esp. Ch. 1; Hamid Dabashi, *The World of Persian Literary Humanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), esp. 331n.

Thus, the vernacularization that occurred in the early modern Ottoman empire is distinct from the comparable processes in the Latin and Sanskrit cosmopolitan orders in that it took place in a cosmopolitan setting that was itself systematically multilingual, involving Ottoman Turkish as well as Arabic and Persian as written languages, not to mention the classical written languages of Christian minorities such as the Greeks and the Armenians. From the late seventeenth century onwards, local vernaculars increasingly started to be used for literate purposes that had until then remained the reserve of these classical and cosmopolitan languages; here, I can only present a bird's eye view of this rich and complex process.[9]

The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ottoman vernacularization occurred most visibly among the Christian subject populations in the western part of the empire, thus lending some initial plausibility to the idea that this innovation had Western European origins. First, authors such as Iosipos Moisiodax and Adamantios Korais pioneered the emancipation of vernacular modern Greek from the long-standing hegemony of *koinè* Greek in education. Second, among the Ottoman Armenians, a spoken – and increasingly also written and printed – supraregional "civil language" (called *kʻaghakʻakan* or *askharhorên*) emerged, which was distinct both from the classical language (or *Grabar*) that had been in written use since the 5th century CE and from locally spoken dialects. Third, the second half of the eighteenth century also saw a vernacularization of the Slavic languages, in the first attempts to write literary texts in Serbian and Bulgarian. Thus, in his 1762 *Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya*, Paisii Hilendarski fulminated against increasing Greek efforts at linguistic assimilation in the orthodox church, and Sofronij Vracanski consciously wrote his memoirs in what he calls the "Slavo-Bulgarian" vernacular. Fourth, Romanian, or "Wallachian" as it was generally called (Greek: *vlakhos*, Turkish *eflak*), emerged as a written language, following the translation of the Bible into Romanian in 1688 and the pioneering literary and learned works by polymath Dimitrie Cantemir around 1700.[10] These vernacularizations among Christians living in various parts of the Ottoman empire appear to reflect local religious and possibly socioeconomic dynamics at least as much as any theological contacts with Western European

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9   For a more detailed account, see Leezenberg, "The Vernacular Revolution." I hope to present a more detailed account in *From Coffee House to Nation State* (in preparation).

10   On Greek vernacularization, see Peter Mackridge, *Language and National Identity in Greece, 1766–1976* (Oxford University Press, 2009); on Armenian, see Marc Nichanian, *Ages et usages de la langue arménienne* (Geneva: Éditions Entente, 1989); on Romanian, see Werner Bahner, *Das Sprach- und Geschichtsbewusstsein in der rumänischen Literatur von 1780–1880* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1967).

Catholics, Protestants, or Enlightenment thinkers, or mercantile contacts with Western European merchants.

The assumption that Western European influences were the driving force behind these developments becomes even harder to maintain in the light of similar shifts among Muslims in the Balkans and among Muslim population groups further East. First, the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries witnessed the emergence of vernacular Persianate poetry among Muslims in Ottoman Bosnia and Albania.[11] Both Bosnian Muslim poets and Albanian *bejtexhinj*, or "bayt poets," such as Muçizade, Nezim Frakulla, and Hasan Zyko Kamberi, were very conscious of the novelty of composing learned literature in their native tongue. Their work, moreover, was remarkably isolated from similar vernacularizing efforts among Catholic and Orthodox authors. Earlier, a number of Albanian works had been written by Catholic priests, but these had not reached the orthodox and Muslim Albanian-speaking population in Ottoman territory. Thus, for all we know the *bejtexhi* tradition is a purely local outgrowth. Likewise, a number of works were written by Muslim authors in "Bosnian," a South Slavic dialect written in Arabic script, most famously perhaps the *Potur shahidiyya*, a rhymed Turkish-Bosnian vocabulary from the seventeenth century already mentioned by Evliya Çelebi. Local Orthodox and especially Catholic Christians had written texts in quite similar Slavic dialects, but these, too, have apparently remained unknown among Bosnian Slavic-speaking Muslims. Indeed, the different vernacular traditions that emerged in early modern times appear to have been segregated along denominational or sectarian lines, and betray little if any sense of nationality as defined in primarily or exclusively linguistic terms.

Second, and perhaps surprisingly, even the language of administration, Ottoman Turkish, went through a vernacularization of sorts in that in learned poetry as well as bureaucratic prose one may see a conscious movement towards linguistic simplification, and to a register of Turkish closer to the language spoken by the Istanbul population than to the highly learned and virtually incomprehensible language of the *küttab* or "scribes," i.e., the literate Ottoman officials.[12] This particular vernacularization seems exceptional in that it was primarily a top-down process driven by parts of the state apparatus.

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11 On early Albanian literature, see Robert Elsie, "Albanian Literature in the Moslem Tradition: Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Albanian Writing in Arabic Script," *Oriens* 33 (1992): 287–306; on Persianate Bosnia poetry, see in particular Seifuddin Kemura and Vladimir Corovic. *Dichtungen bosnischer Moslims aus dem XVII., XVIII., und XIX. Jahrhundert* (Sarajevo, 1912).

12 See in particular Serif Mardin, "Some Notes on an Early Phase in the Modernization of Communication in Turkey," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3 (1961): 250–271.

Third, and most directly relevant to our purposes, in the empire's remote Eastern provinces the Kurds witnessed a significant vernacularization from the late seventeenth century onwards.[13] Most importantly, in 1695 Ehmedê Xanî authored the first-ever *mathnawi* poem in Kurmanjî or Northern Kurdish, the tale of the two ill-fated lovers Mem and Zîn, in a self-consciously innovative attempt to write learned poetry in the local vernacular "for the sake of the illiterate masses" (*ji boyî ʿâmê*).[14] Indeed, his main aim appears linked to learning: he wrote his poem, he famously said, "so that people will not say that the Kurds are without learning, principle, or foundation" (*da ko khelq-i nabêjitin ko ekrad/bê maʿrifet in, bê esl û binyâd*).[15] Unlike Ottoman Turkish vernacularization, this shift to Kurdish appears to have taken place primarily in the smaller rural *medreses* rather than in the prominent urban centres of learning, which were rather closer to Ottoman official culture. Moreover, it shows few if any signs of patronage from local courts, and thus appears to have been more of a bottom-up process.

On the whole, this Ottoman vernacularization involved works of learning as much as literary texts. Often, however, the two genres overlap or even coincide. Thus, Xanî also wrote several Kurdish-language works in rhymed verse expressly designed for beginning Kurdish-speaking medrese pupils, such as the *Nûbihara piçûkan*, an Arabic-Kurdish glossary, and the *Eqîdeya Îmanê*, a small catechistic text. The vernacularization of Kurdish also involved prose works of learning, such as Elî Teremaxî's *Tesrîfa Kurmanjî* and Yûnus Khalqatînî's *Terkîb û zurûf*, both presumably dating from the eighteenth century, which deal with, respectively, the morphology (*sarf*) and syntax (*nahw*) of Arabic. Importantly, this vernacularization involved not only new literate *uses* of vernacular languages, but also new linguistic *ideologies* that present vernaculars as eloquent, expressive and worthy of high literature. One might even argue that they may likewise be accompanied or followed by innovations in linguistic *structure*, primarily through the regimentation and codification of languages in written grammars.[16] We will return to this point below.

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13   See Michiel Leezenberg, "Eli Teremaxi and the Vernacularization of Medrese Learning in Kurdistan," *Iranian Studies* 47 (2014), 713–733.

14   Ehmedê Xanî, *Mem û Zîn* (ed. J. Dost) (Avesta Yayınları, 2010 [1695]), *bayt* 239.

15   Xanî, *Mem û Zîn*, esp. 141.

16   Pollock, "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular," 612, briefly mentions the changing language-ideological correlation between language and community and the linkage between vernacular language and political power, but does not otherwise address questions of linguistic ideology.

3   Patterns of Kurdish Vernacularization

As the above already suggests, it was the Northern dialect of Kurdish, or Kurmanjî, which in the eighteenth century underwent the most significant vernacularization. Subsequently, however, it was the "Central" Sulaimaniya dialect, or Soranî Kurdish, which became the main written variety of Kurdish in Iraq. This shows the contingent and non-linear character of many of these developments. The central dialect only started to be written around 1800; and prior to the publication of periodicals such as *Têgeyishtinî Rastî* and *Pêshkewtî* in the early twentieth century, it was hardly if at all used for written purposes other than poetry. Thus, there was no good *linguistic* reason for promoting this particular dialect to the status of a written standard over others; rather, its development – bumpy, uneven, and contested as it was – was due not to inevitable structural but to contingent political factors. Before we can address these, let us briefly trace the development of Soranî.

Roughly, three distinct kinds, or periods, of vernacularization of Kurdish may be distinguished. First, there is the vernacularization of Hawramî or, as Western orientalists have usually called it, Goranî. This process occurred quite early: starting around the fifteenth century, a variety of the Hawramî or Goranî dialect spoken in the border area between the Ottoman and Safavid empires came to be used, primarily by literate poets associated with the local Erdelan court. However, this dialect, or *koinè*, was not simply a 'court language'; it apparently did not replace Persian as the main language of administration, official correspondence, or – possibly – medrese education. Rather, this koinè was used primarily for learned and popular poetic purposes. Significantly, local poets did not call it "Goranî" or "Hawramî," but "Kurdî." The term "Goranî," not to mention the more far-fetched speculation about their origins and their alleged linguistic, national and/or racial differences with respect to 'Kurds proper,' appear to be primarily the creation of Western orientalists.[17] In short, the vernacularization of Hawramî appears to have been restricted to poetic and, possibly, didactic works; subsequently, Hawramî was to be eclipsed by other dialects.[18]

The second wave of Kurdish vernacularization has already been described above. From the late seventeenth century, introductory textbooks in the Kurmanjî dialect became quite widespread among the medreses of Northern

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17   See e.g. Vladimir Minorsky, "The Gûrân," *BSOAS* XI (1943): 75–103; David N. MacKenzie, "The Origins of Kurdish," *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1961): 68–80.

18   Local historian and literary scholar Hama Hewrami claims that education in this region was generally in Persian rather than any variety of Kurdish. Interview, Erbil, Spring 2014.

Kurdistan. Works such as Mullah Bateyî's *Mewlûd*, Ehmedê Xanî's *Nûbihara piçûkan* and *Eqîdeya 'Îmanê*, Eli Teramaxî's *Tesrîfa Kurmancî*, and Mullah Yûnus Xalqatînî's *Terkîb û zurûf*, became part of the *rêz* or curriculum of medreses as far apart as Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Beyazid. More advanced literary texts, such as Milayê Cezîrî's *Dîwan* and Ehmedê Xanî's mathnawî poem, *Mem û Zîn*, were not strictly part of the curriculum, but appear to have been widely read by Kurdish medrese pupils. These texts seem to have been widely used among rural medreses in Northern Kurdistan until quite recently.[19]

Third, one may witness the vernacularization of the Sulaimaniya dialect, or Soranî as it has been called since Hajî Qadirî Koyî. This process started much later than the other two, around 1800 CE; it also appears to have centred rather less around medrese life than the vernacularization of Kurmanjî, and less around court life than that of Hawramî. However, it did include a number of didactic religious works: among the first texts written in Soranî are the *Ehmedî*, a small Arabic-Kurdish vocabulary written by Qadirî shaykh Ma'rûf Nodê for his son Ehmed, and the *Eqîdetnamey kurdî* by Mawlana Khalid Naqshbandi, a simple prose text setting out the basics of the faith for Naqshbandi laypeople in a language, or rather dialect, they could understand. Apparently, the *Ehmedî* gained a wide circulation: even today reprints are easily available. I have seen little evidence, however, that it was widely used in local medreses or hujras. Some local informants report that in Southern Kurdistan, both the *Ehmedî* and the *Eqîdetnamey kurdî* were used in hujras; but others claim that they were confined to schools with Qadirî and Naqshbandî affinities, respectively; moreover, these reports are not as consistent as those concerning Kurdish-language textbooks in the North.[20] Apparently, the use of Kurdish-language textbooks was not as widespread or as systematic in Southern Kurdistan as in the North.

Thus far, I have encountered only one written source on Southern Kurdish *medrese* life: Hewrami (2008: 324–341) lists a small number of Kurdish- (and Persian-) language textbooks used in the *hujras* of Southern Kurdistan, but he does not indicate how widely these texts were used. His "first list," presumably corresponding to the first year, includes one Kurmanjî text, Ehmedê Xanî's *Nûbihar*, a *Mewlûdnamey kurdî*, and an *Eqîdey 'îman*. These may, but need not, have been written in Kurmanjî as well (possibly, Hewrami is referring here to Mullah Bateyî's *Mewlûd* and Xanî's *Eqîde*, respectively). Next, Hewrami lists Shaykh Ma'rûf Nodê's *Ehmedî* and an *Eqîdey kurdî* (the latter possibly to be identified with Mawlana Khalid's short text better known as the *I'tiqâdname*),

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19   For more details, see Leezenberg, "Eli Teremaxi."
20   Interviews, Erbil, Sulaimaniya, Koya, July 2011, Spring 2012, August 2015, May 2016.

and a number of works in Farsî, including an *Isma'ilname*, the *Pendî Attâr*, the "*Gulistan* of Hafiz Shirazi" [sic], and a Persian-language work by shaykh Ma'rûf Nodê, the *Çaydûde*. In the second year, attention shifted to textbooks of Arabic grammar (*sarf* and *nahw*), starting with Jurjânî's and Birgevi's identically titled *Awâmil*; Hewrami's "second list" also includes a work on *tasrîf* by one Mullah Ali, possibly to be identified with 'Elî Teremaxî; but this is by no means certain. In later years, only Arabic-language books were read.

For the most part, however, the literate and literary elaboration of the Sulaimanî dialect – and, perhaps more importantly, its language-ideological elevation – appears to have been the work of poets such as Nâlî (d. 1855?), Sâlim (d. 1869), Kurdî (d. 1849), Mewlewî (d. 1882), Mehwî (d. 1909), and especially Hajî Qadir Koyî (d. 1897). As far as we can tell from their poems all of these were devout believers; but as poets, they did not operate primarily in medrese circles. It has been said that the rise of the Sulaimanî dialect was due in the first place to the patronage of the local Baban dynasty, and marginalized the neighbouring Erdelan court, and with it, presumably, the use of Hawramî; but this view cannot be maintained without substantial modification. Even in the city of Sulaimaniya, Hawramî continued to be used as a medium of poetic expression; thus, Mewlewî wrote his *Dîwan*, and a long *aqîda* poem, the *Marḍiyya*, in Hawramî. In fact, the very first sample of printing in Kurdish, the trilingual *Dîwan* of Mawlana Khalîd Naqshbandî published in 1843 in Istanbul, included a small number of Kurdish-language poems, all of them in Hawramî.

In short, until well into the twentieth century there was little to suggest that Soranî was in the process of becoming a major language of education and administration. It was written by only a small number of local poets, and read by few more; whatever fame these poets enjoyed resulted from public oral recitation in local teahouses rather than printed books or periodicals. Rather, until World War I everything pointed to Kurmanjî as the main Kurdish variety of the future: it could boast a relatively extended and relatively widely known classical literary tradition and a continuous use in medreses; it was the main medium used in early periodicals such as *Kurdistan*, *Rojî Kurd* and *Jîn*; and it was the dialect of the poem that had come to be seen as the Kurdish national epic, Ehmedê Khanî's *Mem û Zîn* (first printed in Istanbul in 1919). This was a matter of authors using their own dialects rather than the conscious creation of a standard language: thus, several Kurmanjî journals printed Hajî Qadir Koyî's Soranî poems without any qualms, and a few texts in the Northwestern Zaza dialect were printed as well. The dramatic political developments in the aftermath of World War I, however, took an unexpected turn for the Kurds, with far-reaching linguistic consequences.

4   Kurdish in Mandate Iraq

The new political realities created by World War I called an abrupt halt to the development of the Kurmanjî dialect and provided unexpected opportunities for Soranî. In the emerging republic of Turkey initial promises concerning political autonomy and linguistic recognition for the Kurds were soon forgotten. A 1922 draft autonomy law still envisioned promoting and encouraging the use of Kurdish. However, by March 1924 the Kemalist elites promulgated a law demanding that only Turkish be used in law courts and prohibiting the use of Kurdish in schools and other public spaces. Likewise, 1924 law no. 430 on the unification of education (*tevhîd-i tedrîsât kanunu*) led to the closing of all *medreses*, which in the Kurdish-speaking regions had been the main institutional network for Kurdish vernacular learning. Although a good many rural Kurdish *medreses* continued to function clandestinely, these measures effectively put a stop to the development of the Kurmanjî dialect into a full-fledged medium for modern education, literature, and administration. Laws banning both the public and the private use of Kurdish remained in force for decades, and were only relaxed in the early 1990s; until that time, the cultivation of Kurmanjî as a language of modern learning and literature was continued only by intellectuals in European exile.

Developments in mandate and monarchical Iraq ran a rather different course. The new territory of Iraq knew a great variety of Kurdish dialects; these are conventionally grouped together as varieties of Badînî or Badînanî spoken to the Northwest of the Zab river; and the Soranî varieties spoken further Southeast. The Badînan region counted few if any major urban centres; Sulaimaniya was by far the biggest Kurdish-majority city.[21] Although not as openly assimilationist as the Kemalist elites in Turkey, successive Iraqi governments wavered between an accommodationist attitude towards Kurdish demands and an increasingly militant Arab nationalism. During the war, the British had tried to encourage anti-Ottoman nationalist feelings among the Kurds, as they had successfully done among the Arabs. Looking back on the period in a 1925 report, British official C.J. Edmonds wrote that during World War I "one of the devices adopted by the British officers in Kurdish territory for consolidating Kurdish national sentiment was the introduction of Kurdish as the written official language in place of the Turkish of Government offices and the Persian of private correspondence."[22] Note that his words imply

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21   The local elites in cities like Erbil, Kirkuk, and Mosul had long spoken, and to some extent continued to speak, Turkish.

22   Quoted in Hassanpour, *Nationalism*, 103.

that at this stage, Turkish and Persian rather than Arabic were the main languages for public and private literate communication, respectively.

Following the British military occupation of Iraq, the League of Nations granted Great Britain a mandate over the country, explicitly intended to pave the way for Iraq's independence. Although the British mandate undoubtedly had a profound impact on Iraq as a whole and on the Kurds in particular, it is easy to overstate this influence at the expense of local actors. At the same time, however, there was an Iraqi government in Baghdad which can by no means be described as a British marionette; and, as we shall see, a number of Kurdish actors were likewise actively creating new social realities themselves rather than merely reacting to outside forces or, even worse, passively assimilating hegemonic influences.

As noted above, prior to 1918 virtually all Kurdish books and periodicals had been printed in the Kurmanjî dialect. But when in that year the vilayet of Mosul came under British control, the Sulaimaniya dialect quickly gained in prominence. It is not clear whether this shift to Soranî reflected a conscious policy on the part of the local British authorities, and if so, what were the reasons for it: no British documents specifically dealing with linguistic policies have come to light. However, there are a number of factors that may help to account for it. First, the vilayet did not include any of the traditional centres of Kurmanjî learning and letters such as Cizre, Diyarbakır, and Muks. The Kurmanjî-speaking area of Iraqi Kurdistan that had come under British control, the Badinan region, had rather fewer urban and princely centres, and apparently had less of a tradition of Kurdish-language learning than the regions further North. The major exception here, of course, was the court of Amadiya, where Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi had already observed considerable Kurdish-language literary activity in the seventeenth century. But this activity had declined in later times, especially after the Ottomans had abolished the emirate in the mid-nineteenth century. Second, the Sulaimaniya region had become more urbanized and more exposed to modern Ottoman education than the Badinan: it had relatively many modern schools, and was especially proud of the sole military school of Mosul province. As a result, relatively larger parts of the population had become acquainted with both the Ottoman Turkish language and with new Ottoman intellectual currents, in particular nationalism.

Prior to the British occupation, the Sulaimanî dialect had been used in writing almost exclusively for poetic purposes, with a few notable exceptions, such as Shaykh Hasan Qazi's *Mewludname*, Mawlana Khalîd's *Eqîdetnamey kurdî*, Shaykh Ma'rûf Nodî's *Ehmedî*, and a partial translation of Saadi's *Golestan*. In late Ottoman times Soranî Kurdish was used neither in education nor in new

genres of writing such as journalism or novels. Thus, a 1926 British memorandum to the League of Nations states, not without justification, that "before the war, Kurdish was not used as a means of written communication, either private or official […] the development of the written language as a means of communication is entirely due to the efforts of British officials."[23] Such comments may tempt us into concluding that the literate use of Soranî Kurdish, and by extension the existence of a language-based 'national sentiment' among Iraqi Kurds, is merely, or primarily, a creation of British imperialism. Such a conclusion, however, overstates the hegemony of imperial power and downplays local and longer-term dynamics, in particular the Kurdish vernacularizations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the formation of new Ottoman nationalisms during the Hamidian and Young Turk periods.

Initially, and in theory, British policies were clearly germane to both the linguistic and the political emancipation of the Kurds, but the practical implementation of these policies greatly depended on, and varied with, whoever was in charge.[24] Among the most pro-Kurdish officials was Major Ely Banister Soane, who served as the British political officer in the Kurdish region from 1919 to 1921. Already in 1918 Soane had started editing and publishing the Kurdish-language journal *Têgeyishtinî rastî* ("Understanding the Truth") in Baghdad. In 1913 and 1919, he also published grammars of Kurdish that covered both the Kurmanjî and Soranî dialects. The paper served obvious propagandistic purposes: it consistently carried the claim that the Kurds were better off in a British-administered Iraq than in an Ottoman state headed by increasingly nationalist Turkish elites. After replacing major Noel as political officer, Soane settled in Sulaimaniya. His rule, though harsh, appears to have led to greater prosperity among the local population. He also seems to have encouraged greater autonomy for the region – something his superiors in Baghdad, let alone London, were not necessarily happy about. More relevant to our purposes, Soane also encouraged the official use of Soranî Kurdish, for instance by launching a new newspaper, *Pêshkewtin* ("Progress"). Reportedly, its use of written Kurdish for journalistic aims was at first mocked by local literate Kurds, but the paper quickly gained popularity.[25] The paper, like its predecessor, *Têgeyishtinî Rastî*, used Soranî rather than Kurmanjî Kurdish, apparently

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23   Quoted in Hassanpour, *Nationalism*, 105–106.

24   On British educational and linguistic policies in Iraq, with an eye for their occasionally capricious twists and changes, see Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), Ch. 8, and Hassanpour, *Nationalism*, 103–118; 306–315.

25   Cf. "Major Soane in Sulaimaniyah," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* X (1923): 116; quoted in David MacDowall, *Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996²), 158–159.

targeting Kurds already living in Iraq rather than those living on Turkish territory, and specifically targeting the urban Sulaimaniya population rather than the more rural Kurmanjî-speaking Kurds in the North of the vilayet. However, following the Cairo conference, where it had been decided to incorporate Southern Kurdistan into Iraq rather than making it an independent state, Soane was dismissed in 1921; he died a year later.

These vagaries point to a basic contradiction underlying British policies towards the Kurds in Iraq. On the one hand the British encouraged, or tolerated, Kurdish national sentiment as a means of countering Turkish claims on Mosul vilayet; on the other, they tried to contain Kurdish aspirations, primarily out of a concern to preserve the unity of the country ruled by King Faisal. Moreover, there were great differences between different segments of the British authorities: policymakers in London tended to uphold Woodrow Wilson's principle of self-determination, whereas officers in Baghdad, such as A.N. Wilson, preferred an Indian-style centralized colonial rule for Iraq.

A report by the League of Nations commission had made the inclusion of Mosul into Iraq conditional on the appointment of Kurdish officials in the vilayet and on the introduction of Kurdish in the regional administration, courtrooms, and schools; but neither the British authorities nor the Baghdad government did much to meet these conditions. In fact, after the 1925 League of Nations awarding of Mosul vilayet to Iraq, Britain tacitly abandoned its earlier promises of autonomy to the Kurds. Fond of laws as they were, the British tried to safeguard the status of Kurdish by stating their intention to enshrine it in a promised or planned "Local Languages Law," but for years no such law was actually drafted, let alone ratified. Hence, one should neither overstate the effect of this law nor overestimate the sovereign power it reflects or embodies. A British recommendation to the Iraqi government to establish a Kurdish translation bureau, intended to provide Kurdish-language textbooks and translations of legal texts, likewise remained a dead letter. In the spring of 1930, the government in Baghdad announced that it would allow Kurdish as an official language in the North; but this promise, like earlier ones made by the British, yielded few if any concrete measures.

It was not until May 1931 that the long-promised Local Languages Law was ratified, in anticipation of Iraq's admission into the League of Nations, and in reaction to continuing Kurdish agitation.[26] In fact, Kurdish protests were at least as important in bringing the law into existence as British policy-making efforts. Clearly, British and Iraqi authorities saw the Languages Law

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26   For an English translation of the text of this law, see Hassanpour, *Nationalism*, 114–116.

as an alternative to – not to say a fig leaf for – earlier promises of autonomy or even statehood. It should be noted, incidentally, that this law only mentions the Arabic, Turkish, and Kurdish languages, and hence provides no legal basis for furthering the languages of smaller groups, such as (different kinds of) Aramaic, Armenian, and others. Moreover, except for article 8, which implicitly recognizes the existence of distinct forms of Kurdish in Sulaimaniya, Kirkuk, and Mosul governorates, the law apparently assumes Arabic, Turkish, and Kurdish as unproblematic givens or as essentially unitary phenomena, even though in fact this period witnessed fierce discussions concerning the appropriate official variety of all three languages.

It was clear to even the most casual observer that the British failure to honour earlier pledges concerning the use of Kurdish would lead to further unrest. Thus, C.J. Edmonds, who in later years would closely collaborate with Tawfîq Wahby on what was to become the first full-fledged Soranî-English dictionary (published in 1966), repeatedly expressed his frustration at the British mandate authorities' and the Iraqi government's unwillingness to honour earlier pledges concerning publication, education, and administration in Kurdish, for instance in a secret 1929 memorandum to the British High Commissioner.[27] As a result, the late 1920s and early 1930s witnessed an increasingly openly expressed Kurdish disaffection with British unwillingness to fulfil its promises and with the Baghdad government's reluctance to further the development of Kurdish.

The contradictions of British policies were painfully clear to local observers; the disagreements between the British and the (Sunni Arab-dominated) Iraqi government were even starker. The new Iraqi elites were increasingly virulent Arab nationalists; hence, the policies of the Baghdad government during the mandate and monarchical period appear to have been informed by the assimilationist kind of nationalism that could be found in the late Ottoman Balkans and in the early Republic of Turkey, even though in practice it was rather less successful in implementing these ideas. The government insisted on keeping Arabic at the very least as a second language at all stages of education – a policy it saw as essential to the political integration of Kurds into the new Iraqi state. In principle, the government favoured bilingual education in the first years of primary education; in practice, however, it did much to further Arabic and to thwart the development of Kurdish. Arab officials in Baghdad, keen on establishing an Iraqi national unity (a unity which, they tacitly assumed, was or had to be Arab and Sunni) rejected the introduction of Kurdish schools as

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27   Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 190; Hassanpour, *Nationalism*, 107.

of "no practical use." Behind such seemingly practical concerns, however, was a deep suspicion, if not outright hostility, towards any policy that hinted at catering to the ambitions of shaykh Mahmud Barzinji, the would-be king of Kurdistan, who was formally in exile but maintained good relations with several representatives of the British authorities.[28]

More generally, the development of an increasingly exclusivist and assimilationist Arab nationalism in Iraq during the 1920s and 1930s did little to encourage the development of Kurdish as a written language of public communication. A leading role in this was to be played by the famous – or notorious – Satiʿ al-Husrî, one of the pioneers of secular Arab nationalism, who during this period was in charge of education in Iraq as a whole. Although this is not the place for a detailed discussion of his views, al-Husrî has often been credited with a *völkisch* nationalism inspired by German romanticism, notably as a result of his translations of Fichte; but the assimilationist character of his nationalism cannot easily be explained from such alleged German influences. Instead, al-Husrî's ideas appear to have been shaped by the more militant national movements of Macedonia, where he lived from 1900 to 1909.[29]

5 Kurdish Non-State Actors and the Governmentalization of Kurdish

In short, neither the British mandate authorities nor Iraq's Sunni Arab rulers were unequivocally supporting, let alone encouraging, the development of Kurdish in monarchical Iraq. Instead, it was local Kurdish actors, most of them not or only indirectly linked to the Iraqi state, who brought about the development of Kurdish into a fully-fledged written language of modern communication. This process involved activities on several levels; we may see these as different governmentalizing gestures in that they all involved the production or reproduction of knowledge of a regimented Kurdish language as a political or governmental project.

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28 Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 125–127.

29 For a recent study on Arab nationalism in Iraq, which has revealingly little to say about Arab nationalist views of Kurds or other groups, see Peter Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian, and pro-fascist Inclinations, 1932–1941* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2006). On al-Husrî, see Bassam Tibi's outdated but still useful study *Arab Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1981). For a fuller argument concerning the importance of al-Husrî's Macedonian years, see Leezenberg *From Coffee House to Nation State* (in preparation). Wien similarly argues that the influence of German national socialism on Iraqi Arab nationalism has been rather overstated in the literature.

A first form of governmentalization of Kurdish was the creation of Kurdish schools, an effort which was clearly dependent on the Iraqi state for both official authorization and financial support. Despite paying lip service to the ideal of preparing Iraq for independence, the British mandate authorities never considered the education of a future ruling elite a policy priority. In fact, the 1923 *Iraq Report* stated that "it is neither desirable nor practicable to provide secondary education except for the select few."[30] Except for a small number of dwindling Shiite centres of learning in the holy cities of Najaf and Kerbela, the Ottoman schools that had been established in Iraq just prior to the British occupation – few in number anyway – all had Turkish as their language of instruction and catered to Sunnis only.[31] Apart from these modern state schools, there were an unknown number of *hujras*, or elementary Qur'anic schools, attached to local mosques. It was the British who replaced the Turkish-language schools with institutions where the language of instruction (at least for the lower classes) and the religious denomination taught varied with those of the majority of the pupils. Between 1923 and 1930 the number of Kurdish primary schools in Iraq rose from 6 to 28, that is, from 3% to 9.6% of the total number of schools. Apparently, these Kurdish schools received hardly more state funding than the schools for the rather smaller Turcoman community.[32]

In the new schools, however, there was a strong emphasis on classical Arabic and on rote learning; moreover, there was an ongoing battle over what should be the extent of both Arabic and Kurdish instruction at primary and secondary levels. At one point, the government even tried to make the establishment of secondary schools in Erbil and Sulaimaniya conditional on the local population accepting Arabic as the language of instruction.[33] After Iraq had been admitted into the League of Nations, these efforts at Arabization of the few Kurdish schools in the region intensified; in the 1940s, Kurdish was even removed from the curriculum altogether, not to be reintroduced until well into the 1950s. Clearly, the introduction of Kurdish into Iraqi schools was neither the creation of a sovereign Iraqi state nor the imposed product of British imperialism, but an aspect of a contested process of governing the Kurdish population, and a site for protracted struggle.

A second, and very much contested, way in which the Kurdish language was governmentalized was through a new linguistic regimentation: for the first

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30   Quoted in Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 194.
31   Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 197.
32   Hassanpour, *Nationalism*, 311. I have come across few comments on or references to Turkish-language education in Iraq; even fewer of these are reliable or precise. Discussion of this topic will have to wait for another occasion.
33   Edmonds, secret report; quoted in Hassanpour, *Nationalism*, 314.

time ever, local Kurds now set out to codify the grammatical rules of the Soranî variety of their language. Despite initial appearances, this aspect of governmentalization, too, resulted from a struggle *against*, as much as the exercise *of*, Iraqi state power. In 1923, the Iraqi Directorate of Education had commissioned Tawfiq Wahby to write a Kurdish grammar textbook for use in elementary schools. In order to better accommodate the particularities of Sulaimanî Kurdish, such as the rolled /r/, the velarized /l/, and the /o/, Wahby proposed a number of orthographic changes in the Arabic script; moreover, he also proposed writing the short /e/ sound. These and other suggestions, however, met with fierce opposition from the Directorate; apparently, its protests were driven both by religious Islamic and by purely secular Arab nationalist considerations. Thus, Satiʿ al-Husrî, at that time director general of education in Iraq, was one of the main opponents of Wahby's proposed orthographic reforms. As a result, Iraqi state officials decided not to publish Wahby's textbook; it did not appear until 1929, in a private edition printed at the author's expense. Instead, the directorate proceeded to sponsor the publication of Saʿid Sidqi's *Muxteser serf û nehwî kurdî* (1928).

Besides orthographic differences, these two grammars display considerable methodological divergence: in a later interview with Amir Hassanpour, Wahby said that his grammar was modelled on a French grammar textbook by Larive and Fleury for use in elementary schools.[34] But whereas Wahby's textbook was modelled on modern French grammars, Sidqi appears to have taken traditional Arabic grammars as his model; his textbook also employs the classical Arabic grammatical categories, beginning with terms such as *sarf* and *nahw*, instead of employing modern categories such as *morphology* and *syntax*. Thus, the rivalling *political* ideologies of Kurdish and Arab nationalism also found their expression in competing *linguistic* ideologies, and more concretely, in diverging grammatical and orthographic choices, without either of them being obviously or immediately hegemonic. Put differently: one cannot reduce the codification of Soranî Kurdish to the adaptation or internalization of modern Western grammatical categories, or to the passive assimilation of a Western philological orientalism assumed to be hegemonic in advance. Given the severely limited number of Kurdish schools, Sidqi's textbook was not widely used anyway; and, as noted in the early 1940s, Kurdish was removed from the primary school curriculum altogether.[35]

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34 Amir Hassanpour, *Sedeyek xebat le pênawî zimanî kurdî da: tîorî, siyaset û îdeolojî* (Sulaimaniya: Binkey Zhin, 2015), in particular ch. 4.

35 I am indebted to Lana Askari for securing a copy of Tawfîq Wahby's text; unfortunately, I have not been able to get a copy of Sidqi's grammar.

A third aspect of the vernacularization-*cum*-governmentalization of Soranî Kurdish was the establishment of a corpus of Kurdish literature, which involved a new regimentation of texts written in Soranî. As before, Kurdish *belles lettres* were dominated by poetry, but new genres appeared as well, in particular the short story and, increasingly, drama – a genre especially fit for a low-literacy environment. The first 'proper' Kurdish novel, Ibrahim Ahmad's *Janî gel*, would not be written until after World War II, and would not be published until 1971. Likewise, the first locally produced history of Kurdish literature, Sajjadi's *Mejuy edebî kurdî*, was only published in 1956.

Thus, until at least World War II, the process of vernacularization of Soranî Kurdish continued to centre around poetry, with poets such as Pîremerd (d. 1950), Abdullah Goran (d. 1962), Fayîq Bêkes (d. 1948) and the Iranian Kurdish Hejar (d. 1991). The question of whether and to what extent these authors mark the birth of a 'modern' Kurdish literature is a moot one; I shall not address it here.[36] Several of these poets, incidentally, were also involved in the writing of the first Kurdish readers used in local schools, and in the publications of the first Kurdish literary periodicals.

An important dimension of the creation of a Kurdish national literary corpus involved gathering the poems of poets who were being canonized, and which had until then been scattered among various journals or published as broadsheets to be recited at local teahouses. Thus, the 1920s and 1930s witnessed the publication of first editions of the Dîwans of poets such as Mehwî (1922), Hajî Qadir Koyî (1925), Nalî (1931), Kurdî (1931), and Shaykh Riza Talabanî (1935).

Finally, the creation of a national Kurdish literature involved the translation of works between Kurdish dialects. Most importantly, during the 1930s, Pîremerd translated the Hawramî poems of authors such as Mewlewî, Besaranî, and Mawlana Khalîd into Soranî; it is in these Soranî renderings that Iraqi Kurdish school children have become acquainted with these poets until today. Another example of this appropriation is the promotion of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zîn* to the status of Kurdish national epic. In earlier times, the tragic tale of Mem and his beloved Zîn had circulated in both written and oral Kurmanjî versions in the Kurdish North, but it had never become as popular – or even as well known – further South. Now, due in part to the praise heaped on Xanî by Hajî Qadir Koyî, the poem acquired a canonical national status. In 1935, Pîremerd published the first stage adaptation of the story, and numerous others were to follow. Finally, in 1960, Hejar rendered Xanî's poem into modern Soranî, deleting or weakening much of the original's mystic contents in the process. As far as I know few if any of these efforts received any appreciable

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36   But cf. Farangis Ghaderi, "The challenges of writing Kurdish literary history: Representation, Classification, Periodisation," *Kurdish Studies* 3,1 (2015): 3–25.

amount of Iraqi state support in the form of either subsidies for the authors, officially sanctioned publication, or government-sponsored distribution of books.

But there also appears to have been resistance against the promotion of Soranî from a very different corner: that of Kurmanjî, or Badînî, speakers. The exact sociolinguistic relation between the different varieties of Kurdish in Iraq is, in fact, a long-neglected aspect of this protracted linguistic and language-ideological struggle. Local Kurdish activists appear to have assumed as a matter of course that the Kurds should have a single official language variety, and that this variety should be based on the Sulaimaniya dialect. Thus, in a 1931 petition protesting against the Local Languages Law, Kurdish historian and Sulaimaniya representative Muhammad Amîn Zakî specifically objected against article 8 of the law, which allowed for a different "form" of "type" of Kurdish to be used in the Qadhas of Mosul liwa. Skating over the "slight differences" between what he, rather idiosyncratically, called the "Western" and the "Eastern" Kurmanjî dialects (respectively, Badînî and Soranî), and appealing to the authority of science rather than states, Zakî wrote:

> In selecting the eloquent dialect according to scientific principles, the Eastern Kurmanjî dialect must be accepted, since it is close to the eloquent Mukri dialect, and must be made the official language of all the offices and institutions existing in Iraqi Kurdistan.[37]

Clearly, this plea for a unified Kurdish language was driven by language-ideological and political assumptions as much as purely linguistic or scientific ones. It proved powerless, however, against the divide-and-rule tactics of the Iraqi government, which had been making serious efforts at arabising the Kurdish-speaking areas of Mosul liwa. But there are also indications that sometimes, Badînî speakers themselves indicated a preference for Arabic over Soranî Kurdish as a language of instruction and administration.[38]

We know very little about linguistic attitudes and activities in Badînan during this period. It turns out that a local intellectual, one Hama Saʿîd Duhokî, wrote a Kurmanjî grammar in 1932, possibly as a complement or alternative to existing Arabic and Sorani Kurdish school grammars; but this work was not published until 1998.[39]

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37   M.A. Zakî, *Dû teqellay bêsûd* (Baghdad 1935), quoted in Hassanpour (1992: 157).

38   Cf. Hassanpour (1992: 158–9).

39   Interview, Mohammad Abdullah, Duhok, April 2019; see also Muhammad Abdullah, "Rêzimana mela Mihemmed Seʿîdê Duhokî," *Metîn* 77 (1998): 50–65. I hope to explore these matters, and Duhokî's grammar, in more detail on a future occasion.

6   Conclusions

In short, the vernacularization of Soranî and its promotion to an official language were long and highly contested processes, which largely developed in spite of, as much as because of, both British imperialist rule and Iraqi state power. Hence, as noted above, governmentalization should not be confused with the exercise of sovereign power by the state; and indeed, the governmentalization of Soranî Kurdish was the result of resistance *against*, rather than the influence or imposition *of*, either Iraqi state power or British imperial hegemony. Hence, the suggestion that language-based Kurdish nationalism – or, for that matter, any post-Ottoman nationalism – is the product of Western imperialism, or involves a form of 'self-orientalization,' that is, the internalization of romantic-nationalist categories of philological orientalism assumed to be hegemonic, is at best a serious oversimplification and at worst an egregious error. It not only overstates the dominance and coherence of British influence in Iraq, let alone areas not under direct British control, but also ignores the process of vernacularization that started virtually all over the Ottoman empire in the eighteenth century, that is, prior to any political, economic, or cultural influence or domination of Western capitalist powers in the region. Local actors were by no means forced to reproduce any hegemonic discourse. Thus, Wahby's Soranî grammar was indebted not to British orientalism but to a French school textbook; its main rival, Sidqi's 'official' grammar, was informed not by modern Western orientalism but by the categories of premodern Arabic grammar. Second, one should pay due attention to the new internal dynamic triggered by, in particular, the 1877–1878 Russo-Turkish war and the ensuing territorial struggle between rivalling national movements in the Balkans – a struggle that reverberated throughout the empire. Thus, Ottoman and post-Ottoman nationalisms owe as much to these – partly Russian-inspired – secretive, revolutionary and militant Eastern European nationalisms as to the more liberal French-inspired patriotism and the Prussian-inspired forms of cultural nationalism that are usually claimed to have emanated from Western and Central Europe. Third, and most importantly, one should not overlook the crucial role played by early modern forms of vernacular learning in the redefinition of peoples in primarily linguistic terms, and hence in the rise of new language-based nationalisms in the late Ottoman empire and its successor states. These points may also be worth keeping in mind when one is studying other forms of vernacularization and nationalism in the wider region.

7 Postscript: Kurdish Language Policies after 1991

Considerations of space preclude a fuller discussion of developments in republican Iraq, especially the dramatic and destructive policies pursued by the Baathist regime (1968–2003).[40] After taking power in 1968, the Baathist regime, alongside its more widely published Stalinist personality cult surrounding Saddam Hussein and the use of terror as a prime instrument of government, also modelled its attitudes and actions *vis-a-vis* the Kurds and other minorities on early Soviet nationality policies. This seemingly accommodating attitude, however, was difficult to reconcile with the Baathist constitution, which declared Iraq to be an Arab state, and with the Baathists' increasingly assimilationist, racialized and violent Arabism.[41]

After the 1991 uprisings, however, a radically new linguistic landscape emerged in the North of Iraq. Current linguistic realities in the Kurdistan Region are sufficiently complex to merit a brief mention. The standing policy of Arabization came to an abrupt halt in the wake of the 1991 uprisings and the subsequent establishment of a *de facto*, and since 2005 *de jure*, autonomous region in Northern Iraq. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), however, has never developed any language policy worthy of the name. Since 1991, the use of Kurdish in school textbooks, administration and broadcasting has really taken off, but this has been a rather haphazard, improvised, and localized process. Soranî was widely, if implicitly, recognized as the standard, but in practice, most authors wrote the subvariety of their own native area.

Since 1993, the Kurdish regional authorities have allowed education in a standardized form of Aramaic in primary and secondary schools; attempts to introduce this language as a topic for university study, however, have met with fierce resistance. Reportedly, its opponents expressed the fear that this move would encourage Christian missionary activity in the region.[42] Turcoman has likewise been allowed as a language of instruction in local schools. No similar provisions were made, however, for any of the locally spoken Hawramî or Goranî varieties, even those spoken by religious minority communities; the Kakaîs around Tawûq in the Kirkuk governorate and on the Iraqi-Iranian border near Halabja use a Hawramî variety they call *Maço* ("I say"), whereas the Shabak, who used to live in the Ninawa plain East of Mosul until the 2014 ISIS

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40 For more detailed accounts of recent developments cf. Sheykholislami (2012) and Khalid Hewa Saleh, *The Language and Politics of Iraqi Kurdistan: From the 1991 Uprising to the Consolidation of a Regional Government Today*. Lambert Academic Publishing, 2015.

41 On Kurdish policies language pursued by the Baath, see Hassanpour (1992), especially 119–125 and 316–331.

42 Interviews, local university teachers, Erbil, August 2015; Assyrian spokesmen, May 2017.

offensive, speak the closely related vernacular of Shabakî. Apparently, local Kurdish authorities of both KDP and PUK have been reluctant to encourage the literate use of these dialects; nationalists often express a fear of encouraging divisions among the Kurds by allowing such dialects to develop. Recent developments in official ideology and behaviour also point to an increasingly strict and narrow conception of Kurdishness on the part of the ruling power elites.[43]

But it was party politics rather than the aspirations of linguistic minorities that most threatened the unity and stability of the region. Reportedly, in a reaction to the years of infighting between KDP and PUK, the KDP administration approved the introduction of the Arabic-script Badînî dialect in elementary schools in the Duhok governorate in 1998; and in 2009, the Duhok Directorate of Education changed the language of the first three years of high school to Badînî as well, bypassing the Kurdish Academy, which in theory was the authority to make such decisions.[44]

Thus, the realities created by party politics are at odds with widely shared Kurdish nationalist dreams, which have long been – and continue to be – informed by a "one nation, one language" ideology. Numerous works have appeared sketching out proposals for a unified Kurdish language, which is occasionally jokingly referred to as "Sormanji," but none of these proposals have met with wide acceptance. Reportedly in 2009 the regional Ministry of Education tried to introduce school textbooks in a unified Sormanji, but these attempts met with fierce opposition, in particular in the Badinan region, and hence were quietly withdrawn.[45]

In the everyday practice of broadcasting, numerous neologisms appear to have been coined that in practice have led to a convergence between Kurmanjî and Soranî. Thus, the stumbling blocks for linguistic unification were, and remain, of a political rather than a linguistic nature: conversely, differences of vocabulary, pronunciation, and orthography are very quickly given a political significance. As a result, any attempt to propose, let alone impose, a single language variety as a supraregional standard is immediately perceived as an attempt by a specific political party to achieve a hegemonic status.

Two anecdotal examples may indicate how differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and writing system have become heavily politicized. On one occasion, after a lecture at a university in Erbil, a student asked me if I was a PKK sympathizer, since I had been showing my audience a Kurdish text sample in

43   Interviews, anonymous local informants, Erbil, May 2016.
44   Khoshnaw (2013: 363–371), quoted in Saleh, *The Language and Politics*: 29.
45   Cf. Saleh, *The Language and Politics*, 47–48.

the Latin alphabet. On another, I was told of attempts to create a centre for Women's Studies in a local university, which ran into trouble when people realized that there was no politically neutral word for "woman": using either of the two most current terms, *afret* and *jin*, would imply or suggest an affinity with one of the two main Kurdish parties. The university staff briefly contemplated using the politically more neutral, but awkward, term "ladies" (*xanimakan*), before settling on the foreign loan word *gender*. The latter term, in turn, was crudely mocked by local Islamists, who referred to the "centre for *gândâr* (lit., 'fuckers') studies."

The politicization of plans to promote any one variety of Kurdish to a universal Kurdish standard came to a head in 2008, when a number of (mainly Iraqi) Kurdish intellectuals, echoing Zakî and others in earlier decades, presented a petition to regional president Barzani, asking for the Sulaimaniya dialect to be promoted to the linguistic standard not only for the Kurdistan region in Iraq, but for all Kurds. The proposal, never very realistic in the first place, provoked a heated debate, with accusations of authoritarianism and sowing linguistic discord flying back and forth.[46] Significantly, the signatories of the 2008 petition did not ask the regional government to change social realities by any linguistic policies, but merely to recognize in law a social reality that, they claimed, had already come about: partly as a result of its recognition in the 2005 Iraqi constitution, they reasoned, Soranî was no longer a regional or local dialect but represented the Kurdish language as a whole.[47] Equally significantly, the Kurdish Academy in Erbil, in theory the region's highest authority on the Kurdish language, was neither invited to join in these debates, nor does it appear to have taken any proactive stance itself.

The 2008 petition flew in the face of linguistic realities characterized by the widespread, and enduring, proliferation of dialects. Other attempts at creating a unified and/or standardized Kurdish language have remained equally unsuccessful. In 2011, a linguistic conference was held in Erbil; another one was organized in Diyarbakır in the following year. However, the participants in these conferences were unable to reach any consensus; the latter conference in particular was perceived – and accordingly criticized – as heavily politicized. Even in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, a relatively compact area under – nominally unified – Kurdish control since 1991, Kurdish has effectively become

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46 For a brief overview, see Hassan Ghazi, "Language standardisation and the question of the Kurdish varieties: The language debate in Iraqi Kurdistan." Paper presented at the International Conference The Kurds and Kurdistan: Identity, Politics History, University of Exeter, UK, 2009; cf. also Saleh, *The Language and Politics*.

47 Saleh, *The Language and Politics*, 43; Ghazi, "Language standardisation."

a bi-standard language. The Kurmanjî spoken and written in Turkey, being written with Latin characters, cannot be reduced to written Badînî or Soranî. Hence, even irrespective of the different Zaza and Hawramî varieties Kurdish is at present at least a three-standard language: Latin-character Kurmanjî is used among Kurds in Turkey and Syria, and Arabic-character Badînî and Soranî among Kurds in Iraq and Iran.

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"Yan, Of, Ef, Viç, İç, İs, Dis, Pulos …": the Surname Reform, the "Non-Muslims," and the Politics of Uncertainty in Post-genocidal Turkey

Emmanuel Szurek

On 29 November 1934, this unsigned editorial appeared in the Istanbul-based newspaper *Cumhuriyet*:

> Compatriot, it's your turn!
>
> Mr. Baruh, secretary of the B'nai B'rith Jewish *gymnasium*, has stated that he has adopted the word *Batu*, meaning "strong," as his surname, and that in so doing his purpose is to incite the Jews to adopt pure Turkish surnames.
>
> Last year there were Jewish children who took Turkish first names.[1] Just like the Turks, the Jews of Turkey do not have surnames. Names such as *Behar*, *Nesim*, *Levi* and *Kohen* do exist just like ours, and many people make use of them, but these people do not come from the same lineage. From now on, by choosing pure Turkish surnames, they will have made a step toward Turkification.
>
> The Armenians and the Rums do have surnames. All Armenian names end in *yan*, but among the Rums there are numerous surnames ending in *oğlu*, which is Turkish. "Baklacıoğlu," for instance … But there are also many Rums whose surname is not Turkish.
>
> Just as the Surname Law states that names of foreign races and nations cannot be used as last names, it is likewise written in the Surname Regulation which is in preparation at the Council of State that suffixes and words expressing the idea of another nationality and taken from

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1 On this episode, see Rıfat Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri. Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923–1945)* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1999), 287, and Meltem Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building in Turkey. The 1934 Surname Law* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 65–7.

other languages (such as *yan*, *of*, *ef*, *viç*, *iç*, *is*, *dis*, *aki*, *zade*, *mahdum*, *bin*) shall not be attachable to the new surnames, and that it will no longer be possible to use those previously attached.

This Regulation has not been issued yet, but it will be soon. As of now, just as a Turkish Jew will no longer be able to use the word *Levi* as a surname, a Turkish Armenian can no longer use a surname ending in *yan*, and the Rums of Turkey, too, will have to change those of their surnames which do not end in *oğlu*.

In these times when all Turks are striving to take a surname, Greek, Armenian and Jewish compatriots would also do well to show a little enthusiasm in taking pure Turkish names. In so doing, they would show how glad they are that the laws of the Republic do not set them apart and that they are not treated differently from the Turkish citizens.[2]

A widely discussed question with regard to the dialectics of Islam, race, and secularism in post-Ottoman Turkey, is "Who is a Turk?." The perspectives of legal and social practices of state and non-state actors have led scholars to various answers, ranging, ideal-typically, from the duplication of the civic self-narrative of the Republic (all nationals of Turkey are Turks) to more or less exclusive interpretations based on language, religion and ethnicity (true Turks are the sole Turkish-speaking Sunnis of the country, but Muslim refugees and migrants, together with the autochthonous Alevis, Kurds, Arabs, and Laz, are eligible Turks).[3] On paper, the non-Muslims were full-fledged citizens, and as such, they, too, were subject to policies of forcible assimilation or *Turkification*.[4]

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2   *Cumhuriyet*, 29 November 1934. Unsigned editorial.

3   Ahmet Yıldız, *"Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene." Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919–1938)* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001); Nazan Maksudyan, "The Turkish review of anthropology and the racist face of Turkish Nationalism," *Cultural Dynamics* 17,3 (2005): 291–322; Howard Eissenstat, "Metaphors of Race and Discourse of Nation: Racial Theory and the Beginnings of Nationalism in the Turkish Republic," Paul Spickard (ed.), *Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 239–56; Soner Cağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey. Who is a Turk?* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Derya Bayır, *Minorities and Nationalism in Turkish Law* (New York: Routledge, 2016/2013); Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, "Republic of Paradox: The League of Nations Minority Protection Regime and the New Turkey's Step-Citizens," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46,4 (2014): 657–79; Gregory J. Goalwin, "Understanding the exclusionary politics of early Turkish nationalism: an ethnic boundary-making approach," *Nationalities Papers* 45,6 (2017): 1150–66.

4   Ayhan Aktar, "Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında uygulanan 'Türkleştirme' politikaları," *Tarih ve Toplum* 156 (1996): 4–18, Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında.*

A much-cited example is the "Citizen, Speak Turkish!" mobilization, a campaign of intimidation launched in 1928 by university students, teachers, and journalists in order to force the non-Turkophones, particularly the Ladino- and French-speaking Jews and the Greek-speaking Rums of Istanbul and Izmir, to abandon their mother-tongues.[5] In the meantime, however, the non-Muslims were also exposed to various policies and practices of marginalization in public life and the job market, discrimination in private business, limitation of movement, forced displacements, denationalization, and spoliation – all matters which led them not only to be "lesser Turks" in Turkey but also to leave Turkey.[6] This phenomenon has been referred to as *minoritization*,[7] a concept increasingly popular within the broader field of post-Ottoman and Middle-Eastern studies.[8]

Dated 29 November 1934, the editorial cited above could be a textbook illustration of this paradoxical Turkification-vs.-minoritization process. Its author was, I presume, Yunus Nadi [Abalıoğlu[9]], a leading figure of Republican Turkey, once close to Talât Pacha, now a friend of Mustafa Kemal and the chief editor of the *Cumhuriyet*. This daily newspaper was known to be the semi-official voice of Ankara in Istanbul, the former capital of the Ottoman Empire and still a multi-confessional city. Right from the onset, the former Young Turk addressed the non-Muslims inclusively: "Compatriot, it's your turn!". This title was probably an echo of the "Citizen, Speak Turkish!". campaign, which

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5   Senem Aslan, "'Citizen, Speak Turkish!': A Nation in the Making," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 13,2 (2007): 245–72.

6   Talin Suciyan, *The Armenians in Modern Turkey. Post-Genocide Society, Politics and History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

7   Zeynep Kezer, *Building Modern Turkey. State, Space, and Ideology in the Early Republic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 119.

8   Jane K. Cowan, "Ambiguities of an Emancipatory Discourse: the Making of a Macedonian Minority in Greece," in Jane K. Cowan, Marie-Bénédicte Dembour and Richard A. Wilson (eds.), *Culture and Rights. Anthropological Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 152–76; Mahiye Seçil Dağtaş, "Heterogeneous Encounters: Tolerance, Secularism and Religious Difference in Turkey's Border with Syria" (Unpublished PhD, University of Toronto, 2014); Nathalie Clayer, "The Muslims in South-Eastern Europe. From Ottoman Subject to European Citizens," in Roberto Tottoli (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West* (New York: Routledge, 2015, 70–84); Laura Robson (ed.), *Minorities and the Modern Arab World. New Perspectives* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2016); Güldem Baykal Büyüksaraç and Jonathan Glasser, "Inhabiting the Margins: Middle Eastern Minorities Revisited," *Anthropological Quarterly* 90,1 (2017): 5–16; Güldem Baykal Büyüksaraç, "Trans-border Minority Activism and Kin-state Politics: The Case of Iraqi Turkmen and Turkish Interventionism," *Anthropological Quarterly* 90,1 (2017): 17–54.

9   Surnames customarily appear between brackets when related to a period prior to the passing of the Surname Law.

was still in effect in 1934.[10] Still, the author consistently 'otherized' the non-Muslims by contrasting them with 'the Turks,' or by letting an implicit 'us' loom in such phrases as "*our* names," as opposed to *theirs*. The last sentence is particularly telling. First, it was for the non-Muslims to prove their eagerness to be part of the nation by adopting 'pure-Turkish' names (something which would soon be requested from them by law anyhow – or so the journalist thought). In other words, anticipating rather than just obeying the law was in order. Second, in a striking *lapsus calami*, the journalist invited his "Rum, Armenian and Jewish compatriots" to show their willingness not to be treated differently "from the Turkish compatriots," not the *other* Turkish compatriots – finally casting doubt on whether he did view the non-Muslims as his fellow citizens, after all.

In sum, this editorial encapsulated the tension between the desire to see the non-Muslims quickly incorporated by onomastic assimilation – and thus made less visible – , and the pervasive inclination to keep them at bay – and in sight – by discursive dissimilation. Both insiders and outsiders, Turkey's non-Muslims were caught in the double bind of a self-proclaimed secularist integration and an enduring sense of differentiation based on religion.[11] The persistence of the Turkish state in reiterating ambiguities of this kind, or its consistent inconsistency within the realm of the law, I call the 'politics of uncertainty.' In this chapter, I wish to investigate this phenomenon through the case of the Surname reform, a policy still wrapped in much obfuscation with regard to the non-Muslims.

Launched in June 1934, the reform was to be theoretically implemented from January 1935 to July 1936. In terms of linguistics, it constrained the naming practices of citizens in three ways. *Formally*, it made it compulsory for every Turk to have a set of two official identifiers (first name + surname). *Semantically*, some surnames, because of their meaning in Turkish, were deemed anti-national or disgraceful, and therefore prohibited. *Etymologically*, newly adopted surnames had to be selected from Turkish. This last provision was undoubtedly enforced for Muslim citizens (98% of the population), the vast majority of whom lacked

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10   Alexandros Lamprou, "Nationalist Mobilization and State-Society Relations: The People's Houses' Campaign for Turkish in Izmir, June–July 1934," *Middle Eastern Studies* 49,5 (2013): 824–839.

11   Marc Baer, "The Double Bind of Race and Religion: The Conversion of the Dönme to Turkish Secular Nationalism," *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* 46,4 (2004): 682–709; Ekmekçioğlu, "Republic of Paradox"; Bayır, *Minorities and Nationalism*.

a standardized patronymic name.[12] Individuals with names sounding Kurdish, Arab, Slavic or Circassian were not authorized to turn those into their official surnames. The question is whether those who already had a patronymic – as was critically the case for most Armenians, Rums and Jews – had to abandon it or not.[13] Of all citizens, it was they whose naming practices came closest to the new patronymic order, due to both their own onomastic practices and *longue-durée* entanglement with Europe, where surnames had been in order for centuries.[14]

Should the non-Muslims be forced to adopt a Turkish-sounding surname or not? Option 1 (Turkification) meant forcing them to abandon their anthroponymic heritage (just like the non-Turkish Muslims) but fully incorporating them into the national community, as embodied by an etymologically homogenized onomasticon. Option 2 (minoritization) meant keeping the patrimony safe but leaving the owners clearly visible, to the authorities if not in everyday life, as "the non-Muslims."[15] In times of continued persecution, both state-driven and at street level,[16] this was probably not the best option for the non-Muslims, many of whom eventually opted for Turkish surnames (individually). But from the perspective of a state that in many respects had taken up the Young-Turk duty of homogenizing the country on an ethno-confessional basis,

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12   On the prevalent, yet contested, conception that Turks/Ottomans did not have family names, see Olivier Bouquet, *Les noblesses du nom. Essai d'anthroponymie ottoman* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 145–187; Emmanuel Szurek, "To Call a Turk a Turk: Patronymic Nationalism in Turkey in the 1930s," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* [Online] 60,2 (2013); Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 39–41 and 71–74.

13   There were many exceptions to this divide. Muslim refugees from the Balkans, former Persian subjects (where surnames had been adopted in 1925) could have a standardized surname prior 1934, while many non-Muslims of (Eastern) Anatolia lacked one or had a Turkish-sounding surname. See Houchang Chehabi, "The reform of Iranian nomenclature and titulature in the fifth Majles," in Wali Ahmadi (ed.), *Converging Zones: Persian Literary Tradition and the Writing of History: Studies in Honor of Amin Banami* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2012), 84–116; Bouquet, *Les noblesses du nom*, 117–143.

14   Ilsen About and Vincent Denis, *Histoire de l'identification des personnes* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010).

15   After Lausanne, the Armenians, Rums and Jews were the only non-Muslim 'minorities' recognized as such by Ankara. They should not be too casually equated with the non-Muslims. See Baskın Oran, *Türkiye'de Azınlıklar: Kavramlar, Teori, Lozan, İç Mevzuat, İçtihat, Uygulama* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005/2004), 67–80.

16   For instance, the so-called "Thrace events" – a pogrom which led over 15,000 Jews to leave their homeland in Eastern Thrace – started as the Surname Law was under discussion in Ankara. See for instance Rıfat Bali, *1934 Trakya Olayları* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2008).

option 2 could be deemed a preferable course of action.[17] The vast majority of those who have touched upon this question, as we shall see, have argued that assimilation prevailed: the non-Muslims, they hold, were legally compelled to Turkify their surname. I hope to show that this is inaccurate: if anything, the reform ended up legally differentialist – for the non-Muslims – , rather than assimilationist (which it was for the Muslims), for reasons that require both a national and a transnational frame of analysis.

More importantly, by a close reading of the multiple injunctions that punctuated the Surname reform – the law itself (June 1934); its regulation (December 1934); the Interior Ministry's rulings (January 1935) and instructions (April 1935) – , and with particular attention to the timing of those prescriptions, I hope to demonstrate that with respect to the non-Muslims the reforming process was impregnated with ambiguity from beginning to end. Whether intentional or not, such inconsistency led the authorities to a series of legal flip-flops – back and forth between assimilation and differentiation. Thus, research on the surname reform, I argue, has failed to fully grasp this normative zigzagging and the kind of majority-'minority' relationship it was likely to reveal, twenty years or so after the disappearance, by death or deportation, of 2.5 million Ottoman Christians.

My perspective in this chapter is elite- and state-centred, and focuses on the making of the legal apparatus of the reform rather than on its implementation. Examining more documents from the non-Muslims and their institutions and taking the point of view of private individuals, through oral history, would certainly lead to a more complex picture in terms of onomastic agency and creativity.[18] Still, I maintain that when it came to the non-Muslims the volatility of the state remains to be factually documented. To that end, I have used mainly Turkish sources: records of the proceedings of Parliament, the multi-layered normative documentation of the reform, national newspapers, and administrative documents. Since the issue also has a transnational dimension, I have also used Istanbul-based French and Rum newspapers, along with a few

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17   In Turkey, the surname has remained an identifier that is less used, in everyday life, than the first name, which can also be a marker of ethno-confessional belonging. And so, the fact that first names were kept outside the reform does constitute a limitation to the discriminatory potential of the new surnames. But this nuance, in turn, calls for qualification: names are not only tools for identification, they also carry a symbolic repository, and "tell a story"; as such, they have practical effects on individuals' life. See Nicole Lapierre, *Changer de nom* (Paris: Stock, 1995).

18   By conducting interviews in the late 1990s, Meltem Türköz was for instance able to explore the registers of meaning through which individuals make sense of their own memories of the reform. Originally a PhD in social anthropology (2004), her excellent *Naming and Nation-Building* is the most thorough study of the surname reform.

American and French diplomatic archives. It should be clear at this point that the archives of the Turkish Interior and Foreign Affairs Ministries unfortunately remain closed.[19]

1   Denotation, Not Connotation. What Law 2525 Was Mainly About (June 1934)

Before 1934, a Muslim Ottoman was likely to have a variety of names. First came the Islamic *isim* (Ali, İbrahim, Zeyneb). When more complex sociability requested further differentiation, one could resort to a *mahlas* (nickname, pen name), which was conferred to an individual early in life by a superior according to such considerations as morals, educational performance, *tour d'esprit*, etc. Finally, most elite people had a *lakab*, i.e., an additional *mahlas*, but reflecting reputation rather than being a single designator. The *lakab* indicated one's geographical origin, family background, outstanding achievements etc. However, none of these identifiers were fixed. On the contrary, switching names and categories of names happened frequently in a lifetime. Thus, most Turks did not bear standardized *family names*, although there did exist kinship groups with transmissible *names of family*.[20] A classical state-building policy,[21] the surname reform thus represented both an effort in formal homogenization and onomastic stabilization: unlike the Ottoman subjects, the Turks would all use the same categories of names (first name + surname), and would theoretically use the same identifiers throughout their lifetime.

   A follow-up of the adoption, or adaptation, of the Swiss Civil Code (1926), in which the family name was mentioned several times,[22] the reform was launched in 1929, then stopped, then revived. A bill was finally submitted to Parliament in March 1933. The man in charge was the Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya (1927–1938). On 16 June 1934, he explained to the deputies in what perspective the bill had been drawn up:

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19   I am greatly indebted to Antonis Nasis for translating sources in Greek, and to İlker Aytürk and Erik-Jan Zürcher for their insightful remarks. My thanks also go to Güneş Işiksel, Nicole Lapierre, Cilia Martin, Işık Tamdoğan, Duygu Taşalp, and Claire Zalc.

20   Robert F. Spencer, "The Social Context of Modern Turkish Names," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 17,3 (1961): 205–218; Olivier Bouquet, "Onomasticon Ottomanicum: identification administrative et désignation sociale dans l'État ottoman du XIXᵉ siècle," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 127 (2010): 213–35.

21   Gérard Noiriel (ed.), *L'identification. Genèse d'un travail d'État* (Paris: Belin, 2007).

22   Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 64.

Of course it is your high assembly that will be sovereign. Just allow me
to add this: this is a law of modernization. This is a law that your servant
and other friends at the Ministry have worked on with all their power. […]
How was [similar legislation] elaborated in France? What kind of law did
Napoleon produce? What was done by François I? How did the Germans
give names to the Jews? They asked the French how they would attribute
family names no matter what happened to the Algerians.[23]

The minister did not say what purpose – etymological or just formal – was
served by the comparison with the German Jews or the Algerian *indigènes*,[24]
nor which groups were considered their equivalents in Turkey, if any. But his
words did illustrate the Eurocentric civilizationism of the reformers, and their
ambition to build a nation through names. And yet, it seems that when debat-
ing the law the deputies were not much preoccupied with the non-Muslims
and the etymological challenge raised by their surnames. After all, dealing with
the 2% who already had surnames when 98% of the 16 million citizens did not,
was no priority. Moreover, the law had been placed on the agenda just before
the end of the parliamentary session (6 July), so that the draft was discussed
quickly, among other bills, on 16, 18, and 21 June, with a fervour that did not
pass the French observers unnoticed: "From May onward, the zeal of the Grand
National Assembly was observed, whose careful control extends to all objects,
and which has passed a considerable number of legislative proposals […]."[25]
Thus, we may simply conclude that the minorities were outside the deputies'
scope when the Surname law, or Law 2525, was finally passed.

However, other elements suggest that the omission of the non-Muslims
may have been intentional. The draft originally submitted to the Assembly
(March 1933) did indeed state that "All Turks have a name taken from the
Turkish language" (Article 3). Yet, this obligation was omitted from the ver-
sion revised by the Committee of Internal Affairs (December 1933), as well
as from that corrected by the Justice Committee (May 1934).[26] Moreover, in
March 1934, another bill on surnames had been submitted: in the explanatory
statement, its promoter, the deputy of Muğla Nuri Bey, recommended that
future surnames be devoid of any "influence of religion or racial belonging"

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23   *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Zabıt Ceridesi* (hereafter *TBMMZC*) IV, 23, 69, 198.

24   The imposition of a patronymic system in colonized Algeria still awaits its historian. See
      Farid Benramdane, "Qui es-tu? J'ai été dit. De la destruction de la filiation dans l'état civil
      d'Algérie ou éléments d'un onomacide sémantique," *Insaniyat* 10 (2000): 79–87.

25   *Bulletin périodique de la presse turque* 102, 2 (1934).

26   *TBMMZC* IV, 23, annex.

(*dinin ve ırkî milliyetinin tesiri*). Thus, he had an article drawn up stipulating that "Surnames are made of one or two Pure-Turkish words making a single composed word with the suffix *-gil*."[27] Nuri's bill did not make it to the vote, but its contents confirm that the Turkification of *all* names was not excluded when Law 2525 was finally adopted.[28] I here quote Article 3 in its final version:

> The use of civil and military ranks and titles as surnames, as well as the names [*isim*] of tribes [*aşiret*] or of foreign races [*ırk*] and nations [*millet*] is forbidden, and so are the names that are not suited to public morals, or else names that are disgusting or ridiculous.[29]

The sense and purpose of Article 3 were clarified by Şükrü Kaya in the Chamber (21 June):

> Then we want to suppress the names of foreign nationalities. In our country, certain people who came from abroad and became natives of the country [*memleketimiz yerlisi*] bear names of other communities [*başka bir camia*]. For instance, there are thousands of names like *Arap* [Arab], *Çerkes* [Circassian] or *Çeçen* [Chechen].
>
> It is necessary to suppress those names. For instance, those who use such names as Ibrahim-the-Chechen [*Çeçen İbrahim*] or Mehmet-the-Laz [*Laz Memet* (sic)] must definitely find other names for themselves. This is why our purpose is to suppress the separation that does not actually exist in reality but still lives in people's minds.[30]

Article 3 continued the Government's efforts to homogenize the country by destroying all affiliations that were deemed non-national.[31] Still, it did not forbid

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27   *TBMMZC* IV, 23, 71, 191.
28   For another example of such etymological concern, see the words of Ziya Gevher Bey, deputy of Çanakkale, who proposed a motion that "the name cannot be from any foreign language" (quoted in Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 71).
29   *T.C. Resmi Gazete* 2741, 2 July 1934.
30   *TBMMZC*, IV, 23, 71, 246.
31   Such was particularly the purpose of the Settlement Law, adopted five days before Law 2525. See Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 73, and Erol Ülker, "Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online], 7 (2008).

non-Turkic surnames such as "Kevorkian," "Kohen" or "Papadopulos."[32] Rather, it was those surnames that, by their meaning in Turkish, conveyed the idea of an (alleged) infra- or supra-national otherness, that were banned: *names of foreigners*, not *foreign names* were the target. In terms of semiotics, *denotation*, not *connotation* of the foreign, became unlawful.[33]

What is striking in the examples given by Şükrü Kaya, cited above, is that his move against foreignness, if assimilationist, was made with reference only to (presumably) Muslim citizens ("Ibrahim-the-Chechen," "Mehmet-the-Laz").[34] This focus is confirmed by another vivid discussion on Article 3 which took place the same day, between Kaya and Refet Bey, deputy of Bursa. The latter vehemently opposed the prohibition of "foreign names":

> We will entirely abolish the names of foreign races and nations [*yabancı ırk ve millet isimleri**]. I am not of those who think that this is good either. As for myself, I am tired of those people who come to me in this country saying "I am one of yours" although in essence they are not [*özü benden olmadığı halde*]. If these people have foreign names [*yabancı isim***], I don't want them walking around pretending that they are Turks. If this man has the name of a foreign race, and if he is not one of mine in essence, and if he wants to bear a name that refers to his own race, then I find it convenient that he should be known for what he is, with a brand on his forehead [*alnındaki damgasile*].
>
> Here I should add: those bearing names of foreign races [*yabancı ırk isimleri****] or disgusting names – they will be able to change them by applying formally when it pleases them. But otherwise the spirit of the article, its purpose, is likely to be entirely missed.

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32   "Papadopulos," for instance, was the most frequent surname in the *Registre pour l'enregistrement des Grecs non-échangeables*. Cilia Martin, "Les temps de la (re)composition urbaine à Istanbul à travers l'exemple du quartier de Kurtuluş de la fin de l'Empire ottoman à nos jours," unpublished PhD, EHESS, 2014.

33   This has been the source of recurring confusion. See, for instance, Jan Beth-Şawoce and Abdulmesih Bar Abraham, "Cumhuriyet Tarihi Boyunca Doğu ve Batı Asurlara Karşı: Baskı, Zulüm, Asimile, Kovulma …" Fikret Başkaya and Sait Cetinoğlu (eds.), *Resmi Tarih Tartışmaları 8. Türkiye'de "Azınlıklar"* (Ankara: Özgür Üniversite, 2009), 221; Bouquet, *Les noblesses du nom*, 269; Özgül Ceren, "Legally Armenian: Tolerance, Conversion, and Name Change in Turkish Courts," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56,3 (2014): 622–49, 633.

34   Meltem Türköz makes the same observation in *Naming and Nation-Building*, 149.

Şükrü Kaya's reply was:

> As to foreign names [*yabancı isimler*], the greatest duty of a country is to incorporate, it is to assimilate to its own community all those who live within its frontiers. (*Bravos!*) The opposite was true for us, and the country was dismembered. Had the Ottomans converted the people to their language *and to their religion* [my emphasis] in every place they went, like they did in the first period [of their history], the Danube would still be the frontier of Turkey. We suffered a great deal from that. Now, those who live here, it is our burden to force them, no matter what, into the civilization of the Turkish community, to ensure they enjoy the benefits of civilization. Why should we still call someone Mehmet-the-Kurd, Hasan-the-Circassian, or Ali-the-Laz? [...] Those differences should not remain. Should anyone still feel in their heart the slightest feeling of difference, let us erase it in schools and in social life, so that they will be just as Turkish as I am, and will serve the country. This is how so many men who belonged to foreign races came to serve the country. Why should we separate them from us? Why should we call them "Foreigner! Foreigner! Foreigner," as if their forehead was marked with a stamp of infamy [*kara damga gibi alnında yabancı, yabancı, yabancı diye bulunduralım*]? These differences need to be suppressed – that's what our duty is.[35]

Apparently, this discussion reveals the absence of consensus among the ruling elite. It looks as if Refet was more inclined to strengthen the Turks as the dominant ethno-group, hence his differentialist promotion of a well-kept onomastic domain, whereas Kaya's concern seems to be the consolidation of national unity by a Jacobin incorporation of all "foreigners" into onomastic Turkdom.

Yet, I argue that the deputy and the minister were not debating the same categories of citizens, nor the same issue in terms of semiotics. To be sure, Refet's plea lacked clarity, as he repeatedly confused connotation ("foreign names**" – whose Turkification he vehemently opposed) and denotation ("the names of foreign races" – whose Turkification he first opposed*, but ultimately supported***). Nevertheless, when chastising "those people who come to me in this country saying 'I am one of yours' although, in essence, they are not," he was clearly not including those Muslim groups (Kurds, Laz, Circassians), whose assimilation was simply not a matter for discussion in Republican Turkey. Rather, he expressed distrust towards those non-Muslim intellectuals who had been openly inciting Turkish Armenians and Jews to change their

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35   *TBMMZC*, IV, 23, 71, 249.

names. Famous is Tekinalp's (formerly Moiz Kohen) *Turkification* (1928). In this book the journalist had established a new list of "Ten Commandments" for Turkish Jews, starting precisely with "Turkify your names":

> It is imperative to have a Turkish name in order to be a Turk. Even your coreligionists in other countries have nationalized names for they understood this obligation. [...] Give pure Turkish names to your children who are going to be born from now on.[36]

Some Armenians also advocated onomastic assimilation, such as a certain Vankaya (also a pen name), as illustrated in the Istanbul Armenian-language newspaper *Nor Huys* (1935):

> We, with our fullest existence, desire to acquire Turkish last names like the civilized Turks. We will use these last names proudly (how happy one is who says he is a Turk). We have to accomplish this task without wasting time; otherwise we will lose a great deal. For example, a sign on our shops with a Turkish last name would attract a decent Turk. Otherwise a Turk would not come near our shops unless he has to. The Turk has the right to impose this kind of conditions in order to share the rights of his country, which he has acquired with his blood.[37]

The assimilationist plea that Kaya delivered as a reply to Refet's anxieties should not be taken at face value either. First, his discourse, too, was ambiguous: he started by expressing his wish to see "foreign names" (connotation) disappear, but then cited only names of foreigners (denotation) as examples. Second, and more importantly, pretending not to understand whose assimilation Refet was *really* worried about – that of the non-Muslims – , the Interior Minister supported his assimilationist argument by once again providing examples only of citizens with a Muslim background. This "Muslims-Only" focus was further confirmed by Kaya's regret that the Ottoman conquerors had not converted everybody they had subjugated throughout their history to their language *and to their religion*: in this way he actually outlined what the putative limits of the national body were from the perspective of the ruling elite.

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36   Quoted and translated in Yeşim Bayar, *Formation of the Turkish Nation-State, 1920–1938* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 53–4.

37   Quoted and translated in Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, *Recovering Armenia. The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 132.

At this point, it is in order to recall a few basics concerning the architect of the reform. Born on the island of Kos/Istanköy in 1882/1883, Şükrü Kaya graduated from the prestigious Galatasaray *lyceum* and Istanbul Law School, and then trained as a lawyer at the Sorbonne (1908–1912). By the time of his return the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese had forced his family to resettle in Izmir, together with thousands of Muslim refugees. He became a judge, and in this position was appointed head of the Ottoman part of the joint commission set up after the Balkan Wars to supervise the population exchange with Bulgaria. According to Erik Jan Zürcher, "it was his performance in that role that drew Talât's attention and caused him to transfer Şükrü in October to the Interior Ministry with the high rank of 'mülkiye müfettişi' or Civil Service Inspector."[38] In 1914, Kaya was charged with the expulsion of the Rums of the province of Izmir. Next, he was appointed head of the Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Refugees of the Interior Ministry and as such "became a principal organizer of the Armenian deportations."[39] Thus, based in Aleppo from the autumn of 1915, he personally oversaw the mass murders of thousands of Armenians.[40] After the Greek-Turkish war, once he had returned from Malta where he had been exiled by the British along with many Young Turks, the Kemalists appointed him mayor of the newly reconquered (and ruined) Izmir, a place which "had been until a few weeks earlier the great metropolitan centre of Christian Asia Minor and was now the scene of a massive refugee crisis."[41] He also participated in the Lausanne conference, as a member of the subcommission for minorities. Finally, as Interior Minister (1927–1938), he played a prominent role in the writing of Law 2007 (June 1932), which led thousands of Istanbul Rums with Greek citizenship to leave their homes and possessions; he is also considered "responsible for the Exodus of Jews from Thrace in 1934."[42] In sum, to a large extent Şükrü Kaya built his career on the ethnic engineering operations that fashioned modern Turkey.

Coming back to the exchange in the Turkish Parliament cited above, its interpretation can only be speculative. Yet I argue that, despite its apparent

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38 Erik Jan Zürcher, "Unionists and Kemalists: Refugees, Killers and Nation-builders," lecture given in Cetobac Seminar Series, Paris, 15 May 2017.

39 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity. The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 94.

40 Idem, 444.

41 Erik Jan Zürcher, "Unionists and Kemalists."

42 Ayhan Aktar, "'Turkification' policies in the Early Republican Era," Catharina Dufft (ed.), *Turkish Literature and Cultural Memory "Multiculturalism" as a Literary Theme after 1980* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 29–62: 36.

incoherence, or rather because of it, it needs to be read as some sort of a fake disagreement or a staged "dialogue of the deaf": Refet wanted to keep the non-Muslim names visible, Kaya wanted the names of the non-Turkish Muslims destroyed; in both cases, the non-Muslims remained outside onomastic Turkdom. Regarding the larger picture of Interwar Turkey one may thus assume that, if the non-Muslims were not considered when Law 2525 was passed, this was not or not only for circumstantial reasons, but because it was eventually decided that their onomastic assimilation was simply undesirable. In other words, the dominant view within the ruling elite was most probably that the non-Muslims had no place in the imagined community that the new inventory of names was expected to represent and contribute to. But why then was it announced a few months later that non-Muslims would finally have their surnames Turkified?

2   The Etymological Turn of the Surname Reform (November 1934)

The deputies reconvened on 1 November 1934. At the end of the month they passed two other laws which prolonged the egalitarian flavour and revolutionary style of the reform: one granted the honorific *Atatürk* ("Father-Turk") to Mustafa Kemal, the other made it illegal to hold titles or distinctions allegedly originating from the Ottoman past. Appellations such as *ağa*, *hacı*, *hafız*, *hoca*, *kadi*, *bey*, *beyefendi*, *paşa*, *hanım*, *hanımefendi* were abolished. Finally, on 29 November 1934 the *Cumhuriyet* announced that "suffixes and words expressing the idea of another nationality and taken from other languages […]" would be banished as well (see below).

This notice must have come as a surprise to the non-Muslims. If confirmed, it apparently meant that it would be "impossible to register respectively Armenian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian, and other Slavic last names, as well as Greek, Cretan, Persian, Georgian, or Arabic last names."[43] On the same page the newspaper reported that the State Council would "probably" issue the enforcement regulation of Law 2525 "within three to four days": "It is our understanding that the non-Muslims, since they are Turks, will be under the obligation to adopt surnames in the same vein. Yet, this question will be clarified once the Regulation is out." This new development was also noticed by the American *chargé d'affaires* in Istanbul who wrote an analysis imbued with irony:

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43   Cağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*, 62.

> With regard to the law passed in the latter part of June requiring all Turkish citizens to supply themselves with Turkish family name, persons with Greek or Armenian names will be permitted to lop the 'opoulos' and 'ians' off and so purify them. A pamphlet containing suggestions for names is to be published.[44]

Apparently the US diplomat thought that only "foreign" suffixes, not entire names, would be suppressed. His French counterpart was of the same opinion, and notified Paris that "minorities will be authorized to keep their names provided they cut off foreign inflexions." He even thought that "failure to do so could result in fines and prison sentences."[45]

The confirmation came only three weeks later. On 19 December the *Cumhuriyet* reported that "surnames unrelated to Turkishness such as those ending in *yan* or *is* [would] be suppressed." The Regulation (*Soyadı Kanunu Nizamnamesi*) was finally issued the next day with the following articles:

> Article 5. Newly adopted surnames will be chosen from the Turkish language.

> Article 7. It is forbidden to bear a name appearing to contain suffixes *or words* [my italics] implying the idea of another nationality or borrowed from a language other than Turkish, such as *Yan*, *Of*, *Ef*, *Viç*, *İç*, *İs*, *Dis*, *Pulos*, *Aki*, *Zade*, *Mahdumu*, *Veled* and *Bin*. Those who bear such names may not use them. The suffix -*oğlu* should be substituted in their place.

> Article 8. It is forbidden to use and, once again, to bear surnames which in a general manner indicate other nationalities, such as *The-Son-of-the-Albanian* [*Arnavut Oğlu*] or *The-Son-of-the-Kurd* [*Kürd Oğlu*], or which express the idea of another nationality, such as *The-Son-of-Hasan-the-Circassian* [*Çerkes Hasan Oğlu*] or *The-Son-of-Ibrahim-the-Bosnian* [*Boşnak İbrahim Oğlu*], or which are borrowed from other languages, such as *Zoti* or *Grandi*.[46]

Article 5 implied that anyone who did not already have a surname had to pick one from the Turkish language. This confirmed that all Muslims – or at least those considered not to have a pre-Law patronymic – were to adopt a Turkish

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44   NARA: Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Istanbul, Turkey, vol. 459.
45   *Bulletin périodique de la presse turque* 105, 4 (1935).
46   *T.C. Resmi Gazete* 2885 (20 December 1934).

surname regardless of their ethnic our linguistic background. Article 7 stipu-
lated that those (predominantly non-Muslims) whose patronymic name con-
tained non-Turkish suffixes, but also "foreign" words, were to Turkify them.
Finally, Article 8 reiterated that "names of tribes or foreign races and nations"
were banned (as had already been stated in Article 3 of Law 2525); it also re-
peated almost word for word what had already been stipulated in Article 7. In
sum, *etymological* assimilation was added to formal and semantic assimilation,
and connotation of the foreign, in addition now to only its denotation, was
made unlawful.

3   Why Assimilationism Took Over Differentialism (for a While)

A reason for this "etymological turn" of the surname reform could be its very
timing. As is well known, Interwar Turkey played host to an ambitious if not
demiurgic linguistic policy, self-identified as the "Language revolution." The
purpose of this one-of-a-kind endeavour was no less than a radical purge of
all Arabic and Persian lexical and grammatical components, which were still
abundant in the written language of the literati. As a state-driven policy, the
purification of the vocabulary started right after the Romanization of the al-
phabet (1928), but gained momentum late in 1932, a few months before the
Surname Reform was launched. In November 1932 the Society for the Study of
the Turkish language (SSTL, created in July 1932) initiated a nation-wide lexico-
graphical campaign with the backing of various administrations. The purpose
was to provide the etymological raw materials from which a 'Pure-Turkish' re-
placement lexicon was to be selected. By early 1933, citizens were encouraged
to excise all 'foreign' words in oral and written practice.[47]

The road from words to names was short. Just as there was an impetus within
official circles for a systematic cleansing of the vocabulary, the possibility to
Turkify the anthroponymic landscape started to be publicly debated. Thus, on
12 January 1933 a certain Sinanoğlu published the following recommendation
in the national newspaper *Milliyet*:

> The name that really helps to distinguish individuals is the surname, and
> this is why we must take great care when choosing those names. Before
> everything, we must make sure that the surnames are absolutely Turkish.
> For too long people have been using surnames from foreign languages

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47   Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Oxford: Oxford
       University Press, 1999).

such as, for instance, *Hanifzade* or *Mayorkas*.[48] These names need to be Turkified. Such nationalization of foreign names is frequent in other countries, and those who have nationalized their names benefit greatly from it. After the Great War, which lasted four years, this nation had to shed its blood for four more years to set up and secure its national unity. By now that it has entered a new step in building up a strong national culture, citizens should not be left free to manage their surnames themselves.[49]

October–November 1934 was a climactic moment in the "Language Revolution." The results of the lexicographical campaign mentioned above had just been published, and the "war for language" was considered a new war of independence against "linguistic capitulations" (a notion applicable to common nouns and proper names alike). Thus, the new lexicon was to serve as a purified onomasticon, with lists of words eligible as future surnames abundantly displayed in the press. Mustafa Kemal himself set the tune by giving a series of notorious "Pure-Turkish" speeches, with barely any Arabic or Persian words. He also frequently rechristened people around him by giving them surnames.[50] Similarly, State officials and Party members were requested not only to adopt Turkish-sounding surnames, but also to use only "Pure-Turkish" words in their official speeches and writing; every day the press of Istanbul would publish lists of "Famous people choosing Pure-Turkish words" as their new surnames.[51]

This purist attitude complied with the "nationalization" of other symbolic landscapes in the country. Since the mid-1920s there had been an ongoing mobilization to change any place name with a "non-national" (Greek, Armenian, Arab, Kurdish but also 'Ottoman') referent.[52] Another case in point was the forbidding of shop signs written in languages other than Turkish, a policy implemented in the spring of 1933 in the neighbourhoods of Galata and Pera (Istanbul), where numerous coffee places, restaurants, wine houses, patisseries, and dancing halls had Armenian and Rum owners.[53] This ambition towards

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48   An Arabic word followed by a Persian suffix, *Hanifzade* bears a strong Islamic connotation; *Mayorkas* is most likely a Jewish-Turkish surname. On Sephardic Turkish family names, see Baruh B. Pinto, *The Sephardic Onomasticon. An Etymological Research on Sephardic family names of the Jews living in Turkey* (Istanbul: Gözlem, 2004).

49   N.H. Sinanoğlu, "Soyadı dolayında bir iki düşünce," *Milliyet*, 12 January 1933.

50   Szurek, "To Call a Turk a Turk."

51   See for instance, among many other examples, *Cumhuriyet*, 23 November 1934.

52   Kerem Öktem, "The Nation's Imprint: Demographic Engineering and the Change of Toponymes in Republican Turkey," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online] 7 (2008).

53   Méropi Anastassiadou, *Les Grecs d'Istanbul. Histoire socioculturelle de la communauté de Péra* (Leyden-Boston: Brill, 2012), 374.

linguistic homogenization was also illustrated by the "Citizen-Speak-Turkish!" campaign. Finally, I should mention the "Law on Banning Some Attire" (3 December 1934), which forbade clerics to wear their religious garments except at shrines and during services, with the exemption of one cleric from every religion. In line with official secularism its point was to make all religions invisible. A matter of clothing, it expressed the same ambition of destruction of difference. In such collective frenzy, or yearning for purity, it is no surprise that the Surname reform, too, came to adopt a fully assimilationist orientation.

4   The Never-Dying Attraction of Article 7 (1934–2018)

An overwhelming majority of scholars have shared the opinion that the non-Muslims were legally expected to Turkify their surnames. They base this opinion on Article 7 of the Surname Law Regulation, cited above. Alexis Alexandris was one of the first to address the question:

> … after the obligatory adoption of surnames by every Turkish citizen in 1935, pressure was brought to bear upon the minorities to adopt Turkish sounding surnames. This applied particularly to the Greeks who were urged to drop from their surnames such endings as *dis* and *poulos*.[54]

Rıfat Bali referred to Alexandris:

> The Greek of Turkey would Turkify their names by dropping the '-*dis*' and '-*pulos*' suffixes. Most of the Jews would Turkify their names and surnames by finding a Turkish equivalent for each Jewish name.[55]

Bali further identified six Jewish citizens who, he thought, were driven to change their surnames in 1936 because of Article 7: an İsrail Kohen rechristened himself *İsmail Kan*, Dr Behar became *Doktor Bayar*, a Levi turned into a *Leventer*, etc.[56]

Quoting Alexandris and Bali, Soner Çağaptay, too, believes that Article 7 was implemented:

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54   Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations*, 1918–1974 (Athens: Center for Asia Minor Studies, 1983), 183.

55   Rıfat Bali, "The Politics of Turkification during the Single Party Period," in Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.), *Turkey Beyond Nationalism. Towards Post-Nationalist Identities* (London – New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 45.

56   Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında*, 289.

The statute demanded that citizens of all religious and ethnic back-
grounds have Turkish last names only. This had deep repercussions
amongst both Muslim and non-Muslim minorities. Scores of Jews
changed not only their names, but also their first names.[57]

Whereas most scholars adopt a critical stance by interpreting Article 7 as a
paradigmatic illustration of Turkish policies of forcible assimilation, Çağaptay
sings a different tune:

Although the Kemalist ideology focused on the Turkish race, as the
"Speak Turkish" campaign and the Law on Last Names demonstrated, in
practice, Ankara kept the avenue of assimilation open to those who were
not ethnically Turks, especially Jews and non-Turkish Muslims. Such as-
similation was enforced; yet, it was inclusionary.[58]

Thus, in Çağaptay's representation, Turkification policies are interpreted as the
cornerstone of a Turkish "desire" to include the non-Muslims, at a time where
Europe was ravaged by racism:

Ankara regretted the fact that the Jews did not speak Turkish and had not
assimilated. It expected that they integrate by adopting the Turkish lan-
guage and Turkish names. Thus, unlike in many other interwar European
countries, where racial walls divided the Jews and the Gentiles, Kemalist
Turkey did not regard the Jews as racial outsiders […]. Thus, it appears
that under the rubric of Turkish race, Kemalism was willing to accept
not only the Anatolian Muslims and Jews, but, wishfully, even Armenians
somewhere into the body of the Turkish nation.[59]

Unsurprisingly, given the wide audience for his book,[60] Çağaptay has inspired
a few authors who also quote Article 7.[61] But this Alexandris-Bali-Çağaptay-

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57   Cağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*, 62.
58   Ibid., 63.
59   Ibid.
60   The same interpretation is presented in Soner Cağaptay, "Otuzlarda Türk Milliyetçiliğinde
      Irk, Dil ve Etnisite," Tanıl Bora (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* 4 (Istanbul: İletişim,
      2002), 256–7.
61   Vahap Coşkun, M. Şerif Derince and Nesrin Uçarlar, *Dil Yarası. Türkiye'de Eğitimde
      Anadilinin Kullanılmaması Sorunu ve Kürt Öğrencilerin Deneyimleri* (Diyarbakır: DİSA,
      2010), 31; Tuncay Ercan Sepetçioğlu, "Girit'ten Anadolu'ya Gelen Göçmen Bir Topluluğun
      Etnotarihsel Analizi: Davutlar Örneği" (Unpublished PhD, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2011), 210.

and-beyond chain of transmission is no isolated example. Definitely a best-seller in Turkish-republican historiography (although not the first of its kind in the post-Ottoman realm[62]), Article 7 and its shiny list of suffixes is indeed cited in a large number of monographs, articles, students' essays and textbooks.[63] Ahmet Yıldız's notorious opus on Turkish nationalism, for instance, has given rise to a *silsila* of its own: he is cited by Dilek Güven, which in turn makes it possible for Article 7 to appear on various non-academic scenes, including a human-rights report,[64] and an article in *Hyetert*, "the only online news source for Turkey's Armenians."[65] Article 7 has also made its way into Wikipedia in Turkish, English, German, and Italian, and it is duplicated in all sorts of online media, blogs and Facebook accounts.[66]

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62   A document from the Albanian Ministry of Interior (1930) mentions that, at the time of Austro-Hungarian occupation of Albania (1916–1918), there had already been an attempt to ban surnames ending in *iq, viç, ev, of, is, os, aqi,* and *dhis.* Nathalie Clayer, "Un élément sur la nationalisation des noms dans l'Albanie de l'entre-deux-guerres," in Christian Müller and Muriel Roiland-Rouabah (eds.), *Les non-dits du nom. Onomastique et documents en terre d'Islam. Mélanges offerts à Jacqueline Sublet* (Damas-Beyrouth: Presses de l'IFPO, 2013), 470.

63   Ahmet Yıldız, "*Ne Mutlu,*" 236; Dilek Güven, *6–7 Eylül Olayları* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2005), 90; Fabio Salomoni, "Balkan Migrations to Modern Turkey: Continuity and Change," in Luisa Chiodi (ed.), *The Borders of the Polity. Migration and Security across the EU and the Balkans* (Ravenna: Longo, 2005), 148; İbrahim Aksu, *The Story of Turkish Surnames: An Onomastic Study of Turkish Family Names, their Origins and Related Matters 1* (Çanakkale: s.n., 2006), 35; Serap Yeşiltuna, "1934 İskân Kanunu ve basındaki yansımaları" (Master's Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2006), 79; Meltem Türköz, "Surname Narratives and the State-Society Boundary: Memories of Turkey's Family Name Law of 1934," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43,6 (2007): 895; Yasemin Doğaner, "An Identity Construction in the Turkish Republic: The Law on Family Names," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 99 (2009): 120; Mehmet Cem Ulugöl, "Osmanlı ve Türkiye'de Vatandaşlık Kavramı, Azınlıklar Üzerinde Etkisi ve Uygulamaları" (Master's Thesis, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2009), 87; Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey. Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913–1950* (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 231; Klaus Kreiser, *Geschichte der Türkei. Von Atatürk bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2012), 75; Ekmekçioğlu, "Republic of Paradox," 672; Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, passim.

64   Elçin Aktoprak, *Bir 'Kurucu Öteki' Olarak: Türkiye'de Gayrimüslimler* (Ankara: İHM, 2010), 26.

65   Murat Bebiroğlu, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Patrikler ve Önemli Olaylar" (2009). Accessed 29 March 2019. https://hyetert.org/2009/05/26/cumhuriyet-doneminde-patrikler-ve-onemli-olaylar/.

66   Serdar Kaya, "Soyadı Kanunu ve Türkleştirme Politikaları/Ahmet Yıldız" (2009), www.pomaklar.com/t710-soyady-kanunu-ve-turkletirme-politikalary-ahmet-yyldz#1852; Anon., "21 Haziran 1934: Bir Asimilasyon Aracı Olarak Soyadı Kanunu" (2013), pomaknews.com/?p=8965; Anon., "Türkleş(tir)menin Tarihi" (2013), https://www.turkish-media.com/forum/topic/321603-turklestirmenin-tarihi; Roni Margulies, "Hıristiyan ve Yahudilere karşı tedbirli davranma ihtiyacı" (2014), http://www.duzceyerelhaber.com/roni-margulies/21852-hiristiyan-ve-yahudilere-karsi-tedbirli-davranma-ihtiyaci; Birleşmiş

The problem is that Article 7 is discordant with what anyone who has ever stayed in Istanbul knows empirically: namely, that a significant proportion of the non-Muslims have conserved their pre-Law "foreign" family names. Very few authors have addressed this contradiction. Murat Bebiroğlu admits that, "for unknown reasons," Article 7 was not implemented "in certain areas," where the suffix -yan survived.[67] Meltem Türköz explains that "as recognized minorities, the Jewish, Armenian and Greek populations were not legally bound to change names, but this was not made explicit,"[68] in other words that "the law was not meant to encompass the minorities,"[69] but does not say why. Özgül Ceren has a convoluted argument: "This right [to take non-Turkish names] was not protected by law, however, the law allowed recognized 'minorities' to adopt their 'religious and cultural' names simply by not explicitly forbidding them to do so."[70] Finally, Lerna Ekmekçioğlu sees the issue, but does not sort it out either: "from anecdotal evidence it appears that Armenians in Istanbul had kept their original last names while those in Anatolia changed them. But even in Istanbul, while some non-Muslim families kept their ethnic last names, some chose to Turkify them, some were forced to Turkify them, while others simply dropped the linguistic patronymic ending. The only extensive study thus far on the Surname Law [that of Meltem Türköz] does not solve this puzzle."[71] Well, one missing piece here is the fact that Article 7 was abandoned and replaced four days after it had come into existence. In the sinuous history of the Surname reform, this is yet another turn which has gone almost unnoticed, and was never explained.[72]

Beyinler, "Soyadı Kanunu" (2017), https://facebook.com/birlesmis.beyinler/photos/a.172
0115484934734.1073741838.1706653746280908/1922592824686998/?type=3&source=48&__
tn__=EHH-R.gazetevatan.com/soyadi-kanunu-ne-zaman-cikarildi-1143782-gundem.   All
links accessed 29 March 2019.

67   Bebiroğlu, "Cumhuriyet."

68   Türköz, "Surname Narratives," 901.

69   Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 148.

70   Ceren, "Legally Armenian," 634.

71   Ekmekçioğlu, *Recovering Armenia*, 192.

72   One study does notice the modification, yet without addressing its causes and implications: Sabit Dokuyan, "Soyadı Kanunu ve Kanunun Uygulanma Süreci," *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 31,1 (2016): 146. The accurate version of Article 7 is quoted in Temuçin F. Ertan, "Cumhuriyet Kimliği Tartışmasının Bir Boyutu: Soyadı Kanunu," *Kebikeç* 10 (2000): 255–72; Elçin Macar, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde İstanbul Rum Patrikhanesi* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2012/2003); İrem Aki, "Yabancı Irk ve Millet İsimleriyle Soyadı Alınması Yasağı ve Anayasa Mahkemesi," *Türkiye Barolar Birliği Dergisi* 121 (2015): 403–20.

5   **Onomastics Meets Geopolitics. The Differentialist Turn of the Reform (December 1934)**

On 30 December 1934, the *Cumhuriyet* discreetly reported that "amendments" (*tadilât*) had been made to the regulation, of which they had been notified "by telephone from Ankara." At that point a new regulation had in fact already been adopted (24 December), and circulated in the Official Journal (27 December). Instead of the original Article 7, and its alluring list of banned suffixes, one now read: "The names of foreign races and nations may not be used as surnames."[73] This was a radical reversal: non-Turkic suffixes and words were no longer unlawful; and denotation, again, not connotation (of the foreign), was the only legal offence. As a result, the Turkish anthroponymic landscape could be expected to change from a heterogeneous and multilingual, but also poly-systemic, marquetry of names to a *formally unified* (first name + surname), yet *etymologically dual*, onomastic system – with virtually all Muslims bearing "Pure-Turkish" surnames and all non-Muslims retaining their non-Turkic surnames:[74] minoritization prevailed over Turkification.

Determining the reasons for this new differentialist turn requires sources other than Turkish: the Francophone daily newspaper *Istanbul*, known to be subsidized by the French Embassy and a well-informed outlet on minorities-related issues, and the Greek-speaking *Apoyevmatini*, the leading newspaper of Istanbul's Rums, have proved essential here. According to the *Istanbul*, the Greek Government was involved. Right after the (first) regulation was issued, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dimitrios Maximos approached the Ambassador of Turkey in Athens, Ruşen Eşref [Ünaydın], in order to protest that the Turkification of the Rum surnames did not comply with earlier commitments by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tevfik Rüştü [Aras]. Apparently, the Turks reacted swiftly. On 24 December, Maximos announced that Turkey would respect its commitments, and the next day the *İstanbul* was first to announce upcoming modifications.[75] Finally, on 31 December, Ruşen Eşref visited Maximos in person to inform him of the new regulation. The next day, Maximos made a public statement that the issue was closed.[76]

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73   *T.C. Resmi Gazete* 2891 (27 December 1934). In other words, the new Article 7 was only a variation on Article 3 of Law 2525; Article 8 was modified to the exact same effect.

74   Unless they would *individually* decide to change their surname, a possibility that remained open. See Élise Massicard, "Post-hérité. Un retour du patronyme en Turquie contemporaine?" *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 60,2 (2013): 87–105; Özgül Ceren, "Legally Armenian"; Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 167.

75   *Istanbul*, 25 December 1934.

76   *Istanbul*, 2 and 3 January 1935.

The 1930s was a time of rapprochement between Athens and Ankara, as il-
lustrated by the "friendship convention" signed in October 1930. This *amitié
gréco-turque* had been reinforced by the Balkan Pact (October 1934), a treaty
signed by Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia which aimed at appeasing
remaining tensions related to minorities, the post-War exchanges of popula-
tions, and property-related issues. Both Tevfik Rüştü and Maximos had been
personally involved in this negotiation. Like all other newspapers in Turkey,
the *Apoyevmatini* published the initial regulation.[77] It also extensively reported
how the overall Turkish "purification" project of language and onomastics was
viewed with approval in other Balkan countries.[78] It was only on 3 January 1935
that the Rum newspaper reported extensively on the new regulation. First, it
cautiously cited the *Kathimerini*, an Athenian newspaper: "This measure will be
appreciated by the Greek people who will consider the Greek-Turkish friend-
ship as restored on the basis of mutual comprehension and solidarity." The
Apoyevmatini then commented: "this decision by the Government of Ankara
created a better atmosphere of dialogue regarding all minorities-related issues
of both countries, and reaffirms the precious and solid friendship in favour
of the consolidation of peace in the Balkans."[79] It is possible that the Muslim
Greek citizens of Western Thrace were indeed used as a leverage by Athens to
pressure Ankara: leave "our" Rums alone and "your" Turks will be fine. What
we know for sure is that the local question of the Turkish Rums' surnames was
now embedded in international politics. This does change the picture signifi-
cantly: Ankara was not alone in deciding whether Istanbul Rums were to be
onomastically assimilated or not, thus confirming the status of Turkish Rums
(and Greek Muslims) as "hostage minorities."[80] But then Turkish Armenians
and Jews were potential collateral victims of this relationship: they had no
back-up country that could pull diplomatic strings in their favour, and were
directly affected by the ups-and-downs of the Greek-Turkish interaction.[81]

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77   *Apoyevmatini*, 21 December.
78   *Apoyevmatini*, 22 December.
79   *Apoyevmatini*, 3 January 1935.
80   Stefanos Katsikas, "Hostage minority. The Muslims of Greece (1923–41)," in Benjamin
     Fortna, Stefanos Katsikas, Dimitris Kamouzis and Paraskevas Konortas eds.,
     State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey (New York: Routledge, 2013),
     153–75; Emre Öktem, "The Legal Notion of Nationality in the Turkish Republic: from
     Ottoman Legacy to Modern Aberrations," *Middle Eastern Studies* 53,4 (2017): 638–55.
81   This could explain why only few Rums decided to Turkify their surname but many Jews
     and Armenians did (or were driven to). This initially speculative impression was con-
     firmed to me by Cilia Martin, to whom I express my thanks. See also the case, in the 1940s,
     of a citizen who "was first named *Vardar* 'by mistake,' but wanted to take back his old
     family name of *Evrenos.*" Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 167.

In spite of this, the Turkish Cabinet should by no means be considered a puppet in the hands of Athens. For this was not the first time the Greek attempted to influence Ankara's decisions. Just a few days before, for instance, Athens had attempted to have the "Law on Banning Some Attire" (published on 13 December 1934) amended in favour of the Orthodox popes.[82] The Patriarchate of Istanbul protested, and the Greek Prime Minister Panagis Tsaldaris launched a press campaign in Athens: "We will take intensive diplomatic actions towards Ankara if necessary. Enforcing this law would be a heavy assault against the emotions of the whole Orthodoxy."[83] Any actions taken were in vain: the law was enforced as from June 1935, as planned. Another example is Athens' failure to have the "Law Reserving Certain Professions, Trades, and Services to Turkish Citizens" amended. Passed in June 1932, and enforced from June 1934, this law forbade permanent residents to practice a wide range of professions, from street vendor to hairdresser, janitor, worker, or employee. The main target of the law – whose architect was again Şükrü Kaya – were precisely those Rums of Istanbul who, although Greek subjects, were predominantly natives of Constantinople, and had therefore been exempted from the population exchange of 1923. Despite many protestations, Athens proved unable to alter the law, and thousands of Rums lost their jobs and were forced to leave Turkey.[84] Thus, it would probably be a mistake to see Ankara's change of policy with regard to the surname reform as the mere effect of Athens' intervention. Rather, we should think of two national governments converging in the idea that Turkish Rums were not to be assimilated to the majority of the country they lived in. Minoritarization was a transnational dynamic.

6   Consistency in Inconsistency. The Art of the Legal Duality of the Turkish State (January 1935 and Beyond)

Measuring the extent to which the non-forbidding of non-Turkish surnames was actually enforced would go beyond the scope of this study. However, some remarks regarding the ongoing elaboration of the normative apparatus of the reform *after* its implementation had started are in order. Two distinct regulations, as we have seen, had been issued in the Official Journal within a week of each other (20 and 27 December). This documentation was also published

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82   *T.C. Resmi Gazete* 2879 (3 December 1934).

83   Elçin Macar, "The Policies of Turkey toward the Ecumenical Patriarchate: The Single-party Era (1923–45)," Benjamin Fortna et al. eds, *State-Nationalisms*, 132–52.

84   Aktar, "Cumhuriyetin."

through private brochures. Some were printed immediately after the release of the first regulation, and thus became partly obsolete while already commercially distributed.[85] Another source of confusion was added by the Turkish administration itself, as illustrated by *İdare*, the Turkish government journal. Issued by the Interior Ministry, this monthly outlet published newly issued legislation, along with international comparative studies on various administrative questions. In February 1935, *İdare* published a new piece related to the reform: the Surname rulings (*Soyadı Talimatnamesi*). Originally circulated on 2 January 1935,[86] this document was meant to provide municipalities and civil agents with guidelines for the enforcement of the regulation, which had just officially started. But, apparently, the department which wrote this document did not know that the regulation had been modified, for it referred to the obsolete regulation (numbered 2/1720), not the one in effect (numbered 2/1759)! To quote:

> According to Articles 1 and 3 of the law, and Articles 5 and 7 of the regulation, they may not record surnames which are not taken from the Turkish language or surnames implying the idea of another nationality.[87]

This clearly sounded as a conscious re-enactment of the assimilationist ambition to purge the country of all "foreign" surnames. And so, Article 7 was resuscitated from the dead.

In the meantime, the rulings were very vague on the question of which suffixes were actually prohibited:

> Since according to Article 6 of the regulation only the use of the surname as such, or with the word *oğlu*, is accepted, it is forbidden to use, instead of *oğlu*, a word or a suffix which would convey the same meaning in any [other] language, such as *zade* or *mahdumu*. And those [words or suffixes] may not be recorded in civil registers or in birth certificates.[88]

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85   An example is *The Surname Law and its Regulation*, a booklet available for 5 kuruş at İnkilâp Kitaphanesi (the "Library of the Revolution"), in the heart of Old Stambul's administrative district. [Anon.] *Soy Adı Kanunu ve Nizamnamesi. Resmî Gazetenin 20 Kânunuevvel 1934 tarih ve 2885 sayılı nüshasından alınmıştır* ([Istanbul]: Necmistikbal Matbaası, 1934).

86   This date is taken from T.C. Dahiliye Vekâleti, Nüfus İşleri Umum Müdürlüğü Neşriyatı, *Nüfus Kılavuzu. Hizmete Mahsus* (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1938), 59.

87   *İdare. Dahiliye Vekâleti Aylık Mecmuası* 83, 357.

88   Ibid.

Strangely enough, the "Muslim-centred" *zade* and *mahdum* were duly mentioned as banned, but not the other, "Christian-related" suffixes. What is more, the prohibition of *zade* and *mahdum* was justified by the unchanged Article 6[89] of the (first and second) regulations – not by Article 7. This raises speculation that the authors were in fact aware of a reversal of Article 7. If we leave aside speculation, what remains is that in practice legal duality set in: any agent confronted with *Kevorkians*, *Papapulos*, or *Kohens* could either accept or refuse to register their surnames, depending on whether he relied on the Minister's rulings or the regulation by the Government. This ambiguity is probably what explains the existence of yet another layer of documentation: a circular from the Interior Ministry, dated 16 April 1935, of which we have only indirect knowledge, as it was quoted within a correspondence (itself cited by Meltem Türköz) between two civil agents in Istanbul:

> This document has been turned back after having gone over the Interior Ministry's circular on the surnames of Christians dated 16/4/935 and numbered 4892 that was distributed to all the districts. In this circular it says: These [people] already have surnames and because of this it is not mandatory for them to have a Turkish name or for them to remove additions to their names such as *yan*, *diz*[90] or *aki*. Actually every Christian family carries a registered or unregistered surname…. We are registering the surnames of non-Muslims in their own language without hesitation based on the judgement of this order. […] We insist that this surname can be registered. If you are insisting on objecting then you may appeal to the higher authorities […].[91]

This (new) differentialist stance with regard to "the Christians" was against the rulings of January but complied with the regulation and the promises made to Athens in late December. And so, Article 7 died again.

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89   "The Surname can be used either alone or with *oğlu*."

90   I do not know whether this typo was made by the author of the letter or by Meltem Türköz.

91   Correspondence quoted and translated in Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 109. Unfortunately, the author does not specify in which archive she found this letter, nor does she mention its chronological and institutional whereabouts. She interprets it by pointing "to the lack of standard communication among the population offices concerning procedures for minorities": although certainly valid, the argument is limited because she ignores the fluctuations inherent in the existence of two distinct regulations, and does not refer to the rulings either.

A last speculation is in order before this chapter is closed. If the instructions above were applied in all the districts of Istanbul, what about the rest of the country? 1930s Istanbul was still a place where tens of thousands of non-Muslims could feel "at home," with a dense network of organisations. This density itself made enforced Turkification difficult, notwithstanding the fact that Turkish administrative practices were visible to many foreigners. In Anatolia and Thrace, on the other hand, the remaining Armenian and Jewish communities and institutions were scattered and weakened by a decade of low-intensity persecutions. There, the state could act without much accountability, while the non-Muslims themselves had every reason to blend in. One may thus assume that the Interior ministry played a differentialist card in Istanbul, while keeping an assimilationist stance in Anatolia. With the current state of knowledge only few clues are available. Nicole Lapierre reports the memories of an *Avedikian* who became *Avedikoğlu* (still not a Turkish-sounding name, though). He remembered being told at the registry office in Sivas, "there is no more *yan*, it's over."[92] Meltem Türköz studies the case of the *Divan*s (formerly *Divanyan*s), a family from Merzifon whose men were killed during the genocide, and whose factory was confiscated after the war: "It was better, then, not to have it [the -*yan*]."[93] From the population registers Türköz further concludes that among Istanbul's Armenians "name changes were more frequently made among those who were displaced from Anatolia."[94] Lerna Ekmekçioğlu makes a similar observation.[95] Finally, and most significantly, it seems that the assimilationist rulings of January 1935 remained in effect *despite* the differentialist instructions of April: indeed, they still appeared in an official guidebook issued by the Interior Ministry for Registry officials in 1938.[96] In other words, my suspicion is that even after the legislative jumble of 1934–1935, Article 7 remained both dead in Istanbul and alive in the rest of the country, making it a state-of-the-art illustration of legal duality, if not actual *duplicity* (should this legal duality be subsequently found to be the effect of a definite policy).[97]

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92 Lapierre, *Changer de nom*, 183.

93 Türköz, *Naming and Nation-Building*, 150.

94 Ibid., 177.

95 Ekmekçioğlu, *Recovering Armenia*, 192.

96 T.C. Dahiliye Vekâleti, *Nüfus Kılavuzu*, 59–70.

97 Something which the current conditions of access to Turkish Interior and Foreign Affairs archives did not allow me to do.

7   By Way of Conclusion

First, contrary to what has been asserted for decades, Turkish Armenians, Jews and Rums were *not* expected by law to alter their surname. Thus, not only did many of them remain visible after the reform, but they ended up even more visible because of the Turkification of the rest of the anthroponymic landscape. From the perspective of the ruling elite this differentialist option makes sense in a context of enduring discriminations against the non-Muslims, and within the broader Young-Turk habitus of postgenocidal Turkey.[98] But it was simultaneously the effect of international politics, as Athens and Ankara converged in a common understanding of their countries as religion-based polities, with well-circumscribed "minorities." In other words, minoritization was both a domestic, i.e., post-genocidal, and a transnational, i.e., post-Ottoman dynamic.

Second, in public-policy analysis, and this goes for Turkey as well,[99] it is customary to explain the incoherence of the state by the fact that public action always leaves room for contradictory rationales and practices, involving multiple actors. The Surname reform certainly illustrates this axiom. For instance, the short-lived ambition to entirely "purify" onomastics in Turkey could have led to a different outcome in terms of nation building, and probably also had important ground-level consequences. But the question of state inconsistency here requires a different argument. For, what I hope to have demonstrated is that the variability of the reform was not (only) inherent in its circumstantial implementation, but right from, and throughout, its legal and paralegal elaboration.

Within a short time the non-Muslims were given a series of contradicting injunctions, which could be summarized as follows: "You would do well to abandon your surnames" (various voices, from 1928 to 1934). "You are under no obligation to change your name" (the law, June 1934). "In fact, you'll have to do it." (first regulation, December 1934). "Well, it turns out you don't" (second regulation, December 1934). "But, of course, you do" (rulings, January 1935) – "Wait. No, you don't" (Istanbul, April 1935) – "except if you do" (still the rulings, 1938). Beyond the question of whether names were changed or not – some

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98   Suciyan, *The Armenians.*

99   See for instance Senem Aslan, "Incoherent State: The Controversy over Kurdish Naming in Turkey," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online] 10 (2009); Benjamin Gourisse, "Order and Compromise: The Concrete Realities of Public Action in Turkey and the Ottoman Empire," in Marc Aymes, Benjamin Gourisse and Elise Massicard (eds.), *Order and Compromise: Government Practices in Turkey from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Early 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–24.

were, some were not – , the individuals concerned must have come out of the whole process with an increased feeling of existential precariousness.

Finally, what this legal volatility revealed, in its very consistency – again, whether intentional or not – is that Turkey's ruling elite could hardly make up its mind about what to do with the non-Muslims, and thus left them in a sort of political limbo where they remained neither insiders nor outsiders. A good illustration of this is that they could alternatively be accused of unduly Turkifying their surname with treacherous purposes,[100] but also be blamed for not doing that and thus "disregard the law by doing just what pleases them."[101] Damned if you do, damned if you don't.

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100   Eissenstat, "Metaphors," 253.
101   Ali Rıza Önder, "Soyadlarımız Üzerine," *Türk Dili* 201 (1968): 317.

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"Young Phoenicians" and the Quest for a Lebanese Language: between *Lebanonism*, *Phoenicianism*, and *Arabism*

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In the context of modern Middle Eastern history, the varied peoples of the "Greater Middle East" are often viewed through simplified notions of "Arab" and "Muslim," sometimes to the neglect of other, pre-Arab pre-Muslim Middle Easterners otherwise lapsed from the prevalent paradigms *on*, *of*, and *about* the modern Middle East. To non-historians, a century or more of Western academic interest in the region seems to have yielded little beyond clichés and assumptions referring to "'Arabs,' 'Arab' fears, 'Arab' hopes, 'Arab' concerns, and 'Arab' hang-ups – 'Arab' being the emblematic "be all end all" of *all* matters Middle East."[1] Yet there exists a vibrant and venerable Middle East outside the dominant platitudes about which traditional Middle East scholarship remains largely mute. It is within this context that this paper offers the suggestion that the prevalent assumptions about an essentially Arab (or uniformly Muslim) Middle East be confronted with a more culturally and religiously diverse Middle East. In line with this, this paper focuses on the so-called "Young Phoenicians" in Lebanon who in the early twentieth century put forward another interpretation of the history of the region and of their region, foregrounding non-Arab and non-Muslim interpretations of it.

1 Young Phoenicians, Old Lebanese

In Lebanon, the tendency towards valorising and celebrating the *longue durée* of Middle Eastern history and memory is referred to by the generic term 'Phoenicianism'. For obvious reasons, from the perspective of the keepers of Arabist orthodoxy Phoenicianism is deemed problematic, because it relegates "Arabness" to a *period* – rather than an *essence* – of Lebanese history.

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1 Elie Kedourie, "Not So Grand Illusions," *New York Review of Books* 9,9 (Nov. 23, 1967). No page number.

Yet Phoenicianism is also a canonical, long-standing school of thought that resonates among large swaths of a Lebanese society not always enthralled with the assumptions of Arab nationalism. The current was elaborated by an early twentieth-century group of young Francophone philo-Phoenicians – mainly Lebanese Christians – who went by the sobriquet *Les Jeunes Phéniciens* – the "Young Phoenicians."[2] In short, these latter-day Canaanites viewed themselves and the modern Lebanese as a singular, unique group, descendants of the Canaanite seafarers of antiquity (not the newly arrived Arab conquerors). From their perspective, they and their Phoenician ancestors were exemplars of humanism, at once skilled traders, intrepid mariners, subtle disseminators of knowledge, gifted cultural intermediaries, and fluid congenital polyglots straddling multiple traditions, multiple languages, and multiple cultural legacies.

An eminent "graduate" of the *Young Phoenicians*' intellectual circle, Michel Chiha (1891–1954), co-author of the 1926 Lebanese Constitution and a proponent of multiple identities, described the modern Lebanon of the "Young Phoenicians" as a diverse, multiform, polyglot cocktail of cultures and languages. His was a conception of identity that valued composite, complex patchworks of ethnicities and historical memories; a millennial universe of varied civilizations, where peoples and times blended without dissolving each other, and where languages, histories and cultures fused without getting confused with one another. Lebanon of the Phoenicians, Chiha wrote,

> is a meeting place into which peoples flock and assimilate regardless of their origins. Lebanon is the preeminent crossroads where varied civilizations drop in on one another, and where bevies of beliefs, languages, and cultural rituals salute each other in solemn veneration. Lebanon is above all a Mediterranean construct, but like the Mediterranean itself, Lebanon is a nation discerning and sensitive to the stirring music of universal poetry.[3]

This sort of discourse was part and parcel of Chiha's worldview. It is an important element of his political writings, his journalistic output, and his public speaking engagements in various Beirut forums – such as the *Cercle de la*

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2   Franck Salameh, *Language Memory and Identity in the Middle East; The Case for Lebanon* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 45.

3   Michel Chiha, *Visage et presence du Liban*, 2ème édition (Beyrouth: Le Cénacle Libanais, 1984), 49. All translations from Arabic and French originals are the author's own.

jeunesse Catholique (1929) and the *Cénacle libanais* (1946). There, Lebanese beholden to the creed of Arab nationalism often met their match in Lebanese Phoenicianists who, like Chiha, "thought of their country as a piece of Europe, at the foot of a splendid mountain, [savouring] the language of France."[4] Like his "Young Phoenician" cohorts, Chiha recognized the Arabs' and Muslims' presence in Lebanon (and the Middle East as a whole) as a matter of fact, as a cycle in the chronology of peoples and conquerors that took possession of the Middle East at a given time in its history. But Chiha stressed that a mere thirteen centuries of Arab and Muslim domination,

> were not nearly enough to make the people of Lebanon oblivious to, or dismissive of, the fifty centuries that preceded the Arabs!-[...] Even if relying entirely on conjecture, the blood, the civilization, and the language of today's Lebanese cannot possibly be anything if not the legacy, the synthesis, and the sum of fifty centuries of progenitors and ancestors.[5]

From Chiha's perspective the importance of the Young Phoenicians stemmed from their remarkable humanistic, elastic (spacious) conception of history and memory. Admittedly, this conception while opposed to essentialist Arab and Muslim interpretations, did not disown the Arabs, did not bespeak hang-ups regarding Muslims, and did not shun the rich Muslim/Arab cultural, linguistic, and literary patrimony – which the Young Phoenicians deemed an important (albeit lone) piece in a larger patchwork rather than a dominant motif. Indeed, Chiha and the *Young Phoenicians* were passionate about the preservation of the Arabic language in the pantheon of Lebanese polyglossia, which, from their perspective, constituted a splendid addition to Lebanon's vaunted cosmopolitanism and linguistic humanism. What they repudiated, however, were linguistic dogmatism, national rigidity, and cultural coercion and regimentation. Arabic is a wonderful language, Michel Chiha stressed:

> It is the language of millions of men. We wouldn't be who we are today if we, the Lebanese of the twentieth century, were to forgo the prospects of becoming the Arabic language's most accomplished masters to the same extent that we had been its masters some one hundred years ago ... How can one not heed the reality that a country such as ours would be

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4 Marius Deeb, *Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah: The Unholy Alliance and its War on Lebanon* (Stanford, California: The Hoover Institution Press, 2013), xiv–xv.

5 Michel Chiha, *Le Liban d'Aujourd'hui* (*1942*) (Beyrouth: Editions du Trident, 1961), 49–52.

literally decapitated if prevented from being bilingual (or even trilingual if possible)? … [We must] retain this lesson if we are intent on protecting ourselves from spiteful [monolingual] nationalism and its inherent self-inflicted deafness [to other languages]; an affliction that may lead us to assured cultural mutism.[6]

There is arguably no more exquisite a celebration of cosmopolitanism, and no more forceful a rejection of nationalist jingoism than this text. Chiha, as a representative of the Young Phoenicians, certainly did not shun the Arabic language or its cultural trappings. Yet he remained uncompromising in his rejection of Arab nationalist linguistic authoritarianism and the cultural conformity that it demanded.

Charles Corm (1894–1963), poet laureate and *éminence grise* behind the Young Phoenicians, described his ancient ancestors' and modern compatriots' cultural and linguistic 'pantheism' as the founding elements of human civilization, at once human, humane, and humanistic, selflessly bestowing gifts through both time and space upon all peoples of the globe.[7] This worldview of Corm's – an element of the kind of benevolent nationalism that he advocated – would attain its finest incarnation in an address that he gave in Beirut in June 1949, at a meeting of the *Cénacle libanais*. In this, Corm noted that since the remotest antiquity, at a time when they were still known as Canaanites,

and later as Phoenicians, the Lebanese had created, preserved, defended, affirmed and advanced an expansive and liberal civilization with universal impulses and qualities so accessible to other peoples that some of those, even the loftiest and brightest among them, came to assimilate these attributes of Lebanese civilization as if they were their own, identifying them with their own national genius.[8]

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6   Chiha, *Visage et presence*, 49–52, 164.
7   Charles Corm, "Déclaration de M. Ch. Corm," *Les Principes d'un Humanisme Méditerranéen* (Monaco, November 1935), 25.
8   Corm, "Déclaration de M. Ch. Corm," 25.

This, in Corm's view, was the incarnation of humanism. And in that sense, Lebanon was not only a most exquisite practitioner of humanism, but also an eloquent purveyor of that most human of human virtues, contributing to the "building of a better human community, and a more humane humanity."[9]

Although advocating – and indeed living – polyglossia as a defining element of Lebanese specificity and its Phoenician filiation, the *Young Phoenicians*' main linguistic-intellectual media remained French – and in certain iterations Arabic. They used French to escape the Arabic language and the stigma of 'Arabness' that is often attached to it.[10] They also used Arabic in order to prove their detractors wrong: to affirm their proficiency in Arabic (alongside other languages,) and to stress that just like Irishmen, Scotsmen, Liberians, Nigerians and others who may be native Anglophones but not Englishmen, so could Lebanese be the *avant-garde* of Arabic linguistic revival and Arabic *belles lettres*, and yet remain distinctly Lebanese. However, there remained an impulse for 'authenticity' that continued to animate the Young Phoenicians movement, an impulse which, although using the French and Arabic languages, often with the intimacy and alacrity of natives, still yearned for an 'authentic' Lebanese language. This tendency followed two paths: one attempted to revive Syriac and Canaanite as *the* autochthonous, authentic, unique languages of Lebanon (*Bnay Qyomo* is a modern current endorsing and promoting this on-going project);[11] on the second path these revival movements were dismissed as futile and counterintuitive, with the argument that an authentic Lebanese language *already* existed, and that the Phoenician language and its Syriac iterations were already living presences, transmuted into the modern spoken Lebanese vernacular.[12] In other words, as the argument went, the spoken vernaculars of modern Lebanon, as they had always been, were *not* "defective

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9   Corm, "Déclaration de M. Ch. Corm," 24.

10   Throughout its modern history, Lebanese Arabists who saw the country's cultural accretions as corollaries of Arab-Muslim history used Modern Standard Arabic as their political and literary medium. Conversely, those Lebanese who saw their identity to be the outcome of a pre-Arab – i.e., Phoenician – progenitor were largely, albeit not exclusively, francophone.

11   See for instance the following websites related to the *Bnay Qyomo*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVrnWRDVLqk; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fappJX7DX6U; https://www.facebook.com/BnayQyomo/posts/1679274845681410; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFzFwKhLzrU.

12   See for instance Fouad Ephrem Boustany's "La trace du Phénicien Ugaritique dans le parler Libanais" in *Opera Minora; Studia Libanica* (Beirut: Editions ad-Da'irah, 1986), 69–87.

Arabic dialects," but indeed "evolved Phoenician dialects."[13] Thus, instead of 'revival' this last group advocated the "codification" of this "Lebanese language" in written form, in a modern incarnation of the Phoenician alphabet, as embodied in the Roman characters. Both these tendencies were born in the early 1920s; they co-existed with the establishment of Greater Lebanon and the birth of the Young Phoenicians movement. And although both became a reality benefitting from a coherent programme only in the middle of the 1950s – with the "codification" track triggering a 'dialectal' and literary revival – the idea of a distinct, ageless, enduring "Lebanese language" was the brainchild of Young Phoenician poet laureate Charles Corm himself. Although not a linguist, Corm wrote with the keen discernment of one, maintaining that, its hybridity notwithstanding, Lebanese was synchronically speaking a distinct language in its own right, deserving recognition and valorisation as such. By the early 1930s he was already advocating his "Lebanese language," in French.

In his 1934 Phoenicianist manifesto, the monumental *La Montagne Inspirée* ("The Hallowed Mountain"), Corm charted the rehabilitation and redemption of what he called "*ma langue libanaise*," "my Lebanese language," describing it "lyrically," but addressing it like a living being. "No, no, my mother tongue," came Corm's invocation:

> You aren't a fallen corpse in the abyss of time! / For, I still can feel your verve, swelling up in my veins, / Rising up like springtide, surging up like a wave! / And I still can hear, your sparkling silver springs, / Churning up from the past, whispering to my soul … / … Your soft and graceful inflexions, still slip their ancient drawl, in all the modern languages, swarming on our shores; / Your sparse and scattered caresses, still flow in my veins, and cuddle with my soul!! / … For, even as I write, in someone else's

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13   For instance, Lebanese poet and language reformer Saïd Akl (1912–2014,) a friend and mentee of Charles Corm and Michel Chiha, claimed "spoken Lebanese" to be a language *sui generis* – a Semitic language to be sure, but a distinct language – that is not an off-spring of Arabic. The "Lebanese language," Akl argued, "can best be described as the sum of centuries of a congenital bilingualism and a natural confluence between Canaanite, Aramaic, Latin languages, Arabic dialects, and Turkish." Certain syntactic peculiarities of Lebanese, he noted, "are clearly Phoenician and Aramaic, while the lexicon may also draw heavily on Arabic, Latin, French, or Turkish." And so, stressed Akl, "the Lebanese language is not some vulgar form of an eloquent and arcane Arabic […]; it is an indigenous and spontaneous outcome of a uniquely Lebanese experience […], and it has always been the native spoken language of the Lebanese people." It has certainly been transformed over the millennia, he admitted, to reach the modern spoken form under which it is found today; but it remains "an evolved form of Phoenician, not a vulgar or colloquial Arabic." (see for instance "Netruk Baʾa l-ʿArabi" [Enough Already with the Arabic Language], *Lebnan*, (Beirut: Volume IX, Number 433, Friday August 10, 1984), 1.

language, and even when I speak, in someone else's tongue, / It's still you in my voice, My sainted Mother's voice, / Snug like a lover's warmth! / For, Man here below, in spite of having learnt, his brute oppressor's tongue, / Has kept the looks the tone, Has kept the pitch, the pulse, / Of his forefather's inflections, of his ancient mother's voice! / ... For, even these sweet words, stolen from France's lips, / With impassioned affection, quivering in my heart, / Still taste on my lips, where my smiling sorrow sits, / Still taste of a Lebanese kiss.[14]

And so, even in lamentation, it seems Corm recognized a hidden vigour to his ancestral tongue, a living artefact which he claimed had fused with and were infused in the modern languages currently spoken in Lebanon. In Corm's telling, a national language was like a timeless, warm, hallowed maternal voice, emanating from a distant past, reverberating in the present, emitting shudders of national pride and tales of forebears and glory. Therefore, even when they seemed to acquiesce in – even boasting of – their congenital polyglossia, the *Young Phoenicians* of Corm's generation still yearned for an 'authentic' national language and recognized the endurance and latent essence of this 'national language' in their modern idioms. The multilingualism flaunted in Lebanon was, in Corm's words, simply a palliative, a borrowed outer garment, an artifice meant to ward off the dominance of any single "intruder" language. Yet, the "Lebanese language" that he spoke of – both an 'internal' emotive language and an actual living competency – impregnated, metabolized, and transmuted the other idioms currently in use: i.e., Arabic, which, like other languages, Corm viewed as an intruder on pre-existing unique speech forms.

What is worth noting is that although written in French, and in the French mediaeval poetic tradition of the *chanson de geste* chronicling local heroic exploits, *La Montagne Inspirée* was, as stated by Corm, "traduit du Libanais" – that is to say "translated from the Lebanese language." Indeed, the introduction to each of the poem's three "cycles" (or narrative "sagas") presented these as French renditions of an original Lebanese poem, thus suggesting that although "speaking in tongues" as it were, and sounding French, Italian, or for that matter Arabic, the linguistic reservoir of the modern Lebanese people remained a single authentic ancestral "Lebanese" language, a bequest of the ancient Phoenician progenitor. To wit, in his *Hallowed Mountain*'s "Saga of Memories" Corm affectionately noted how his own grand-parents spoke Syriac – *not* Arabic – in late-nineteenth century Lebanon, and that this same Syriac, a relic

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14   Charles Corm, *La Montagne Inspirée* (Beirut: Éditions de la Revue Phénicienne, 1934/1987), 105–6.

of Phoenician, remains the language of Lebanon to this day.[15] "Grief, good grief, O unspeakable grief," he wrote,

> My own grandparents spoke, Syriac in Ghazir. / Syriac, where the Phoenicians' flair, their vigour and their flame, are still extant today; / Alas, no one now can fancy finding shades / Of our grandparents' footsteps, in the shadow of ancient vines; / The bygone language of yore, is choked for evermore, in our scrawny muzzled throats. / And now our Mountain, Ever kind to her sons, / Beholds its splintering skies, riven by the sounds, of foreign Western tongues; / [...] For, languages like Italian, like English and Greek, / Like Turkish and Armenian, clutter and jam her voice, / While she willingly yields to the sweet tyranny of the language of France. / Yet, I know that in London, In Paris and in Rome, / Our writers can never hold the station they deserve, / That everywhere they go, despite their humanity, / They shall always remain, outside the human race. / For, a people is orphaned when it hasn't a tongue; / And the languages of others are borrowed outer cloaks, / In which one seems dubious, shameful, lifeless, frail, obnoxious and strange! / [...] Yet, these foreign-sounding words, which are taught to our children, / To us are not that strange; / For, it seems that our hearts can still recall remembrances, of having fashioned them, and styled their graceful sounds! / Indeed, it is they, who

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15   It is not within the scope of this paper, and neither is it my intent, to prove or disprove the veracity of Charles Corm's claim. Many Lebanese Maronites of Corm's grandparents' generation, into the mid- to late- nineteenth century, did indeed cling to remnants of Syriac – even if only for liturgical and ceremonial purposes. However, the focus here is purely on the context of ideas and intellectual history: the fact that such a claim was indeed made (and continues to be made) in modern Lebanon, and why. Thus, what concerns me are the socio-political and intellectual impulses behind such claims rather than their "linguistic" credibility or historical accuracy. Corm is obviously appealing to an "internal" language here; an emotive affective amulet with which he seeks to "resurrect" his "ancestral tongue," even if only as a lyrical pursuit to satisfy personal (or patriotic/nationalist) yearnings for the "language of the Phoenicians." The fact that he prefaces each "saga" in his poem with the phrase *traduit du Libanais* (or "translated from the Lebanese language") speaks precisely to the "soul," the "inspiration," or the "internal language" behind the poems; these are all sentiments that remain fundamentally Lebanese in Corm's telling. Therefore, although Corm uses all the languages of mankind, often with the intimacy and alacrity of natives – as is the case with Corm's French language here – the Lebanese of Corm's persuasion (and generation) still breathed, clasped, sensed, and spoke a distinctly unique Lebanese language.-And so, Corm's "symphonic epopee" ends with the disclosure that "even these sweet words, / Stolen from France's lips, / With impassioned affection / Quivering in my heart, / They still taste on my lips, / Where my smiling sorrow sits, / Still taste of a Lebanese kiss."

> disowned their lineage; / Uprooted from us, torn from our embrace, / Embellished by exile, like beloved ingrates, they now disown their race.[16]

And so, following a drawn-out lamentation over Lebanon's ostensible loss of its "authentic, native" language – be it Phoenician or Syriac-Aramaic – Corm concludes on a note of exuberant optimism, affirming that Phoenician-Syriac, that is to say a unique Lebanese language, "is alive and well and vibrant and living out-loud" in *his* Lebanon. Again, this alludes to the axiom of Corm's times' that synchronically speaking, and notwithstanding its mingling of Aramaic syntactic constructions with Arabic morphology, Lebanese is indeed a distinct language in its own right.[17] Yet, Corm's resonance and the impact of his work dwelt more in the realm of the cultural, the affective, and the symbolic, rather than the measurable and the purely linguistic. Ironically – and although cultural specificities ought to be evaluated not by way of genetic information but rather through historical accretions – recent studies have demonstrated that the Lebanese of today and the Phoenicians of classical antiquity share with each other some 90% of their genetic lineage, thus validating by science what Corm already knew in his heart.[18]

Thus, as time moves ever further away from the day *La Montagne Inspirée* was first published, wrote Élie Tyane in 1935, and as the tempests that had vigorously shaken the souls of those who came into contact with those sublime verses in 1934, Charles Corm's *Hallowed Mountain* goes on acquiring new meanings and added gravitas.[19] The poem is not only an "ode" to Lebanon's ancient glories and an optimist vision of its days to come, but also, as Tyane argued, was above all a confirmation of Lebanon's high moral values and a restitution of the country and its people to their true selves and their true history. "Long had I stayed in awe of this book," Tyane wrote,

> unable to write or utter a single commentary on it, crushed and eclipsed as I was by the enormity and loftiness of the emotions taking hold of me as I ran through its pages, breathless, thunderstruck, euphoric. Today,

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16   Corm, *La Montagne Inspirée*, 101–2.
17   Boustany, "La trace du Phénicien Ugaritique," 70.
18   Pierre A. Zalloua et al., "Identifying Genetic Traces of Historical Expansions: Phoenician Footprints in the Mediterranean," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 83, 5 (2008). https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18976729. See also Ornella Antar's "Depuis des millénaires le peuple libanais n'a pas bougé d'un iota" in *L'Orient Le Jour*, Beirut, July 29, 2017. https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1064754/-depuis-des-millenaires-le-peuple -libanais-na-pas-bouge-dun-iota-.html.
19   Élie Tyane, *Lumière sur la Montagne* (Beirut: Éditions de la Revue Phénicienne, 1935), 7.

however, with my soul finally composed, reasonably collected before the hallowed image that *La Montagne Inspirée* evokes, I feel myself ready to bear witness, not so much to the inherent beauty of this work, as to the filial piety that it exuded, conferring upon it an almost sacred aura.[20]

But Tyane's wonderment at the exalted lyricism (and realism) of *The Hallowed Mountain* was not an exception; it had become the prevailing emotion with most of those who came into contact with that epochal work. An energizing blast of energy and warmth "reminiscent of a Victor Hugo and an Alphonse de Lamartine" runs through the pages of *La Montagne Inspirée*, boasted a 1934 editorial in Lebanon's leading French-language journal, *La Revue du Liban*.[21] Reading Charles Corm, *La Revue* wrote, one feels as if possessed, inflamed, entranced, and carried away on a breath-taking journey through the millennia, breathing love and nostalgia. Like many other Lebanese poets, Charles Corm drew divine inspiration from Lebanon's mountains; yet, he remained so different from all those who came before him, and possibly all those who may follow, because,

> nowhere, at any time in its history, has Lebanon been graced with a moving, tormented, passionate national cantor such as Charles Corm, and nowhere have we heard in Lebanon national inflections as vibrant and as powerful as Charles Corm's! The Hallowed Mountain is truly a landmark of our literary history […] worthy of the widest audiences possible. Indeed, one feels it is the duty of the Lebanese government to disseminate this work and make it required reading in Lebanon's national schools.[22]

In many ways, *La Montagne Inspirée* was a book that strictly speaking went way beyond the realm of poetry and memory, wrote one reviewer in 1935; "it is a manifesto! A summons to Lebanese youth" and an exhortation for them to draw faith, hope and energy from the living fountainhead of their proud lineage.[23] Even the Anglophone press of the times had its say, with a review in *Domestic and Foreign Research* of November 1934 hailing *La Montagne Inspirée* as a "remarkable poetic composition of stirring religious strains […]; an Epopoeia of sublimely inspired lyricism, setting forth the contributions of Phoenicia

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20   Tyane, 8.

21   See E.M., "La Revue du Liban et de l'Orient Méditerranéen," Paris, February 1934, in *Extraits de la Critique* (Beirut: Éditions de la Revue Phénicienne, 1935), 3.

22   E.M., "La Revue du Liban," 3–4.

23   Jeanne Archache, "La Bourse Egyptienne," Alexandria, February 8, 1935, in *Extraits de la Critique*, 6.

to this world civilization, from the remotest times to our days."[24] In this same vein, Eliahu Epstein's editorial in the *Palestine Post* of February 24, 1935, entitled "Lebanese Renaissance," perhaps merits being reproduced in its quasi entirety here. Not only because it concisely encapsulated Charles Corm's thought, but also because it spoke to the intimacy with which Epstein himself understood Charles Corm – and indeed the intellectual bond that the two of them shared. "'*La Montagne Inspirée*' is more than a mere collection of poems," wrote Epstein:

> It is an enthusiastic expression of an "idée mystique" of the author, the idea of Lebanese renaissance. Charles Corm is a Lebanese patriot who preaches all through the pages the revival of the old Phoenician civilization. His dreams are like those of Astarte and Baal. His heroes are Hiram, Fakreddin, Emir Bechir, Youssef Karam, the emigrants and the peasants of the mountain. He is inspired by Byblos and by Ras Shamrah who speak to his mind and heart, in a more compelling voice than the cultures under which the Lebanese lived and developed since Phoenician days. Lebanon to him is not merely a part of the Arab world. He speaks of the Lebanese tongue, which is the old Phoenician. He speaks of "our leaders" which to him are not the present leaders, but the heroes of old, to whom he would like to hark back, for the revival of that brilliant age which made Lebanon a power in the world, and his ancestors were the bearers of culture; when Tyre and Sidon, and Byblos were metropolises from which emanated knowledge and learning to the far-flung corners of the world. Corm is not a new name: he is the director of the *Revue Phénicienne*, one of the founders of the *Association des Gens de Lettres* of Beirut, and the promoter of *Les Auteurs Libanais de Langue Française*. There can be but little doubt that one of the factors which inspired the new Phoenician aspirations was the Zionist movement which has encouraged them to dream of reviving their own culture and traditions. Corm writes prose and poems. They are a mixture of the epic, sometimes weaved into lyric emotions. He recalls the greatness of the old Phoenicians whose Kings built the garden of Semiramis and the temples of the Near East; of the Phoenician colonies in Africa. Has the greatness of the Phoenicians been dimmed, he asks, because they were merchants and sometimes forgot that independence must be defended even by blood? We may expect more from the

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24 Charrier, "Domestic and Foreign Research," New York, November 25, 1934, in *Extraits de la Critique*, 4.

pen of Charles Corm. He is not only an able poet, but a man who battles for his ideas.[25]

Even those Lebanese not particularly enthralled with Charles Corm's Phoenicianist affections could not help being charmed by the imageries he presented. Amin Rihani, for instance, one of Lebanon's early twentieth-century exponents of Arabism, could not resist the profound humanism of Corm's brand of Lebanese nationalism. Reading *La Montagne Inspirée*, Rihani wrote in 1934, one cannot help loving and identifying with Corm and his Phoenician Lebanon – even though Rihani would remain dubious as to whether or not the Phoenicians were truly worthy of Corm's love and adulation.[26] "You are a lover of the human race," wrote Rihani in praise of his friend and philosophical adversary,

> your heart bears within it oceans of affection, and your soul shines like bright sunlight of affection. You abscond both Frenchmen and Arabs, but you regale us with canticles emanating from the depths of your heart and soul, singing with devotion your boundless love for the peoples of your land.[27]

Still Rihani was at a loss to explain Corm's enthusiasm for the vanished Phoenicians while remaining lukewarm vis-à-vis the "living Arabs." Yet he could not help admitting that Lebanon was well deserving of Corm's love, dubbing *The Hallowed Mountain* the "Phoenicians' Song of Songs," writing that:

> Lebanon and Charles Corm are a single inseparable moral and spiritual unit. Corm's unbounded love for Lebanon is incarnate in Lebanon's Cedars and Mountains, and in turn Lebanon's Cedars and Mountains willingly prostrate and melt before him, rendering themselves incense and emanations of light to be offered at his exalted national altar. [...] I read Corm's *Hallowed Mountain* and I feel as if transported from one festival of light to the next, from one orchard to the next, and from one raging volcano to the next; yet I remain firmly planted on Lebanese soil.[28]

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25   Eliahu Epstein, "Lebanese Renaissance: La Montagne Inspirée by Charles Corm," *Palestine Post*, Jerusalem, February 24, 1935.
26   Amin Rihani, "Jabal al-Tajallī" [The Mount of Transfiguration] (Beirut: *Al-Maarad*, Special Issue, Number 38, July 4, 1934), 9.
27   Rihani, "Jabal al-Tajallī," 9.
28   Rihani, "Jabal al-Tajallī," 9.

Even Khalil Takieddine (1906–1987), another Lebanese Arabist, confessed his sheer inability to resist the charisma, energy, and affection that Corm's work – and his person – exuded. Even for one committed to Lebanon's Arab identity as Takieddine had been, the lure and temptation of Phoenicianism were rendered exquisite, irresistible, and profoundly compelling through the magic flowing from Charles Corm's literary work. Khalil Takieddine admits to not being a fan of "national literature"; yet Corm's poetry, he stressed, commanded our attention because it broke free from the constraints of time and space and persons, and "it soared high above and beyond Lebanon, to heights far removed from narrow nationalism and into a most capacious universalism."[29] Corm's work is universal and humanist in the true sense of the terms, wrote Takieddine, and it is the outcome of Corm's own spacious, universalist, vigorously and profoundly humanist formation; "a fine, delicious culture that eludes a good many of our company of literati in Lebanon today."[30] And whereas Amin Rihani's Arabist leanings compelled him to criticize Corm's use of French instead of Arabic, Khalil Takieddine merely wished Corm had written in Arabic, "if only to show those so-called Arabic-language poets of our times – who in reality are scribblers and poseurs and cheap wordsmiths – how true poetry makes the heart flutter, how it makes the eye yearn for the sublime, and how its music lets loose one's feelings and stirs the emotions."[31]

In sum, *La Montagne Inspirée* was a stirring and exhilarating poem both to those who knew Charles Corm personally, and those who did not; to Lebanese who were invested in and sensitive to Corm's themes, and to foreigners who were not. To the Lebanese, *La Montagne Inspirée* was a veritable *epopée*. the stuff of legends, evoking in living poetic form all the hopes, the emotions, the disappointments, and the yearnings and memories of a people. Indeed, if there were such a thing as a repository in book-form for the spirit of a nation, Charles Corm's *La Montagne Inspirée*-had to be it; "a kaleidoscope of emotions," wrote Albert Naccache, "wonderfully depicted; a book that bewilders at first, then grabs hold of your heart, parading before you cavalcades of the most diverse of centuries and the most contradictory of events, where Lebanon is restituted in all its glory and splendour."[32] Charles Corm is sometimes "too realistic" in his depiction of historical events, often "too brassy" in formulating his thoughts and his imageries, "yet he remains an idealist to a fault, supremely principled";

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29 Khalil Takieddine, "al-Jabal al-Mulham wa-al-Adab al-ʿĀlamī" [the Hallowed Mountain and Universal Literature] (Beirut: *al-Maʿraḍ*, Special Issue, Number 38, July 4, 1934), 25.

30 Ibid., 25.

31 Ibid.

32 Albert Naccache, *L'Orient*, Beirut, January 14, 1934.

an incarnation and confirmation of all that is great and graceful in Lebanon.[33] The brassiness of Corm's poem can perhaps be summarized in the three simple words that he casually throws out at the beginning of each cycle: *Traduit du Libanais* or "translated from the Lebanese language." Therefore, while wielding all the languages of mankind, often with the intimacy of natives – as in the case with French – the Lebanese still breathed, clasped, sensed, and spoke a unique Lebanese language. And so ends Corm's "symphonic *epopée*" with the discloser that "even these sweet words, / Stolen from France's lips, / With impassioned affection / Quivering in my heart, / Still taste on my lips, / Where my smiling sorrow sits, / Still taste of a Lebanese kiss."

2   Conclusions

The work of francophone Lebanese novelist and member of the *Académie Française* Amin Maalouf (b. 1949) beautifully summarizes (and pays tribute to) the cultural humanism and the diverse polyglot cosmopolitanism promoted by the Young Phoenicians. Indeed, Amin Maalouf's personal trajectory, and even his literary characters, often read like ideas and ideals drawn from the Lebanon of Charles Corm and the Young Phoenicians. Maalouf even brought elements of this, his supremely Lebanese experience, to the acceptance speech he delivered at his induction into the *Académie Française* in June 2012. Sitting on the *Académie*'s Chair number twenty-nine – a perch once occupied by Ernest Renan (1823–1892), a hero of sorts to the Young Phoenicians – Maalouf pledged to bring to the legacy of this venerable French institution all that he had inherited from the land of his birth; his origins, his languages, his accent, his convictions, his doubts, and more than anything else perhaps, his dreams of humanist harmony, progress, and coexistence among contradictions and opposites.[34]

Even the engravings on Maalouf's ceremonial sword illustrate "Phoenicianist" ideals and the idea of contact and linguistic-intellectual intercourse between civilizations: on one side of the sword were featured an image of Marianne (symbolizing the French Revolution) grazing a Cedar of Lebanon, along with an engraving depicting the archetypal Phoenician princess, Europa, her abduction by an oxen image of the Greek god Zeus, and her establishment on the

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33   Naccache, *L'Orient.*

34   See Amin Maalouf, "Discours de réception et réponse de M. Jean-Christophe Rufin; Réception de M. Amin Maalouf" (Paris: Académie française, June 14, 2012), http://www .academie-francaise.fr/discours-de-reception-de-amin-maalouf.

continent that would come to carry her name. On the other side of the ceremonial sword were etched the names of Maalouf's wife and three sons, along with two words, "exile" and "identity," written in Arabic letters.[35]

And so, Amin Maalouf's *Académicien*'s themes (or dreams) are found to be not all that different from those advanced by his Young Phoenicians elders; the images of Zeus and Europa are a symbol of the millennial tradition of contacts and cultural intercourse between Phoenicia and indeed the East as a whole on the one hand (a notion illustrated by the princess Europa whose name she would bequeath to a continent and a culture), and the West as illustrated by the god Zeus on the other.

"This inflection that you hear" in my Lebanese rendition of the French language, began Maalouf's speech to the *Académie*, is an accent that precious few ever hear any more in our France of today; it is certainly not the mode of speech in the confines of this bastion of French language and literature, the *Académie Française*.[36] Yet, asserted Maalouf, the "rolled 'R'" of his Lebanese-inflected French language had been the norm of all Frenchmen of times past: from the greats of seventeenth century French literature like La Bruyère and Racine, to sixteenth-century precursors such as Rabelais and Ronsard, to the very kings of France and the founder of the *Académie* himself, the Cardinal de Richelieu (ca. 1635), *all* of France once spoke with rolled "Rs." Therefore, Malouf claims:

> This rolled "r" is not coming to you from Lebanon; it is simply coming back from there. My [Lebanese] ancestors did not invent it. They simply preserved it in the form in which they had received it from the mouths of your forebears, […] many of whom – like Volney, Lamartine, and Barrès, to name only those – visited us often. […] Let me pause for a moment and reflect briefly on one of those Lebanese at heart: Ernest Renan. Renan wrote his "Life of Jesus" in six weeks, in one sitting, at the foot of Mount-Lebanon. He had wished to be buried there, in Lebanon, near the coastal city of Byblos, in the vault where his beloved sister, Henriette, lay. […] People often attribute the ascendancy and influence of the French language to France's colonial era. That may be the case in many places in the world! Not so in Lebanon. [… Our] romance is centuries old. The love story between the homeland of my birth and my adoptive country owes

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35   "Amin Maalouf entre à l'Académie Française" in *Le Monde*, June 14, 2012, https://www .lemonde.fr/livres/article/2012/06/14/amin-maalouf-entre-a-l-academie-francaise_ 1718861_3260.html.

36   Maalouf, "Discours de réception".

little to military conquest and much to the skilled diplomacy of King
François I […] who took special interest in the peoples of the Levant.[37]

Therefore, this Franco-Lebanese romance, claimed Maalouf, is ongoing and
has been evolving since at least the thirteenth century. Yet, he noted, its true
origins were much more removed in time, going back to an era when gods and
men walked the earth alongside one another, and when the god Zeus, assum-
ing the likeness of an ox, seduced a Phoenician maiden named Europa and
made off with her from the Lebanese coasts of Tyre and Sidon to the conti-
nent that would become her own, bearing her name.[38] Later, Europa's brother
Cadmus, on his quest to find his sister and bring her home, transmitted to the
Greeks the Phoenician alphabet, precipitating the development of the Greek
alphabet (and with it Greek knowledge), and all that would follow in manner
of human accomplishments. This was mythology of course, admitted Maalouf,
but "mythology tells us stories that History itself might have forgotten; and this
myth of the abduction of Europa in particular, is a codified acknowledgement
of a debt – the cultural debt owed by ancient Greece to ancient Phoenicia."[39]

Amin Maalouf concluded the "Phoenician" segment of his speech by bor-
rowing a description of Cadmus from the man that he was replacing on the
Académie's Chair number twenty-nine – cultural anthropologist Claude
Lévy-Strauss – who portrayed the Phoenician archetype as "the civilizer [of
Europe]; [the man who] had sown the dragon's teeth […] upon this land,
scorched and burnt as it were by a monster's breath, [where] we awaited [and
witnessed] the sprouting of mankind."[40]

I would like to close with a quote from Amin Maalouf's historical novel *Leo
Africanus*, because I think the protagonist [Leo Africanus] serves as a model
for Lebanon and the Middle East as a whole (past, and hopefully future), but
also because Leo encapsulates the archetypal Young Phoenician of Charles
Corm's generation. Maalouf's Leo saw his native land as a richly textured
human, cultural, and historical space, composed of Arabs and Muslims (and
their artefacts) to be sure, but teeming with non-Arabs and non-Muslims (and
their artefacts) as well; a space with topologies, climates, histories, languages,
geographies, and cultural monuments favourable to diverse human composi-
tions, synthesizing centuries of intellectual, linguistic and cultural traffic. As
one may discern, Amin Maalouf's Leo Africanus may indeed be seen as an

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37   Ibid.
38   Ibid.
39   Ibid.
40   Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (Paris: Plon, 1995), 141.

anthropomorphic Lebanon, a Lebanon of the Young Phoenicians certainly, but also a microcosm of the rest of the Levantine Middle East. This is how Leo introduced himself to his readers in Maalouf's narrative:

> I, Hassan, the son of Muhammad the scale master; I, Jean-Léon de Médicis, circumcised at the hands of a barber and baptized at the hands of a Pope, I am now called the African. But I am not from Africa, nor from Europe, nor from Arabia. I am also called the "Granadan," the "Fezzi," the "Zayyati," but I come from no country, from no city, from no tribe. I am the son of the road; a wayfarer. My homeland is the caravan; my life the most spectacular of pathways, the most riveting of travels … – My wrists have rubbed, in turn, against the caresses of silk, the chafing of wool, the gold of princes, and the chains of slaves. My fingers have parted a thousand veils, my lips have made a thousand virgins blush, and my eyes have seen cities die and empires collapse. From my mouth you will hear Arabic, Turkish, Castilian, Berber, Hebrew, Latin, and Italian vulgates, because all tongues and all prayers belong to me. But I belong to none.[41]

This is the Lebanon of the Young Phoenicians (and through it, the rest of the Middle East), a diverse universe that many of its children are still striving to preserve. This is ultimately the future of the Middle East; a recasting of identity and language and places of memory in a space that is anything but the monolith that we have come to perceive in these past one hundred years of encounters, discoveries, analyses and interpretations. Some may opt to forget history, or rewrite history, or even suppress and falsify history for political purposes. But "History is the collective memory, the guiding experience of human society," wrote Bernard Lewis, and the Middle East, its motley crew of peoples, traditions, and cultures "still badly need [the] guidance" of history as both an art and a science; a noble human and humanist endeavour.[42] It is from this premise that muffled and concealed Middle Eastern voices – their languages and their stories – ought to be excavated, uncovered, restored, and recovered.

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41   Amin Maalouf, *Léon l'Africain* (Paris: Livres de Poche, 1987), 2. It is worth noting that Leo Africanus was a real life personality; his name was Hassan al-Wazzan, Leo the African, a sixteenth century Andalusian Amazigh Muslim diplomat and author, best known for his book *Descrittione dell' Africa* (Description of Africa); he was born a Muslim and raised as a Christian in the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and was converted to Catholicism by Pope Leo X, who gave him his name.

42   Bernard Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans; Interpreting the Middle East* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 395.

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"Those Who Pronounce the *Ḍād*":
Language and Ethnicity in the Nationalist Poetry
of Fu'ad al-Khatib (1880–1957)

Peter Wien

The *Ḍād* is a letter of the Arabic alphabet that represents a sound which Arabs claim that only they pronounce. The epithet *lughat al-Ḍād*, the language of the *Ḍād*, therefore singles out the Arabic language as, supposedly, distinctive and exclusive to the Arab ethnic community, or, in other words: for *al-nāṭiqūn bi-l-Ḍād*, or *those who pronounce the Ḍād*. The veracity of the notion that the *Ḍād* may be unique to the Arabic language is not what is at stake here. However, the notion of distinctiveness that it represents goes back to the times of the early Islamic conquests, when Arabs asserted their dominance, ridiculing non-Arabs' inability to pronounce the language correctly. The epithet was still used at the turn of the twentieth century to challenge Ottoman hegemony.[1] The letter *Ḍād* became a trope for the Arabic language as a whole, and, as this chapter illustrates, a marker of an ethnical boundary to speakers of other languages, illustrating the processes of vernacularization and nationalization of the classical Arabic language. As *lughat al-Ḍād*, classical Arabic was no longer a religious and literary idiom shared by Muslims across a range of ethnicities and a *lingua franca* in a region shared by various Arab and non-Arab religious communities, but a standardized language that members of a specific ethnicity claimed for themselves.

The poetry of Fu'ad al-Khatib (1880–1957) is exemplary for the cultural labour that went into this process of deliberate demarcation. For al-Khatib the language was not only what distinguished the true adherents to the Arab nation from others, but it was also under threat of being encroached upon by Western languages via imperialist dominance. As we shall see, for al-Khatib reciting a poem meant discharging a weapon in order to control linguistic shape and semantic heritage, and thus to preserve distinction and dignity.

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1 On the letter *Ḍād*, see Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity: A Study in Ideology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 55–60. All translations from Arabic are the author's.

Fuʾad al-Khatib moved in a nationalist universe that gained shape in the years around World War I. The late Ottoman period in general, and the war in particular, triggered a great deal of social, political and cultural changes that also affected intellectual life and literary production.[2] During this time, an Arab activist such as al-Khatib could still be a universalist: a politician, a teacher and intellectual, a civil servant, and an acclaimed poet at the same time – before a class of functionaries, professional demagogues, and military men started to dominate nationalist politics in the Arab lands in the 1930s and took over power after World War II.

Al-Khatib's own recollections and a selective presentation of documents and quotes form the basis of a biography that his daughter Ihsan published in the mid-nineties of the past century.[3] Anecdotes structure the biography, based on Ihsan al-Khatib's personal memory of her father and that of relatives she talked to. In addition, the account rests on Fuʾad al-Khatib's poetic work and its evolution over time. His poetry is available in a *Dīwān* edited by his son, and in a recent edition of the works he wrote during the time of the Arab Revolt, published in Jordan to eulogize the Hashemite dynasty.[4] The chronological sequence of Fuʾad al-Khatib's *qaṣīda*s establishes a quasi-autobiographical account because his poetry was rarely composed for art's sake alone. Like many of his contemporary colleagues, he wrote his poems as commissions or in reaction to events or experiences. They are thus a remarkable monument for the rise of a radical vision of Arab national identity among ethnically Arab intellectuals confronted with the competing and alternative imperial, Islamist, and ethnocentric narratives of the contested public spheres of the late Ottoman Empire and its successor states.[5]

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2 Compare Dina Rizk Khoury, "Ambiguities of the Modern: The Great War in the Memoirs and Poetry of the Iraqis," in *The World in World Wars: Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia*, ed. Heike Liebau et al., Studies in Global Social History 5 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, n.d.), 313–40.

3 Iḥsān Fuʾād Khaṭīb, *Wamaḍāt min ʿumr al-zaman: Qabasāt min ḥayāt al-Shaykh Fuʾād al-Khaṭīb, shāʿir al-thawra al-ʿArabiyya al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li-l-Malāyīn, 1994).

4 Fuʾad al-Khaṭīb, *Dīwān al-Khaṭīb*, ed. Riyāḍ al-Khaṭīb ([Cairo]: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1959); Imtinān al-Ṣamādī, *Shiʿr Fuʾād al-Khaṭīb fī-l-thawra al-ʿArabiyya al-kubrā wa-l-Hāshimiyya* (Amman: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 2010).

5 The framing in this introduction is adapted from a chapter on Fuʾad al-Khatib in my book *Arab Nationalism: The Politics of History and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2017), 21–33.

1   The Convergence of Life, Culture and Politics

Fu'ad al-Khatib was born into a rural notable family of Sunni Muslim denomination in the village of Shhim in Lebanon's Shuf mountains, south of Beirut. His grandfather and father were both Ottoman judges.[6] Fu'ad attended the Syrian Protestant College (later renamed AUB) from 1904 onwards and published his first articles and poems in the Beirut journal *al-Mufīd*.[7] It was migration that turned him into a pan-Arab poet: due to differences with his father, who envisaged a medical career for his son and feared that his strong pro-Arab and anti-Ottoman convictions threatened his safety, Fu'ad first moved in with family members in Jaffa and then moved to Cairo around the time of the Young Turk revolution.

In 1910 he published the first part of his *Dīwān* and then spent the remaining years before World War I as a teacher at Gordon College in Khartoum in the Sudan.[8] When war broke out he was in Lebanon for the birth of his second child, his daughter Ihsan, only to flee the Ottoman lands again to escape persecution as an Arab political activist.[9] He then decided to join Sharif Husain and his Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire in the Hejaz. His family, too, was under threat of being deported by the Ottoman military authorities, but the poet managed to get them to join him in the Arabian Peninsula.[10]

Altogether, the al-Khatib family story fits perfectly into the grand narrative of the rise of Arab nationalism. Al-Khatib claimed that he was the first Arab from outside the Hejaz to join the Arab Revolt, a fact that – regardless of its veracity – provides an important legitimating element in Fu'ad al-Khatib's biography. His fame, even if largely vanished today, is based on the fact that he was once known as the "Poet of the Arab Revolution." Khatib developed a close rapport with the Sherif of Mecca and started to beat the drum of the latter's fame in prose and poetry, taking over editorship of the Sherif's newspaper *al-Qibla*. After the war, he became Husain's Foreign Minister in the government

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6   Khaṭīb, *Wamaḍāt min ʿumr al-zaman*, 16f, 35; Khaṭīb, *Dīwān al-Khaṭīb*, 8f (introduction by the editor).

7   Khaṭīb, *Dīwan al-Khaṭīb*, 9. On the Syrian Protestant College/AUB see Betty S. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 17–20 and passim.

8   Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, Colonialisms 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 3–4, 7–11, 21, 51–55, 60–63, 104–7. Apparently, one of al-Khatib's students was the future Sudanese prime minister and president Ismaʿil al-Azhari. Khaṭīb, *Dīwān al-Khaṭīb*, 4f, 9; Khaṭīb, *Wamaḍāt min ʿumr al-zaman*, 14.

9   Khaṭīb, *Wamaḍāt min ʿumr al-zaman*, 14–20.

10   Ibid., 24–26.

of the Hejaz. His poems were recited by school children throughout the Arab East.[11]

Sherif Husain's rebellion is part of the founding myth of Arab nationalism, representing Arab revolutionary spirit and resilience against the Ottoman enemy, and exemplifying – in line with the mythology shaped during the *nahḍa*, the Arab literary renaissance period of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the final wake-up call to the Arabs to throw off the Turkish yoke. Al-Khatib facilitated the broadcasting of Sherif Husayn's role in this awakening in the light of nationalist aspirations.[12] For this, the Sherif needed the service of a pan-Arab mind.

The Arab Revolt initiated a lasting relationship between the Hashemites and Fu'ad al-Khatib, and also between his family and Arabia. As a diplomat and senior political adviser, Fu'ad al-Khatib first served Sherif Hussein directly, and then represented the government of the Hejaz in Damascus during Prince, later King, Faysal's rule over Syria, until al-Khatib left in the wake of the battle of Maysalun that marked the beginning of French rule. He was again at the side of Sherif Hussein's oldest son 'Ali during his reign over the Kingdom of the Hejaz, and then of his younger brother, the Amir 'Abdallah of Transjordan, who would later become the first King of Jordan. He was also a friend of King Ghazi of Iraq because he had been his English teacher in the Hejaz. After he fell out with the Hashemites, King Ibn Sa'ud of Saudi Arabia remembered al-Khatib as a loyal spokesman of the Arab cause and after World War II honoured him with a post as the Kingdom's first Ambassador to Afghanistan, where Fu'ad al-Khatib died in 1957. He was buried in his home town Shhim, where weeds overgrow his tomb today.[13]

It is probably fair to say that al-Khatib's commitment to the Arab nationalist cause made him an uprooted man. He spent only limited periods of time in his home country of Lebanon – usually when he had to gather his thoughts and strength in order to embark on a new political project, or after one of his frequent breaks with a political mentor, writing a great deal of poetry along

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11 Ibid., 22f; Khaṭīb, *Dīwān al-Khaṭīb*, 10. On officers joining Faysal see Yücel Güçlü, "The Role of the Ottoman-Trained Officers in Independent Iraq," *Oriente Moderno* 21,2 n.s. (2002): 125–27. On continuing Ottoman loyalty see Michael Provence, "Ottoman Modernity, Colonialism, and Insurgency in the Interwar Arab East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43,2 (May 1, 2011): 215–20.

12 For the preceding paragraphs see Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997), 116–205.

13 Khaṭīb, *Wamaḍāt min 'umr al-zaman*, 36–47 (the period of Faysal's rule in Damascus), 51–69 (in the Hejaz with Hussein), 75–79 (Foreign Minister under 'Ali in the Hejaz), 82–133 (with 'Abdullah in Jordan), 151–178 (in Saudi service and in Afghanistan).

the way. The periods when he pursued a political agenda were spent in countries other than his own. His life unfurled as a sort of an anti-career of Arab nationalism (unlike that of an Arab notable, a military officer, or a member of the New Effendiyya, the middle class of young professionals), in which he lived the ideals of the pan-Arab *Republic of Letters* as a nationalist poet and spent his efforts in the service of leaders who for him embodied the pan-Arab cause. He also experienced many of the crucial events in the political history of Arab nationalism either at first hand or indirectly because he was familiar or even friends with the key actors.

2   Pronouncing the Ḍād: Language and Identity

There are two motifs that run through Fu'ad al-Khatib's opus, from the early years prior to World War I to his death in the 1950s: the identification of Arab ethnicity with the ability to master classical Arabic ("*al-ʿarabiyya*"), and with the historical, social and geographical location of the purest state of the language as practiced by poets in the Arabian Peninsula before and during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Khatib's uprootedness and his movements throughout an Arab realm – physically between Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, the Sudan, the Arabian Peninsula and Syria as well as Jordan, and imaginatively through every place where people "pronounced the *Ḍād*" – brought him to a vision in which his true home was his language. It may also be that his perception of the Arabian Peninsula, and especially the Hejaz, of the Jahiliyya and early Islamic periods as a *chronotope* – a projection of an idealized, historically and geographically defined location intersecting with that of the author – led to his decision to join the Arab revolt, a decision based on an ethnocentric vision of nationalism (as opposed to, for instance, contemporaneous Egyptian or Syrian varieties of Arab nationalism), and conditioned by a self-image as an Arab poet. In other words, for al-Khatib the purity of one's language depended on an untainted ethnic descent and vice versa.[14]

This perception of an ideal state of Arabness already speaks out of Fu'ad al-Khatib's early poetry. A poem he published in the Egyptian daily *al-Ahrām* around the time of the Young Turk Revolution in 1908/9 complained about the Arabs' alienation from their roots, which al-Khatib located in the Arabian

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14   For a pertinent application of the Bakhtinian *chronotope* see William Granara, "Nostalgia, Arab Nationalism, and the Andalusian Chronotope in the Evolution of the Modern Arabic Novel," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 36 (2005): 59.

Peninsula where *those who pronounce the Ḍād* resided.[15] Indeed, he took the link between language and the depth of a historically rooted identity very seriously. Stylistically, al-Khatib was a neo-classicist, but a reading of all the poetry al-Khatib wrote in his lifetime reveals that he chose particularly complex poetics in terms of structure and lexicon, with the semantics of his poetic choices subordinated to morphology and sound – at times as if he had chosen antiquated vocabulary and truncation to underline the meandering of his language. In comparison, the poetry of Ahmad Shawqi (1868–1932), the Egyptian "Prince of Poets" and the leading voice of Arabic neo-classicism, is easy to read. The predilection for rare words even influenced the prose in al-Khatib's essays: see for example the *muqaddima* (foreword) to the second part of his *Dīwān*, published shortly after his death in 1959, in which the editor added explanatory footnotes to numerous words that, he deemed, required an explanation – a practice quite unusual for a twentieth-century prose text. Even in the first half of the twentieth century al-Khatib's choice of style was not without alternatives. Free verse and the usage of a modernized vocabulary were used in a repertory of styles at the time. Compare and contrast, for instance, the modernism in the life and work of the Iraqi poet Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi (1863–1936). Al-Zahawi belonged to an even earlier generation of poet-intellectuals, who tried to distinguish themselves as harbingers of a new age in a period of political and social reform under Ottoman rule.[16] Al-Khatib begged to differ. He even nourished a certain mistrust of print as a medium, preferring the oral presentation of his works because he was sure that anything else would lead to the corruption of his language. When he decided to bring out a second *Dīwān* shortly before his death – re-issuing the first edition of 1910, which had long been out of print, and adding a second half consisting in large parts of hitherto unpublished material – he explained that he brought a great deal of poems from obscurity to the realm of existence. He had been used to reciting his creations to a small group of friends, and then to command them to oblivion. The little that had been published had therefore been subject to corruption or had been "born out of the first passing utterance," i.e., transcribed by others. Only recently, he had rethought this habit – maybe out of concern for his legacy, but

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15   The title of the poem is "Ālām al-ʿArab wa-āmāluhum" ("Pains of the Arabs and their
      Hopes"), Khaṭīb, *Dīwān al-Khaṭīb*, 25; Ṣamādī, *Shiʿr Fuʾād al-Khaṭīb*, 27. The title used
      in the *Dīwān* is "Āmāl wa-Ālām." The story of the publication of the poem is in Khaṭīb,
      Wamaḍāt min ʿumr al-zaman, 10–12. See also Wien, *Arab Nationalism*, 28, with a partial
      translation.

16   Dina Rizk Khoury, "Looking for the Modern: A Biography of an Iraqi Modernist," in *Auto/
      biography and the Construction of Identity and Community in the Middle East*, ed. Mary
      Ann Fay (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 109–24.

also due to the encouragement he had received in Saudi Arabia.[17] The stylistic and lexical archaisms, though, and the old-fashioned practice of presenting poetry as recitation for a specific occasion rather than wide distribution via print were clearly a part of the poet's self-styling.

3   A Language of Strength

For Fuʾad al-Khatib, Arabic was "without a doubt, […] the greatest of the Semitic languages, the widest in scope, and the wisest in usage …," as he wrote in the aforementioned *muqaddima*, which he entitled "*Min al-ṣaḥrāʾ ilā al-udabāʾ*," "From the Desert to the Literati." The language created bonds across the lands. The confrontation with Arabic had shown that the Romans and Persians were weak. The word al-Khatib used for "to be weak" is "*ʿayya/yaʿayyu*," which also has the additional meaning of "to stammer and stutter." The powerlessness of the Romans and the Persians (another common term for foreigners, and especially for Persians, that al-Khatib liked to use was "*al-aʿājim*," "the non-Arabic speakers," or "those who speak bad Arabic") was therefore not only a weakness in battle, but also a weakness of language as compared to the strength and clarity of classical Arabic. However, the poet was not sure if the dissemination of the language from the Arabian Peninsula had been all that beneficial. He complained that the students of his time had turned away from "*al-ʿarabiyya*" and had become tired of it, as if it showed sophistication in itself when people "talked in words that were not their own and blabbered in useless ways, or boasted in faulty language." Al-Khatib was clearly proud of his knowledge of the classical lexicon, and showed this off in his poetry, holding up a mirror to the frequent usage of neologisms and loanwords by younger people. He propagated that there should be a clear distinction between original rules and neologisms, as well as inventions in the language, "like between water and a mirage in midday heat." Most crucially, though, he had someone to blame for the regrettable tendencies among the youth: the narrow-minded people who had regulated the language and taken away its ability to evolve. Though he was not explicit about it, this is probably a reference to the post-conquest grammarians who had shaped Arabic in a tighter cast than the poets of the Jahiliyya with their more flexible and creative usage of the language, probably in line with al-Khatib's argument that the early grammarians were urbanites and more often than not of non-Arab ethnical background. For him, the journey of the

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17   Khaṭīb, *Dīwān al-Khaṭīb*, 107.

language "from the desert to the literati" (as in the title of the essay) therefore meant a decline.[18]

Variations on the theme of what the Arabs had done to their language run through the different stages of al-Khatib's work. Already the introduction to the early, pre-World War I part of his *Dīwān* contained a complaint on this topic. Europeans, he wrote, had certainly benefited from Arab culture in the Middle Ages, but without returning the favour. On the contrary, they had even robbed Arabs of their language and "left it stuttering and in rags." But al-Khatib was even more bitter about the way his own people had treated their heritage, to the extent that they should even be grateful for what had been preserved of it in European museums and libraries:

> I wish I knew what our sons will say about us when time passes, and that inertia and disunity are not all they see in our history. Will they send down on us waves of honour or flashes of spite? Our idleness was not enough, we even let go of our literary treasures, and trivialities distracted us from the essence, and we left the books of our fathers in the treasuries of the West, and we remained at ease. It is only good that these treasures did not vanish into oblivion, but that they were taken from our hands to the libraries of Europe, until we started to marvel at our forefathers, and to revive our glory again, and until our own products will be given back to us without delay, and they will serve to elevate scholarship … That yesterday's finery may return …![19]

4   Ethnic Chauvinism

Before the end of the Ottoman Empire, al-Khatib did not promote a chauvinistic version of ethnocentric nationalism in the sense that he did not yet subscribe to an image that a perceived decline of the Arabs had been due to the influx of "*aʿājim*" elements, such as the Ottoman Turks. This view became a mainstay of Arab nationalist mythology in the interwar period. In the aforementioned poem "*Ālām al-ʿArab* …," a commentary on the Young Turk revolution, al-Khatib stated that the Arabs had initially welcomed the rule of the House of Osman, but he regretted that the Turks no longer did justice to them: "You [Arabs]: there is no fatherland among the Turks – for you, but still they are

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18   Khaṭīb, 119, 123f; Suleiman, *The Arabic Language*, 58–59.
19   Khaṭīb, *Dīwān al-Khaṭīb*, 13f. The translation is mine.

the lords of the land …"[20] In a different poem, he opposed what he perceived as the Young Turks' Turkification policy, but called for a brotherhood between Arabs and Turks instead.[21] In yet another poem, which had come out a little over three months before "*Ālām al-ʿArab …*" in the Egyptian daily *al-Ahrām*, he expressed worries about frictions between ethnicities in the empire, but confirmed the strong links between them.[22]

However, al-Khatib's ethnocentric nationalism may have facilitated the adoption of a relatively unambiguous anti-Judaism that speaks out of the works addressing the Palestine conflict, which was one of the central topics of his poetry-cum-political-commentary. In the scholarly literature there are many arguments about the nature, origins and chronology of Arab anti-Judaism in the twentieth century and its descent into the lows of anti-Semitism over the past 40 years or so. There is broad agreement that the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 marked a turning point, after which politicians and intellectuals alike were increasingly willing to adopt the language and *topoi* of European anti-Semitism.[23] Take for example a poem that al-Khatib wrote on the occasion of the outbreak of hostilities between Palestinian militias and the Haganah, as well as Jewish militias in late 1947. The poem opens a chapter in the *Dīwān* called "For the Sake of Palestine," and itself is entitled "To Those Who Pronounce the *Ḍād*," bringing us back to al-Khatib's vision of the ethno-linguistic community as a community of fate with a shared responsibility to protect the integrity of the nation against outside intruders. In this, the Jews, who had participated in the linguistic and cultural community of the Arab Middle East for millennia, now became a group that was essentially

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20 Ibid., 25 (quote), 28.

21 See his poem "Ayyuhā al-Turk wa-l-ʿArab" in Ibid., 31–35; Ṣamādī, *Shiʿr Fuʾād al-Khaṭīb*, 78–82.

22 He wrote "What are the Arabs if not Turks in their honour and vigour – what are the Turks if not Arabs in their [religious] ways" in "Ilā al-ʿArab wa-Shawkat Bāshā," *al-Ahrām*, July 1st, 1909, p. 1. The poem praised Mahmud Shawkat Pasha's leadership, but expressed that Arabs had doubts about his affiliation. Shawkat Pasha, who played a decisive role in the second constitutional period and in the suppression of the counter-revolution in April 1909, came from an Arabized Georgian family in Baghdad. Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 20.

23 See Gudrun Krämer, "Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World: A Critical Review," *Die Welt des Islams* 46 (2006): 243–76. This special issue contains a number of critical articles on the subject. See also Meir Litvak and Esther Webman, *From Empathy to Denial: Arab Responses to the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). See also Peter Wien, *Arab Nationalism: The Politics of History and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 172–97.

foreign – al-Khatib apparently making no distinction as to whether they were of European or Middle Eastern and North African origin. He wrote:

> We have a dwelling that we build and live in – in its rear are fortresses in the deserts and strongholds
>
> On top of it is the house, what a wonderful house … – persistent forever and unchanged since ancient times
>
> Generations walk around it in humility – they spread the ground until it is even, and he [God?] smiles
>
> But where, you people of Israel, is your refuge – from an attack with burning ire
>
> Woe unto you! Is the equality of the shroud your record of ownership? – Is the equality of the shroud your fortune?
>
> Come! Plunder them from the grave, rotten – Then wear them and declare the inheritance your inheritance.[24]

In these lines, al-Khatib declared that the Arabs had sole ownership over the Terra Sancta, where "the house" was probably a reference to "Bayt al-Maqdis," the Temple Mount (though the line about the people circumambulating would rather suggest that the point of reference is the Kaʿba in Mecca). He also presented the Jews as a homeless people, with no roots in the ground, no buried ancestors even, so that they had to claim the shrouds of the dead of others for themselves. He went on:

> Filastin is not allowed for you as a refuge – She is not to be shared as part of the booty
>
> She does not flow for you with honey and milk – Here are the guardians, here are volcanoes and lava.[25]

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24   Khaṭīb, *Dīwān al-Khaṭīb*, 365f.
25   Ibid., 366.

Depicting the Jews as a homeless people is a European anti-Semitic stereo-
type, and so is the classic allegation that the Jews were the murderers of Jesus,
the Christian Messiah. In a remarkable turn, al-Khatib crossed a line towards
the adoption of Christian imagery in the appropriation of a European *topos* of
anti-Jewish exclusion:

> Oh [Jewish] nation ("*Yā qawm!*"), whichever Messiah you are going to
> crucify tomorrow – What is the price of betrayal for you

> And how many purses count today as inheritance – when the purse of
> Balfour is your compensation?

> God may not protect what there is in the West in terms of greed – as
> money is an idol there

> Oh East, be a witness for history, as you have lied – people of politics;
> speak the truth, pen!

> If the people has a soul then it saw a body – in which it lives, and the nose
> of death is cut off [meaning: death has been vanquished completely][26]

First, Jews are presented here in the role of Judas who accepts blood money in
exchange for betrayal in the Balfour Declaration and afterwards. Second, the
Arab people, in turn, take on the role of Jesus, whose body is Palestine, and
though badly beaten conquers death.

Fu'ad al-Khatib's favourite term for the nation as an ethnic community
was "*qawm*," which he used in his works both in its original meaning allud-
ing to a tribal-ethnic group, and in the meaning of 'nation.' In the course of
the interwar period, the original distinction between the patriotic "*waṭan*," (fa-
therland), the ethnocentric "*qawm*" (as in "*qawmiyya*," "nationalism") and the
Islamic "*umma*" became blurred in common usage; al-Khatib, however, liked to
retain the old Arab tribal connotation of the term "*qawm*" in his predilection
for old usages, probably fully aware that his audience would have understood
the word as belonging to an ideological nationalist semantic field. Jews, as a
"*qawm*," were an ethnic nation for al-Khatib. He directed his ire against all of
them, not only the Zionists.

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26   Ibid., 367f.

5 Conclusion

To sum up, the Arabic language was for al-Khatib a marker for the inseparable bonds that bound together the Arabs as an ethnic community, but it was also a monument highlighting the corruption and decline that his people had gone through since the age of purity in early and pre-Islamic times, embodied especially in the poetry of the Jahiliyya period. He therefore fashioned himself as a poet in the desert, as a bulwark against Arab decline and foreign intrusion, and as a warning that a political awakening of the Arabs would have to be accompanied by a cultivation of the soul, which for him was in the language. However, the anti-Jewish references in his poetry indicate that he was ready to adjust the borders between language, culture, and ethnicity as new lines of conflict were drawn in the interwar Middle East.

Despite his insistence on the classical form and his resistance to modernization and Westernization in the language, al-Khatib was nevertheless a modern man. Through the themes that he chose, and in the media in which he published (despite his apparent aversion to having his work printed), he participated in the formation of Arabic as a modern political vernacular and a vehicle for nationalist ideology. The pan-Arab public sphere was his playing field, even if he rejected some of its stakeholders. Thus, this chapter, presents the agenda of an intellectual to create a linguistic realm based on geography of origin, historical rootedness and religion that offers little room for ambiguity. Al-Khatib's nostalgia for the Arabs of early Islam, and his burgeoning anti-Semitism are the antithesis of the cultural labour of minority communities for whom Arabic was a language of inclusion rather than of exclusion, as other chapters in this volume show.

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Arabic and the Syriac Christians in Iraq: Three Levels of Loyalty to the Arabist Project (1920–1950)

Tijmen C. Baarda

In the twenties and early thirties of the twentieth century, a group of Assyrians in Iraq was busy setting up their own intellectual and educational infrastructure revolving around a number of people inside the Assyrian Church of the East. Most of them had newly arrived as refugees from the Ottoman Empire and had started from scratch. They used a dialect of the Neo-Aramaic language which they called Swadaya, and which is also known as Modern Assyrian. If they employed Arabic at all it was because of the dominance of this language in the new state of Iraq, not because they were so keen on using it. On the other hand, around the same time the Patriarchate of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq propagated the use of Arabic and adherence to the Arab nationalist identity of the state. Drawing upon long experience in writing in Arabic and teaching the language, the Chaldeans were eager to take it to the next level by endorsing it as their own. Yet another type of dealing with the Arabic language is found with the Syriac Orthodox of Iraq. In the late forties, high-ranking clergy from this church used the Arabic language with the same eagerness as the Chaldean clergy did, but at the same time stressed their transnational connections with their coreligionists in the Middle East, North America and India, whom they saw as members of one Syriac nation. All three Christian groups belong to the tradition of Syriac Christianity, and share a largely similar historical background. Nowadays they are usually regarded as belonging to the same ethnic group. Yet in the early state of Iraq, these three groups, which all had their centres in the city of Mosul, show enormous differences in their approaches to the Arabic language and the ideology of Arab nationalism.

The Syriac churches,[1] which constitute the great majority of Iraq's Christians, are connected by the traditional use of the Syriac language, a form of Aramaic.

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1 The Syriac churches in Iraq are the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Syriac Catholic Church, the Assyrian Church of the East (historically known as the Nestorian Church) and the Chaldean Catholic Church. To this may be added the Ancient Church of the East, which was founded in 1968 and therefore has no relevance for this chapter, and the Maronite Church in Lebanon, which is of little relevance for the situation in Iraq.

Many Syriac Christians speak a form of Neo-Aramaic as their mother tongue, and both Syriac and Neo-Aramaic are deeply rooted in Syriac Christian identity. However, Aramaic has always had competition from other languages, of which Arabic is the most important. In Mandatory Iraq, we find strong evidence that part of the Syriac Christians not only used Arabic on a daily basis, but also made a strong commitment to the use of the Arabic language, which they often courteously called *lughat al-ḍād*. In some cases they even endorsed Arab nationalism. At the same time, other Syriac Christians stressed the necessity of studying the Syriac language because of its importance for their religion or their community, but in many cases expressed themselves in Arabic to do so. For yet other groups of Syriac Christians, it was not Arabic but Aramaic they identified with. These Syriac Christians saw Arabic merely as a language that was necessary to master in order to survive in or – more optimistically – to become part of Iraqi society, where Arabic was dominant.

The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement by George Antonius appeared in 1938.[2] This well-known work has since functioned as an introduction to Arab nationalism for a western audience, but it is deeply rooted in the context in which it was written.[3] Antonius, a Greek Orthodox Christian, born in Lebanon but throughout his life active in many different parts of the Arab Middle East, defined Arabs as people speaking Arabic, regardless of religion.[4] Most Christians in the Middle East – notably the Copts, the Greek Orthodox and Catholic, and the Maronites – were clearly part of this definition, while others, such as the Armenians, were not. For the Syriac Christians the situation was rather complicated. Antonius explicitly discusses the Assyrians as not belonging to the Arab nation,[5] whereas the other Syriac Christians are not mentioned. In line with Antonius' definition of an Arab as a native speaker of Arabic, he implicitly regards part of the Syriac Christians as Arabs and part as non-Arabs, because some are native speakers of Arabic,

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2   George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938).

3   Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "The Language of the Nation: The Rise of Arabic among Jews and Christians (1900–1950)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43:2 (2016): 176–77.

4   Antonius accepts the idea that those who in modern times form the Arab people are descendants of those who originally became Arab through what he calls "linguistic" and "racial Arabisation." This idea, which is significant given the value that was given to race in the 1930s, when the book appeared, explains why Antonius feels comfortable giving non-racial and non-fixed criteria such as speaking a particular language to determine if someone ought to be regarded as an Arab or not.

5   Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 365. Cf. Murre-van den Berg, "The Language of the Nation": 178n.

but others are not. The Syriac Christians are the only group of Christians in the Middle East whose situation carries this ambiguity.

The terms "Syriac Christian" and "Syriac Christianity,"[6] which I use throughout this chapter, are not unproblematic and need further clarification. The fact that all churches have a shared background and use the Syriac language for (at least) liturgical purposes justifies the usage of this term, at least in academic discourse, but also falsely suggests that there has always been a strong connection between the churches and their adherents which is unquestioned. Today the idea that all denominations of Syriac Christianity are connected to each other is indeed widely accepted, even if outside academia they are commonly known under different names, such as Assyrian and Aramean. This idea is known as *umthonoyutho*, a Syriac word that could be translated as "nationness," and which Naures Atto describes as "unity discourse."[7] Not much research has been done about the early development of this important idea, but it is clear that from 1915, the year of the Assyrian/Aramean genocide, it has found acceptance in many places in the Middle East and elsewhere. However, there was no general acceptance yet, and in Iraq it seems that the idea had only little influence until at least the end of the 1940s.

The existence of different Syriac Christian communities in Iraq that had relatively little contact with each other resulted in a great variety of ideas about the position of the Syriac Christians, both in Iraqi society and *vis-à-vis* the other Syriac Christians. These ideas caused different views on and practices in using the Arabic language, which had been the official language of the country since the establishment of the state of Iraq and was regarded as the major unifying factor of the Iraqi people.[8] Because the Syriac Christians had a long history of using Arabic and had many native speakers of the language, Arabic was not strange to them and their embracing of it could be justified, but at the same time they had their own Syriac and Neo-Aramaic languages, which potentially made them strangers. The choice whether or not to adopt Arabic as their own was likely to have huge consequences for the question whether the Syriac Christians were to be regarded as a minority or as part of

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6   "Syriac Christian" and "Syriac Christianity" are synonymous with the terms "Syrian Christian" and "Syrian Christianity," which have recently been replaced to avoid confusion with the state of Syria. The word "Syriac" does not exclusively refer to the language in this context.

7   Although it found broader acceptance in the Middle East after 1915, the year of the Sayfo or Aramean/Assyrian genocide, it seems not to have gained much influence in Iraq until at least the second half of the twentieth century. Naures Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses Among the Assyrian/Syriac Elites in the European Diaspora* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), 279.

8   Ali A. Allawi, *Faisal I of Iraq* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 383.

the majority. In this chapter I will explain how church officials in Iraq in the period 1920–1950 put forward different ideas about the Arabic language, and how this related to their position regarding the Arab identity of the state. I will first give a short overview of the language situation of the Syriac Christians in Iraq, and briefly discuss the origins of Arab identities with Syriac Christians in Iraq, which were already established before the First World War. After that, I will successively discuss the different views on the Arabic language held by the Syriac Christians who belonged to the Assyrian Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic Church, and the Syriac Orthodox Church.

1   Arabic and the Syriac Christians

The use of Arabic by Syriac Christians is not something that only came up in the nineteenth or twentieth century. Already from the ninth century onwards there were Christians writing in Arabic, both Syriac Christians and authors from other traditions, such as the Copts.[9] The use of Arabic within both the West and East Syriac churches is therefore strongly rooted in the tradition of Syriac Christianity. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Syriac Christian manuscripts are known where Arabic is used alongside Syriac or on its own. In addition to that, the common practice of Garshuni – using the Syriac script for writing in another language, most of the times Arabic – shows that the language could even be used to express a Syriac Christian identity.[10]

However, it is exactly these features of the use of Arabic by Christians – mixing it with Syriac and the use of Garshuni – that make it stand apart from the Arabic that we see in use by the Muslim environment. Although by the time of the *nahḍa*, or Arab literary revival, there was a common ground for Christians and Muslims to use the Arabic language, the "traditional" use of Arabic with these features continues in Iraq, even in the twentieth century, and especially in manuscripts. In an earlier article I have given examples of this 'traditional' use of Arabic by Syriac Christians in Iraq that did *not* correspond to the standard use of the language that was prevalent in most of the Arab world since the *nahḍa*. Here, Arabic is either written in a mix between

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9   Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, part 1: *Die Übersetzungen* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944), 51.

10   F. del Río Sánchez, "El árabe karshūnī come preservación de la identidad siríaca," in *Lenguas en contacto: el testimonio escrito*, edited by P. Bádenas de la Peña et al. (Madrid: Editorial CSIC, 2004), 185–194.

the colloquial and the standard language,[11] or in Garshuni, or a combination of both. I argued that this use of Arabic is a continuation of earlier practices and a sign that the *naḥḍa* had not yet fully penetrated to certain groups of Syriac Christians in Iraq. We see this practice in Iraq mainly in ecclesial manuscripts and closely related writings, such as letters about manuscripts.[12]

In this contribution the focus is on the use of Arabic in the 'modern,' standardized form, i.e. in what linguists call Modern Standard Arabic, which was still in development at the time. My hypothesis is that these traditional and modern uses of Arabic by the Syriac Christians run parallel to each other and do not rule out each other. Nevertheless, with a few exceptions most authors only engaged in one of the two possibilities. Using Arabic in the 'modern' way meant that it was not used anymore in the specific 'Syriac' mode with its long tradition. Indeed, the 'modern' use of Arabic was of no use to express a Syriac identity. What it could do, and sometimes did, was to express an Arab identity instead. Christian intellectuals in Baghdad and Mosul had already done this before the First World War. In the twentieth century, after the establishment of the state of Iraq, we see this also happening in the publications of some of the Syriac Churches.

2   The Origins of Iraqi and Arab Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire

After the establishment of the state of Iraq in 1920 as a kingdom under a British mandate, many intellectuals engaged in the state building process. The zeal with which Muslims, Christians and Jews took up this task is surprising, given the fact that Iraq has often been described as an artificial state: a state without its own identity, based on the Sykes-Picot agreement rather than pre-existing cultural, social or political units, which was deemed eventually to fall apart. But in the period after 1920, when the British occupation was very unpopular, the creation of Iraq as a state separate from the other Arab countries was

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11   This type of Arabic is sometimes called Middle Arabic, but usually not for the modern period. For a discussion if the term Middle Arabic can only be used for works written in premodern times, see Johannes den Heijer, "Introduction: Middle and Mixed Arabic, a New Trend in Arabic Studies," in Liesbeth Zack and Arie Schippers (eds.), *Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic: Diachrony and Synchrony* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1–25.

12   T.C. Baarda, "Standardized Arabic as a Post-*Naḥḍa* Common Ground: Mattai bar Paulus and His Use of Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni," in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, edited by S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah and H.L. Murre-van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 71–95.

unquestioned,[13] and not seen as a merit of the British.[14] As we will see below, this zeal is also visible in part of the Syriac Christians. In order to put Syriac Christian engagement in Iraq with Arabic and Arab nationalism after the First World War in context, I will in this section describe its origins from before the war.

By the beginning of the *nahḍa*, or Arab(ic) literary revival, there was a common field of literary productions in Arabic for Muslims, Jews and Christians. Christian and Jewish usage of Arabic used to be characterized by features that set the language apart from Muslim usage, such as the frequent use of a different script (Hebrew script in the case of the Jews, and Syriac script in the case of the Syriac Christians), but around the start of the eighteenth century a number of authors started to use the Arabic language in the same way as Muslims did, and explicitly as part of the same cultural sphere. Abdulrazzak Patel calls this "the reintegration of Christian writers into the mainstream of Arabic literature."[15] Although usually acknowledging the connection between Arabic and Islam, non-Muslim authors began to appropriate the Arabic language as part of their culture.[16] For the Syriac Christians in the area that now constitutes the state of Iraq, we see that the effect of the *nahḍa* first became visible in the field of journalism: right after the declaration of the second Ottoman constitution, various authors with a Syriac Christian background started writing in Arabic-language journals in the cities of Mosul and Baghdad.[17] Some of these journals were openly critical of the Ottoman policy of Turkification, which was common with the Arabic-language press at the time. Other journals were less

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13   Political parties opposing the government and especially the British presence were created from the early 1920s, but even these parties used an Iraqi nationalist vocabulary. Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 60.

14   Rather, Arabic sources tend to make a distinction between the liberation of Iraq and the subsequent occupation by the British, for instance the Chaldean author Sulaymān Ṣāʾigh, who devotes a chapter to the "independence of Iraq" (*istiqlāl al-ʿIrāq*) and then another chapter to the establishment of Faisal as King of Iraq. Al-Qass Sulaymān Ṣāʾigh, *Tārīkh al-Mawṣil*, part one: 1342–1923 (Cairo: *al-Maṭbaʿa al-salafiyya bi-Miṣr*, 1923), 326–32.

15   Abdulrazzak Patel, *The Arab Nahḍah: The Making of the Intellectual and Humanist Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 69.

16   An explicit example of this is Buṭrus al-Bustānī's *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, an Arabic lexicographical work in which he based his discussion of the Arabic lexicon on Christian texts. This author was also a proponent of "Syrianism," which I will discuss below. Rana Issa, "The Arabic Language and Syro-Lebanese National Identity: Searching in Buṭrus al-Bustānī's *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 62:2 (2017): 465–84.

17   An overview of journals published by Syriac Christian authors in Iraq, both before and after the First World War, is given in Fāʾiq Buṭṭī, *Mawsūʿat al-ṣaḥāfa al-suryāniyya fī al-ʿIrāq: taʾrīkh wa-shakhṣiyyāt* (Erbil: *Wizārat al-thaqāfa wa-l-shabāb, al-mudīriyya al-ʿāmma li-l-thaqāfa wa-l-funūn al-suryāniyya*, 2013). Note that for the period before the First World War, Buṭṭī speaks about Iraq with Baghdad as its capital as if the state already existed; see for instance page 12, where he writes that Dawīd Ṣalīwa went "to the capital, Baghdad" (*al-ʿāṣima Baghdād*).

political, but there, too, the boundaries of what was to become Iraq were already visible.

One of the journals in which this can be seen is the Baghdad-published newspaper *Lughat al-ʿArab* "Language of the Arabs." The famous Christian writer Anastās al-Karmilī from Baghdad was co-editor of this journal, the other co-editor being the Muslim Kāẓim al-Dujaylī. The main interests of these journals were Arabic literature, history and archaeology, and one of their official objectives was to make known the knowledge of Western Orientalists to the audience in Iraq:

> We will transfer to our Iraqi patriots (*waṭaniyyinnā al-ʿIrāqiyyīn*) the things that were written about them by the Europeans (*al-ifranj*) and by others among the famous authors.[18]

In a loose French translation of the journal's goals the impression is given that the author expected the Western audience to be unaware of Iraq as a region with fixed boundaries and political significance, as the following quotation shows:

> Elle renseignera le monde savant tant d'orient que d'occident sur les contrées de l'Arabie, de la Mésopotamie et sur les provinces avoisinantes.[19]

Although it is not surprising that in the French version *Mésopotamie* is used rather than *Irak*, which was a common way to refer to this area in the West until long after the formal creation of the country as a mandate,[20] the fact that "Mesopotamia" alone was not enough to describe Iraq and "Arabia" was mentioned as well, shows that for the author the two words were not yet synonymous.[21] The use of the word "homeland" (*waṭan*) before the creation of the country parallels the use of this word by the propagators of an "integrated

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18   Anonymous, "*Lughat al-ʿArab: Majallat shahriyya adabiyya ʿilmiyya tārīkhiyya*" (introductory article), *Lughat al-ʿArab* 1:1 (1329/1911): 1. The journal gives the issuing dates in both the Islamic and the Gregorian calendar.

19   Anonymous, "Loghat – el – ʿArab" (French version of introductory article), *Lughat al-ʿArab* 1:1 (1329/1911): 39.

20   Compare also the name of the Protestant mission to Iraq after the First World War: this was initially called the United Mission in Mesopotamia, although it was created after the establishment of the state of Iraq.

21   The phrase *les provinces avoisinantes* is reflected in the Arabic phrase *al-ʿIrāq wa-mā jāwarahu* "Iraq and what is adjacent to it," which is repeated numerous times in the journal. The French word *provinces* is probably not used in the sense of Ottoman *vilayet*s here, because the Ottoman Empire did not have *vilayet*s called Iraq/Mesopotamia or Arabia. It may refer to a lower administrative subdivision.

Syria" or "Syrianism" within the Ottoman Empire from the mid-1850s, about which much more research has been done.[22] The Christian author Buṭrus al-Bustānī, whom we will meet again below, was an important proponent of this idea.[23] It may be regarded as an example of the phenomenon that Cem Emrence identifies as "concentric homelands (*vatan*s) within the Ottoman universe."[24]

In the first issue of the second year, in 1912, in an article by Ibrāhīm Ḥalamī, the borders of what was understood as Iraq are defined rather sharply. In this discussion the author begins by recognizing that Iraq's borders always have changed over time, continuing with the meaning of Iraq in medieval times, for which he quotes Yāqūt's thirteenth-century *Kitāb muʿẓam buldān*.[25] Further on he writes the following about what was understood as Iraq in his days:

> Today, Iraq is subdivided into two parts, and both these parts consist of a self-existent *vilayet* (*wilāya*), which are: the *vilayet* of Baghdad and the *vilayet* of Basra.[26]

In other words, the term "Iraq" in 1912 was equivalent to the two Ottoman provinces of Baghdad and Basra, which is exactly what constituted the country when it was founded in 1920. It is important to note that the province of Mosul is absent here, which was only granted to Iraq by a League of Nations decision in 1925, which indicates that this province was not envisioned as part of Iraq and that its addition to the country was merely the result of the British conquest. Nevertheless, the discussion above shows that the foundations of an Iraqi-Arab identity for the new state were already laid before the First World War and that this idea had partly Christian origins. This may explain why after the war various Christian intellectuals zealously defended the newly founded state of Iraq and its Arab identity, often together with their Muslim counterparts. Although before the war the propagation of this idea was reserved for Christians who worked outside the ecclesiastical channels of the church, after the war this changed: some of the Syriac churches started to embrace

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22   Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 42–43.

23   Buṭrus al-Bustānī was a Protestant from a Maronite background. Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Christians Between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus al-Bustani," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11 (1980): 287–304.

24   Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy and the Islamic State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 42.

25   Ibrāhīm Ḥalamī, "*Al-ʿIrāq*," *Lughat al-ʿArab* 2:1 (1330/1912): 2–9.

26   Ibid.

Iraqi-Arab identity, while others stayed away from it. The engagement of the churches after the war will be the topic of the next three sections.

3   The Assyrians around Joseph de Kelaita: Arabic for Practical Purposes

I will start my discussion with the Syriac Christian group that shows the least enthusiasm in using the Arabic language and assimilating to an Arab identity. I will call this group the Assyrians, although this requires some explanation: depending on the user, the word in its modern context may have different meanings, with a changing range of Syriac Christians that are included in the definition. The reason for this is that Assyrian in its modern usage is an ethnic category which many Syriac Christians use to identify themselves, but not all. Proponents of an Assyrian ethnic identity sometimes used the word 'Assyrian' to refer to all Syriac Christians, whether the people they talked about identified as such or not.[27] Other authors use it only for people who did identify as Assyrians. In another sense the term can also refer specifically to somebody who belongs to the Assyrian Church of the East. In less specialist histories of modern Iraq and the modern Middle East in general, authors often do not specify what exactly they mean by 'Assyrian'. In many cases they only use it for people who identify as such, but the absence of clarification occasionally causes confusion.[28] Historians who are aware of the different meanings of the word may often struggle to explain the matter as well. Different usages of the term often overlap, because historically the Assyrian self-identification was the strongest amongst the Syriac Christians who belonged to the Church of the East – hence the official inclusion of the term in the name of this church.[29] It is precisely this point of overlap that adds much to the confusion.

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27   Sargon G. Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 3–5. Donabed does not explicitly discuss what he means by 'Assyrian,' but from his list of what Assyrians should *not* be called it is clear that all Syriac Christians are included in his definition. Nevertheless, the elements of Assyrian Iraqi history that he discusses are almost all about the Assyrians who came to Iraq as refugees, which are also the Assyrians I discuss in this section.

28   Robert Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 77–78; Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *'Iraq, 1900 to 1950: A Political, Social, and Economic History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 191–200. The only Christians mentioned by Longrigg, even in a discussion on minorities, are the Assyrians, and this only in relation to the Iraq Levies and the road towards independence.

29   For a history of the Assyrian identification in the Church of the East, see Adam H. Becker, *Revival and Awakening: American Evangelical Missionaries in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

The case of Iraq in the early twentieth century is one where this overlap plays an important role. The overwhelming majority of those who in this period in Iraq identified as Assyrian consisted of people who had arrived in Iraq as refugees during the First World War from the Hakkari mountains in the Ottoman Empire, and partly from the Urmia region in Persia. The majority of them belonged to the Assyrian Church of the East, and a minority to the Chaldean Catholic Church or Protestant denominations.[30] They were first accommodated in two different refugee camps in Iraq, and later settled in the north of the country when it became clear that they could not return to Hakkari, and that no other "national home" could be found for them. For a long time, an influential part of the Assyrians remained opposed to eventual integration into Iraq.[31] For this reason, the Assyrians of Iraq acquired a reputation in historiography of having a negative attitude to the state they lived in. However, this view is only partly correct: there were different factions with different ideas about the community's future in the country.[32] The fact that this view is too rigid also transpires in the Assyrians' various attitudes to the Arabic language, as we will see below. A dramatic turning point for the Assyrians came in 1933, one year after the independence of Iraq, when hundreds to thousands of civilians were massacred in the Assyrian town of Simele. A large number of Assyrians decided to leave the country, including the patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East; the remaining part no longer actively opposed integration into Iraq.

As speakers of Neo-Aramaic who came from a place where Arabic was not used, the Assyrians in Iraq had to adopt not only to the new political authority, but also to an entirely new linguistic situation. Although their Neo-Aramaic dialect, which is often called Sureth and belongs to the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic group of dialects, is close to the Neo-Aramaic spoken by a large portion of the Chaldeans and as well by some Syriac Orthodox and Syriac

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30   To explain the confusion that can be caused by the multiple meanings of the term Assyrian, even if an author is well aware of this, we may take the article by Sami Zubaida on the Assyrians in Iraq in 1933. There, a paragraph is spent on explaining who the Assyrians are, stating that they are "Nestorian Christians." Technically this is not correct, since Zubaida means that among the Assyrians there were also Catholics and some Protestants; however, in general terms this overlap did indeed exist. Sami Zubaida, "Contested nations: Iraq and the Assyrians," *Nations and Nationalism* 6:3 (2000): 366.

31   H. Müller-Sommerfeld, "The League of Nations, A-Mandates and Minority Rights during the Mandate Period in Iraq (1920–1932)," in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), edited by S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah and Heleen Murre-van den Berg, 258–283.

32   J.F. Coakley, "The Church of the East Since 1914," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78:3 (1996): 179–98.

Catholic Christians, a great difference is that these other Syriac Christians had their roots in Iraq itself where, especially in the intellectual centres such as Mosul and in other cities, Arabic was predominant. The Assyrians, on the other hand, were much less rooted in an Arabic linguistic environment, but instead of Arabic they brought with them an elaborate literary tradition of writing in Neo-Aramaic, which at the end of the nineteenth century had been developed in Urmia in Persia.[33]

The Neo-Aramaic writing tradition was continued right after the Assyrians' arrival in Iraq. To facilitate this, the well-known deacon and later priest Joseph de Kelaita (Yawsep d-bēt Qlaytā, 1880–1952) brought a printing press to Iraq with types he had originally developed for a printing press in India.[34] He had learned this craft in England and the United States. De Kelaita was born in the middle of the Hakkari and Urmia regions, but had not been in the Middle East any more since his departure to England in 1910, so that when he arrived in 1921 in Mosul he had a different background than those who came as refugees from the north.[35] The printing press established by De Kelaita had moving types for East Syriac script and was in operation from 1921 to 1931. At least 15 books were published during those years, but a comprehensive list is not available.[36] Most of those were printed for the Assyrian Church of the East, but in rare cases the press was used by others as well, including the Chaldean Catholic Church. This means that most books are of a religious nature, or are aids for learning the Syriac or Neo-Aramaic language.

The linguistic situation for the Assyrians as outlined above is visible in the choice of languages at Joseph de Kelaita's printing press. The only languages used in the books are Classical Syriac and Neo-Aramaic, in addition to the frequent inclusion of a secondary title page in English. In general, the reprints of older texts are in the Classical Syriac language, whereas the original works are in Neo-Aramaic. Classical Syriac and Neo-Aramaic were clearly distinguished from each other, and the importance of Neo-Aramaic is reflected in a few editions of classical texts where the original Classical Syriac text is accompanied

33   H.L. Murre-van den Berg, *From a Spoken to a Written Language: The Introduction and Development of Literary Urmia Aramaic in the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1999).

34   Mar Aprem, "Mar Narsai Press," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78 (1996): 171–2.

35   A basic biography can be found in Rudolf Macúch, *Geschichte der spät- und neusyrischen Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976), 279.

36   Daniel Benjamin, "Assyrian Printing Presses in Iraq During the 20th Century," *ARAM Periodical* 21 (2009): 154. Benjamin lists 15 books from this period, but at least one book that I came across is not part of the list.

by a translation into Neo-Aramaic.[37] Apparently, the Neo-Aramaic translation made the book accessible to a larger audience. Arabic has no role at all and is not featured in any of the books; the books reflect the Assyrians' special situation as a community with a well-developed literary tradition that was different from the Arabic-dominated literary tradition in the society around them.

In the first decades after the establishment of Iraq as a state, the Assyrians were active in the foundation of schools that specifically served their community. As there was virtually no government-funded education in the early years after the establishment of the state of Iraq, private initiatives to establish primary and secondary schools were numerous and the government did not enforce strict rules for the curricula of these schools.[38] Shamuel mentions five Assyrian schools. Crucially, these schools are clearly identifiable as *Assyrian* schools because they carry this word in their names.[39] The two most important of these were the Assyrian School of Mosul, which was linked to the Church of the East and the Assyrian School in Baghdad, founded by the American United Mission in Mesopotamia in 1921 but later independently governed by Protestant Assyrians. Documents from these schools show that, unlike what is suggested by the books published at Joseph de Kelaita's printing press, Arabic was present at the schools to some extent. Thanks to a diploma dating from 1926 we know about the Assyrian School of Mosul that "English, Elementary Arabic, and Syriac" were part of the curriculum, in a time that government control over private-school curricula was still limited.[40] The diploma itself is also interesting, as it is written in, in that order, English, Arabic and Classical Syriac. The diploma is signed in triplicate, i.e., for each language, by both Joseph de Kelaita as the school's director and two teachers, with their names. What is

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37   For example, De Kelaita's edition of the *Exposition of the mysteries* (*Pūshaq rāzē*) by the fifth-century Syriac author Narsai, which he published using the press in 1928. The book was republished using a self-publishing service – for details see: http://www.lulu .com/shop/mar-narsai/an-exposition-of-the-mysteries/paperback/product-177484.html (accessed 21 August 2019).

38   For education during the mandate period, see Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 193–209. The spectacular growth of the state educational system after independence becomes very clear in: Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East: Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1949), 119–213.

39   Robin Shamuel, "The Private Assyrian Schools in Iraq During the 20th Century," unpublished master's thesis, Leiden University, 2008.

40   Some school curricula were digitized by the Assyrian School of Mosul Project. An archived version of its website is available at: http://web.archive.org/web/20150911032852/http:// aina.org/mosulschool/school.htm. This page contains information about the school curriculum in 1921–1924 according to Deacon Yosip Zia, who attended the school at the time.

interesting here is that Joseph de Kelaita signs with his name in Latin, Arabic and Syriac characters successively, whereas the two teachers write their names in one script only: one in Syriac script, the other in Arabic script. This suggests that the teacher who signed in Arabic script did not know Syriac script and was probably a teacher of Arabic at the school from outside the Assyrian community, while the teacher who signed in Syriac script might not have known Arabic. If this is true, it shows a situation that is perfectly imaginable in 1926, with a teacher from outside the community being appointed to teach Arabic to children in order to facilitate a good future in the country they lived in, at the same time keeping the Assyrian community together by establishing an educational institution specifically for them.

The aftermath of the Simele massacre of 1933 was also a turning point for the educational efforts of the Assyrians in Iraq. It meant the annexation of Joseph de Kelaita's Assyrian school in Mosul by the state.[41] The Assyrian School in Baghdad, which was Protestant, was allowed to continue, but was forced to change its name twice so that eventually it no longer contained the word "Assyrian."[42] A request for a subsidy from the director of the school to the American missionaries, who had initially founded the school, shows that in 1937 the prejudice against the Assyrians, i.e., of not being willing to integrate into Iraq, still existed, but also that this particular school did its best to prove it wrong. The following quote from an internal report from the American mission's archive explains why the subsidy request was rejected:

> The Assyrians have never adapted themselves to the life in Iraq but have continued their school and their church in their original language. The Government is desirous of having them absorbed into the Iraqi nation. The Mission feels that its primary purpose is to evangelize the Arabs. Consequently it felt that it could not continue paying out money to a non-Arab community.[43]

The negative decision came at a time when the American mission focused more and more on its initial goal of converting Muslims. In this respect it is not surprising that the missionaries decided to cut the funding for initiatives for the support of Christian groups, even if these were close to the missionaries'

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41   Shamuel, "The Private Assyrian Schools in Iraq," 28–29.
42   Ibid., 33.
43   Presbyterian Historical Society, RG89–1–16, "Memorandum on conversation with Mr. Willoughby regarding the Assyrians in Baghdad and his comments on a letter from Mr. Khendo H. Yonan with regard to the situation there" (1937).

religious views. More telling, however, are the harsh words about the continued use of the Assyrians' language, which the missionaries thought to have a negative effect on their integration into Iraqi society. The defensive response reveals something about the different feelings prevalent amongst the Assyrians:

> Of course we are not an Arabic speaking community, but we are by far more Iraqis in spirit and in every way than the other sects among the Assyrians here in Baghdad, although this attitude has no concern whatever with religious matters, or it does not affect the Mission work in any way, but on the contrary, our church program of work and the evangelization spirit of our congregation are by far more agreeable with the Mission plan of work than even Arabic speaking native church (protestant) in Bagdad.[44]

In other words, these Assyrians acknowledged that their identity was different from that of the mainstream in Iraq, but that they still saw themselves as "Iraqis in spirit." Furthermore, it is made explicit that they regarded all the other Assyrians as less integrated, which shows that this probably was a common complaint or prejudice against the Assyrians in general.[45] Unfortunately these comforting words, showing both the wish to integrate as loyal Iraqi citizens and the spiritual connection with the mission's ideas, did not convince the Protestant mission. Their response even shows a resolute rejection of the wish of these Assyrians to stay loyal to their identity by teaching the schoolchildren Aramaic:

> The Mission has never felt that it was responsible for the school and especially at this time it seems to be a needless expense since there are good Government schools and your children would not lose out educationally if you dropped the idea of conducting a school. You possibly feel that you must teach the Syriac tongue to your children, but is this the wisest course? The language of your country is Arabic and we feel that you should put emphasis on your children learning this language. This would be one way of identifying yourselves with the people of this country if you intend to remain citizens of Iraq.[46]

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44   Presbyterian Historical Society, RG89–1–15, letter from Khendo H. Yonan to Dr Coan, 6 August 1936.

45   By "the other sects among the Assyrians," Khendo H. Yonan means the Assyrians who were not Protestant, most notably those who belonged to the Assyrian Church of the East.

46   Presbyterian Historical Society, RG89–1–17, letter from B.D. Hakken (secretary of the mission) to Khendo H. Yonan, 1 November 1938.

We can conclude that the cultural and educational endeavours of the Assyrians in Iraq correspond to the prevalent view that this community saw itself as separate from the Arab majority: they had their own name and used their own language. However, the sources also show that the Assyrians' historiographical reputation of being opposed to integration into Iraqi society needs some qualification. Both before and after 1933 members of the Assyrian elite were actively promoting knowledge and intellectual pursuits for fellow Assyrians within the frameworks of the state, recognizing the importance of Arabic as a state language. The fact that Arabic was not adopted as the community's own language does not devalue this conclusion in any way.

4   The Chaldean Patriarchate and Sulaymān Ṣāʾigh's *al-Najm*: Strong Commitment to the State and its Arab Identity

The Simele massacre of 1933 was a turning point for the Assyrians in Iraq, but must have had an impact on all Christians in the country, even if it was only the Assyrians who were directly targeted.[47] However, in the September issue of the official Chaldean journal *al-Najm*, which came out right after its yearly summer break during which the Simele massacre took place, not a single word is devoted to what happened. Instead, about half of the issue is filled by an obituary of King Faisal, who had died during the same summer, and an appraisal of his son and successor, King Ghazi.[48] The warm words for the new king are especially striking considering his supposed role during the massacre.[49] The lack of any mention of the Simele massacre could be explained by a complete absence of communication between the Assyrians and the Chaldeans, but this is not probable. Another explanation makes more sense. Sadly, the Simele massacre was an issue of national Iraqi pride and resonated in the whole country. Therefore, not only were the Chaldeans necessarily aware of what had happened, but they may also have been supposed to agree with the nationalist

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47   The contemporary account by Ronald Sempill Stafford reads: "Apart from this, a violent campaign of anti-foreign and anti-Christian propaganda had lashed the mob into a state of frenzy. The Christians in Mosul were panic stricken, and with an excited and entirely undisciplined mob any small incident might lead to a tragedy." R.S. Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1935), 167. On page 170–171, we furthermore read that the leading Christians were supposed to attend official meetings, and "whatever their feelings, they had no option but attend."

48   *Al-Najm* 5:7 (1933).

49   Ibid., 169–70. See also Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians*, 170, for an account of the cheering that Prince Ghazi received from crowds after the massacre.

pride that came with it. Therefore, the only sensible way the Chaldeans could react was by ignoring the event, but at the same time praising the government and the new King.[50]

Al-Najm (The Star) was an Arabic-language journal edited by Sulaymān al-Ṣāʾigh (1886–1961), a priest and author from Mosul who is also known for his three-volume work on the history of his birthplace. The journal appeared between 1928 and 1938 and was an official publication of the Chaldean Catholic Patriarchate, which was located in Mosul at the time.[51] The journal focused on literature and history related to the church, but also included articles about society, health and morals, as well as news rubrics with stories concerning the church and its religious community, Iraq and the world. Thus, it gives a good impression of the official position of the Chaldean Patriarchate regarding the position of their community in the country and what the Arabic language meant to them. The journal was completely in Arabic, which was also explicitly endorsed as the language of choice for the Chaldeans. In the following paragraphs I will discuss the position of the Chaldeans in Iraq as it was envisioned by the Patriarchate, their views on Iraqi-Arab nationalism, and what they wrote about the Arabic language, on the basis of an analysis of contributions to this journal during the years 1928–1938.

The terminology used in *al-Najm* to refer to the Chaldean community and the country in which they lived sheds light on how the Chaldeans saw themselves as part of Iraq. Three key terms are used in talking about the group they belonged to: *umma* (nation), *waṭan* (homeland) and *ṭāʾifa* (religious group, sect). These three words are common Arabic words, but the exact usage is crucial, for there is an important difference here with the Syriac Orthodox usage, which I will discuss below. For the Chaldeans, *umma* refers to the Arab nation, which alternates between the transnational Arab nation as a whole and the nation of Iraq. In a number of cases the editor uses the phrase "the Iraqi nation in particular and the Arab nation in general (*al-umma al-ʿIrāqiyya khāṣṣatan wa-al-umma al-ʿarabiyya ʿāmmatan*)."[52] The word *waṭan* (homeland) was used to

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50   A similar argument is found in A. Schlaepfer, "*The King is Dead, Long Live the King!* Jewish Funerary Performances in the Iraqi Public Space," in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, edited by S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah and H.L. Murre-van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 198–202. Here we find an explanation why Jewish participation in funerals after the death of King Ghazi (1941) was greater than after King Faisal's death, even though times were much harder for Jews in Iraq in 1941 than in 1933.

51   A second series covered the years 1950–1955; the reason given for the interruption is financial. Buṭṭī, *Mawsūʿat al-ṣaḥāfa al-suryāniyya fī al-ʿIrāq*, 50.

52   "*Akhbār ṭāʾifiyya*," *al-Najm* 5:5 (1933): 334, in a piece about the uncovering of a statue of Faisal in Baghdad.

refer to the country of Iraq – it was not used for the Arab countries as a whole. The word *ṭāʾifa* (religious group, sect) is used to refer to the Chaldean Catholic community only. Like *umma*, *ṭāʾifa* is a very common Arabic word and is used in particular for all different Christian denominations found in the Middle East. While this may seem obvious, it is in sharp contrast to the Assyrian terminology. The *ṭāʾifa* of the Chaldeans is called *al-ṭāʾifa al-kaldāniyya* (the Chaldean religious group) and is set apart from the other Christian *ṭāʾifa*-s found in Iraq. There is not a single sign of an understanding of unity or *umthonoyutho* between the different Syriac Christian groups, although at least in one case the journal expresses in particular its Christmas and New Year wishes to the "Christian *ṭāʾifa*-s."[53] By using the word *ṭāʾifa*, the Chaldeans identified themselves as nothing more than a religious group or denomination in Iraqi society. Crucially, they regarded this *ṭāʾifa* as part of the wider Iraqi-Arab *umma*, and they presented themselves as an integral part of it, not as a minority.

This view of the Chaldeans as an integral part of the Iraqi-Arab nation agrees with the official ideas of the new state and its head of state, Faisal. The principles of the state of Iraq and the authority of the king were explicitly endorsed several times, even though the government was not always supported.[54] In 1931, *al-Najm* printed a speech of bishop Istifān Jibrī that had been held in Kirkuk in the presence of King Faisal. The topic of his speech was *ḥubb al-waṭan*, which literally means "love for the homeland," but which can also be translated as "patriotism." The phrase *ḥubb al-waṭan* is known in Islam as part of a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad which has been used to justify several forms of nationalism.[55] Even the Christian proponent of Syrianism, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, used this saying to stress the importance of allegiance to the *waṭan*.[56] This Christian usage of the phrase is echoed here by the Chaldean bishop:

> God did not create man to be all alone, but to live with others in a societal body, and the country (*al-bilād*) in which he is born or lives, together with the people of his people (*qawm*) in a lasting way, is called the homeland

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53　Editorial, *al-Najm* 4:1 (1931): 1.

54　In 1933, a piece was included in support of the Mosul branch of the anti-British and multisectarian opposition party *Ḥizb al-Ikhāʾ al-waṭanī*, which was not included in the government until in 1935. See Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History*, 61.

55　U. Haarmann, "Waṭan," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, volume XI, edited by P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 174–75.

56　Issa, "The Arabic Language and Syro-Lebanese National Identity": 478–79. As Rana Issa mentions, Buṭrus al-Bustānī argues against usage of the word *umma*, which is an idea that the Chaldeans clearly do not copy.

(*al-waṭan*). This definition of the homeland implies the kingdom, be-
cause it is the same thing in this meaning; when we say that a man loves
his homeland, it means that he loves the kingdom under which patron-
age (*ẓall*) he lives.[57]

Al-Bustānī continues by claiming that according to a number of biblical pas-
sages the idea of loving one's homeland is natural, and, crucially, that this also
means that people should obey their government. Religious differences in one
country, as in Iraq, do not pose a problem here, as the bishop explains:

> We should observe that unity of homeland (*waḥdat al-waṭan*) does not
> require unity of religion (*waḥdat al-dīn*), just as unity of religion does
> not require unity of homeland. There might be one single religion for a
> number of homelands or kingdoms (*awṭān wa-mamālik*), but there can
> also be one homeland or kingdom that contains peoples (*aqwām*) with
> different religions (*adyān mukhtalifa*).[58]

As in other countries, the Iraqi understanding of Arab nationalism of this time
contained an element of Islam, without directly challenging its inclusive na-
ture towards Christians and Jews. The Chaldeans seem perfectly comfortable
with this, as occasionally it seems that a certain pride seems to be hidden in
placing Christianity alongside Islam, as on an equal footing. For instance, the
following passage from Faisal's obituary stresses that the Chaldean Church
participated in a mourning ritual together with an Islamic organization:

> On that day the Luminous Islamic Guidance Association (*jamʿiyyat
> al-hidāya al-islāmiyya al-zāhira*) published an announcement to the
> people, announcing accepting condolences, and reading of *al-Fātiḥa* in
> the Sheikh Abdallah mosque for three full days. In the same way, the resi-
> dence of the Chaldean Patriarchate accepted condolences in the evening
> of that day, and likewise the rest of the dioceses in their residences, and
> moving obituary speeches were held.[59]

Nowhere in *al-Najm* is it explicitly written that the Chaldeans were Arabs, even
though the authors' support for the "Arab nation" comes very close. What also
points in that direction is their positive assessment of the Arabic language.

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57   *Al-Najm* 3:7 (1931), 327ff.
58   Ibid.
59   *Al-najm* 5:7 (1933): 322.

Not only was it the exclusive language of the journal, at certain points it was also mentioned as the language of choice, suggesting these Chaldeans saw it as their own. This is significant because a large part of the Chaldean population did not have this language as their mother tongue. Respect for the language is shown already on the first page of the first volume in 1928, when the opening editorial devotes the journal to "'those who pronounce the *ḍāḍ*' (*al-nāṭiqīn bi-l-ḍāḍ*)," referring to the common idea and symbol of pride that Arabic is the only language containing the *ḍāḍ* sound, and that the Arabs are the only people capable of uttering it.[60] The clearest example of this is the inclusion of an article by a (probably French) Dominican priest identified as Hyacinthe, entitled "Let us master our language as well as possible!." In this article, readers are urged to do their very best to perfect their knowledge of the Arabic language: "Oh youth of Iraq, your language is Arabic, which is old, widely known and one of the most important, far-reaching in terms of speakers and abundant in terms of vocabulary…."[61]

Neo-Aramaic and Classical Syriac were however not completely absent from *al-Najm*. On the front page, both the journal's name and motto ("We saw a star in the East") were printed in Syriac together with Arabic. Furthermore, some articles in the journal contained some quotations from liturgical or historical Syriac texts, printed in Syriac script. The use of Syriac on the front page imbues the Syriac language with a symbolic relevance. Syriac and Neo-Aramaic were furthermore referred to a couple of times in announcements and news reports relating to the Chaldean *ṭāʾifa*: in an announcement of a New Year's wish issued by the Chaldean Patriarchate, it is mentioned that a wish of reportedly 59 pages was issued in both "the Arabic and Chaldean languages,"[62] and in a report on a meeting of the Chaldean Charity Association in Mosul the singing of songs in both Chaldean and Arabic is mentioned.[63] The word "Chaldean" (*kaldānī*) may here refer both to the Classical Syriac and the Neo-Aramaic vernacular language spoken by the Iraqi Chaldeans, which were not usually differentiated. What is important is that *suryānī* (Syriac) is never used for the language: this word was only used to refer to the Syriac Orthodox and Syriac Catholic churches. This difference is also visible in the archives of the Dominican Syro-Chaldean seminary, who used the French equivalents "syrien" and "chaldéen" respectively as names for both types of Syriac, even if

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60   Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 59–60.

61   Al-ab Hiyāsint al-Dūmīnīkī, "*Nutqin lughatunā bi-juhd al-istiṭāʿa,*" *al-Najm* 7:4 (1935), 141.

62   "*Akhbār al-ṭāʾifa,*" *Al-Najm* 5:1 (1933): 40.

63   "*Al-jamʿiyya al-khayriyya al-kaldāniyya bi-al-Mawṣil, bi-munāsabat ijtimāʿihā al-ʿāmm 26 ayyār sanat 1929,*" *Al-Najm* 1:8 (1929).

the differences between them are limited to different script variants and pro-
nunciation traditions.[64]

In conclusion, as a mouthpiece of the Chaldean Catholic Church *al-Najm*
shows that the Patriarchate actively supported the integration of the Chaldean
community as one of the Christian *ṭāʾifa*-s, being an integral part of the
Iraqi-Arab nation. The state institutions and the King were supported, but not
necessarily the government. The use of Arabic was encouraged and people re-
garded the language as their own.

5   **The Syriac Orthodox and Paul Bihnām's *al-Mashriq*: Holders of
        a Middle Position**

Like authors from the other churches in Iraq, Syriac Orthodox authors show a
continuous literary activity that goes back to antiquity if we take into account
their manuscript production, which continued as before after the First World
War. However, unlike the Assyrians and the Chaldeans, who produced printed
books already before the independence of Iraq, the Syriac Orthodox Church in-
side Iraq shows no involvement in printed literary activity before the year 1946,
and most of what we have from them is in the form of manuscripts. Because
of that, the Syriac Orthodox position regarding the use of Arabic is more dif-
ficult to reconstruct than that of the Chaldeans and the Assyrians. Also the
missionary archives do not provide any further information here. Luckily, from
1946 to 1951 two journals were published that were closely connected to the
Syriac Orthodox Church. These journals are *al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-Mashriq*,
published subsequently during the years 1946–1947 and 1948–1951.[65] The two
related journals were the responsibility of the priest Paul Bihnām, who was
the director of the Syriac Orthodox "clerical school" of Saint Ephrem in Mosul,
a transnational seminary for the education of Syriac Orthodox priests in Iraq
and abroad.[66] The journals were published in close connection with this

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64   Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, IV Mossoul, Z-9, F, "Le séminaire Syro-Chaldéen," 39. The
      French sources seem to refer only to the classical language.

65   *Al-Mashriq* should not be confused with its namesake, the far better known Catholic jour-
      nal *al-Mashriq*, which has been published in Beirut since 1898. I accessed *al-Mashriq* and
      Lisān al-Mashriq in the Widener Library at Harvard University in 2015.

66   This school was a transnational seminary and was known in Arabic as *al-madrasa
      al-iklīrīkiyya al-afrāmiyya* "Clerical Ephrem school." Not much seems to have been written
      about it, although a short history can be found on the website of the Syriac Orthodox
      Patriarchate. "Mor Aphrem Theological Seminary," accessed 21 August 2019, http://syriac
      patriarchate.org/st-aphrem-theological-seminary/.

school, as visible from the frequent inclusion of articles about events that took place at the school. Compared to the Chaldean *al-Najm*, *Al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-Mashriq* contain fewer explicit clues to ideas about language and nationalism. However, a few key articles that deal with identity, as well as some news stories that deal with events in the Syriac Orthodox world, help us to understand some of the underlying assumptions.

Where the Chaldeans of *al-Najm* consistently used the word *ṭāʾifa* to refer to their community, in Syriac Orthodox sources we frequently find the word *umma*, meaning "nation." Although *umma* was also frequently used by the Chaldeans, the essential difference is that they used it for the Iraqi and Arab nations, whereas in *al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-Mashriq* it is used for the Syriac community itself. This means that the nation they considered themselves part of was not Iraq, or the Arabs as a whole, but their own Syriac community. A couple of times we find the word *ṭāʾifa* as well, in at least one case alongside the word *umma*.[67] A few times we also find the word *milla*, which is the underlying form of the Ottoman Turkish word *millet*. In both cases the word seems synonymous with *umma* and could have been replaced by it. However, in all cases where *ṭāʾifa* and *milla* are used, these words refer to the Syriac Orthodox community on a local level inside Iraq or in other countries, which suggests that these words have more of a political or legal connotation.[68]

The *umma* that the Syriac Orthodox authors had in mind was a transnational nation of Syriac Christians worldwide, both in the Middle East and in the diaspora in the Americas, and possibly also in India. The full name was *al-umma al-suryāniyya*, which may be translated as "the Syriac nation," although it should be kept in mind that the word *suryāniyya* could have been translated in various ways into English (should this have happened in the time it was written), including "Syrian" and "Assyrian." Nowhere is there any explicit definition of what was understood by this "Syriac nation": did it only refer to the Syriac Orthodox, or to all Syriac Christians, including the East Syriac Chaldeans and Assyrians who in contemporary sources in Iraq were never referred to as

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67   "*Khiṭāb al-rāhib Jurjis al-qass Būlus: al-mawhiba al-ṣāliḥa*," *al-Mashriq* 1:22,23,24 (1947): 1034 and 1036. In this speech, the words *ṭāʾifa* and *umma* are both used to refer to the Syriac Orthodox in Iraq.

68   For the word *milla*: *Lisān al-Mashriq* 2:1 (1949): 39, about the consecration of a church; *Lisān al-Mashriq* 2:3,4 (1949/1950): 141, about the election of the Syriac Orthodox *majlis al-millī* in Mosul. For the word *ṭāʾifa*: *al-Mashriq* 1:22,23,24 (1947): 1034, speech by George al-Qass Joseph about the director of the clerical Ephrem school praising his service to the *ṭāʾifa* – in the same speech, the word *milla* is also used; *Lisān al-Mashriq* 1:8,9 (1949): 385, in a report about a play about the story of Saladin at the same school put on in order to raise money for the poor.

Suryānī? A lengthy article entitled *Al-thaqāfa al-Suryāniyya* "Syriac civilization," which appeared in the journal's first year of publication, sheds light upon this question. In the fifteen parts of the article, the author (who can probably be identified as the editor of the journal) goes through the two millenniums of history of the Syriac Christians with a focus on its literature and languages. In the beginning of the article he writes about "the noble Syriac nation," which "has been around since the oldest times in the beloved East."[69] This nation is traced back not only to the early centuries of Christianity, but also even further back to the earlier Arameans, praising them as the foundation of all civilization: "And thus [the Syriac people] knew that the Aramaic nation (*al-umma al-Arāmiyya*) was to them a lofty civilization before Christ for many generations, who have laid the foundation of all knowledge, starting in those remote times in the past ..."[70] The Aramaic heritage of the Syriac Christians is proudly given as the foundation of the culture of today's Syriac Christians, an idea that was to become the basis of the Aramaic nationalist ideas that developed from the 1950s onwards, although the idea itself was much older than that. However, for the period since the establishment of the Edessene Syriac language the author consistently uses the designation *Suryānī* "Syriac."

For the author, *al-umma al-suryāniyya* also includes the East-Syriac Church of the East as it developed as a dyophysite church after the condemnation of Nestorius in 451, although he describes its theology from a Syriac Orthodox point of view. In another part of this article, discussing the famous School of Edessa (the fourth- and fifth-century institution that was decisive in the development of Syriac literature and theology), a considerable amount of space is devoted to dyophysite authors who attended the school, including the famous East-Syriac author Narsai. In addition to that, Nestorius himself is mentioned as "patriarch of Constantinople, who was Syriac by nationality (*al-suryānī al-jins*)."[71] The article uses no harsh words to describe Nestorius' dyophysitic ideas, although his teachings are contrasted with the mainstream ideas, represented in the school by "a section that remained with the old doctrine of the church."[72] Thus, East Syriac authors from both before and after the Christological schisms are treated as belonging to the Syriac *umma*, even though their theological ideas were considered unorthodox.

The use of the word *umma* shows that these Christians saw themselves as a nation and therefore probably as an ethnically distinct group, even if there

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69   "*Al-thaqāfa al-suryāniyya*," *al-Mashriq* 1:4 (1946): 178.

70   Ibid., 179.

71   "*Al-thaqāfa al-suryāniyya*," *al-Mashriq* 1:5 (1946): 229.

72   Ibid.

are no overt displays of nationalism. In Arabic, the word can refer both to a nation in its modern sense and to the Islamic concept of *umma*, meaning the worldwide Muslim community. Although the use of *umma* in *al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-mashriq* for the worldwide community of Syriac Christians parallels the meaning of the Islamic *umma*, it probably should not be understood in only this sense. The word *umma*, as well as its Syriac cognate *umtho*, appears more often in Syriac Orthodox sources, both in manuscripts inside Iraq and in printed works in other countries.[73] In some of these sources the idea of a nation or even nationalism is more pronounced.[74]

As interesting as the idea of belonging to a nation, however, is the fact that the journal shows a perception of a special relationship with the Syriac Christians of other denominations. As I indicated in the beginning of this article, in the first decades after the establishment of the state of Iraq there is little evidence of a sense of *umthonoyutho*, or the idea that all Syriac Christians are part of one nation. *Al-Mashriq* gives the first evidence of the development of this idea inside Iraq. As it is more often the case, the idea of *umthonoyutho* does not translate into anything concrete: apart from the fact that the other Syriac denominations are mentioned every now and then, there is no evidence in *al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-Mashriq* of any concrete attempts to unite the communities such as communal meetings or other forms of collaboration. In fact, the only case of the Syriac Orthodox evidently working together with another denomination is their contacts with Christians who clearly did *not* belong to their nation. This is the case in the description of a religious party in 1947, in which the clerical school of the Syriac Orthodox thanks the Armenian association for permission to use the hall of the Armenian Orthodox school as a location to celebrate its anniversary, as well as for the services of the Armenian musical band.[75]

Even if the most common point of reference expressed in the journal was the Syriac Orthodox nation, the fact that this nation belonged to Iraq is not ignored, and at times referred to in patriotic terms. There is a striking difference between the first volume and year of publication of *al-Mashriq*, when Iraq is

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73 An article from the 1930s that appeared in the Arabic-language journal of the Syriac Orthodox patriarchate that was published in Jerusalem shows the earlier usage of this term in the Arabic language: "*Lamḥ fī tārīkh al-umma al-suryāniyya fī al-ʿIrāq*," *al-Majalla al-baṭrīrkiyya* 7,8 (1936).

74 This is the case in the contemporary poems by the Syriac Orthodox poet Ghattas Maqdisi Elyas, and in the discourse surrounding the founding of the Assyrian Democratic Organization in Syria in the 1950s. For the Assyrian Democratic Organization, see Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland*, 290–99.

75 "*Akhbār al-shahr*," *al-Mashriq* 1:16,17 (1947): 797.

mentioned very rarely, and the subsequent volumes of *al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-Mashriq*, when patriotic references to Iraq appear every now and then. The usual word to refer to Iraq is *waṭan* "homeland," which is the same as what we saw in the Chaldean *al-Najm*.[76] The following citation is an example:

> Since a couple of years, the honourable and virtuous Doctor ʿAbd al-Aḥad ʿAbd al-Nūr and Mr Mattā Sarsam have been representatives of Mosul in service of their nation (*ummatihi*) and of their homeland (*waṭanihi*) … May God protect them (*ḥafiẓahum Allāh*) for the service of the beloved Iraq under the shadow of His Majesty, our beloved king Faisal the second, and under the auspices of the attendant of the throne of Faisal, the exalted crown prince His Highness Abdel-Ilah.[77]

Here, the words *umma* and *waṭan* are used next to each other with two different meanings: the representatives are supposed to serve both their nation, the Syriac Orthodox, and their homeland, Iraq. It is similar to the juxtaposition by the Chaldeans of *ṭāʾifa* and *umma* for respectively the Chaldean community and the Iraqi-Arab nation, but the terms used are not compatible except for the word *waṭan*, which has the same meaning for the Syriac Orthodox and the Chaldeans. The complimentary words in which the country, its king and the regent are described are also similar to what we see in *al-Najm* – even if we see them there far more frequently.

Arabic was the only language used in *al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-Mashriq*, and we could almost be led to forget that Syriac was still a very important language for the Syriac Orthodox. This is borne out by the great proportion of Syriac we find in their manuscripts, which also indicates the use of the language in church. The only Syriac we find in the journals is the Syriac translation of the journal's title on its front pages, and some Syriac terminology (printed in Arabic script) such as *malfono* "teacher" and *mfashqono* "interpreter." Unlike what we see in *al-Najm*, however, *al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-Mashriq* devote more attention to the Syriac language, which was clearly regarded as the language that belonged to the Syriac *umma*. This is especially visible in the article series cited

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76   It is significant that *waṭan* refers to Iraq and not to a homeland for the Syriac Christians. In contemporary Syriac poetry and other sources, the word *motho*, which also means homeland, is found to refer to the area where the Syriac Christians live, sometimes with nationalist connotations. This is the case in poems by Ghattas Maqdisi Elyas, and the word was reportedly used in this sense by members of the *Committee for the Love of Church and Language*, which was founded in 1955 in Syria by opponents of Arabization of the Syriac Christians in the country. For the latter see Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland*, 293.

77   "Al-nāʾibān al-fāḍilān," *al-Mashriq* 2:1,2 (1947): 77.

previously called "Syriac civilization," where a lengthy part is devoted to the Syriac language.[78] That is not to say that the Arabic language was not treated with respect: not only is the Arabic of a high level, but in some places the language is also praised for its beauty or importance. This happens for example when the priest ʿAbd al-Aḥad Tūmā of Bartallah, an Aramaic-speaking town, speaks in Arabic in Baghdad after "not having delivered a speech in the language of the *ḍād* (*lughat al-ḍād*) for thirteen years," and asks to be excused if he makes some mistakes in "this noble language."[79]

In conclusion, the Syriac Orthodox journals *al-Mashriq* and *Lisān al-Mashriq* show the existence of a curious middle position in their ideas about the Arab identity of the state. Like the Assyrians, they saw themselves as a nation distinct from the Arabs of Iraq and beyond with a language of its own, even though they called this nation *Suryānī*, "Syriac." Equally, they showed little or no interest in the members of this nation that belonged to other Syriac churches. However, like the Chaldeans and unlike the Assyrians, they deliberately used the Arabic language, and in an eloquent way. The fact that they belong to the country of Iraq is asserted, but although the country's Arab identity is not contested, no attempt is made to present the Syriac Orthodox as part of that identity.

6   Conclusion

The establishment of the state of Iraq as an Arab country meant the beginning of an enormous change in which the Arabic language came to be used by Syriac Christians. While Arabic had already been used by Syriac Christians for more than a millennium, its adoption in its modern form had to wait until after the First World War. 'Modern' use of Arabic here means that there is no longer any difference between "Christian Arabic" and "Muslim Arabic," that it appears as a language clearly separated from Syriac, using Arabic script and modern media such as journals and printed books – in other words, the Arabic that we associate with the Arab *nahḍa*. Already before the establishment of the state, in the period after 1908, various Syriac Christian authors in Mosul and Baghdad had published in Arabic, but none of them had done so through ecclesial networks. As Arabic became the official language of the whole country after the establishment of the state, Christian churches also began to publish in Arabic, starting with the Chaldean Catholic Church, and later also the Syriac Orthodox Church. At the same time, we see that the newly arriving Assyrians

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78   This part is published in *al-Mashriq* 1:10 (1946) until 1:24 (1947).

79   "*Al-khiṭāb al-tārīkhī*," *al-Mashriq* 1:10 (1946): 468.

enriched the literary landscape by their systematic publishing in and teaching of written Neo-Aramaic. In more traditional settings, such as manuscript production, the changes were slower and the old practices of language mixing and Garshunography continued. Thus, the first decades after the First World War set a precedent for the rest of the twentieth century. Arabic became the official language of the state and it formed the basis of the state's Arab identity. This choice also implied that a number of minority languages, including Aramaic, were excluded. The Syriac Christians of Iraq, split between different churches but also between native speakers of Arabic and of Aramaic, show various views on the new reality, reflected in various positions expressed by church leaders in publications and educational endeavours.

The Chaldeans in *al-Najm*, with their consistent usage of *ṭāʾifa* for themselves and for the other Christian groups and *umma* to refer to Iraq and the Arab world, positioned themselves deliberately as a religious group within the Arab Iraqi nation. The Arab identity of the state was not only acceptable to them, but was even staunchly endorsed. The Arab nationalism they supported did not discriminate according to religion and was therefore also acceptable to them, even if it recognized the special relationship between the Arabic language and Islam. This is in sharp contrast to what we see happening with the Syriac Orthodox, who used the phrase *al-umma al-suryāniyya* to refer to the Syriac Christians worldwide. Although they positively assessed their presence in Iraq as their *waṭan*, they did not share the idea that they were part of the same Iraqi-Arab nation with the Chaldeans. For the Assyrians, most of whom part of and represented by the Assyrian Church of the East, it is also clear that those who reached out to their community by publishing or educational efforts saw themselves as part of a nation that was different from the majority in the country. The difference between them and the Syriac Orthodox is that the former generally expressed themselves less favourably – or sometimes outright unfavourably – about the country in which they lived.

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Awakening, or Watchfulness: Naum Faiq and Syriac Language Poetry at the Fall of the Ottoman Empire

Robert Isaf

From the Hindu Kush to the Brecon Beacons, the rise of nationalistic feelings in the early twentieth century was accompanied by an outpouring in nationalistic literature. This was also the case among the Syriac-language communities of the Middle East, who wrote in what linguists call Aramaic. This language is attested in the tenth century BC in today's northern Syria, and in the second and early third centuries AD became the primary medium for literary expression around Edessa, Urfa in today's southeastern Turkey. This specific form of Aramaic is referred to in English as Classical Syriac, and its importance as a literary language for various forms of Syriac Christianity (in today's Maronite Church, Syriac Orthodox Church and Church of the East, and their Roman Catholic counterparts) has contributed to its survival, even as it ceased to be spoken outside learned circles. The Syriac-language poetry we will be examining in this paper was written in that Classical Syriac dialect, taught to its practitioners in school and not in the home, and was allied with a sense of nationalism associated with a perceived ethnic connection to the ancient Assyrian empire. The literary movement therefore could be styled, following earlier authors, as an "Assyrian Awakening."[1]

The poetry produced by this movement during the waning years of the Ottoman Empire is a valuable witness for the study of contemporaneous minority nationalisms. Our exploration of the content, craft, and tradition of this poetry serves to demonstrate the relationship of nascent Syriac-language nationalism to contemporary Arabic-language nationalism and nationalist poetry, and to show the importance of Classical Syriac as a poetic medium in the further development of an Assyrian national identity. First, I hope to show that, although the political impulse towards a particular Assyrian nationalism was part of a contemporaneous movement widespread throughout the Ottoman Empire in the 1910s, and at least partially an offshoot of the more developed

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[1] See for instance Adam H. Becker, *Revival and Awakening: American Evangelical Missionaries in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), and Baarda, this volume.

nationalist tradition of Eastern Syriac communities (especially those in the Persian Urmia region), its literature emerged in its given form from the initiators' readings of and familiarity with the "Arab Awakening" – the Arab *Naḥḍa* – and specifically the writers of the previous generation.[2] Alternatively, it could be said that the particulars of the Assyrian Awakening movement in some noteworthy ways echo the first phases of the Arab *Naḥḍa* – whereas in other ways the time frame and environment of the movement are better understood as overlapping with a later phase of *Naḥḍa* literature.

With an understanding of that historical framework we can examine more closely how writers of the Assyrian Awakening attempt to revive the Classical Syriac tradition, and the ways in which their nationalist literature relates to nationalist literatures around it. The poetry is distinguished from earlier Classical Syriac verse in that it often deals with secular instead of religious themes – sometimes even appearing pointedly non-religious, focusing on an Assyrian ethnos rather than a Syriac religion. It is often a social and historical past that we encounter in this poetry, a civic law rather than a religious law, gentile cities of pagan temples rather than monasteries. Despite drawing inspiration from immediate Arabic predecessors, the actual poetic technique has not been adapted from contemporary Arabic practice but consciously drawn from the older Syriac tradition, especially the stage to which it had developed in the so-called Syriac Renaissance (a tradition which, itself, owes much to earlier Persian and Arabic influences).[3] We will further find that all of the poems dealt with here have a clear purpose. In one way or another the poems attempt to instil in their readers a particular sense of secular, ethnic unity, of pride, and of both protective and positive action for the good of the "Assyrian" people.

Finally, specifically in the work of the Syriac Orthodox nationalist Naum Faiq, who is the focus of this paper, we find that this poetry illustrates the central role of Classical Syriac in the ever more important self-designated "Assyrian" identity. Not only is the *use* of Classical Syriac as the language of this nationalist poetry important; the poetry itself emphasizes time and again the centrality of Classical Syriac to the national cause, both as an immaterial inheritance and as a discipline that must be studied, diligently, in order for individual members of the nation and for the nation as a whole to achieve parity with the other peoples of the earth and attain the greatness and glory

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2 See for instance Stephen Sheehi, "Towards a Critical Theory of al-Nahdah: Epistemology, Ideology and Capital," in Journal of Arabic Literature 43 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 269–298.

3 For more information on the history of Syriac literature, see especially Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn: A Marcus & E. Webers Verlag, 1922), and Alessandro Mengozzi, *Religious Poetry in Vernacular Syriac from Northern Iraq (17th–20th Centuries): An Anthology* (CSCO 628; Leuven: E. Peeters, 2011).

that, in the pseudo-historical imagination of Assyrian nationalists, it had in biblical days.[4]

1 The Poems of the Awakening

Naum Faiq (Naʿūm Fāʾiq) was born in 1868, in the city of Diyarbekir, at that time a hub of the Empire's Syriac-tradition community, and a hub, therefore, for budding nationalistic sentiments within that community.[5] The city had played a unique role in Syriac affairs over the previous three centuries as the seat of a number of break-away patriarchs from the Church of the East, but also home to the considerable Syriac Orthodox community into which Faiq was born. The movements associated with the Roman-aligned patriarchs became known as Chaldean, after the ancient people with its capital at Babylon, and both exemplified and accelerated the growing influence of Western missionaries in the non-Latin Christian communities of the Middle East. The presence of these Western missionaries contributed to the continuation of the tradition of Syriac literary production from the sixteenth all the way through to the nineteenth century. The first breakaway patriarch allied himself with the Roman church in 1551; a few decades later a roughly 150-year period began of increased literary production in Syriac, from the 1590s to the 1740s, both in local vernaculars and in Classical Syriac.[6]

4　On Syriac Christians in Diyarbekir, see Emrullah Akgunduz, "Some Notes on the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Preliminary Investigation of Some Primary Sources," in *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915*, edited by Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij (Leiden: Brill, 2012) and Khalid Dinno, *The Syrian Orthodox Christians in the Late Ottoman Period and Beyond* (Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2017). It should be quickly noted at this point that, although there was a backlash in later generations (and even among poets writing in Classical Syriac) against 'Assyrianism' of this sort, or the expressed belief that the Syriac churches were unified by an ethnic Assyrian heritage, in Faiq's own time there was no virulent controversy associated with that claim. Therefore, questions of the 'legitimacy' of the Assyrianist worldview expressed by Faiq and his contemporaries lie outside the scope of this paper; see again Becker, Revival.

5　See Naures Atto, *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses Among the Assyrian/Syriac Elites in the European Diaspora* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), 263–297. See also the entries on Naum Faiq in Rudolf Macúch, *Geschichte der spät- und neusyrischen Literatur* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2009), and George A. Kiraz, "Fāʾiq, Naʿūm: Naoum Elias Palak (ca. 1868–1930) [Syr. Orth]," *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (*Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press 2011*), 163.

6　Heleen Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures: The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces* (*1500–1850*) (Leuven: Peeters, 2015).

With the initiation in the 1830s of Protestant missionary activity among Church of the East communities in Iran, a new wave of literary production began, this time predominantly in the vernacular of the Urmia region. During the following decade, at the same time that the first Protestant Syriac-type printing press arrived in Urmia, excavation of the ancient Assyrian capital of Nineveh began, under Englishman Henry Layard, with the Westerners employing the term "Assyrian" to describe the Christians among whom they were working. The designation probably began life among Westerners using it for the Church of the East (also called 'Nestorians'), which was treated in much of the orientalist imagination as a nation in itself.[7] An American Protestant "Assyria Mission" was established in Mosul in 1849; by 1886 the third successive Anglican mission to the region was initiated, "to the Assyrian Christians," which forbade the wearing of anything except traditional dress in its schools and actively worked to encourage a sense of pride among pupils in their own culture.[8]

Despite the decades-long tradition of "Assyrian" as a label, it was only closer to the turn of the century that this new nationalism began to call itself "Assyrian" in turn.[9] As Becker concludes, the missionary schools played an essential, and intentional, role in fermenting a national identity among their pupils based on their distinct linguistic, literary, religious, and cultural traditions.[10] These developments in Iran could not fail to influence the attitudes of the Syriac speakers in Ottoman territory, and despite differences – sectarian and dialectical, for instance – a sense of a shared ethnic identity among Christians of the Syriac tradition developed.

In 1879 an organization calling itself the Ancient Suryani Brotherhood (Süryani Kadim Kardesligi, in Turkish) was founded in Diyarbekir. It proceeded to found a grammar school oriented towards the teaching of Classical Syriac, the first of its kind; it was here that Faiq received his education, under the directorship of an early and notable proponent of the Assyrian nationalist ideology, Hanna Sirri Ceqqi.[11] In 1888, Faiq himself began teaching. Although the grammar school was forced to close in 1890, its decade of education left an immense

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7   Becker, *Revival*, 237. Becker cites mention at least as early as 1848 of the "Nestorian nation."

8   See Heleen Murre-van den Berg, *From a Spoken to a Written Language: The Introduction and Development of Literary Urmia Aramaic in the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1999) and J.F. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England: A History of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

9   Becker, *Revival*, 257.

10   Ibid., 262.

11   Atto, *Hostages*, 272.

impact on the Syriac-speaking community world-wide, Faiq being perhaps its greatest representative. He went on to teach at a variety of other Syriac schools in the region,[12] and was still teaching in 1909, when, along with a number of friends, he co-founded a literary society called *al-Intibāh*, an Ottoman Turkish loan from Arabic meaning "The Awakedness," *ʿirutho* in Syriac.[13]

It was in this context that Faiq's most well-known poem was written (see the Appendix at the end of this chapter for the Syriac text of all poems; this is Poem 1):

> *Awaken, son of Assyria, awaken!,*
> *And see how enlightened the world is.*
> *The opportunity is being driven, lo, from our hands,*
> *And time too swiftly sweeps away.*
> *Awaken, son of Assyria, awaken!*
>
> *Let refuge be taken in in wakefulness.*
> *Let us twist in flight to exaltation.*
> *If we do not awaken there shall be no hope.*
> *Misfortune befalls us on our path.*
> *Awaken, son of Assyria, awaken!*[14]

The society seems to have spawned at least two journals, one of the same name (*al-Intibāh*), which began publication that same year in the United States, and one under Faiq's own editorship, in Diyarbekir.[15] This second journal, which began publication in 1910, was *Kawkab Madenḥo*, Syriac for *Star of the East*, very likely in reference to an important contemporaneous paper founded in Urmia, in 1906, called simply *The Star*.[16] *The Star* and its circle of contributors was itself closely associated with early attempts at nationalist organization (within Iran), specifically the foundation of a consciously ecumenical "National Union" in 1907 and a somewhat more clandestine "Syrian Union" in

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12   Kiraz, "Fāʾiq, Naʿʿūm," 163.

13   Ibid., 163. Please note that throughout the course of this paper I will use whichever valid English translation of this single Syriac word – which, as shall be seen, appears quite frequently – seems most appropriate and coherent within the English context and syntax. In different circumstances "awakedness," "awakening," or "watchfulness" may be more or less serviceable English renderings.

14   All translations from Syriac verse are mine, and tend towards the literal. The original Syriac of this poem is included at the end of the paper, along with the original texts of all other poems in the order in which they are introduced below.

15   Atto, *Hostages*, 273.

16   Becker, *Revival*, 290.

1908. Adam Becker cites *The Star* as reporting on the young nationalists who had been "awakened" to the national plight during meetings at the home of the Urmia intellectual and writer Isaac Malek Yonan.[17] It was in his own *Star of the East* that Faiq published his polemical poem of "awakening," written to inaugurate his "awoken" and "watchful" literary/political society. Publication allowed the poem to spread and become a kind of anthem for the nascent nationalistic sentiments of Assyrians both in their ancient homeland and abroad. Only three years later Faiq himself took the path to exile, fleeing government persecution to relocate in New Jersey, where many of his coreligionists from Diyarbekir had already begun new lives following the massacres of 1895.[18]

Faiq contributed to *al-Intibāh* for his first few years in America, publishing another journal, called *Beth Nahrin* (the Syriac name for Mesopotamia), in January 1916.[19] The very first poem published in this new journal, attributed to a man named Sharko Ahro (otherwise unknown), appeared on the front page of *Beth Nahrin*'s second issue, underlining Faiq's staunch nationalist inspirations (Poem 2 in the Appendix).

> *Someone give me wings that I can fly to Bethnahrin*
> *And see my imprisoned Assyrian brothers wherever they are scattered*
> *Those who were in this world suns and moons*
> *And in their destruction are extinguished lamps and darkened lights*
>
> *Oh, if only I had wings to fly to that foreign country,*
> *That I could go and dwell upon the heights and the mountains of Persia*
> *And I would visit them, the sons of our nation, to outrage them*
> *Nor have the sons of vipers yet sheathed the sword of savages.*
>
> *O sons of our nation, oh, we are shattered at your torment.*
> *And by your deaths, oh, we are forsaken like those deceased.*
> *If here we are delivered from the dagger of Beelzebub*
> *Yet we are battered by the desolation of your flesh and spirit.*
>
> *It seems to our eyes night and day will never end.*
> *Everyone near and far alike depends on you.*
> *Nevermore shall our hearts fill with feasting and rejoicing*
> *Until your bitter distances are united with ours.*

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17   Ibid., 287.
18   Dinno, *The Syrian Orthodox*, 244.
19   Kiraz, "Fāʾiq, Naʿʿūm," 163.

According to George Kiraz, Faiq published a collection of national anthems in Diyarbekir, in 1908, which he then reissued in 1913 in New Jersey.[20] This appears to have been the only full-sized collection of poetry he produced, and included work not only in Syriac but also in Turkish and Arabic.[21] Although neither of these printings is available to the current author at this time, we can consult an item that appears to be a third reprint of the same collection, imprinted in Patterson, New Jersey, and dated 1917.[22] Evidently hand-copied, and titled *The Book of Anthems for Wakefulness, or – National and Motherland Songs* (the title given in both Syriac and Turkish), it is 82 pages long, with the majority of poems being "songs" (labeled as *nashirhalar*) in Ottoman Turkish Garshuni, although Arabic Garshuni makes up a significant section as well. The manuscript itself is presented as a Turkish document, that being the language used to introduce the volume and to label the four sections. The last of these is "Assorted Poems" – the second and third "Turkish Songs" and "Arabic Songs," respectively. The first section is titled "Syriac Songs," although even then the title is given in Turkish Garshuni.

The manuscript as a whole deserves more attention, but for our purposes now it is this first section that is of the most interest. The shortest, it is composed of four poems in Classical Syriac, each given with indications of the music or metre to which they have been written. The first three are undated, and can reasonably be assumed to have been written before 1908, when Faiq's first national anthems were published in Diyarbekir, since throughout the manuscript poems written after that first edition all seem to have an indication of their date and place of composition – as is the case, for instance, with the final poem in this section.

The first poem is written in the "Serughian" or "Jacobian" metre (referring to the Syriac Orthodox poet Jacob of Serugh), which is composed of 12 syllables per line divided into three equal feet (often in context called *pausae*). Its title is given as "A Plea and a Rousing Cry" (Poem 3 of the Appendix). It consists of seven quatrains in monorhyme, and as literature stands out clearly as Faiq's best poem thus far. Stanzas 3 through 5 form the highlight:

Beloved brothers, look, the apothecary is opened to you.
Go take up your medicines, seek succour for your sickness.
For if you fail to fill your drinking skins today with water,
What will you drink when you walk the parched places?

Where is our beauty, where is our opulence, O Sons of Aram?
You are all now lost, and we deprived of our great dignity.
Come, let us all gather together, and beg healing for our illness –
With the strength of our Lord shall we resurrect our dead Nation.

Oh Suryoye, stinking in the grave like Lazarus,
Rise, for Christ cried out "Awake, and there shall be hope for you."
Be diligent as you study the teachings of the first who passed -
They shall shine a light for you like the light of daybreak.[23]

The second and third poems are shorter – the second is entitled simply "Wakefulness" (*ʿirutho*), and the third, "Assyrians" (*Othuroye*). They will be quoted in full in the next section. The last poem has in its title the only example of Latin lettering in the manuscript: it reads "My Country 'Tis." Dated 1916, in Patterson, it is composed of six verses and is set to what Faiq, the new immigrant, evidently knew as the tune of "My Country 'Tis of Thee," which of course was itself adopted for American use from the British "God Save the King." Faiq's version remains known and sung to the same tune in Tur ʿAbdin.[24] In place of the words "my country, 'tis of thee, / sweet land of liberty, / of thee I sing," Faiq's anthem opens (Poem 4 of the Appendix):

Come all Assyrians
To prepare a life of goodness for us
With study and knowledge.[25]

A decade after *Beth Nahrin*'s inauguration, in 1926, the magazine published Naum Faiq's Syriac poem "Nineveh and New York," the last Syriac verse of his dealt with here. Faiq was to die only a few years later, at the beginning of 1930.

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23   Naum Faiq, *The Book of Anthems for Wakefulness* (Paterson, 1917), 9.
24   I was told this in personal conversation with a well-educated man from Tur ʿAbdin; it was confirmed by a second.
25   Faiq, *Anthems*, 12.

2   The Poetry Itself and its Literary Context

Naum Faiq's 1909 poem is written in a heptasyllabic metre, in two monorhymed strophes with a refrain. What distinguishes it quite clearly from the most familiar poetry in the earlier Syriac canon goes to the core of what makes the "Assyrian Awakening" distinct in its language's history, which is of course its fixation on an ethnic nationalism among communities of the Syriac-language tradition. Faiq, well-educated enough in Arabic to write his own poetry in that language, was thoroughly familiar with the last fifty years of literary revolution that had swept the Arab world, in the period now known as the *Nahḍa*, or the "Awakening." So-called literary societies, often secret and driven in large part by Christian Arabs, cropped up across Ottoman Syria in the second half of the nineteenth century. Beirut was the capital of this movement, and the Arab world's first literary society was founded there in 1847, within its ranks one of the era's most brilliant thinkers, Buṭrus al-Bustānī. Bustānī should be mentioned here on account of his acting as a sort of reminder of the presence of Syriac learning and literature in these earliest days of Arab nationalism; he was educated in Syriac in the Maronite monastery of ʿAyn al-Waraqa, assisted in the translation of a new Arabic-language Bible using Syriac sources, and attempted to translate verse by Gregorius Bar Hebraeus, the thirteenth-century luminary and exemplary figure of the Syriac Renaissance, into Arabic.[26] It could be argued that the first stirrings of a Syriac literary revival began here, with the attempt to reintroduce the last great Syriac-language writer to a generation of newly conscious Syrians.

Decades later, Ibrāhīm al-Yāzijī, son of another illustrious member of Bustānī's Syrian Association for Sciences and Arts, joined another literary society, more explicit in its calls for Arab autonomy than its predecessor. It was there that, in 1878, Yāzijī stood and declaimed the poem that would later become almost synonymous with the *Nahḍa* as a whole – "Arise, ye Arabs, and Awake." That poem is an emblem of its time, firmly neoclassical. Its form does not deviate from the *qaṣīda* of ancient Arabic tradition, but, as Mustafa Badawi observes, this hardly precludes the modernity of the neoclassical poem as a genre, least of all as regards its intentions and intended audience:

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26   Ignatius Afram Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, Trans. Matti Moosa (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2003), 34; Butros Bustani, 1876. "Ibn al-Ibri," in *Daʾirat al-Maʿarif. Qamus ʿamm li-kull fann wa-matlab*, edited by Butros Bustani (Beirut, 1876–1900), 594ff.

> Within the formal and stylistic limitations of the *qasidah* the neoclassical
> poets managed to give adequate expression to their modern problems
> and preoccupations. At their hands the role of the poet was considerably
> changed. The poet as the craftsman who was prepared to sell his wares to
> the highest bidder, or who vied with his fellow craftsmen in verbal acro-
> batics and display of stylistic ingenuities, as was indeed the case before
> the modern revival, was gradually but unmistakably replaced by the poet
> as the spokesman of his community.[27]

Those earliest Arabic literary societies remained somewhat isolated, and it
was not until after the restoration of the Ottoman constitution in 1908 that
"an extensive network of associations, parties, secret societies and clubs work-
ing for reforms and administrative decentralization,"[28] closely associated with
the independent press, truly began to develop, and even then the movement's
greatest expansion did not come until after 1913.

The context suggests that Naum Faiq's work, and the Assyrian Awakening
at large, is more than simply an isolated revival of Syriac-tradition culture.
It is quite clearly a beneficiary of the late-Ottoman Arabic cultural revival
whose roots lay in the half century before his birth, and which itself, through
the persons and works of its Christian standard bearers such as Bustānī, bore
natural association with the Syriac-language traditions of geographic Syria.
The *al-Intibāh* society of 1909 is distinguished by its Syriac-tradition mem-
bership and emphasis, but only as one of the myriad and predominantly
Arabic-language societies working for reform and autonomy across Ottoman
Syria; indeed, if found in a list of contemporary societies, it would even blend
completely into the mass by its use of an Arabic-Turkish, rather than Syriac,
name. At the same time, the *al-Intibāh* magazine itself remained written in
Turkish Garshuni. The society announced that one of its main goals was to re-
establish the grammar school that had been shut almost twenty years earlier;[29]
a worthy goal, to be sure, but not one to be understood as more especially ur-
gent in 1909 than in 1907. It was rather the spirit of the times that reignited the
old fire.

Faiq took inspiration from the earlier *Nahḍa* societies in creating his own.
As an Arab Awakening had been declared by al-Yāzijī, so would an Assyrian

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27   M.M. Badawi, *Modern Arabic Literature and the West* (London: Ithaca Press, 1985), 105.

28   Rashid Khalidi, "'Abd al-Ghani al-'Urasi and al-Mufid: the Press and Arab Nationalism
       before 1914," in *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890–1939*, edited by Marwan R. Buheiry
       (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), 42.

29   Atto, *Hostages*, 273.

Awakening need its own auspicious announcement. Once again, though, it was a spark provided by the Arabic example to light an Aramaic flame. Al-Yāzijī looked back towards the classical Arabic tradition for the model for his ode – and entirely naturally, since, as Badawi puts it, "there was no other idiom available" to the neoclassical Arabic poet;[30] Faiq chose as his model a simple song in Ephremite metre, but rhyming in the long-enduring, Arabic-influenced style of poets since before the Renaissance. Put differently: where the 'idiom available' to the Arab revivalist is the long ode, the Syriac revivalist finds the hymn.

Despite the initially optimistic tone of Faiq's "Arise, Sons of Assyria, Arise" (Poem 1 in the Appendix) in its call for positive change, a closer reading betrays an urgency quite removed from the output of the Arab movement. This is apparent even the Arabic name of Faiq's society; rather than the sense of re-awakening from a slumber implied in the idea of a "*Nahḍa*," "*Intibāh*" suggests the wakefulness expected of a watchman. The same sense imbues line 6, where "refuge" is to be found in *'irutho*, wakefulness, vigilance, the kind of watching the angels on guard in the heavens take part in.[31] Indeed, in the entire poem, only one line, line 7, offers a truly positive view of the Syriac community's future: "We shall speed towards exaltation." Line 2 notes the enlightenment of the *rest* of the world, but only to draw attention to how quickly the chance to join that enlightenment is slipping away. Neither was the concern unwarranted: the Syriac Orthodox Faiq and his coreligionist colleagues had been warned, by the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch himself, against "movements which trespass on Ottoman sensitivities, matters such as composing music … movements like those which imitate the Armenians, who demand independence."[32] In 1912, due in no small part to his publications and public advocacy for his Assyrian cause, Faiq himself was forced to flee the Empire. In 1915 the Sayfo began, the series of genocidal massacres of Syriac-tradition Christians in Ottoman territory. Faiq's hometown of Diyarbekir saw some of the worst devastation.

There's little surprise, then, that the first poem published in Faiq's new American journal, *Beth Nahrin*, in 1916 deals with the devastation head-on (Poem 2 in the Appendix). Written not by Faiq but by Sharko Ahro, this poem, beginning "Someone give me wings …," is certainly more lyrical in nature, but remains an address, both to its readers and explicitly to those still suffering back in the homeland in the aftermath of the Sayfo, which means "sword"

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30   Badawi, *Modern*, 102 – here speaking specifically of the poet Mahmoud Sami al-Barudi, but in terms applicable to neoclassicism as a whole.

31   J. Payne Smith Margoliouth, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1903), 412.

32   Atto, *Hostages*, 89.

in Syriac: "Nor have the sons of vipers yet sheathed the sword of savages." Arranged into four stanzas of four lines each, it is written in the Serughian metre and with a monorhyme in each stanza. This had been a favoured style of Syriac poets since the time of the Syriac Renaissance, 600 years earlier. And little to nothing has changed – now, in New Jersey, a poet appears, writing as a part of a tradition whose style and form seems in many ways to have remained the same through all that time.

A weak anaphora connects the beginnings of the first three quatrains, each interpretable as a plaintive "O!," and a not-overbearing mirroring effect further links the first two quatrains in particular. Note, for instance, how "to fly" appears in two different forms in lines 1 and 5. Some mournful wordplay seems to occur in the second line, conflating one pronunciation of "Assyrian" with the Syriac word *assuroyo*, which means "shackled" or "imprisoned." It is worth noting that popular usage of *Othuroyo* as a self-designation, following both recent European usage and the long-established Armenian word for Syriac speakers (*Asori*) was a very recent trend; Following others, Adam Becker gives 1897 as offering "the first explicit claims that the Syrians [Syriacs] were descendants of the ancient Assyrians."[33] This evidences common use only in the years before World War I, especially among intellectuals in the Church of the East.[34] The popularly accepted etymology, followed also by Syriac scholars and clergy, traced the original name *Othuroyo*, through a series of consonantal mutations and deletions, to *Osuroyo* and eventually to *Suroyo*.[35]

To address his lament to the *bnay gensan* – Sons of our Nation – and specifically to include Persia alongside Bethnahrin, in parallel stanzas, suggests that, in the midst of ongoing turmoil throughout the Middle East, Ahro is consciously casting his net as wide as he can.

> *Someone give me wings that I can fly to Bethnahrin*
> *And see my imprisoned Assyrian brothers wherever they are scattered*
> *...*
> *Oh, if only I had wings to fly to that foreign country,*
> *That I could go and dwell upon the heights and the mountains of Persia*
> *...*
> *O sons of our nation, oh, we are shattered at your torment.*

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33   Becker, *Revival*, 258.

34   Aaron Butts, "Assyrian Christians," in *Companion to Assyria*, edited by Eckart Frahm (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 603.

35   Becker, *Revival*, 318.

The entire journal is handwritten. This poem appears in a different hand from the masthead and other articles, its script and vocalization indicating an Eastern origin. It is not implausible that the author was from the Church of the East himself; at the very least he suggests a sense of kinship with his fellow "Assyrians," regardless of where they fall in the centuries-old sectarian divisions. Certainly Faiq, as the publisher, viewed the ethnic unity of the "Assyrian nation" as a simple fact, and their future political unity as a matter of paramount importance. As early as six years before, in an article in *Kawkab Madenḥo*, Faiq spoke of

> this people which derived from the stock of those once worthy names *Asuri* and *Arami* and which later split into five groups – the Suryani, Nestorians, Chaldeans, Suryani Catholics and Maronites – out of ignorance and zealotry.[36]

Even more unambiguous was Faiq's mission statement for *Beth Nahrin* itself, published with the magazine's inauguration in 1916, and so nearly side-by-side with the poem under consideration:

> Our goal is not to show how learned we are, but to serve our *vatan* [motherland]... for all brothers of the Süryani to come together under a single umbrella. These brothers are Nestorians, Chaldeans, Maronites, Catholics, Protestants ... I remind these groups that their past, their race, their blood and flesh, their tongue, their *vatan* are all that of the Süryani ... we must work to exalt the name of the Assyrians.[37]

In that context, then, and even regardless of the author's actual provenance, this poem, not only in its content but even in its presentation – markedly different from that of the articles around it – is itself a quiet testament to how important the idea of unity was for Assyrianists of the age, unity among all *inheritors* of a perceived Assyrian heritage.

Returning to Faiq's poetry, the "anthems" of his *Book of Nationalist Songs*, seems slightly jarring after the intensely emotional lament of Sharko Ahro's poem in *Beth Nahrin*. For the first three poems we anticipate an obvious explanation: we could certainly expect a nationalistic poem written in 1916 to have a somewhat bleaker tone than those written a decade earlier. Strangely,

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36   Atto, *Hostages*, 277 (translations and formatting hers).
37   Ibid., 281 (translations and formatting hers).

though, "My Country 'Tis" (Poem 3 in the Appendix), dated 1916 in the manuscript, does not seem at all to differ in tone from Faiq's famous 1909 hymn. The fifth verse is nearly a paraphrase:

> *Awake, awake, Othur,*
> *And tear down the walls of ignorance, heroically.*
> *You have had enough of meekness and of carelessness,*
> *And this will forever be the cause of your destruction.*

Even more striking is the sixth and final verse:

> *So who will give me wings to fly to Bethnahrin?*
> *To find rest in its soil, and smell its scent,*
> *To trade in imperishable delights for myself.*

As mentioned above, Ahro's poem was published at the beginning of 1916 – so it seems highly implausible, to say the least, that Faiq did not at least have its repeated opening line in mind when he wrote this. The tone of his indebted poem could not be more different, though. Ahro begs for wings to fly to a devastated country and offer his compatriots aid, of whatever sort he can; Faiq is retreating on the wings of poesy and beer-hall melody to a kind of imagined paradise lost, an (only recently!) exiled homeland idealized by nostalgia. In the midst of wartime, and in comparison to Ahro's heartfelt lament, the result can feel a little bit trite. Nothing in the previous verse – or anywhere in the anthem – really corrects the nagging sense of insufficiency-in-context.

Faiq's admonitions and rallying cries to his fellow "Assyrians" are very consistent in their content. The "Assyrian Nation" has spent too long cowering in ignorance, and darkness of mind and spirit; it has failed to assert its claim to the patrimony of its homeland, or its intellectual and cultural inheritance; it has "fallen asleep" and, to the extent that it has begun to awaken, it has done so thus far only drowsily, listlessly, aimlessly. The third song in his manuscript, entitled simply "Assyrians," does little but repeat the theme in a different metre, namely that of the mournful incense hymn (Poem 5 in the Appendix):[38]

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38   The document itself gives the melody as "to the Incense Hymn," which is used in mourning rituals in the Syriac churches.

Oh Athuroye	*awake from sleep*
For in our hands remains	*not a hair from the head*
Our treasure is scattered	*and our splendour is destroyed*
And the people	*has become enslaved again to strangers*
At the beginning of time	*we were the possessors*
And today we wallow	*as servants and the disinherited*
Our shining motherland	*is Bethnahrin*
And today the sons of our Nation	*are scattered from it*
Sons of pagans rule	*in our rich land*
And have sapped the strength	*of our powerful Nation*

Although this poem, like the next two poems, probably dates to the original 1908 publication of Faiq's collection of anthems, there is little evidence in the text itself to suggest whether the poem belongs closer chronologically to "Awake, Sons of Assyria, Awake," or to the post-exilic, post-Sayfo "My Country 'Tis." In none of these poems is there a real call to arms, nor, in fact, a real recognition of the immediate mortal plight of his people. Consider "Assyrians" in contrast to Ahro's distinctly post-Sayfo poem. The people are "enslaved" and "disinherited," rather as the ancient Israelites – but they are not "tormented" by the "dagger of Beelzebub" or the "sword of savages." The "sons of vipers" of Ahro's lament are here only "sons of pagans," illegitimate rulers rather than murderers. "My Country 'Tis," (Poem 4 in the Appendix) outlines the trouble: the manuscript's second poem (Poem 6), "Wakefulness," has already provided the solution.

When wakefulness advances
Among the people of the Suryoye;
And all the weapons of teachings also
Rise in place of illiteracy
And our language of the forefathers is eagerly read
And our Nation knows and strives again with the other peoples
Then, as equals we shall shout
Long live wakefulness

For Faiq, the plight of his people is essentially a spiritual illness, no matter what very real, physical suffering is visited on them by history or its human

agents. Their salvation, therefore, is likewise a spiritual concern, the cause of Assyrian nationalism one to be fought for in the mind and soul, through education and upbringing. As an individual striving for greatness must rouse himself daily from the stupor of sleep, instead of lazing in bed; must approach his set tasks with discipline and diligence, instead of going only haphazardly about them; must always be attentive to the changing world around him, learning from it and bettering himself; so too must a community do the same, acting as one body, in order to achieve greatness and true parity with the communities around it. This is Faiq's exhortation to his people no matter where he is, whether in 1908, in Diyarbekir, or nearly a decade later, in Patterson: awaken, and see and strive, rather than arise, and fight.

Awakening – the root /ʿwr/ "to wake, to watch, being awake" – is unmistakably the tonic key of all Faiq's nationalist thinking, unchanged in Patterson from the secret society in Diyarbekir. Of the five remaining poems discussed here, all of them save "Nineveh and New York" use the root in some variation. Often, as above, this comes as a noun, *ʿirutho* as wakefulness, or watchfulness, or vigilance; sometimes as a command – *ettʿir;* but regardless, the implication, in the whole of Faiq's oeuvre, is not simply the state of being not-asleep, but of being actively conscious, watchful, vigilant. The same root is used for the name of the class of angel translated as "Watcher." Of course the corresponding root /qwm/ "to rise" is used widely as well, but clearly in the sense of rising from sleep, and that root, more clearly a verb of movement, isn't quite as ubiquitous as "waking."

Language, metaphor, and imagery related to this central theme of 'waking' is encountered everywhere, but it reaches its peak in the most self-consciously 'literary' poem dealt with here: "A Plea and a Rousing Cry" (Poem 3 in the Appendix). Written, like Ahro's poem in *Beth Nahrin*, in the Serughian metre – an immediate indication of its primarily literary rather than musical intent, as opposed to the primarily hymnal metres of the previous three poems – "Rousing Cry" opens with some genuine if somewhat overbearing wordplay, which mostly serves to drive the thematic point home for us as observers a century later.

> *Watcher who awoke in the heart of the watchers this watchfulness,*
> *Awaken in us, Lord, brotherly love and harmony,*
> *And bring light to the eyes that are blinded in negligence,*
> *And help all of us to labour in the vineyard in eternity.*

Already in this first stanza we notice an element missing in the other poems – namely, that of religion. It is quite telling that Faiq's most intentionally literary "nationalist song" is also the poem most steeped in Christian imagery (and this

despite his heavy use of hymn meters!). These elements all come together in strophe 5, quoted earlier in this paper:

> *Oh Suryoye, stinking in the grave like Lazarus,*
> *Rise, for Christ cried out "Awake, and there shall be hope for you."*

The monition to awaken is now a *divine* command as well – the secular cause of the nation given heavenly impetus, put into the Messiah's own mouth. Of all the material dealt with here, the marvellously cavalier image of the nation as a stinking corpse in a dark grave is certainly Faiq's finest.

As suggested by the Lazarine grave, a natural accompaniment to the central theme of wakefulness is the contrast of darkness, and blindness, with that of enlightenment, and sight:

> *Bring light to the eyes that are blinded in negligence*
> *…*
> *Oh Suryoye who slept and turned from knowledge*
> *Rise from the sleep of negligence and see the nations*
> *…*
> *Our lantern shall not be lit, which has been extinguished in laziness,*
> *And we shall dwell forever in darkness and in misery*

The theme is not exclusive to this poem, but is found also in "My Country 'Tis" (Poem 4, s. 4): "Why does darkness rule always in our eyes and gloom rule always in our mind?" and in "Awake" (Poem 1, s. 2): "And see how enlightened the world is."

Certain other themes and key words reveal Faiq's conception of the Assyrian nationalist cause. Once awoken from sleep, the national body must be "diligent" and "disciplined" in its study and self-formation; the first focus of study must be the material of the nation itself, its language, history, inheritance, and moral teachings. Strophe 5 of "Rousing Cry" (Poem 3) ties the curriculum once again to the image of enlightenment:

> *Be diligent as you study the teachings of the first who passed –*
> *They shall shine a light for you like that of daybreak.*

The poem elsewhere warns of the consequences "if we don't stand today in diligence" (*ḥaṭṭifutho*, l. 11), while trumpeting that "through watchfulness we shall arrive to the stair of diligent success" (*kashshirutho*, l. 13). "Watchfulness" (Poem 6) lionizes both "all the weapons of teachings" (l. 3) and "our language of the forefathers" (l. 5); in "Assyrians" (Poem 5, l. 5) the current state of slavery

is contrasted with how "at the beginning of time / we were the possessors". "My Country 'Tis" (Poem 4) is the mother lode. Strophe 4 gives us:

> *Come let all of us be diligent and carry in our heart*
> *The splendour of our forefathers and glory of our kings*

Strophe 3 has already expanded on those "kings," bringing in the pseudo-mythological side of a historic imagination:

> *Oh Sons of the race of Aram and Children of Shamiram*
> *You shall attain victory and you shall bear sweet fruit*
> *If your path is in the footstep of our masters.*

It is important to remember at this point, in conjunction with the religiosity evidenced earlier in "Rousing Cry," that there was no necessary conflict between a celebration of an imagined, glorious pre-Christian past and a deep Syriac Christian identification. If anything, the two had worked in parallel since the inception of Assyrian nationalism, in its earliest stages in Urmia. The Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Thomas Audo, among other things a strident nationalist and formidable scholar whose dictionary of Classical Syriac remains in use, was adamant about the importance of studying the long-hidden history of his people's ancient predecessors, pagan though they were.[39] Shamiram herself – the legendary queen of Nineveh's founding king, Ninos – seems to have been inserted into the Syriac imagination by one Deacon Augustine Thomas, another Chaldean, in a 1898 article for the nationalist-inclined Urmian newspaper *Voice of Truth*.[40] As expected from the use the Serughian metre, there is a bit more in the way of formal craft to mine in "Rousing Cry" than in Faiq's other verse. One of the best-crafted lines is the first in strophe 4, with full parallelism across the first two pausae that not only grants us an internal rhyme but a full assonantial repetition:

> ayko shufran, ayko ʿutran, o bnay Orom
> *Where is our beauty, where is our opulence, O Sons of Aram?*

The chorus-like repetition of "*u Suryoye*" at the beginning of strophes 2, 5, and 7 lends a sense both of balance and movement to the poem as whole. More importantly, though, it serves to highlight yet again the easy fluidity of national identity in Faiq's mind, and in the public consciousness of many of his

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39   Becker, *Revival*, 321.
40   Ibid., 319.

contemporaries. Suryoye, Athuroye, sons of Aram – all coexist in the myth-making imagination of the nationalist poet. All are connected by the shared traditions of language, religion, culture and ancient history, even if certain of these traditions receive more spotlight in one or another poem.

Just as "Rousing Cry" emphasizes the religious tradition of the shared Suryoyo identity, "Nineveh and New York" (Poem 7), published a decade later, clearly emphasizes its secular, historical tradition. The metre is the same, Serughian, but the poem is divided into rhyming distiches rather than quatrains:

> *I have met two finely fashioned cities in the world:*
> *I cannot form the figures sufficient to praise them.*
> > *One is placed in the East in the midst of rivers:*
> > *The other in the West is mother of beloved things.*
> *One has all of Bethnahrin surround it from two sides*
> *And the other is surrounded by the Hudson river at all approaches.*
> > *One is built upon dry land with ten thousand wonders;*
> > *The other sits in the midst of the sea and its surroundings are*
> > *marvellous.*
> *Two sisters lording over beauty and ceremony*
> *From whom the world has drained the draught of teaching.*
> > *Their names, if you wish to know them written:*
> > *Nineveh and New York, wreathed with splendours that fill them with*
> > *beauty.*

The poem, technically speaking, is so unexceptional that it seems fairest to treat it as a teaching poem – something intended for young readers, in the vein of the esteemed Malfono ("Professor") Qarabash (1903–1983), whose short lessons and textbooks have educated generations of young Syriac readers. The content of the poem, however, is instructive to us, even if – and perhaps especially if – its primary purpose was more didactic than lyric. It opens as a dry paean to the two eponymous "great cities" of the world, a subject that ought to allow the poet a little more adjectival wiggle room than "great" and "glorious." A sort of ping-pong jingle effect is created by the comparison of the one to the other: "Nineveh is surrounded by two rivers, New York is surrounded by one river; Nineveh was built with engineering, New York was built with discipline," (cf. l. 1–24) and so on. A rather flat-footed use of anaphora through this opening section could be interpreted as having biblical intimations, although after all most things could.

Before the half-way mark has been reached, though, the poet seems to forget the discipline of the comparison purported in the title, and drifts off into an elaboration of the ancient Assyrian capital. Presumably the idea here is to draw an equivalency between the two to the minds of modern readers,

establishing Nineveh as the true predecessor to the greatness of New York, and of the country as whose greatest manifestation it stands: "The intersections of streets, O, and avenues, and ... high towers and ziggurats," (l. 37; l. 45) and the young Syriac reader is meant to look across the water at the Manhattan skyline, reading this description of Nineveh, and feel himself the author of these things through his lineage. Even as we flee the homeland, Faiq insinuates to his kinsmen, we flee to nations indebted to us. In the long gridded streets of New York Faiq finds memorial to the streets and processional avenues of Nineveh, beneath their ziggurats instead of skyscrapers. It is worthwhile to note that what we in the twentieth century might consider the most distinctive type of New York architecture, the art-deco style whose ziggurat-like steps and setbacks were in turn essentially legislated into being by zoning ordinance in 1916, would have just been appearing in the decade since Faiq's arrival, and reached an early heyday by 1926. Just as those towers echoed Nineveh's, so too did the city's ordinances and laws; indeed, Faiq, though certainly not referencing any particular New York ordinance, explicitly includes "well-ruled laws, and ordinances" (l. 38) in his catalogue of great aspects of Assyrian heritage, and, importantly if perhaps so astoundingly, wilfully fantastical, "rule of the people" (l. 39)... that is to say, ancient practices, teachings, and doctrines which in his own day are reflected in America's greatness, and which the modern Assyrian nation must pursue with discipline and diligence to regain its ancient glory.

Consider lines 49 and 50. Although until this point the sense of the strophe has already imbued the entire poem, its firm pronouncement in these lines does carry an unexpected power. The two lines are connected by both a sort of anaphora and a pleasant alliterative atmosphere of /th/ and /b/. In the second line, rhythm, repetition, assonance (of /i/ and /e/, but not in a grammatical parallelism), and simplicity and directness hit the reader with the weight of truth:

> Hiy-(h)i itheyh l-Othuroye athro w-motho
> *She indeed for the Assyrians is a nation and a homeland.*

From this point, there is a strange opening-up of the theme. The "she" in question is not the Nineveh of the title: it is Bethnahrin as a whole. Without any clear reason the poem ends in the enumeration of various pseudo-historical facts about the homeland and the Assyrian heritage, fizzling out in an agreeably brief list of Assyrian kings. Notably, in the list of peoples which forms the ends of lines 53 to 56, Faiq asserts a relation through Abraham to the Hebrews, and direct relationships between the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Arameans. By

this point in his life, Faiq had already started his second American journal, *Huyodo* – in English, *Unity* – putting into a masthead one of the central tenants of his Assyrian nationalism.

Whatever the purpose of the poem, and whatever its literary value, its content and context offer a useful touchstone for the question of how to conceive of Faiq's own place as a poet – specifically as a Middle Eastern poet with national identity as his core theme. The *malfono* arrived in the New York area right at the swell of the decidedly romantic Mahjar movement, the wave of *émigré* writers and poets most famously represented by the New York-based Pen League and writers such as Khalil Gibran, which represented a sea change in Arabic towards modern literature.[41] Amin Rihani is composing his prose poetry for Manhattan at the same time that Faiq is writing neoclassical teaching *mimre* for it. Consider further Ilya Abu Madi, whose second *diwan*, and first to be written in America, was published with a preface by Khalil Gibran in 1919, and whose third book of poems, considered by critics to contain his most excellent work, came in 1927.[42] Across the water from Faiq, Abu Madi is giving voice to the tortured individualist, the lone prophet with his inscrutable universal mysteries and endless visionary searching. Compare that to the role of the poet in the pages of *Beth Nahrin*. He must be first and foremost a representative of, and a leader for, his people. If "Nineveh and New York" is indeed a teaching poem for young readers in the diaspora, it could not testify to his responsibilities better. There is no firm space for purely personal soul-searching and torment in the literature of the Syriac language yet; that is a luxury that first requires some communal safety, stability, and certainty. Thus, Naum Faiq composes no cries to the cosmos, but rather rallying cries to the homeland and its scattered people, urges to self-education and offers tools to aid in the cause. Central to this cause is the language of his forefathers – at one time both the foundation of the national edifice, in dire need of restoration, and the tool to help restore it.

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41   Badawi, *Modern Arabic*, esp. 102–109.

42   See Robin Ostle, "Ilya Abu Madi and Arabic Poetry in the Inter-War Period," in *Studies in Modern Arabic Literature*, edited by R.C. Ostle (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1975), 37–39.

Appendix: the Syriac Poems

1   *Awake, Son of Assyria!*

Syriac text taken from: Sargon Donabed, *Remnants of Heroes: The Assyrian Experience* (Chicago, 2003), 53.

ܐܬܬܥܝܪ ܒܪ ܐܬܘܪ ܐܬܬܥܝܪ   (1
ܘܗܒ ܚܝܠܟܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܠܥܡܢ
ܦܠܚܐ ܥܡ ܐܒܝܗ ܗܐ ܘܚܢ
ܐܦ ܪܒܐ ܚܙܘܝܚܗ ܚܚܢ
ܐܬܬܥܝܪ ܒܪ ܐܬܘܪ ܐܬܬܥܝܪ

ܚܚܢܘܐܠܐ ܢܐܣܘܪ ܝܘܗܐ   (2
ܠܚܕܟܠܚܗ ܒܝܘܐܠܠ ܝܘܗܐ
ܗܐܝ ܠܐ ܢܐܠܐܚܢ ܘܠܐ ܚܘܢܗܐ
ܐܘܝܟ ܠܚ ܚܐܘܢܝܣ ܚܐܘܗܐ
ܐܬܬܥܝܪ ܒܪ ܐܬܘܪ ܐܬܬܥܝܪ

2   *Someone Give Me Wings That I Can Fly to Bethnahrin*

The Syriac text comes from the January 15th, 1916 edition of Bethnahrin, accessed at www.AssyrianArchive.org.

ܡܢ ܘܢ ܢܘܚܠܟ ܬܓܐ ܘܐܠܗܘܗ ܠܐܘܠ ܠܚܠܟܠܘܘܩܢ   (1
ܘܐܢܕܐ ܠܠܣܬܢ ܐܚܘܘܢܣܐ ܘܐܣܠܐ ܘܘܢ
ܗܘܢ ܘܢܘܘܘ ܚܚܠܚܐ ܗܒܐ ܗܚܩܢ ܗܗܘܘܩܢ
ܘܚܠܚܒܝܬܢܘܗ ܘܚܘ ܠܬܩܚܐܘܢ ܗܣܚܗ ܢܗܘܩܢ

ܠܚܣ ܘܢ ܐܣܠ ܠܚ ܚܘܘ ܐܚܚܣܣܐ ܐܚܬܐ ܘܝܟܐܗ   (2
ܘܐܝܠܠ ܗܐܚܘܐ ܚܠܠ ܘܚܚܠܐ ܗܝܗܘܘܐ ܘܚܢܗܗ
ܗܐܗܚܘܘ ܐܢܗܝ ܠܚܬܣ ܝܝܢܗܣ ܘܠܗܘܗܝ ܚܗܚܗܗ
ܗܣܠܐ ܘܣܬܢܚܠ ܗܘܠܠ ܠܟܠܗ ܚܬܢܐ ܘܐܗܗܣܗ

ܐܗ ܚܢܬ ܝܝܢܗܣ ܠܚܠܠ ܘܗܗܘܠܚܗܝ ܗܐ ܗܣܣܩܢܝ   (3
ܘܚܗܩܬܠܐܢܚܗܝ ܐܣܘ ܚܢܬܐ ܗܐ ܗܚܚܩܢܝ
ܐܝ ܡܢ ܣܬܚܠ ܘܚܚܚܒܝܚܚܠ ܣܢܝ ܩܢܢܩܢܝ
ܠܚܠܠ ܣܢܚܗܠܚܗܝ ܚܗܝܝܢܐ ܗܢܗܚܠ ܚܣܩܢܝ

ܘܩܢܐ ܘܚܢܬܢܝ ܠܚܠܠܚ ܐܢܚܢܝ ܗܘ ܠܐ ܥܠܟܝ   (4
ܚܠܠ ܚܬܢܚܠ ܗܐܗ ܘܣܢܚܠ ܚܠܚܣܗܝ ܠܠܚܝ

ܠܐܘܐ ܗܘܬܣܐ ܠܠܚܩܠܝ ܡܠܘܡ ܠܐ ܡܠܡ
ܘܚܠܬܒܡܗܘ ܗܢܘܙܐ ܐܢܘ ܣܬܝ ܗܠܡ

3   *A Plea and a Rousing Cry*

Source: Naum Faiq, *The Book of Anthems for Wakefulness* (Paterson, 1917), 8–10.

ܚܠܗܠܐ ܘܡܚܙܢܘܐܠܐ
ܚܡܢܠܐ ܝܚܘܘܚܠܐ

(1)   ܚܢܘܐ ܘܐܚܡܙ ܚܠܚܠܐ ܘܚܢܘܙܐ ܗܘ ܚܡܙܗܠܐ
ܐܚܡܙ ܚܡ ܗܢܙܒ ܘܣܡܚܠܐ ܐܢܠܐ ܗܐܦ ܐܗܡܗܠܐ
ܗܐܢܗܘ ܚܬܢܠܐ ܘܐܠܚܗܩܡ ܚܡܗܘܡܢܘܐܠܐ
ܗܚܪܘ ܚܚܠܡ ܘܒܚܠܡܣ ܚܚܢܗܐ ܚܐܡܢܘܐܠܐ

(2)   ܐܗ ܗܗܘܩܣܐ ܘܘܡܚܗ ܗܐܗܡܚܗ ܚܡ ܒܒܚܠܐ
ܡܗܡܗ ܚܡ ܗܒܠܐ ܘܡܗܗܡܢܘܐܠܐ ܗܣܗܘܗ ܚܐܩܗܘܐܠܐ
ܚܒܠܐ ܚܩܗܚܠܐ ܗܐ ܡܚܚܠܚܬܝ ܘܗܘܚܠܐ
ܗܣܡ ܗܢܚܡ ܝܚ ܚܣܚܠܐ ܗܚܒܗܗܡܘܐܠܐ

(3)   ܐܢܬܡ ܘܣܡܚܠܐ ܗܐ ܩܠܡܣ ܗܗ ܚܗܡܝ ܚܡܠܐ ܗܩܩܚܒܠܐ
ܪܠܗ ܡܚܗ ܗܗܡܠܐ ܗܚܚܙܢܗܗ ܐܚܗܝ ܚܗܗ ܣܗܚܠܡܚܠܐ
ܘܐܝ ܗܗܡܚܠܐ ܡܚܠܡ ܐܢܠܐܗܝ ܩܢܠܐ ܚܡܐܙܢܠܐ
ܡܗܝ ܗܠܡܝ ܐܢܠܐܗܝ ܡܚܐ ܘܙܘܡܠܐܗܝ ܚܚܠܐ ܙܩܗܘܢܠܐ

(4)   ܐܢܚܗ ܡܗܘܩܢܝ ܐܢܚܗ ܚܗܠܩܝ ܐܗ ܚܒܣ ܐܘܡ
ܐܚܒܪܗ ܚܠܚܗܗܝ ܗܗܩܚܣܡ ܚܬܠܐܗܐ ܚܡ ܚܠܐ ܘܗܡܙܢܚܐ
ܠܐܗ ܘܒܠܐܚܚܗ ܚܠܡ ܗܚܚܐ ܠܚܚܠܡ ܗܗܡܚܗܡ
ܚܣܠܗ ܘܗܙܝ ܚܚܒ ܠܚܡܠܐܗܐ ܝܢܗܡ ܢܘܣܡ

(5)   ܐܗܗܩܘܣܠܐ ܘܗܬܢܗ ܚܗܚܙܐ ܐܣܘ ܚܚܪܙ
ܡܗܡܗ ܘܗܡܣܠܐ ܡܚܐ ܘܐܠܐܠܚܙܗ ܗܘܗܗܐ ܚܠܚܗܝ ܡܚܙ
ܒܪܗܗ ܡܚܗܗܝ ܠܚܚܠܐܚ ܗܚܠܡ ܡܪܩܐ ܘܚܚܙܗ
ܗܣܡܝ ܒܪܡܚܣ ܗܗܗܘܙܐ ܘܡܚܗܗܝ ܐܣܘ ܗܗ ܘܪܩܙ

(6)   ܐܝ ܗܗܡܚܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܣܚܣܡ ܚܣܩܣܗܗܠܐ
ܗܠܐ ܐܣܒܡܝ ܝܗܗܠܐ ܚܣܗܚܐ ܗܚܚܢܗܠܐ
ܠܐ ܡܚܠܐܢܗܘܙ ܗܢܝܡ ܘܘܚܪ ܚܚܗܡܚܚܠܐ
ܗܗܒܪܢܒܢܡ ܚܠܡܚܡ ܚܣܡܚܠܐ ܗܚܒܗܡܘܐܠܐ

ܐܘܕ̈ܢܐܣ ܚܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܐܘܡܘܐ ܐܣܩܘܡܘܗ ܐܗ   (7
ܐܗܢܚ ܘܗ ܡܥܡܐܕ ܗܣܠܐ ܣܝܣ ܟܠܟܚܘ
ܐܢܗܥܡܗܘ ܐܙܘܪܟ ܐܗܥܢ ܡܟ ܐܗܢܗܚ
ܐܗܢܗܪܚܗܘ ܐܙܕܝܪܚ ܐܡܗ ܡܟܠܚ ܠܐܗܘ

4   *My Country 'Tis*
Source: Faiq, *Anthems*, 11–13.

ܗܒܪ̈ܡܐܚܡ
ܐܣܘܗܡܘ ܐ̈ܢܗܡܪ

ܐܗܟܚܕܗܩܘ ܐܬܣ ܟܚ ܘܟܚܒܘ ܐܬܩܘܐܐ ܚܠܐ ܗܐ   (1
ܐܐܙܗܟܣܚܚ ܕܐܗ ܟܐܗ ܗܟܪܝܗ ܐܒܟܟܣܚ
ܐܗܢܗܕܘܘ ܐܙܩܗ ܐܬܢܪܕܗ

ܐܒܗܡܚ ܡܚܟܗܢܐ ܐܟܠܐܗ ܐܠܣܟܠܘ ܐܒܠܡܗ ܝܡܟܚ ܡܚܡܡ   (2
ܐܗܢܗܟܚ ܬܚܣܗ ܐܗܢܗܐܟ ܩܗܟܗܗ
ܠܒܗܗܘ ܝܗܗ ܬܢܬܗ ܐܗܗܢܠܠܘ

ܗ̈ܟܣܚܡܘ ܝܡܟܚ ܢܡܥܡܗܘ ܬܒܝܟܟ ܕܐܗ ܡܘܐܘ ܐܣܢ̇ܝ ܣܚ ܐܗ   (3
ܝܟܣܠܐ ܐܟܣ ܐܙܘܐܩ ܗܝܡܗ ܐ̈ܗܣܝܟ
ܝ̈ܟܣܗܘ ܝܐ ܡܣܚܗܘ ܐܟܚܬܟܚ

ܡܟܚܟܗܡ ܡܥܡܐܕ ܣܬܗܗܚ ܐܗܟܗܚ ܕܐܗ ܝܬܢܣܚ ܐܚܡܣ ܐܢܡܟ   (4
ܟܚ ܠܚܕ ܕܐܗ ܐܣܢܗ ܟܚ ܝܠܟܣܠܟܒܘ ܐܗ
ܡܚܬܟܗܘ ܐܣܚܗܚܡ ܝܩܚܘܐ ܐܗܡܐܩ

ܟܝܠܢܚܝ ܗܗܗ ܗܟܚܡܘ ܐܙܗܗܟܡ ܐܗܐ ܝܚܠܐܠܐ ܝܢܚܠܐܠܐ   (5
ܐܗܣܡܗܗܚܡ ܢܝܚ ܕܐܗ ܐܗܗܟܗܘ ܝܟ ܝܡܗܗ
ܟܠܒܣܗܐ ܝܒܝܐܘ ܐܟܟܚ ܣܗܘ

ܐܗܗܟܚ ܐܡܝܚ ܐܗܗܠܐܗ ܐܗܟ̇ ܟܚܗܗܗ ܡܝ ܘܡ ܡܚ   (6
ܡܩܗܒ ܟܟܚ ܣܗܘ
ܐܣܘ ܗܒܚ ܡܗܗܡܐܗ ܐܬܣܢ ܗܙܒܚܚ ܐܡܐ̇ܗ
ܡܙܟܡܟܣܡܐܠܘ ܐܩܗܗܡܚ ܟܟ ܐܙܗܕܡܘ

5   *Assyrians*

Source: Faiq, *Anthems*, 10–11.

ܐܬܘܪ̈ܝܐ

ܚܡܫܬܐ ܘܚܠܐ ܚܗܙܐ ܘܚܡܡܚܐ

1)	ܗ̇ ܐܬܘܪ̈ܝܐ	ܐܬܘܪ̈ܝܐ ܡܢ ܥܝܕܐ
	ܠܐ ܩܘ ܝܡܢ ܚܐܝܬܡ	ܡܢ ܙܢܥܐ ܡܕܠܐ
2)	ܗܡܡܚܠ ܐܠܐܚܝܘܠ	ܥܒܘܗܝ ܐܚ
	ܘܟܚܘܡܬܢܐ ܐܘܕ	ܚܡܡ ܐܡܠܐ ܚܚ
3)	ܚܡܘܦܢܐ ܘܪܩܢܐ	ܘܘܡܝ ܐܬܫܒܐ
	ܡܥܝܐ ܩܡܝ	ܚܬܒܡ ܘܠܬܒܐ
4)	ܡܚܠ ܒܪܣܚܐ	ܐܠܐܝܢܐ ܚܡܠ ܢܘܩܝ
	ܘܘܡܥ ܚܠ ܐܘܡܠܠ	ܡܢܐ ܡܚܠܚܝܦܡ
5)	ܚܠ ܣܩܐ ܐܡܚܚܘ	ܚܠܘܡ ܚܘܡܠܐ
	ܘܐܦ ܐܡܣܚܘ ܚܣܚܢܦ	ܘܐܘܡܠܝ ܚܡܣܠܐ

6   *Wakefulness*

Source: Faiq, *Anthems*, 10.

ܚܢܘܗܪܐ

ܚܛܐ ܘܐܡܚܠܝ ܘܚܣܢܝܐ

ܐܡܚܠܝ ܘܚܢܘܗܪܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܘܡܠܐ: ܚܠܐ ܚܡܚܐ ܘܡܘܩܢܣܐ
ܘܐܦ ܡܠܐ ܪܬܢܐ ܘܡܬܟܒܠܐ
ܡܡܡܝ ܚܝܪܡܠ ܡܚܠܗܐܠܐ
ܘܘܡܣܐܝܠ ܢܒܙܐ ܠܠܡܝ ܐܡܘܡܐ
ܘܒܝܠ ܠܚܝܢܡܝ ܘܢܡܙܐ ܐܘܕ ܚܚܩܡܚܐ ܐܣܬܒܐ
ܘܡܝܡ ܡܘܡܐܝܠ ܒܪܚܘ
ܘܐܡܣܐ ܚܢܘܗܪܐ

7 *Nineveh and New York*

Syriac text accessed as a PDF attachment to the article "Naum Faiqs dikt om Nineve och New York." *Hujada*, February 5, 2016. Accessed at http://www.hujada.com/article.php?ar=2777&page=1.[43]

ܢܝܢܘܐ ܘܢܝܘܝܘܪܩ

(1a) ܚܠܩܝܢܝ ܡܕܝܢܬ ܗܝܡܢ ܗܘܢܝ ܦܝܚܠܐ ܚܠܟܡܐ:
ܠܥܘܚܬܬܢܝ ܠܐ ܡܘܡܣ ܐܝܠ ܘܐܪܗܘܙ ܪܚܡܐ

(1b) ܣܝܐ ܠܟܡ ܗܡܥܐ ܚܡܪܝܣܐ ܚܡܪܝܚܐ ܢܗܘܩܐܠܐ:
ܘܐܝܣܢܐܠܐ ܘܝܢ ܚܚܢܚܢܐ ܐܡܐ ܘܩܡܢܐܠܐ

(2a) ܣܝܐ ܣܒܘܢܝ ܚܗ ܚܠܐ ܚܡܠܢܗܘܢܝ ܗܡ ܠܐܘܢܝ ܪܚܬܡ:
ܗܐܠܐܣܢܐܠܐ ܣܒܢܙ ܢܗܘܙܐ ܘܗܘܗܗܘ ܗܡ ܚܠܐ ܪܗܚܬܡ

(2b) ܣܝܐ ܠܟܡ ܚܣܐ ܚܠܐ ܚܡܥܐܠܐ ܚܙܚܗ ܠܐܗܘܢܝ:
ܐܝܣܢܐܠܐ ܠܐܠܐܚܐ ܚܡܪܝܚܠܐ ܠܥܡܐ ܘܚܙܚܣܗ ܘܗܥܢܬܡ

(3a) ܠܐܩܠܝܡ ܐܢܬܢ ܗܢܙܐ ܗܘܩܙܐ ܐܦ ܢܙܣܒܐ:
ܘܗܥܢܗܢܝ ܗܚܠܗ ܚܠܟܡܐ ܚܠܗ ܗܬ ܘܗܟܚܒܐ

(3b) ܗܗܚܙܐ ܘܥܠܗܢܝ ܐܢܗܗ ܘܚܚܠܐ ܘܠܐܠܚܟ ܗܘܩܙܐ:
ܢܝܢܘܐ ܘܢܝܘܝܘܪܩ ܚܙܚܐ ܗܚܬܢܣܐ ܘܗܚܠܝ ܗܗܘܩܙܐ

(4a) ܢܝܢܘܐ ܐܠܟܐܢܗ ܗܕܒܝܕܟܠܐ ܘܚܟܠܐ ܘܐܠܐܗܙܢܒܐ:
ܗܘܢܝܘܝܘܪܩ ܐܠܟܐܢܗ ܗܕܒܝܕܟܠܐ ܗܚܣܟܠܐ ܘܐܗܚܬܢܚܣܐ

(4b) ܠܐܘܢܗܗܢܝ ܚܬܙܐ ܠܚܬܢܚܐ ܚܚܠܟܡܐ ܗܐ ܚܡܠܐܝܪܣܝܡ:
ܗܘܪܚܬܝܠܐ ܗܚܣܢܚܐ ܘܗܘܢܙܗܠܐܗܘܗܝ ܘܚܠܐ ܝܗܥܣܝܡ

(5a) ܐܠܐܗܙܢܒܐ ܗܥܟܠܗܗ ܚܣܢܝܐ ܚܡܚܣܙܗܠܐܠܐ:
ܘܐܗܚܬܢܚܣܐ ܚܣܐܗܗܗ ܚܢܘܢܝܘܝܘܪܩ ܚܡܚܚܗܡܡܗܠܐܠܐ

(5b) ܢܝܢܘܐ ܐܡܐ ܘܗܕܒܙܢܬܟܠܐ ܘܐܠܐܗܙܢܒܐ:
ܗܘܢܝܘܝܘܪܩ ܚܚܟܠܐ ܘܗܕܒܙܢܬܟܠܐ ܘܐܗܚܬܢܚܣܐ

(6a) ܣܝܐ ܐܚܚܠܐ ܚܚܟܗ ܚܚܠܥܐ ܪܢܬ ܘܩܚܟܥܒܐ:
ܗܘܢܝܘܝܘܪܩ ܐܗܥܣܟܠܐ ܚܒܙܩܚܟܐܒܝ ܗܗܐܦ ܠܐܩܚܚܒܐ

(6b) ܠܐܘܢܗܗܢܝ ܚܬܙܐ ܚܚܚܠܐܗܩܠܐܠܐ ܗܝܡܢ ܝܚܚܚܡܝ:
ܘܚܒܝܕܟܠܐ ܘܚܚܗܘܚܟܥܒܐ ܗܩܩܠܐܡܐ ܗܗܗܘܚܚܡܝ

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43   Please note that I have retained the formatting as printed in *Hujada* – that is to say, grouped into quatrains, although the intended division appears to be strophes of two lines each.

(7a) ܒܐܠ ܐܟܠ ܟܨܪܙ ܗܘܩܙܐ ܘܟܐ ܐܒܐ ܐܣܘܡ:
ܗܣܒܐܠܟ ܟܨܚܪܩܗ ܟܐܐ ܐܪܣܘܣܡ

(7b) ܣܐܣܐ ܠܐܠܐܘܙ ܟܙܣܗܐܐ ܙܐܐ ܟܐܚܐ:
ܟܚܟܬܣܬܐ ܟܨܟܚܟܣܗܐܐ ܐܗܙܣܐ ܠܗܟܐ

(8a) ܠܐܘܟܬܗܐܐ ܘܨܣܙܗܐܐ ܗܐܩ ܘܐܗܣܗܐܐ:
ܣܐܣܐ ܣܘܟܟ ܘܟܐܟܟ ܠܐܩܠ ܟܣܘܣܘܣܗܐܐ

(8b) ܗܘ ܠܐܘܬ ܐܗܨܣܟ ܟܘܟܟܩ ܗܘܬܚܐ ܘܟܣܣܗܐܐ:
ܘܗܣܘ ܟܚܟܟ ܟܟܟܬܗܐ ܟܟܗ ܗܪܣܣܗܐܐ

(9a) ܟܣܨ ܟܬܙܐ ܘܗܗܘܟܚܐ ܣܬܒܐܐ ܟܣܗ ܗܙܗܐ:
ܗܐܩ ܠܗܬܩܗܐ ܘܗܘܬܢܐ ܟܗ ܠܐܐܣܘܗ

(9b) ܗܩܟܣܗܐܐ ܗܐܘܘܙܗܐܐ ܗܐܟܙܗܐܐ:
ܟܗ ܟܨܪܒܟܐܐ ܨܨ ܗܗܘܩܩܐ ܘܨܪܘܙܝܩܐܐ

(10a) ܟܟܐܘܣܗܐ ܗܘܬܗܘܐ ܗܐܩ ܐܗܘܣܟܐ ܟܟܟ ܘܢܘܘܗܐ:
ܗܐܩ ܟܣܘܒܐ ܘܗܘܙܢܐ ܗܝܟܣ ܟܟܝܬܗܐ

(10b) ܘܗܘܙ ܟܟܚܐ ܗܗܘܘܙܣܗ ܐܘܘܟܟ ܗܘܙܣܗܚܟ ܟܚܟܐ:
ܘܟܟܩ ܟܟܗܘܗ ܟܣܗ ܐܟܐܙܗܘܗ ܟܟܟ ܐܩܚܗܐܐ

(11a) ܗܩ ܘܗܘܒܗ ܗܐܩ ܘܘܣܒܣܐ ܟܬܘܣܩ ܟܝ ܟܙܘܙܣ:
ܙܚ ܒܘܘܬ ܝܡܢ ܗܐܟܐܬܨ ܟܣܒܐ ܘܟܟܟܟܘܗܘܣܡ

(11b) ܢܟܐ ܗܘܙܘܐ ܘܘܠܐ ܟܣܣ ܟܣܗ ܟܣܟ:
ܟܝ ܟܙܘܙܝܟܗ ܟܟܟܟ ܟܝܟܗ ܟܟܟܐܗܘܙܗ ܩܢܝܬ

(12a) ܟܣܒܐ ܐܠܐܣܘܣܗܗ ܟܙܬܟܝܠܐ ܙܬܟܐ ܗܐܩ ܙܣܙܢܐܐ:
ܗܗܝܢܠܠܐ ܠܐܘܟܬܗܐ ܘܟܟܗܘܐ ܟܚܬܒܐ ܗܐܩ ܗܣܟܗܐܐ

(12b) ܣܐܣܐ ܗܨܪܒܟܐܐ ܘܟܟܐܟܐ ܟܟܐܘܙܟܐ ܗܘ ܘܟܟܟܟܗܘܣܡ:
ܟܝ ܐܩܚܗܐܐ ܘܨܒܬܢܟܐܐ ܗܗ ܗܗܟܟܟܐ ܟܐܗܘܬܡ

(13a) ܗܗ ܟܟܟܐܗܘܣܡ ܘܐܟܟܐܣܗ ܐܗܘܙܐ ܙܙܣܟܟܐ ܗܝܟܚܟܐ:
ܗܗ ܗܗ ܐܣܟܟܣܗ ܠܠܐܘܗܐܐ ܐܐܟܐ ܗܗܟܟܐ

(13b) ܟܝܟܗ ܙܒܬ ܝܗܘܐ ܗܗ ܗܢܘܣܗܐ ܘܐܟܗܝ ܐܗܙܩ:
ܗܗܝ ܟܩܟܙܗ ܟܙܣܘܒ ܗܟܢܐ ܟܩܝܙܗ ܗܙܙ ܟܟܗ ܗܗܝܩ

(14a) ܗܐܩ ܐܟܙܗܘܣ ܘܗܗܘܐ ܐܟܐ ܟܟܙܐ ܝ ܟܟܬܢܐ:
ܗܗ ܐܟܟܗܘܝܒ ܝܗܘܐ ܣܝ ܟܝ ܟܢܢܐ ܘܐܟܐܗܒܢܐ

(14b) ܐܟܐܘܙܗ ܗܝܟܚܐ ܐܟܟܗܘܝܒ ܝܗܘܐ ܟܟ ܐܗܙ ܘܟܚܟܬܢܐ:
ܗܐܚܗܘܝܒ ܠܐܘܣ ܙܣܟܐ ܗܘܙܚܐ ܘܐܝܘܟܗܐ

(15a) ܚܘܒܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܫܘܬ ܢܥܒܕܘܗܝ ܗܘ ܚܝܚܢܐ:
ܘܐܦ ܗܘܝܬܢܐ ܡܟܬܐ ܘܙܢܪܐ ܚܬܒܝܣ ܘܘܐ

(15b) ܚܘܘܡܒ ܢܥܒܕܘܗܝ ܐܚܒܣ ܘܐܠܐܘܢܝܣ ܡܚܝܢܐ ܚܡܠܐ:
ܘܣܠܐ ܡܕܢܐ ܘܟܠܥܬܢܐ ܘܐܝܢܩܐ ܚܠܚܠܐ

(16a) ܘܒܐܘܘܗ ܡܟܬܐ ܘܚܡܠܐ ܘܣܝܐ ܚܘܒܝܢܘܐܠܐ:
ܘܒܠܒܘܗ ܗܘܘܗܝ ܡܘܗ ܚܚܒܐ ܘܚܥܢܘܐܠܐ

(16b) ܠܚܠܠܦܟܘܢ ܘܟܠܥܒܐܪܘ ܘܗܢܘܒܐܡܠܐ:
ܘܐܗܢܣܒܘܗܝ ܘܟܚܘܘܗܝ ܐܗܘܙ ܗܘ ܚܐܡܐܚܠܐ

(17) ܘܐܦ ܗܢܚܒܠܐ ܘܗܘܗܝܒ ܗܢܘܗܝ ܘܐܘܕ ܗܢܣܢܚ:
ܘܗܥܕܗ ܠܚܡܐ ܚܗܩܬܢ ܗܘܗܝܡܐ ܘܗܢܝ ܗܘ ܗܚܠܡܬ

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Global Jewish Philanthropy and Linguistic Pragmatism in Baghdad

Sasha R. Goldstein-Sabbah

The Jewish community of Baghdad changed dramatically from the mid-nineteenth century until its dissolution between 1949 and 1951. These changes were due to political, social, and technological factors which influenced the entirety of Iraqi society. For the Jewish community of Baghdad, whose numbers went from 24,000 in 1876[1] to 118,000 in 1947,[2] these changes meant that in less than a century the Jews in Baghdad saw the emergence of a flourishing, multi-lingual educated middle class who was actively engaged in Iraqi society and yet deeply connected to world Jewry.[3] One important factor in this communal transformation was the role of foreign actors and in particular foreign Jewish philanthropic organizations. This chapter explores the importance of transnational Jewish solidarity in Baghdad and what can be learned about the Jewish communal leadership of Baghdad during this period via their exchanges with European Jews. My central argument is that collaboration with foreign Jewish groups was a constant theme between 1860 to 1950 that ultimately gave the Jewish community relevance within the wider Iraqi society during the Hashemite period. Furthermore, I hope to demonstrate that philanthropic partnerships were established based on considerations of linguistic pragmatism, political landscape and economic implications.

Foreign Jewish aid, from both organizations and individuals, played an immeasurable role in this development, without which the community would not have been able to flourish as it did. Although the financial aspect of this aid was central to communal development, help also came in other forms that were just as instrumental, specifically by providing technical expertise and political support. These organizations were, in large part, responsible for the importation of Western culture and European language instruction to the Jewish

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1 Maurice M. Sawdayee, *The Baghdad Connection* (Locust Valley, NY: Maurice M. Sawdayee, 1991), 17 [citing Jacob Obermayer in *Ha-Magid*, 12 January 1876].
2 Hana Battatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movement of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 40.
3 Abbas Shiblak, *Iraqi Jews: A History of Mass Exodus* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), 33–54.

community of Baghdad.[4] The languages used by the community both for written and spoken interaction significantly diversified. Whereas in the mid-nineteenth century the Jews of Baghdad primarily spoke a local dialect often referred to as Judeo-Baghdadi,[5] and wrote in Judeo-Arabic (Arabic language in Hebrew script), using Hebrew for liturgical purposes and rabbinic correspondence, by the Mandate period most literate Baghdadi Jews were writing the Arabic language in Arabic script, and able to read and write in either French or English or both languages. Hebrew for the most part remained a liturgical language, although there are also examples of Modern Hebrew linguistic creativity during this period.[6] As to spoken language, Judeo-Baghdadi remained the *de facto* communal language, although the local Muslim-Baghdadi Arabic dialect, English and French also became important languages of communication.

Studying the different types of aid provided by foreign Jewish philanthropic organizations in collaboration with the local communal leadership helps explain how the community could change so dramatically in a relatively short period. The analysis of this relationship also sheds light on the objectives of the Jewish communal leadership, and challenges notions that foreign benefactors rather than/opposed to local elites were the key decision makers in the development of the communal infrastructure. In this chapter I summarize some of the motivations behind transnational Jewish solidarity, and provide an overview of the history of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) and the Anglo-Jewish Association's (AJA) activities in Baghdad. By comparing and contrasting these two organizations we can gain greater insight into the political and linguistic choices made by the communal leadership during the mandate and early years of the Iraqi state. Finally, I will draw some conclusions about what these relationships teach us about the Jewish community of Baghdad and their language choices.

The historical documents used for this chapter are primarily from the Alliance Israélite Universelle Archives in Paris, and the Anglo-Jewish Archives housed at the University of Southampton. These documents have been supplemented by secondary source material relating to the concept and history of transnational Jewish solidarity and Iraqi Jewish History, in particular Nora Şeni's *Les inventeurs de la philanthropie juive* and Matthias Lehmann's *Emissaries from the Holy Land: The Sephardic Diaspora and the Practice of Pan-Judaism in the*

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4   Zvi Yehuda, "Iraqi Jewry and Cultural Change in the Educational Activity of the Alliance Israélite Universelle," in Harvey E. Goldberg (ed.), *Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries: History and Culture in the Modern Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 134–145.

5   Haim Blanc, *Communal Dialects in Baghdad* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

6   Lev Hakak, *The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Creativity in Babylon, 1735–1950* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009).

Eighteenth Century.[7] For the section on the role of the AIU I have greatly benefited from an article by Zvi Yehuda, "Iraqi Jewry and Cultural Change," which discusses the role of the AIU prior to the British Mandate.[8] Although the histories of these two organizations in Iraq is each worthy of its own volume, my objective in this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive history of these organizations in Iraq, a project which still needs to be undertaken. Instead, I attempt to shed some light onto the history of Baghdadi Jewish cooperation with foreign Jewish philanthropic organizations, and explore what we can learn about the Jewish communal leadership in Baghdad from these relationships.

1   Modernity, Transnational Jewish Solidarity, and Philanthropy

With few exceptions, Jewish communities have rarely existed in isolation with no connections to other Jewish communities. For example, Baghdad had occasional Jewish visitors over the centuries, even after it ceased to be the centre of the Jewish exile in the eleventh century. Notably, Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century and Petahiah of Regensburg in the thirteenth century both wrote of their sojourns in the city and their impressions of the Jewish community.[9] However, from the tenth to the nineteenth century Jewish communities around the globe were rarely in regular structural communication, either ecclesiastical or secular, as no overarching organization existed at the time. Instead, these connections were generally informal networks, both from a religious perspective with rabbis offering guidance in the form of *responsa*, or from an economic perspective with trade and banking networks linking communities (at times oceans apart). However, there is little historical evidence that these traditional connections translated themselves into the concept of a unified transnational Jewish community or the idea of a "Jewish people." Instead, in different periods communities of Jews practiced forms of transnational Jewish solidarity via different Jewish diaspora networks, often connected to charity.[10]

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7   Nora Şeni, *Les inventeurs de la philanthropie juive* (Paris: Éditions de La Martinière, 2005); Matthias Lehmann's *Emissaries from the Holy Land: The Sephardic Diaspora and the Practice of Pan-Judaism in the Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

8   Yehuda, "Iraqi Jewry," 134–145.

9   Yaron Ayalon, "Baghdad," in Norman A. Stillman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) Vol. I, 313.

10   Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land*, 8–14.

Prior to the nineteenth century transnational Jewish charity or philanthropic work was centred on the idea of *halukka*,[11] whereby *shlikhim* would travel the Jewish world collecting funds to support religious charitable institutions and academies in Hebron, Tiberias, Safed and Jerusalem.[12] And even this work was relatively limited because charity (*sedaqa*), although central to Judaism, was seen as a local obligation within one's own community. The religious obligation specifies three types of charity: to support orphans and widows; to provide food, clothes, and shelter to Jews visiting from other communities; and the remittance of funds to the Holy Land to support the pious Jews residing there. However, there was no historic precedence for Diaspora communities supporting other Diaspora communities prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, with occasional rare exceptions, for instance in the case of natural disasters, for example. However, even *halukka* was decentralized before the nineteenth century. Instead, different groups present in the Holy land competed for financial support by targeting the communities with which they had family links.[13]

As Nora Şeni notes in *Les inventeurs de la philanthropie juive*, the radical changes in the way Jewish communities approached charity and perceived their relationship to other Jewish communities were closely linked to the idea of the "age of modernity" as expressed by the European Enlightenment and the *Haskala*, modifying how European Jews viewed their relationship with and responsibilities towards Middle Eastern and North African Jews.[14] One of the reasons European Jewish intellectuals took an interest in "Oriental Jewry" was their search for authentic Jewish practice, a newfound interest in Jewish history, and a general intellectual curiosity. In turn, they wrote about their findings in *Haskala* newspapers making European Jewry aware of the existence of

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11   *Halukka* is the remitting of funds to Jerusalem (and other holy cities) to support small, usually impoverished, communities of religious Jews. Examples of this practice appear in documents found in the Cairo Geniza, although the practice is most likely much older.

12   The history of emissaries to Israel was compiled by Abraham Yaʻari in 1951. Although Yaʻari's attempt to show an uninterrupted connection between the Jewish people with the land of Israel and a historic Jewish unity has been highly criticized, his history of *shlikhim* remains the reference on topic. Abraham Yaʻari, *Sheluhei Erets Yisraʼel* (Jerusalem, 1951). For criticism on Yaʻari's work see Jacob Katz, "Heʼarot sotsyologiyot le-sefer histori," *Behinot* 2 (1952) as cited in *Lehmann, Emissaries from the Holy Land*, 7–9.

13   Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land*, 11–14.

14   Şeni, *Les inventeurs de la philanthropie juive*. For a wider discussion on the *Haskalah* see Moshe Pelli, *Haskalah and Beyond: The Reception of the Hebrew Enlightenment and the Emergence of Haskalah Judaism* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2010), 16.

these other Jewish communities.[15] Additionally, with the rise of modern journalism, news of events such as the Damascus affair of 1840, the Mortara Affair in 1860, and anti-Jewish riots reached European Jews relatively quickly.[16] These events were of great concern to 'enlightened' European Jews such as James de Rothschild, Moses Montefiore and Adolph Cremieux, who felt an obligation to help their co-religionists. Thus, these 'emancipated Jews' laid the foundations of not only modern Jewish philanthropy, but consequently also of modern international Jewish solidarity, through the founding of organizations dedicated to the plights of Middle Eastern and North African Jewry. In Baghdad the two most important of these organizations were the French *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) founded in 1860, and the English *Anglo-Jewish Association* (AJA) founded in 1871.[17]

There are several important differences between the pan-Jewish aid networks of the eighteenth century that Lehmann writes about, and the transnational Jewish philanthropic networks of the nineteenth century that Şeni discusses. Firstly, the eighteenth-century networks were exclusively focused on helping the Jews in the Land of Israel and thus looked only to other Jewish communities outside of Palestine as potential donors. Secondly, the eighteenth-century networks were organized by Jewish subgroups, the most active of which were the Sephardic Jewish networks.[18] Thus, one major change in the nineteenth-century Jewish philanthropic networks was the rapprochement between different Jewish subgroups, and the fact that these associations organized themselves along national lines rather than religious traditions.[19] Thirdly, the eighteenth-century networks were relatively conservative in their objectives, aiming to assist the impoverished in times of crisis, whereas the nineteenth-century philanthropic networks aimed to "westernize," "modernize," "improve"

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15   Orit Bashkin, "Why did Baghdadi Jews Stop writing to their brethren in Mainz?," in *Histories of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East*, edited by Philip Sadgrove, *Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement* 15 (2005): 108–109.

16   Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: 'Ritual Murder,' Politics, and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

17   The American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee and the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* were also active in Baghdad during this time. However, their contribution to the development of infrastructure was significantly smaller, and therefore I have not addressed them in this chapter.

18   Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land*, 4–5.

19   This is apparent in all Jewish philanthropic organisations in which the leadership represented a mixture of both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews (in the case of the AIU and AJA), and a mixture of Ashkenazi Jews with Eastern and Western European origins (in the case of the JDC).

and "civilize" the communities they were aiding.[20] Finally, the organizations of the nineteenth century had strict hierarchies, a bureaucratic apparatus, and a defined ideology – a marked difference from the dynamic networks of the eighteenth century.[21]

Returning to Baghdad: in the mid-nineteenth century the city was a relative backwater in the Ottoman Empire, with little public infrastructure, no printed newspapers in the city, and no secular education options. This was in sharp contrast to European Jewry, who had already undergone over a century of transformation via the ideals of the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, and the *Haskala*. With the arrival of European Jews and their newspapers in Baghdad the literate Jews of the city were more connected with other Jewish communities than in the preceding decades. Thus, they became aware of the debates among European Jewry, particularly those on the secularization of education and the adoption of certain Western cultural norms. Although not officially organized until the founding of the lay council in 1879, from as early as the 1860s Baghdadis Jews corresponded with European Jews, publicly (via the newspapers of the *Haskala*) as well as privately, imploring their brethren in Europe to help the communal elites to modernize their community through various forms of aid and support.[22] In addition to these newfound connections, over the course of the nineteenth century an important Baghdadi Diaspora developed in the British colonies of India and East Asia. These communities were extremely successful commercially, and developed strong economic, political, and cultural ties with European Jewry while at the same time maintaining a connection to Baghdad.[23] The result is that as part of their philanthropic

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20   Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land*, 14.

21   Ibid., 11.

22   Bashkin, "Why did Baghdadi Jews," 108–109.

23   For more information about the "Eastern Baghdadi communities," see, for India, Joan Roland, *The Jewish Communities of India: Identity in a Colonial Era* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), and Ezekiel Musleah *On the Banks of the Ganga: The Sojourn of Jews in Calcutta* (North Quincy MA: The Christopher Publishing Company, 1975); for Singapore, Joan Bieder *The Jews of Singapore* (Singapore: Suntree, 2007); for Burma, Ruth Fredman Cernea, *Almost Englishmen: Baghdadi Jews in British Burma* (New York: Lexington Books, 2007), for China, Maisie J. Meyer, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Whangpoo: A Century of Sephardi Jewish Life in Shanghai* (New York: University Press of American, 2003) and Chiara Betta, "From Orientals to Imagined Britons: Baghdadi Jews in Shanghai," *Modern Asian Studies* 37,4 (2003): 999–1023. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3876534. For a discussion of women in the Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora, Jael Silliman *Jewish Portraits Indian Frames: Women's Narratives from a Diaspora of Hope* (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2001).

initiatives in the city these wealthy Eastern Baghdadis pleaded with the AIU and AJA on behalf of Baghdad.

These changes in Baghdad, and the relationship between disparate Jewish communities at this particular moment in history, are part of a broader narrative of changes in the question of Jewish identity throughout the European and North American Jewish Diasporas during the nineteenth century. Specifically, this period marks the beginning of a transition from Jewish subgroups grounded in either a specific geographic location or specific religious customs (such as Sephardic, Maghrebi, or Eastern European Ashkenazi) towards the idea of a larger global Jewish people, in which many Jews began to imagine themselves as one unified community.[24] This change was not limited to Baghdad or its communal leadership in the nineteenth century. Rather, it was a fundamental change in Jewish communal perception which occurred (and was also contested) throughout Europe, North America and the Middle East in different places and at different times throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, arising from questions of nationalism and the concept of minority in the modern nation state. In the context of the Jewish community of Baghdad great attention is usually given to their integration into Iraqi society in the first half of the twentieth century,[25] but it should not be forgotten that the Jewish community was strongly linked to world Jewry during this same period, a relationship that developed because of philanthropic ties. Therefore, different identities were being developed parallel to each other, although none of these were mutually exclusive. With the rise of Arab nationalism and the growing tension over the Palestine question, the foreign Jewish ties of the Jewish community in Baghdad became more complicated and monitored but were never severed by either side.

The philanthropic relationship between Baghdad as the receiver of aid from the Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora on the one hand, and the foreign Jewish philanthropic organizations on the other, were central to the development of the communal infrastructure. Cooperation with foreign Jewish philanthropic organisations brought Baghdadi Jews of all social levels into contact with other Jewish groups through these new schools, hospitals, and charities. The Jews of Baghdad received multiple forms of aid, in three areas – financial aid, sharing of knowledge, and political assistance. Financial aid is the most quantifiable form of support. Regular donations, special grants from foreign organizations,

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24   Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land*, 1–14.

25   Orit Bashkin, *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), Aline Schlaepfer, *Les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad: Discours et allégeances (1908–1951)*, Christians and Jews in Muslim Societies series (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

and assistance in facilitating donations from individuals in foreign Jewish communities all helped to establish the successful network of social institutions developed and managed by the communal leadership. Although the European Jewish philanthropic organizations provided some money for education, they were not the primary benefactors.[26] The main providers of financial assistance were the wealthy Jews inside Iraq such as Menahem Daniel Saleh, wealthy Baghdadi Jews residing outside Iraq such as the Sassoon and Kadoorie families, and foreign Jewish philanthropic aid organizations. The Jewish community was also successful in occasionally acquiring funds from foreign consuls wishing to expand their spheres of influence in Baghdad, specifically through the study of English and French or by providing scholarships for study abroad.[27]

Besides financial support one of the most important functions of these organizations was assistance in providing, or arranging for, experts to travel to Baghdad to advise the community. As Peter Sluglett mentions, due to an underdeveloped education system there was a general dearth of educated individuals in Iraq well into the 1930s, and specifically of teachers capable of teaching Western languages.[28] However, the Jewish community was able to utilize their international connections to recruit foreign teachers, administrators, doctors, nurses, and other experts who were sent by foreign Jewish organizations to either work in Baghdad themselves, or to train locals from the Baghdad community in areas where expertise was lacking. Aid organizations arranged for Jewish students to receive training in France, England, and even the United States, on condition that they return to their home country or to another country in need of teachers to teach afterwards.[29]

Finally, the most sensitive form of aid provided by the Jewish philanthropic organizations was that of assuming the function of political lobbyist, informant, negotiator and at times protector, because it had the potential to raise questions of dual loyalties. Although the role of political negotiator began in the nineteenth century, this form of aid was to gain greater importance with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire as the importance of Britain in Iraq grew. Very wealthy Baghdadis abroad also played an important role in lobbying

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26   Jewish schools report 1925 MS 137 AJ37/4/5, Jewish schools reports 1930 CAHJP Iraq File P3/2464.
27   CO 730/177/2.
28   Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 193–209.
29   MS 137 AJ37/4/5 – These documents are about Baghdadi students sent to study in London but refusing to return to Iraq to teach as per their agreement. Of particular interest are the files between 1940–1942.

for the community, liaising with foreign governmental bodies on behalf of the Jewish community of Baghdad. This role as political agent and advisor is the most complicated of the three types of aid provided to the community, because these political 'links' aroused questions of conflicting loyalties, especially when anti-British sentiments in Iraq grew during the post-Mandate period. This issue of political support is further complicated by the fact that many of these Jewish organizations helping the Jewish community in Baghdad also had strong ties to the Jewish community in Palestine. However, these important political connections persisted up until the dissolution of the community.

In conclusion, assistance came in many formats that went well beyond financial aid. Furthermore, foreign Jewish philanthropic organizations were not the only actors outside Baghdad to provide aid to the Jewish community: foreign governments and the Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora were also active parts of this complex network of aid, thus reaffirming the intricate networks which existed between the Jewish community of Baghdad and other organizations and groups.

2 Foreign Consuls and Jewish Philanthropic Organizations

On the eve of the British Mandate, the lay council's[30] main focus was on developing a network of secular schools, charities, and hospitals to accommodate the Jewish population of the city, a process which had begun in the nineteenth century.[31] To achieve these goals the lay council actively worked to strengthen its ties to French and English consuls, with whom the French *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU), and the English Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA) were in constant contact.[32] By exploring the relationships between these

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30 The lay council was the secular council that governed the activities of the Jewish community, controlled its budget, and acted as the government-recognized spokesperson for the Jewish community in Baghdad. The council was established in 1879 as part of the Ottoman Tanzimat reforms and continued to function during the British Mandate and the period of the Iraqi Republic, see Eliyahu Agassi and Avraham Ben-Yaakov, "Chapter Nine: Communal Administration and Institutions," in Ora Melamed (ed.), *Annals of Iraqi Jewry* (Jerusalem: Eliner Library, 1995).

31 Yehuda, "Iraqi Jewry," 134–145.

32 The American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee (JDC) was also active in Baghdad during this time. Their contribution to the development of infrastructure was significantly smaller than the AIU and AJA and therefore I have not addressed them in this chapter. For more information about the JDC, see Sasha Rachel Goldstein-Sabbah, "Baghdadi Jewish Networks in Hashemite Iraq: Jewish Transnationalism in the Age of Nationalism" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2019).

organizations and both the Jewish community in Baghdad and their local governmental representatives we may begin to understand how the Jewish community of Baghdad negotiated various state and non-state actors in the first half of the twentieth century. Unlike the Baghdadi Jews residing on the Indian subcontinent and in East Asia, these organizations did not have a special connection to Baghdad. Although these European Jews may have felt a spiritual or moral connection to the Jews in Baghdad, in reality they knew very little about the community and often much of their information came via the consuls of their respective countries, or from Eastern Baghdadis active in the organizations. For these aid organizations the Jewish community in Baghdad represented one community amongst the many they were trying to help across Eastern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East as part of this new idea of transnational Jewish solidarity. In the overall landscape of Middle Eastern and North African Jewry, the Jews in Baghdad were wealthier than many other communities, due to their importance in the Iraqi economy, and as such it was assumed that they had greater internal means than other Jewish communities. For this reason, support from the local consuls and especially Eastern Baghdadis who acted as bridges between the local Baghdad community and the philanthropic organizations was essential.

From an administrative perspective, both organizations relied heavily on their local governmental representatives in Baghdad, such as the consul-general or other members of the civil administration. The Jewish elites in Baghdad, for their part, actively courted the American, French and British diplomatic missions in Baghdad; they saw the benefits these connections could have regarding all forms of aid, including matchmaking between the Jewish community of Baghdad and foreign Jewish organizations.[33] These foreign delegations in turn often acted as an intermediary between Baghdad and foreign Jewish communities, making introductions and assuring the organizations that their resources were put to good use. The foreign diplomatic delegations themselves were also known for providing scholarships and other types of support, particularly to promote secular education within the Jewish communal schools.[34]

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[33]   Although not discussed in this chapter, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) began to remit funds to the Jewish community of Baghdad because of a letter sent by Oscar S. Heizer, then US Consul in Baghdad to the JDC, suggesting they aided the community. JDC ARCHIVES – http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/NY_AR1921/00016/NY_AR1921_00773.pdf

[34]   The British government gave small donations to the English Language Shamash School in the 1930s and 1940s. The French government provided scholarships for students to study

An example of the Jewish community courting these foreign diplomats is an event in 1918, when the Jewish community of Baghdad hosted a fundraiser to provide general relief to the poor of all confessions in Mosul. This event took place at a liminal period in Iraqi history, at the tail end of the Ottoman Empire and the dawn of Iraqi statehood under British mandate. The event took place only one month after the lay council (unsuccessfully) petitioned the British Civil Commissioner in Baghdad to bestow British citizenship to the Jews of Baghdad.[35] A British consular report about the event describes Jewish communal elites actively courting both Jewish and non-Jewish foreigners by presenting their own communal values as analogous to those of the foreign guests. Below is an excerpt from a report by the British India Office:

> On the 10th October Jewish Community entertained to dinner several members of America relief commission, the US consul, French consul, and several officers of Civil Administration (UK) [sic].
>
> After dinner followed songs and recitations by Jewish school children exceedingly well done with several speeches by leading Jews in English and Arabic highly flattering to the present regime. As an expression of their earnest feelings the speeches were followed by an auction of some jewellery [sic], presented by a Jewish lady, for charitable purposes: the auction realized some Rs. 30,000, Jewish ladies present spontaneously made further offers of jewelry.
>
> At the close of evening it was announced that proceeds would with the permission of G.O.C. in chief be devoted to relief of poor in Mosul without distinction of creed wherever that place was??? [sic][36] either before or after end [sic] of war. My American friends found above entertainment very instructive.[37]

In this instance, the Jewish community was entertaining the three main foreign presences in Baghdad relevant to the Jewish community. Most likely these events were an opportunity for the Jews to present themselves as a modern

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in Paris. See Naim Kattan, *Farewell Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad* (London: Souvenirs Press, 2005), 211.

35   Norman A. Stillman, *Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1991), 256–257.

36   This is a direct transcription of the original letter. The writer is apparently not aware of the location of Mosul.

37   Indian Office Library, British Library IOR/L/PS/11/139 P 4484/1918.

Westernized community, with values in line with the foreign countries repre-
sented. It is also likely that those in attendance were trying to position them-
selves as allies to these representatives, who were often navigating unfamiliar
terrain with respect to culture, languages and politics. As the report notes, this
event included educated children, community leaders who spoke English and
Arabic, Jewish women publicly mingling with men, and a non-confessional
philanthropic action, all of which were exceptional for Baghdad in 1918. This
is analogous to the position taken by communal leadership and Eastern
Baghdadis when corresponding with Jewish philanthropic organizations. This
particular report was sent to the UK foreign office. They in turn were known to
forward similar reports to the AJA, and it is probable that reports on this event
made it into the hands of the AIU and the JDC, because similar-style reports
exist in both organizations' archives.[38]

Beyond general reports on the state of the Jewish community in Baghdad,
all Jewish philanthropic organizations used their local governmental represen-
tatives to oversee the distributions of these funds, representatives who at times
went as far as to collect receipts from the lay committee or the schools' com-
mittee and sending these back to the organizations – a testament to the highly
nationalist nature (British and French) or these organizations.[39] Additionally,
representatives of the local government often attended events organized by
the schools on behalf of the organizations, sending back reports to attest to
the level and quality of education and also to confirm that the financial aid
had been put to good use. Thus, the relationship between the foreign Jewish
organizations and the local diplomatic representation was effective in forging
relationships between the local Jewish community and foreign governments.

Beyond these similarities in the working of each organization there were
also differences. As I will describe in more detail below, the AIU's focus was
mostly on providing expertise in the development of schools by supplying
teachers, and educational material; its financial contributions were almost
exclusively intended to support the AIU schools. The AJA, particularly during

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38   For a detailed example of this with references to archival documents see Sasha
      Goldstein-Sabbah, "Censorship and the Jews of Baghdad: Reading between the lines in
      the case of E. Levy," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 7:3 (2016): 283–300 (DOI:
      10.1080/21520844.2016.1227927).

39   Yehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A history of the American Joint Distribution Committee
      1929–1939*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974), 15–17; JDC
      Archives: http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/NY_AR1418/00003/NY_
      AR1418_03503.pdf#search='mesopotamia' JDC Archives 1917. This later changed as inter-
      national banking became more reliable, and many of the financial transactions in the
      1930s and 1940s would go through banks such as the East Bank or Bank Zilkha, many of
      whose executives also held positions within the Jewish communal administration.

the Mandate, was to be a more active partner of the community, acting as an earpiece to both the British and Iraqi governments for the Jewish community; this in addition to helping to raise money from Jews in the UK to support the Jewish Institutions in Baghdad, and being instrumental in the overhauling of the Jewish schools in the 1920s.

3   Alliance Israélite Universelle

The AIU was founded in Paris in 1860 as an outgrowth of Jewish emancipation in France and out of a desire to defend the rights of Jews within France as French citizens. Although the AIU would come to be known for its Jewish schools outside France, its initial goal was not to import 'Western Civilization' to the Jews of North Africa and the Middle East through the opening of schools. Instead, the initial aim was more local, i.e., to help French Jews who had not yet benefited from the economic and social opportunities that the founders of the AIU had been fortunate enough to receive through emancipation. The AIU looked to Judaism as moral guide that would "*mettre d'accord dans l'homme, la foi, la raison, et le Coeur*" in the modern secular emancipated world.[40] As I already mentioned, the idea of extra-territorial Jewish solidarity was born out of concern in the wake of such incidents as the Damascus affair and other acts of violence against Jews in the world.[41] This in turn led to education outside the French borders quickly becoming one of the AIU's main activities and its most enduring legacy. In working with Jewish communities abroad the AIU saw itself as a partner in development, providing resources and the expertise to successfully run a modern secular school. It demanded both financial and intellectual collaboration with the Jewish community (or members of it) for which it was opening a school.[42]

Baghdad was one the first cities in which an AIU school was opened. The original request for a secular Jewish school predates the formation of the lay council by fifteen years and was thus a private rather than a communal initiative. Two European Jews residing in Baghdad, Isaac Luria (a Russian watchmaker) and Herman Tzvi Rosenfeld (a German tailor), together with two

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40   Perrine Simon-Nahumi, "Aux origines de l'Alliance," in *Histoire de l'Alliance israélite universelle: de 1860 à nos jours*, edited by André Kaspi (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 11–52.

41   Frankel, *The Damascus Affair*; Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene, eds, *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

42   Aron Rodrigue, "La mission éducative (1860–1939)," in *Histoire de l'Alliance israélite universelle: de 1860 à nos jours*, edited by André Kaspi (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 227–228.

Baghdad-born Jews, Joseph Shemtob and David Somekh, wrote to Paris, stating their desire to help the Baghdadi community form a school that would instruct boys in secular subjects and asking the AIU for help in this endeavour. The letter notes that they are aware of the school that had recently been opened for Jewish boys in Tetouan, Morocco and that they believe something similar would be ideal for the Jewish community of Baghdad. The letter also states that the members of the Jewish Baghdadi community had pledged money to support the school.[43] On 10 December 1864 the *Alliance* school opened with Isaac Luria as its first director.[44] This early initiative in secular education completely sidestepped the religious elites of the city, but was well received by those who saw the value in sending their sons to a secular school. By January 1865 the school had 43 students, and 75 by June of that year.[45] The school's initial objective was to teach both secular and religious subjects, thus making it a direct rival to the Midrash Talmud Torah, the only other option for Jews wishing to obtain higher education in Baghdad.

The conflict between secular and religious elites is illustrated by a letter sent by the students of the AIU school to the French Consul in Baghdad in 1869, three years after the original school was opened.[46] In this letter the students explain that the Rabbinate is falsely accusing them of "irreligion" and threatening excommunication. Therefore, they are writing to request help and protection from the French Consul, to defend their right to a secular education and prevent the school from being closed. This anecdote is indicative of the power struggle that went on between the religious and secular elites in Baghdad during the late nineteenth century. It is interesting to note that students were writing to the French consul, which would lead one to assume that the students believed the French consul would have power in assuaging concerns on the part of the Rabbinate. This was perhaps due to the students' own AIU education with its strong French nationalist bent. However, the students were wrong and the school was temporarily closed, largely due to pressure from the Rabbinate. Although this first experience with a secular AIU school was relatively short-lived, the school eventually re-opened. In 1879 Baghdad created a Jewish lay council, at which time a formal relationship between the Baghdadi Jewish elites and the AIU was established.[47] Because most of the communication regarding the schools went via the Consul General de

43   Sawdayee, "The Baghdad Connection," 20.

44   Ibid., 20.

45   Ibid., 20; *Bulletin de l'Alliance* 1864, 4

46   AIU archives Bobin 4 fiche 8–9.

47   Yehuda, "Iraqi Jewry," 134–145.

France, this relationship helped strengthen Jewish communal relations with the French administrative presence in Baghdad as they were in regular contact over the schools on behalf of the AIU. The relationship with the AIU in Paris remained detached, because the vast majority of teachers and school directors did not come from France but were instead AIU-educated Jews from other places in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA); this also fostered a sense of community between Baghdad and other Jewish communities in the region.

Overall the relationship between the AIU and the Jewish community in Baghdad was fraught with tension.[48] The Jewish communal leadership was happy to accept the expertise, money, and political support of the AIU because they were committed to secular education, an objective that would have been difficult without AIU assistance. However, Iraqi elites were sceptical of the French cultural superiority that the AIU professed, and questioned whether a French-language as opposed to an English-language orientation was the most appropriate for the youngsters of the community.[49] As early as 1872, members of the Jewish community were pressuring the AIU to modify their standard curriculum. The suggestions for curriculum modification included an increase in the amount of time dedicated to Arabic and Hebrew, and the idea to possibly change the language of instruction to English.[50] Although the AIU never fully acquiesced to these requests, these pressures did lead to some curriculum modification at the AIU schools, and reflect the high level of agency and engagement in these schools that came directly from Baghdadi communal leaders.

Until World War I the AIU remained the most active foreign Jewish organization in Baghdad, opening the two largest Jewish schools prior to the Mandate period: the Albert Sassoon boys' schools and the Laura Kadoorie girls' school. Each was named after the wealthy Eastern Baghdadi benefactor who had donated the land for the building of the school and set up endowments which would partially defray the school's operating expenses. Additionally, the AIU would set up other schools in partnership with the lay council utilizing the AIU curriculum although they received less financial and teaching support than the schools mentioned above. The success of these schools in the period prior to the Mandate meant that there was a strong francophone influence on the first generations of Baghdadi Jews receiving secular education, a point reflected in the correspondence between Baghdadi Jews and Anglophone Jews well into

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48   Ibid., 134–145.

49   Ibid., 139.

50   Ibid., 140 cited [AIU archives Irak IE3, report of the committee meeting, 24 December 1872], this appears again in correspondence on 30 December 1890 MS 137 AJ 95/ADD/6.

the mid-1940s: those who received an AIU education presented a strong bias towards writing in French, although they were able to read English. This hybrid way of corresponding is seen in the correspondence between the Anglophone Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie in Shanghai and Hong Kong, and their agent Ibrahim Nahum in Baghdad in the 1930s and 1940s. The AIU-educated Nahum would write in French to his Kadoorie cousins, who would respond in English.[51] Similar patterns are also apparent in later correspondence with AIU-educated Jews from Baghdad writing to the AJA.

After World War I, the importance of the AIU to the lay council diminished due to several convergent factors. Firstly, other education options became available through the development of Jewish community schools not attached to the AIU (or wilfully separating from the AIU) and the free government schools.[52] However, this explanation does not fully clarify why the AIU's presence in Baghdad declined, especially when we consider that the AIU continued to send teachers and school administrators to Iraq well into the 1940s. Furthermore, the main AIU girls' school, Laura Kadoorie, remained the premier girls' school in Baghdad until the 1950s. It is my contention that the distancing from the AIU did not originate from a desire for the Jewish community to remove itself from foreign Jewish organizations, but is instead a question of linguistic and political pragmatism.

As Zvi Yehuda notes, "the AIU pursued its efforts to acculturate the Jews of Mesopotamia in two central spheres: 1) setting the curriculum in community schools, in which the French language was used, and 2) changing the customs and traditions of the students in the spirit of France and the West."[53] The objectives and the ethnocentrism of the AIU became less attractive in the twentieth century as the position of the French language declined in post-Ottoman Iraq, with English growing in importance even before the Mandate because of increased trade with British controlled India. This shift is apparent in the increasing requests from members of the Baghdad community that English and Arabic be the dominant languages of education.[54] Officially, the Jewish Community of Baghdad took over management of the AIU schools in the 1920s,

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51   The Kadoorie archives in Hong Kong cover correspondence between Baghdad and East Asia in which Ibrahim Nahum, the Kadoorie agent in Baghdad, writes in French and Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie write in English. Although Nahum's date of birth is unknown, it is assumed he attended the AIU school before the Mandate period as he began work for the Kadoories in the early 1920s.

52   Yehuda, "Iraqi Jewry," 143, Shiblak, *Iraqi Jews*, 40.

53   Yehuda, "Iraqi Jewry," 133.

54   Georges Weill, "Les structures et les hommes," in Kaspi, *Histore de l'Alliance*, 60; Jewish schools report 1925 MS 137 AJ37/4/5.

becoming responsible for both the financing and the curriculum. The desire was to focus more on Arabic and English. This project was outlined in 1921, but actually took over a decade to achieve due to the complexities involved in overhauling a curriculum and finding suitable teachers.[55] In practice many of the schools retained aspects of the AIU curriculum and its French bias, focusing on French cultural production, hiring francophone teachers, and working towards French school certificates.[56] Therefore, although the desire to separate from the AIU is apparent in the correspondence between the AIU, AJA and the lay council, achieving this objective took time and was closely linked to careful diplomacy between all parties involved: the AIU and AJA collaborated in many of their initiatives, and Eastern Baghdadis were influential in both organizations.[57] Thus, the dominant factor in the shift is the growing relationship between the lay council and the Anglo-Jewish Association, the organization I will discuss in the next section.

Therefore, although the AIU played an important role in developing secular Jewish schools in Baghdad in the nineteenth century, sixty years later it offered little in the way of financial or political assistance in comparison with other actors. The financial assistance offered by the AIU consisted predominantly of funding from Baghdadi Jews based in India and the Far East who had their own agents in Baghdad. In this way they were able to support the community independently of the AIU, or via the AJA if they preferred to work through an organization. As to political support, the French presence in Iraq was considerably less than in other areas of the MENA. Furthermore, the AIU's lack of flexibility in regard to curriculum changes put off the Baghdad elites, who wanted a curriculum adapted to the linguistic needs of the new Iraqi state.[58] By the 1920s an English partner to assist the community made more sense than a French one, so that in the first year of the British Mandate in Baghdad the AJA almost completely usurped the position of the AIU as the main foreign organizational partner of the Jewish community in Baghdad. The AJA was to hold this position until the dissolution of the community.

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55   Jewish schools report 1925 MS 137 AJ37/4/5, 2–3.
56   S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah, "Jewish Education in Baghdad: Communal Space vs. Public Spate," in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, edited by S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah and H.L. Murre-van den Berg (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2016), 96–120.
57   MS 137 AJ37/4/2/2, MS 137 AJ37/4/5.
58   Yehuda, "Iraqi Jewry," 142–143.

4   Anglo-Jewish Association

The Anglo-Jewish Association was founded in 1871, originally as a sub-branch of the AIU.[59] However, it quickly developed its own mandate and ideology, working independently from the AIU in many of its initiatives. This distancing from the AIU is apparent in its official publications in the first half of the twentieth century: it does not mention the AIU in relation to its founding, preferring to stress the idea that it was founded "to aid in promoting the social, moral and intellectual progress of the Jews" and "to obtain protection for those who may suffer in consequence of being Jews."[60] The two statements point to the position the AJA would take in Baghdad, the social, moral and intellectual progress relating to education, and the protection of those suffering as a consequence of being Jewish, linked to AJA's willingness to act as political intermediary. The first involvement of the AJA in Baghdad, however, was that of supporting the AIU by sending an English teacher to the AIU boys' school in 1879, and agreeing to cover the cost of the teacher's salary.[61] Shortly afterwards, Silas E. Sassoon presented the AIU with a trust bond of 5,000 rupees to be put toward English instruction, thus assuring the continuation of English at the school and providing funds for the purchase of English-language books for the school library.[62]

In Iraq the AJA became an increasingly important partner of the communal Jewish leadership as the relationship between England and Iraq became stronger upon the establishment of the Mandate. Even before the Mandate, as early as 1890, the AJA minutes note that D. Sassoon in Baghdad had requested that the AJA and the Jewish Board of Deputies in London make inquiries into the new governor general in Baghdad with regard to his attitude towards Jews.[63] Another important event in the strengthening of relations between the AJA and the lay council was AJA's support of the Jewish community in the controversy over the burial of Rabbi Abdallah Somekh in 1889, when Somekh died during a cholera outbreak.[64] The issue related to the Jewish community's wishing to bury Somekh by the tomb of Ezekiel. When they were prevented from doing so by the local Arab population, the AJA and Jewish Board of Deputies

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59   Zosa Szajkowski, "Conflicts in the Alliance Israelite and the Founding of the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Vienna Allianz, and the Hilfsverein," *Jewish Social Studies* 19 (1957), 29–30.

60   MS 137 AJ37/4/5 – Ledger of School involvement – Draft Statement of Aims 28th November 1943.

61   MS 137 AJ95/ADD/4 – 14 May 1879.

62   MS 137 AJ95/ADD/5 – 16 March 1882.

63   MS 137 AJ95/ADD/6 28 January 1890, 11 February 1890.

64   Sassoon Archives Box 35, Jewish National Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

interceded with the governor of Baghdad on their behalf.[65] Thus, even before the mandate period the AJA showed its willingness to lobby the Ottoman authorities on behalf of the Jews of Baghdad. Therefore, although the AIU remained the dominant foreign figure in Jewish education in Baghdad prior to World War I, the AJA had already proved itself to be the Jewish community's main foreign partner in political matters in the nineteenth century.

The AJA's large role in Baghdad was motivated by two interwoven factors. Firstly, Britain's role in Iraq (mentioned before) is partially to blame for this – in fact the only other place that the AJA was as active was Palestine, a point the AJA even refers to in a 1943 summary of its histories and objectives.[66] Secondly and perhaps more importantly, many Baghdadi Jews on the Indian subcontinent and in East Asia became culturally and linguistically Anglicized, with many eventually gaining British citizenship.[67] Yet, as mentioned earlier, these Jews continued to feel an obligation towards Iraqi Jewry, with the Anglo-Jewish Association becoming an important channel for this demonstration of solidarity because it also confirmed the 'Britishness' of these Jews.

One important example of an anglicized Baghdadi is Sir Elly Silas Kadoorie (1867–1944). Born in Baghdad, he would spend most of his life outside Iraq in Bombay, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. Kadoorie was an active supporter of many AJA initiatives, but Baghdad held a special place in his philanthropy. In Baghdad the Kadoorie family provided the funds to found several schools (one of which bears the name of Sir Elly's wife Laura Kadoorie) and hospitals (one of which bears the name of his mother Reema).[68] Kadoorie's attachment to Iraq, and his faith in the work of the AJA and in the future of Britain in the Middle East were so great that he set up a residuary trust in 1924 allocating one third of his fortune to building schools in Mesopotamia and Palestine, and one third to the AJA to be used for the purpose of education.[69] After Sir Elly's death his sons Horace and Lawrence continued this tradition by supporting the Jewish institutions in Baghdad – they retained their father's agent in Baghdad to run philanthropic initiatives, thus ensuring the AJA's role in Baghdad until the early 1950s. The Sassoon family was also active in the AJA. Ellis Franklin (a mem-

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65   MS 137 AJ95/ADD/6 22 October 1889 11, February 1890.

66   MS 137 AJ37/4/5 – Ledger of School involvement – Draft Statement of Aims 28 November 1943.

67   For a discussion of the Baghdadi Jews' becoming Anglicized, see the volumes mentioned above by Roland, Meyer, and Cernea. This process of Anglicization provides an interesting contrast to the Baghdadi process of Arabization which occurred in Iraq, and is a point which deserves greater academic attention and discussion.

68   MS 137 AJ31/14/2/1 – 15 June 1923.

69   The final third was left to his brother, Eleazar Kadoorie – MS 137 AJ31/3/2/1 1924-43 1 of 3.

ber of the Baghdadi Sassoon family), for instance, held the role of treasurer,[70] and as stated earlier many of the first trusts and scholarships from the AJA for Baghdad were endowed by members of the Sassoon family.

This Eastern Baghdadi bridge between Baghdad and London acted as a diplomatic intermediary in the perpetually sensitive issue of finances and fundraising. One recurring source of tension was the lay committee's directly soliciting donations from co-religionists in England for their philanthropic work in Baghdad. Numerous letters between the AJA and the lay council show the AJA suggesting that the lay council restrict its fundraising to Iraq so as to avoid overlapping efforts.[71] These exchanges suggest that the AJA, which depended on private donations for its charitable works, saw the Baghdadis in Baghdad not only as a partner but also as a competitor in raising money. Such conflicts over 'fundraising territory' were often assuaged by Baghdadis residing outside Iraq. These exchanges also suggest a constant theme of the lay council working to assert its independence and to be viewed as a partner rather than a simple aid recipient.

The two most important factors which attracted the lay council in Baghdad to working with the AJA were the inclination to support the community politically, mentioned earlier, and the desire for English-language education in the Jewish schools. Although prior to the 1920s the Jewish schools flourished like no other in Baghdad, the French curriculum, as already stated, left something to be desired in the eyes of the Baghdadis, who saw their future as wedded to Arabic and English. The watershed moment in the shifting of the curriculum from the AIU system to a hybrid Iraqi/British system was achieved in the 1920s, when the AJA arranged for the Jewish community to have Lionel Smith act unofficially as director of the Jewish schools. Smith was the British advisor to the Ministry of Education from 1923–1931. Later writings by him suggest serious frustration in working with the Iraqi government when he felt his suggestions fell on deaf ears, which perhaps explains his willingness to dedicate so much time to the Jewish community.[72] Smith was charged with assisting the lay council and schools' committee in reorganizing and improving the Jewish school system.[73] Originally, the AJA offered to pay Smith 600 pounds per year

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70   Kaspi, *Histoire de L'Alliance*, 56.
71   http://www.ija.archives.gov/viewer/2994/19579. This file contains correspondence in English, French, and Arabic between the AJA, AIU, and the various Baghdadi committees involved in fundraising for schools between 1924–1935.
72   E.C. Hodgkin, "Lionel Smith on Education in Iraq," *Middle Eastern Studies* 19,2 (1983): 253–260.
73   MS 137 AJ37/4/2/2 – 24 March 1926.

to be at the disposal of the Jewish community.[74] Smith declined the money, preferring to advise on an unofficial level because he did not want his work being brought to the attention of the government.[75] Although Smith writes of troubles in Jewish education, such as teachers resisting additional training,[76] his correspondence with the AJA and the Lay council presents him as having a positive role in professionalizing teaching and updating the curriculum.[77] This type of assistance, in which a British colonial official unofficially worked for the Jewish community, would have been impossible without the connections the AJA was able (and willing) to provide.

The high value placed on English language education by the communal leadership is further demonstrated by the founding of the Shamash school in 1928, the first school to use a largely British curriculum. This school was to usurp the place of the AIU Albert Sassoon boys' school as the most prestigious Jewish school in the city. The Shamash school was heavily supported by the AJA, which supplied both teachers and administrators and provided an annual subvention to cover administrative costs. Ironically, the person who set up the endowment for the school, Benjamin Shamash, was a Baghdadi Jew residing in Nice, France, and a graduate of the AIU school in Baghdad.[78] Thus, his desire to establish an English-language Jewish school in Baghdad and the support and thanks he received from the lay council are a testament to this preference of English over French.

The positions of the AJA, the Eastern Baghdadis, and Jewish community of Baghdad in regard to financial assistance and education are best summarized in a letter sent by the president of the AJA Claude Montefiore to Sir Elly Kadoorie on 17 May 1932. The letter is a response to Kadoorie questioning the level of engagement of the AJA and the level of English being taught in Baghdad for which Kadoorie was deeply concerned. Montefiore in his response states that:

> For boys ... good knowledge of English is essential. The AJA in realization of this helps as far as its means allow, the Shamash school, which is designed to give Baghdad boys a secondary education in English. The present policy of the AJA in this regard is apparently appreciated by Baghdadis in England and elsewhere, for they have entrusted more than

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74   MS 137 AJ37/4/2/2 – 26 October 1925.
75   MS 137 AJ37/4/2/2 – 14 December 1925.
76   MS 137 AJ37/4/2/2 – 26 April 1926.
77   MS 137 AJ37/14/2/1, School committee correspondence 1921–1926.
78   MS 137 AJ 37 3/2/2.

3,000 pounds within the last year or two, earmarked for the Shamash school.[79]

Although the majority of the AJA staff was successively recalled in the late 1930s, firstly due to the growing political instability in Iraq and later due to World War II, the AJA continued to work with the lay council in Baghdad up until the dismantling of the community between 1949–1951.[80] In 1936, for example, they lobbied the British Foreign Office, asking it to intercede with the Iraqi government to lift a ban on certain Jewish periodicals coming into the country.[81] Even after WWII they continued to help to direct funds to the Jewish schools, whenever possible trying to arrange for teachers for the schools. Finally, in the period between 1947–1951 the AJA, assisted by the British government, monitored the deteriorating position of the Jewish community in Iraq and worked with the American Jewish JDC to ultimately get the Jewish community out of Iraq.[82]

5   Conclusion

The relationship between the Jews in Baghdad and European Jewry was a product of nineteenth-century European Jewish interest in MENA Jewry which fundamentally changed the way in which disparate Jewish communities interacted with and supported each other, and in turn changed the position of Jews throughout MENA. Unlike other areas of MENA, where Christian missionary initiatives competed with Jewish schools, in Baghdad the Jewish schools pre-dated the arrival of Christian missionary schools by almost half a century. Therefore, also unlike other areas of MENA, Christian missionizing was not a concern for the Jews in Baghdad. Furthermore, because the local Christian population was significantly smaller than the Jewish population there are no traces of the competition between transnational Jewish and Christian bodies as found in some other cities of the Levant. In fact, many Christian and Muslim elites in Baghdad sent their children to the schools of the Jewish community until in the Mandate period other options became available.[83] For this reason

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79   MS 137 AJ37/4/2/2 – 17 May 1932.
80   MS 137 AJ37 6/1/4 – Foreign affairs committee progress report April 21, 1950.
81   Goldstein-Sabbah, "Censorship and the Jews of Baghdad."
82   MS137 AJ37 6/1/3, MS137 AJ37 6/1/3 f.2.
83   Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East: Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1949), 209–213.

the decisions of the Jewish communal leadership pertaining to education had an influence that extended beyond the Jewish community in Baghdad. Furthermore, although the initial relationship between foreign Jews and Baghdad was driven by European Jews living in Baghdad and the foreign consuls there, by the Mandate period the Baghdadis themselves were the key decision makers and their decisions were based on their position as Iraqi citizens.

Comparing the philosophies, actions, and initiatives of the two organizations and their relationships with the lay council makes it possible to understand why from the 1920s onwards the Jews in Baghdad opted to strengthen their ties to AJA and distance themselves from the AIU. In my opinion the foremost reason was linguistic, specifically the fact that with the onset of the Mandate period English was becoming the most important language in Iraq after Arabic. Therefore, for Jews in Baghdad it was more advantageous to partner with an organization tied to the British Empire than one from the Francophone sphere. This point is most clearly illustrated by the Jewish Community hiring Lionel Smith to expand and improve the entire the Jewish school system, thus signalling a clear break with the AIU. Of course, these relationships were not mutually exclusive; in fact, the lay council worked with many foreign Jewish groups around the world in the first half of the twentieth century. The AIU continued to support their schools in Baghdad by providing curricula and teachers up until the 1950s.[84] However, unlike the AJA they did not become involved in political advocacy – the AJA, for instance, lobbied the Foreign Office to lift the censorship of Jewish newspapers in Baghdad in the 1930s.[85]

By comparing the working mode of the AJA to that of the AIU we clearly see that the AJA was less intellectually wedded to the propagation of British culture than the AIU was to French culture. Whereas the AIU was a staunch proponent of the teaching of French as the dominant language in their schools, the AJA saw greater value in a strong programme in Arabic – a point that was commensurate with the ideology of the communal leadership. The AJA also showed greater enthusiasm and flexibility in working with the local Iraqi curriculum than the AIU.[86] The lay council also preferred the AJA over the AIU as their main partner, because they were willing to involve themselves in public health and political issues concerning the community, whereas the AIU generally limited itself to education. A factor further solidifying this Anglo-Baghdadi

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84 MS137 AJ37/3/3/8.

85 Goldstein-Sabbah, "Censorship and the Jews of Baghdad."

86 This led to the hiring of Adolph Brotman in 1926, an Orthodox Jew with a wife and child, who accompanied him to Baghdad. MS 37 AJ37/4/2/2. Communications from 3 March 1926 to 18 September 1934.

relationship was that the Iraqi Jewish Diaspora for the most part, resided in places under British colonial control or Britain itself, and facilitated a close co-operation between the two bodies. Finally, the language choices of the Jewish communal leadership demonstrate not only their agency within Jewish networks, but also their desire to integrate within the greater Iraqi society. This is exemplified by the early requests that school curricula place greater emphasis on the Arabic.

In conclusion, the Jewish communal leadership of Baghdad consistently sought cooperation with foreign Jewish organizations up until the 1950s, to strengthen their position within Iraqi society through the development of a modern Jewish communal infrastructure. The Jewish community in Baghdad's multi-decade relationship with these organizations and the correspondence which remains suggest that the Jewish communal leadership saw themselves as part of a global Jewish community – an idea which was thought to be fully compatible with being an invested Iraqi citizen.[87] Thus, the choice on the part of the Jewish leadership in Baghdad to align itself with the AJA as opposed to the AIU was a strong act of communal independence, driven by political calculation and linguistic pragmatism, to assure their integration into the fledgling Iraqi state.

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Past Perfect: Jewish Memories of Language and the Politics of Arabic in Mandate Palestine

Liora R. Halperin

1 Introduction

As Zionist institutions in Mandate Palestine discussed and promoted Arabic study in light of increasing Arab resistance to Zionist settlement,[1] they not only speculated on the origins of this opposition and possible mechanisms of subduing it,[2] but also crafted nostalgic – and often counterfactual – narratives of past coexistence. For the mainly Yiddish-speaking Jewish settlers arriving in a mainly Arabic-speaking land and seeking to reclaim Hebrew as a vernacular, Arabic offered a pathway to an alternative Jewishness, one rooted in a long-lost Semitic identity. While these 'new' Jews worked to contain or suppress the local resistance to their settlement, Arabic became a symbol of a lost, harmonious past when Jews and Arabs did indeed coexist as fellow speakers of Arabic. In this chapter I hope to show that claims during the Mandate period about early Jewish settlers' use of Arabic allowed descendants of the early Jewish agricultural colonies (*moshavot*, sing. *moshava*) to craft an image of themselves as the bridge between pre-Zionist and Zionist Jewish Palestine and symbols of a non-political Zionism that transcended conflict – this at a time when all evidence pointed to an increasingly conflictual and provocative role for Zionism in Palestine.

As scholars have noted in their works on nationalism and memory, rhetoric about the past – in this case about past language practices – serves political

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1 Growing Palestinian animosity toward Zionism in the twentieth century can be attributed to several factors, including regional and geopolitical ones, but a consensus is emerging that the very separation practices of the Second Aliyah, those whose promoters thought would *lessen* animosity, in fact exacerbated it because of the tendency of these practices to dispossess Palestinians without offering them a place in the newly configured labour market, see Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1882–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Anita Shapira, *ha-Maʾavaḳ ha-nikhzav: ʿavodah ʿIvrit 1929–1939* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University; Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meʾuhad, 1977).

2 On competing rationales for Arabic language study during the mandate period see Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbors: Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis, 2016).

purposes during times of ethnic rivalry and internecine conflict.[3] Like discussions about language choices elsewhere in the Middle East during the same period, some of which are discussed in this volume, Zionist settler claims about knowing and deploying Arabic were political. They became part of a larger programme to justify settlement, minimize the significance of resistance, and negotiate internal Zionist divisions at a time of growing partisan acrimony.

European Jewish agricultural settlement in Palestine had begun in the late nineteenth century, when a tiny religious Jewish community, both Sephardi and Ashkenazi, already lived in a handful of Palestine's cities alongside Christian and Muslim Arabs. Jews from the Arab Levant, some of them Sephardic speakers of Ladino, were commonly fluent in Arabic. Religious Ashkenazim, of Eastern and Central European origin, were less likely to formally learn Arabic, but they, too, often knew colloquial Arabic. Many Arabic elements even made their way into their Palestinian Yiddish.[4] As Menachem Klein argues, "There was no mental boundary separating Muslim and Jew" in Late Ottoman Jerusalem. "The walls of language and culture were low ones, and Jews and Arabs who entered the physical or linguistic zone of the Other felt no sense of being alien."[5] Some Ashkenazi Jerusalemite families studied Arabic more formally: Reuven Rivlin, grandfather of Israel's current President, studied for a year in an Islamic school and his son Josef went on to research Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University and translate the Qur'an into Hebrew.[6]

European Jewish rural settlers, who began to purchase small plots of land in the late 1870s, were motivated by visions of making Jews more economically productive through agriculture. They founded twenty-odd colonies in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, including Petah Tikva (1878); Rishon LeZion, Zikhron Yaakov, and Rosh Pinna (all 1882); and Rehovot (1890). Over time, they celebrated their communities as representing a clean break from Palestine's past and the beginnings of a new nationalist project; following World War I this wave of settlement was deemed the "First Aliyah" or first wave of Zionist settlement.[7] In practice, however, such discourses of rupture

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3 Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1; Matt K. Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 6.

4 Mordecai Kosover, *Arabic Elements in Palestinian Yiddish: The Old Ashkenazic Jewish Community in Palestine, Its History and Its Language* (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1966).

5 Menachem Klein, *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron* (London: Hurst & Company, 2014, 2014), 45.

6 Klein, *Lives in Common*, 42–43.

7 Hizky Shoham, "From 'Great History' to 'Small History': The Genesis of the Zionist Periodization," *Israel Studies* 18,1 (2013): 31–55.

obscured real continuities between early settlers and the existing Jewish communities of Palestine.[8] Petah Tikva and Rosh Pinna's initial founders came from the religious communities of Jerusalem and Safed, respectively, and early settlers in Petah Tikva such as Yehuda Raab and Avraham Shapira learned Arabic while living in Jerusalem. Later arrivals remained reliant on existing Jewish-Muslim-Christian urban networks and Jewish multilingualism to negotiate land purchases and acquire goods and services. The 'break from the past' that became the legacy of the first colonies in the minds of Zionists and Palestinians alike was a retrospective construction. At the time, this settlement occurred and survived only because of Jews who remained imbedded in a pre-Zionist social context.

Within the colonies themselves, which Yuval Ben-Bassat and others have called "proto-Zionist" rather than Zionist per se,[9] Jewish settlers adopted economic arrangements that made limited use of Arabic necessary. Striving to engage in productive agriculture, first in cereal grains and later in wine grapes and citriculture, colonists regularly hired Arab field labourers at a low wage.[10] These practices exposed them to the criticism of later arriving Jews, especially those motivated by socialist Zionism and the idea of Jewish-Arab market separation, people who asserted that all economies built on the backs of native labour would be rife with exploitation. Nonetheless, early colonies, many of which came under the foreign Jewish philanthropic support of the Rothschild family, continued hiring Arab field labourers, guards, and drivers throughout the Mandate period. These relationships, though hierarchical and often abusive, nonetheless seemed to suggest a period "prior to conflict" when read selectively and against the intensified conflict of the twentieth century.

In what follows I look at commemorative sources produced in these Jewish colonies during the Mandate period alongside other texts from within the internal Jewish discourses on Arabic in Palestine. Claims about early Arabic knowledge among Ashkenazi Jews had questionable validity as historical generalizations, but they served an important political purpose on the local level. By constructing and appropriating a history of Arabic-speaking European Jewish founders, colony leaders claimed their own legitimacy in the face of political marginalization and put forward a premise, popular particularly among Zionist business interests and the political centre-right, that economic

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8   Israel Bartal, "'Al ha-rishoniyut: zeman u-makom ba-'aliyah ha-rishonah," in *Lesoheah tar-but 'im ha-'aliyah ha-rishonah*, ed. Yaffa Berlovitz and Yosef Lang (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uhad, 2010), 15–24.

9   Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Proto-Zionist – Arab Encounters in Late Nineteenth-Century Palestine: Socioregional Dimensions," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 38,2 (2009): 42–63.

10   Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins.*

integration, albeit on strict hierarchical ethnic lines, provided a better recipe for Jewish-Arab coexistence than economic or geographic separation.

2   The Politics of Arabic in Mandate Palestine

By the time the British assumed their Mandate over Palestine in 1923, the Jewish community was already politically organized, with ideologically aligned parties, a variety of associated social service organizations, labour unions, and a Jewish city: Tel Aviv. The Yishuv, the common term at the time for the Jewish community, found itself increasingly divided around assessments of the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine, its origins, the likelihood of its resolution, and the utility of personal outreach versus military preparedness in addressing it. Ashkenazi Zionists approached these questions from a stance of alienation and foreignness, whereas Sephardi and Oriental Zionists (who are not the subject of this article) discussed the centrality of Arabic as a tool for conflict resolution within the framework of Zionism, as Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor have shown.[11]

Arabic language could serve a range of Jewish agendas in this fraught context. As Hillel Cohen has shown, over the course of the Mandate period Zionist organizations sought Arab collaborators and informers.[12] A variety of labour-oriented organizations, from the mainstream socialist Mapai (Jewish Workers Party of Palestine) to the Marxist Ha-Shomer Ha-Tsa'ir (Young Guard), came to feel over the course of the Mandate period that reaching out to Arab workers was essential. At a Mapai assembly in 1943, a member named Y. Burstein noted that "our politics in the Arab field is *personal politics* … Relations with Arabs determine the solution to the problem." Others at this gathering affirmed the premise that long-term coexistence was possible and could be accomplished by building goodwill through language study.[13] Members of Ha-Shomer Ha-Tsa'ir also increasingly lamented their lack of Arabic knowledge. A writer in the newspaper of Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk, an agricultural collective (kibbutz) affiliated with the movement, lamented in 1936, "We have not even begun to learn

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11   Jacobson and Naor, *Oriental Neighbors*.

12   Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

13   "From the Words of the Members in the Assembly of Members at the Party's Jerusalem Branch," 4 September 1943. On the Agenda: Activity of the Party in Researching the Arab Problem, 1, BB, 2-926-1943-1, (Arab Division, the Committee for Studying and Clarifying the Arab problem, incoming and outgoing correspondence). Speaker: Y. Burstein. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

the ABCs of approaching Arabs."[14] Over the course of the 1930s and 1940s, and in some cases earlier, some movement newspapers started publishing columns to help Jews learn the language.[15] Kfar Masaryk, along with other kibbutzim, instituted language courses.[16] In 1940, a group of Arabists within Ha-Shomer Ha-Tsaʿir gathered to found a Department of Arab Activities intended to teach Arabic and organize workers in the Arab community.[17]

Many of these early twentieth century promoters of "Hebrew Labour," their term for an ideological refusal to hire Arab workers in Jewish-run enterprises, had spent their first weeks or months in Palestine as workers in the citrus orchards or wineries of Petah Tikva, Rehovot, or Rishon LeZion, the three most prominent late-nineteenth century colonies, and had broken away after concluding that the landowners were bourgeois, exploited Arab labour, and were not committed to the national project. They felt that a socialist-inspired program of Jewish-only labour was more conducive to the goal of Jewish mass immigration and national revival.[18] The vanguards of this group, known retrospectively as the Second Aliyah (immigration wave) began a pitched battle for Hebrew Labour, full of insults at their landowning employers.[19]

Having personally seen instances of denigration and abuse in the colonies, Labour Zionists, as they came to be known, had presumed that economic separation would eliminate exploitation from the Zionist program and win back Arab support for the national settlement project. Some of the colony landowners, in resisting local Zionist Labour organizing, had become allied with the anti-Labour political forces that eventually coalesced into Vladimir Jabotinsky's Revisionist movement, the core of the Zionist right wing. Revisionists, who were defined as much by their harder line militaristic ethos as by their support for private capital, were not known for their investment in

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14   Kibbutz Masaryk, *Ba-Kibbutz*, May 1936, 1.

15   *Ba-maʿaleh: ʿiton ha-noʿar ha-ʿoved*, 27 January 1933. Yad Yaʿari Archive, Givʿat Haviva.

16   Kibbutz Masaryk, *Ba-Kibbutz*, May 1936, 10, Yad Yaʿari Archive, Givʿat Haviva.

17   Joel Beinin, "Knowing Your Enemy, Knowing Your Ally: The Arabists of Hashomer Hatsaʿir (MAPAM)," *Social Text*, no. 28 (1 January 1991): 108, https://doi.org/10.2307/466379. Both Cohen and his Bentov wrote memoirs which provide insights into their upbringing and involvement with Ha-Shomer Ha-Tsaʿir. See Mordekhai Bentov, *Yamim mesaprim: zikhronot meha-meʾah ha-mukhraʿat* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poʿalim, 1984); Aharon Cohen, *Guf rishon, guf shelishi* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi, 1990).

18   For an account of this experience from a Labour Zionist perspective see Shlomo Zemach, *Sipur hayai* (Jerusalem: Devir, 1983), 44–45.

19   Zeev Tsahor, "Ha-mifgash ben ha-ikarim le-foʿale ha-ʿaliyah ha-sheniyah be-Fetah Tikvah," *Katedrah* 10 (January 1979): 142–50; Moredecai Reicher, *60 shanah le-hakhrazat ha-herem al poʿalei Petah Tikva: Hanukah tarsaʾʾv–hanukah tashkaʾʾv* (Petah Tikva: Beit Neta; Merkaz le-toldot kibush ha-ʿavodah ve-yedaʿ histadruti mi-yesodam shel ha-merkaz ha-haklaʾi u-moʿetset poʿale Petah Tikva, 1965).

Arabic study for purposes of reconciliation. They considered attempts at reconciliation short-sighted and employed Arabic almost entirely for the purpose of intelligence gathering and reconnaissance.[20] It was easy enough, therefore, for Labour Zionists to look at the capitalist farmers in the agricultural colonies and presume that they were and had always been opponents of building working relationships through language. But some in the colonies were interested in promoting a different narrative of the past.

3 The Politics of the Past

By all accounts, the First Aliyah colonies, founded and initially inhabited by Jewish landowners with roots in the Russian or Austro-Hungarian empires and supported by cheap native labour and private capital, were places of labour exploitation and strained relations rather than Jewish-Arab camaraderie. These were places in which Jews and Arabs encountered each other on a daily basis, as the former purchased from and employed the latter and, as a consequence, acquired a limited, instrumental knowledge of Arabic.[21] Recounting his visit to the Zionist agricultural colonies of Palestine in 1914, the Yiddish writer Yehoash (Solomon Blumgarten) called the lack of Arabic knowledge he had found among immigrant Jews "one of the weakest points of the settlement." Arabic was a language Jews used to address employees, he had found, not a language of conversation: "Colonists who have been living in Palestine for decades know only sufficient Arabic to converse with their Arab *'Arabaji*, or wagon driver. As to writing and reading Arabic, that is out of the question."[22] Although there had been various attempts to teach Arabic in the colonies, including hiring a teacher in Rishon LeZion, new immigrants rarely improved.[23] Scholars have suggested that ignorance of the Arabic language contributed to local suspicions of Jewish settlements at the time.[24]

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20 These efforts in the mandate period laid the foundation for some of the IDF intelligence operations after 1948. See Gil Eyal, *The Disenchantment of the Orient: Expertise in Arab Affairs and the Israeli State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

21 Early records suggest that whole communities of labourers in the Rehovot colony lived in or near the colony together with their families. There was regular economic interaction, moreover, with local Arab villages that would sell produce to the colonists.

22 Yehoash, *The Feet of the Messenger* (Ayer Publishing, 1977), 194; Yehoash, *Fun New York biz Rehovos un tsurik* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1919), 44.

23 Yaacov Ro'i, "Yahase yehudim-'arvim be-moshvot ha-'aliyah ha-rishonah," in *Sefer ha-'aliyah ha-rishonah*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 1982), 252.

24 Yosef Gorny maintains that the colonies should not, in and of themselves, have provoked Arab opposition, because their number was small, "but it was the subjective interpretation, coloured by the convictions and emotions of the fellahin, that influenced relations

Even those sympathetic to the overall colony model of employing low-wage Arab Labour sometimes suggested the need for additional commitment to Arabic among settlers. During the year of the Yehoash's visit, the citricultural-ist and writer Moshe Smilansky had also spoken critically of immigrant Jews, saying that "Over the course of thirty years we did not learn the language of the land. In the entire Hebrew Yishuv there are not even ten people who can read and write Arabic. This fact might seem absurd to the reader; but to our dis-grace, this is the reality."[25] For him, the circumstances themselves demanded better knowledge of Arabic; what needed to change, he felt, was not the eco-nomic arrangements but Jews' recognition of their obligations within them.

For Labour Zionist ideologues, however, language and labour issues were related. Ha-Shomer (The Guard), a Jewish guard organization founded in 1909, saw Jewish-only guarding (also known as "Hebrew guarding") as the first step in a broader program of economic separation: where colonies convention-ally hired Arab, Circassian, and Maghrebi (North African) men to guard the colonies and their property, Ha-Shomer suggested that this practice exposed the colonies to theft by the guards or their friends and, more broadly, led to passivity and weakness. Alongside its posture of muscular Jewish self-defence, Ha-Shomer also prided itself on a new commitment to Arabic language knowl-edge, a commitment they emphasized and valorised in Mandate-era com-memorative books. Such books, though written years after the fact, are a useful primary source in understanding their retrospective self-construction during the Mandate period.[26]

In her retrospective essay about her role in the formation of Ha-Shomer, Manya Shohat asked rhetorically "How would a small group of Jews live among masses of Arabs educated in the tradition of the desert, the rifle and the knife,

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with the settlers." In addition to lack of Arabic knowledge he cites cultural differences, especially around the status of women. Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882–1948: A Study of Ideology* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1987), 17–19. Yehuda Slutzky in *Sefer Toldot Ha-Haganah* suggests that lack of Arabic knowledge led to the first attack on Petah Tikva.

25   Moshe Smilansky, "Ba-moledet," *Ha-ʿOlam*, 16 January 1914, 6. Smilansky also criticised the denigrating attitude of Zionist colonists in Palestine, claiming that prior to their immigra-tion they had considered the land "as an abandoned wasteland waiting for its redeemer and had not revised their views even after coming to Palestine and finding that it was not a virgin landscape."

26   Gur Alroey notes that the absence of contemporary materials from Ha-Shomer has pro-duced a historiography that tends to repeat the organization's auto-hagiography. He turns to documents from the agricultural colonies to challenge assertions about their pre-WWI activities. I view the Mandate era commemorative volumes as a primary source in their own right – about mandate-era concerns. Gur Alroey, "Mesharte ha-moshavah o rodanim gase ruah?: meʾah shanah le-agudat ha-shomer, perspektivah historit," *Katedrah* 13 (2009): 77–104.

whose ethics are totally different from ours?" Her answer to this classical co-
lonial conundrum was based on language: the guard program pushed Jews "to
learn the Arabic language, the customs and concepts of the Arabs, because for
the project to succeed it was necessary to create neighbourly relations based
on mutual respect and in accordance with the people's psychology and its
traditions."[27] Voices like Shohat's became dominant in Zionist and Israeli his-
toriography, and a discourse on teaching Arabic from a position of economic
separation came to seem normative.[28] Ha-Shomer rarely acknowledged the
tension at the heart of its endeavour: by striving for closeness from a position
of national separation, the Hebrew Labour ethos rendered Arabic knowledge
among Jews even weaker than before.

But even Ha-Shomer members, who considered themselves heirs to a lin-
eage of ancient Jewish defenders such as the Maccabees,[29] also found model
defenders in the "First Aliyah" colonies, their former employers, while deni-
grating these communities as a whole. "The isolated, the daring, who went out
in front," wrote Manya's husband Yisrael Shohat, won the respect of Arabs, but
in general Arabs denigrated Jews both in the city and in the village, "because
they thought of them as weak and cowardly."[30] The heroes of the First Aliyah
period and their escapades defending against a variety of local attacks were to
occupy a similarly ambivalent place in the narrative provided by *The History of
the Haganah*, a multi-volume Labour Zionist text about the evolution of Jewish
militarism.[31]

Some of the Mandate-era leaders of the Labour movement acknowledged
that the Hebrew Labour programme had reduced opportunities for more nat-
ural language acquisition. In a 1942 memo to Moshe Shertok (Sharett), head
of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency and later the second Prime
Minister of Israel, Miriam Glickson commented that

> Today there is a lack of direct contact between Jews and Arabs such as
> existed in the first settlements [the colonies]. Then there were Arabs in

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27   Manya Shohat-Vilbushevitz, "Ha-shemirah ba-arets" [Guarding in the Land] *Kovets
      Ha-Shomer: Te'udot, zichronot u-divre ha'arakhah* [The 'Ha-Shomer' Collection:
      Documents, Memories, and Appreciations], Tel Aviv: Arkhiyon ha-Avodah, 1936–7, 51.
28   On the central place of Arabic in the self-image and culture of the Labour Zionist move-
      ment, see Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (Berkeley: University of
      California Press, 2000), 198–200.
29   Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National
      Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 17.
30   Yisrael Shohat, "Shelihut ve-derekh," in *Sefer ha-Shomer: divre haverim*, ed. Yitzhak
      Ben-Zvi et al. (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1957), 4.
31   Shaul Avigur and Ben Zion Dinur, eds., *Toldot ha-Haganah*, Mahadurat 'Am 'oved, vol. A
      pt. 1, ha-Sifriyah ha-Tsiyonit (Tel Aviv: Ma'arakhot, 1954), 93–104.

every house and community and every resident knew how to conduct a conversation with them. But today the settlements are separate, most of their residents don't know Arabic at all and the work of spreading the language is only beginning. On the other hand, thanks to systematic study (an important thing that was lacking in the early settlements) we imparted to some of the residents an elementary knowledge of the literary language, of the Arab question, and of Arab folkways.[32]

Though she and Shertok advocated economic and residential separation from Arabs, Glickson appears to be bemoaning the loss of Jewish-Arab contact that had occurred in the early Jewish agricultural colonies. Labour Zionists did not explicitly swear off interethnic contact; they believed that close labour cooperation could occur within the proletariats of both peoples. However, they thought that this cooperation could only occur following a Jewish "conquest of labour."[33] Nonetheless, the imagined product of the bygone Jewish-Arabic contact – Arabic knowledge among Ashkenazi Jews – had declined such an extent that by 1942 the Jewish Agency felt that more "systematic" instruction by trained European Jewish Orientalists was necessary.[34]

Some Labour Zionist leaders recognized the contradiction inherent in promoting closeness through separation. At a 1944 gathering of Jews to discuss the state of language learning programs, Michael Assaf, active in Mapai and the labour union it dominated (the Histadrut), noted that "Our community was not built on the idea of mixed settlements [of Jews and Arabs] and [this explains] the little real Arabic knowledge among our members … in fact, in the colonies, whose spirit is more chauvinist, there is a more positive approach to Arabic, given that there is vital contact with the Arabs in practice."[35] Such statements acknowledge the flaws of the axiomatic association between Labour Zionist ideology and lived Jewish-Arabic interaction.

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32 Memo from Miriam Glickson to Moshe Shertok, re: conference of Arabic teachers in the communities, (which took place on 25–26 August 1942), 3 September 1942, CZA, J17/322. The conference included the heads of the Department of Education as well as candidates for teaching in the communities.

33 Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 47–110.

34 On the evolution of Arabic language study in Israel, especially around the defense establishment, see Eyal, *The Disenchantment of the Orient*; Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*. Both suggest that the military sphere came to dominate Arab studies in the Jewish community of Palestine and Israel so much that the only non-native speaker students who achieved proficiency in the language were those who expected a military career. Many writers have lamented the poor state of Arabic language studies among Israeli Jews.

35 Protocol mi-fegishat muzmanim be-she'elat hora'at ha-'Arvit, 13 July 1944, Yad Ya'ari Archive (Givat Haviva) (2)4.21.95, Eliezer Be'eri, Personal, Correspondence, 1941–1952.

The colonists themselves highlighted these contacts. Members of an economically powerful but often politically side-lined class of agriculturalists during the Mandate period, they emphasized their own status as firsts and founders and promoted a narrative of Zionist settlement that they suggested was implicitly superior to the socialist Zionist vision that politically displaced them. During the Mandate period, they both asserted their own political relevance and promoted a model of Jewish-Arab relations that they claimed was pragmatic, moderate, and rooted in the realities of the market.

Local historiography from the "First Aliyah" colonies, conveyed in anniversary volumes, memoirs, pedagogic texts, and agriculturalist journals, abound in narratives about Jewish-Arab (and Ashkenazi-Sephardi) contacts that are taken to demonstrate colonists' commitment to coexistence based in economic hierarchy.[36] These Mandate-era texts were part of a broader program of commemorating the past and asserting its significance in the face of opposition and Labour Zionist dominance, in part through a focus on heroic types known for their combination of Arabic knowledge and masculine bravery.[37]

Zerubavel Haviv, a Russian Jew of Ashkenazi origin and son of one of the founders of Rishon LeZion, established in 1882 southeast of Jaffa, called on fellow Zionists in 1946 to renew their commitment to Arabic language instruction in schools. "Knowledge of the language of our neighbours is an elementary obligation," Haviv wrote, "and shared lives will not be possible in this land and in the vicinity without a common language."[38]

Haviv had no affiliation with the Labour Zionists who set up programs for mutual understanding and institutes for the study of Arabic.[39] Not only does

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36   Two key organization of successors were the Farmers' Federation (Hitahdut ha-Ikarim), founded in 1929 which advocated the interests of capitalist farmers, and Bene Binyamin, an organization run by children of the first planters that was instrumental in founding new colonies, including Netanya and Herzliya, in the 1920s. Both had trouble articulating a political message or determining whether to position themselves as a political organization at all. Neomi Shiloah, *Merkaz holekh ve-ne'elam: ha-hugim ha-ezrahiyim be-Erets Yisra'el bi-shenot ha-sheloshim* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 2003), 77–88; Yigal Drori, *Ben yamin li-semol: ha-hugim ha-ezrahiyim bi-shenot ha-'esrim* (Tel-Aviv: Mif'alim universita'im la-hotsa'ah la-or, 1990), 162–79.

37   Yosef Lang, "Sefarim ve-yovlot: Petah Tikva mitmodedet 'im 'avarah," in *Le-Fetah Tikvah* (Petah Tikva: Oded Yarkoni Petah Tikva Archive, 2012), 10–50.

38   "Arabic in the vocational high school," 2 July 1946.

39   Abigail Jacobson, "Sephardim, Ashkenazim and the Arab Question in Pre-First World War Palestine: A Reading of Three Zionist Newspapers," *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2003): 105–30; Michelle U. Campos, "Between 'Beloved Ottomania' and 'The Land of Israel': the Struggle over Ottomanism and Zionism among Palestine's Sephardi Jews, 1908–1913," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 4 (2005): 461–83; Beinin, "Knowing Your Enemy, Knowing Your Ally"; Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948.*

Haviv criticise the Labour-Zionist economic and political agenda that became
dominant in the Yishuv after World War I, he also felt that Labour Zionists
systematically and unfairly overlooked the achievements and successes of
their non-labourite predecessors, those like his father. Haviv was not content
to let Labour Zionists claim the mantle of caring about Arabic study without
recognizing a much older Zionist commitment to the language. Why, he won-
dered, did later, Labour-leaning arrivals "never [stop to] wonder about the acts
of the first settlers [*ma'ase rishonim*], and think that the entire Hebrew Yishuv
[Jewish community] was founded upon their own arrival?"[40]

Haviv, like others from the late nineteenth-century Jewish colonies, had
built rituals of commemoration around these settlers, constructing them as
heroic men cherished for cultivating positive relations with local Arab popu-
lations, first and foremost through their knowledge of Arabic. Some of these
individuals gained fame through their untimely deaths at the hands of Arabs,
others by surviving and serving as living myths. In each narrative their knowl-
edge of Arabic, always acquired through personal contact rather than through
formal programs or institutes, gave them a familiarity with the landscape and
the ability to build trust with locals in a way that made their Jewish colonies
resistant to attack and explained the relative paucity and minimal severity of
Arab resistance to Zionist settlement as compared to trends in the twentieth
century. While historians have offered other contextual explanations for this
increase in violence and recall the more ethnically mixed pre-Zionist environ-
ments with which these settlers remained in contact, Haviv and others were
more than pleased to take personal credit for these figures *as* Zionists and
place blame on the backs of groups associated with their political opponents.

Two early colonists, Avraham Yalovsky and Avraham Shapira, both epito-
mized this seemingly natural acquisition of Arabic. Yalovsky, born in Bialystok
in 1850, came to Palestine in 1883 and was a blacksmith in Nes Ziona, located
south of Rishon LeZion. He was murdered in his hut in the winter of 1888–9 for
unclear reasons. In 1994, during his signing of the Cairo Agreement between
Israel and the PLO, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would refer to him as
the first casualty in the Yishuv, a sort of *ur*-casualty of Zionist memory.[41] But
Yalovsky's commemoration had begun quite a bit earlier, during the Mandate
period. Moshe Smilansky, a major participant in the elevation and celebration

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40   Zerubavel Haviv, "Ha-'Arvit be-vet ha-sefer ha-'amami" [Arabic in the Primary School]
      Ha-Boker, 2 July 1946, 2.

41   Yitzhak Rabin, "Alfe kevarim: shelanu ve-shelahem," Speech delivered at the signing of
      the Cairo agreement between Israel and the PLO, 4 May 1994. http://www.rabincenter.org
      .il/Items/01734/3.pdf

of the first colonies, emphasized that, "Yalovsky learned Arabic and in his nature loved joking and had lively, entertaining conversations and would draw customers both through his talking and through his work."[42] According to Moshe Levanon, a resident of Nes Ziona who shared his memories of Yalovsky in 1926, he lived in a lone house on the periphery of the colony that served as a meeting point: "Often Arab peasants and Bedouin from among his acquaintances [ma'rūfiyya] would meet in his house and he would chat with them about various matters." In Levanon's view, Yalovsky was killed despite his good relations with the peasants who would come to him to have horseshoes made.[43] Yalovsky combined several characteristics that lend credit to him and by extension to Nes Ziona. He was an entrepreneurial businessman, operating independently and drawing customers through the laws of the market. He was intrepid, willing to set up shop outside the centre of the colony. And he was a jovial man, building personal relations without any connection to organized political movements.

While Yalovsky is known because he died, Avraham Shapira of Petah Tikva was known because he lived. As he was fond of quipping to audiences, "In all the days of my life I never killed anyone and I never was killed."[44] Shapira, born in Southern Ukraine in 1870, became a guard in Petah Tikva in 1890 and died at the age of 95 in 1965. Over the course of the Mandate period he was praised locally not only for knowing Arabic but also for using these skills to track down stolen items, resolve conflicts between Petah Tikva and neighbouring villages, and even intervene as a judge in conflicts between Arab clans. His Arabic nickname, Sheikh Ibrahim Mikha, was often cited as proof of this alternative identity.

These personal connections with Arab leaders, largely corroborated by evidence from the period, seemed particularly distant during the days of the 1936–1939 Arab revolt. At that point Zionist immigration had increased considerably, as had Palestinian self-awareness as a national group in danger of being sidelined by Zionism. In a 1939 appeal addressed to "Hebrew Youth" and aimed at funding the second of the two volumes of Shapira's memoirs, a fundraising committee made up largely of representatives from the colonies and Zionists outside the Labour movement wrote that "you have of course heard and read of the acts of Avraham Shapira" and suggested that members of the

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42   Moshe Smilansky, *Perakim be-toldot ha-yishuv.* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1939), Vol 1, 80–81.

43   Moshe Levanon, "Lifnei heyot 'Nes Ziona': perek zikhronot." Written 11 Heshvan/ 19 October 1926. Given to Nes Ziona archive by Noam Reiber in 1998, in the name of Yitzhak Levanon. Nes Ziona Archive, Avraham Yalovsky Folder.

44   Dan Ben-Amotz and Hayim Hefer, *Yalkut ha-kezavim* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uhad, 1956), 38.

community must understand the necessity of publishing his memoirs in order that "the young Hebrew generation learn to walk in his ways." In what way would he serve as a model? In addition to being the "renewed Jewish heroic type," he "aroused respect among the daring [Arab] neighbours." The project, the appeal suggested, would give youngsters the feeling of "the honour of a nation raising heroes in its own land" and would teach them "the laws of relating to the [Arab] neighbours on both sides of the Jordan, both in peace and in conflict, but always with honour."[45]

Though Shapira was unaffiliated with any political party, he sided more with the right-wing or anti-Labour part of the Zionist political spectrum. Nonetheless, his longevity and identity among the first generation of recognized founders made his reputation seem to transcend politics. In 1946, just after the end of World War II, the Jewish Agency sent Avraham Shapira a greeting on the occasion of his 75th birthday that past December: "His name flutters over many pages of the magnificent review of building and guarding our name and our honour – great was his role in improving friendly neighbourly relations. Proud and upstanding, he knew how to weave the web of good relations between the villages that border our points of settlement."[46] Wisdom about resolving ongoing national and land conflict, these texts imply, would come not from the Labour leadership but from wisdom acquired by representatives of the founding generation of Zionist (in reality proto-Zionist) land settlers.

As presented in commemorative, retrospective, or advocacy materials produced during the Mandate period, Yalovsky and Shapira learned Arabic through sheer force of will and unmediated connection with locals. But historical circumstances suggest that these narratives obscure two key pieces of relevant context: new immigrants of the late nineteenth century who did achieve near-native fluency did so often through the intermediation of Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews who knew Arabic, or through connections with the pre-Zionist Ashkenazi Jewish communities of Palestine, which tended to have spoken proficiency in Arabic (if not reading knowledge) through daily neighbourhood and commercial contacts. In other words, they had these skills not because they were exemplars of a transformed Jewish type, but because their communities actually remained embedded in pre-Zionist structures. It's not surprising that such evidence is mentioned only occasionally. Those promoting the colonies had been accused by Labour Zionists of insufficient commitment to the nationalist project and excessive diasporic traits of religiosity and affinity

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45   Va'ad Ha-yedidim le-hotsa'at zichronot Avraham Shapira, n.d. [1939], Petah Tikva Archive 003.002/12 Item Number 8404.

46   'Ever Hadani (ed.), *Me'ah shenot shemirah be-Yisra'el* (Tel Aviv: Y. Chechik, 1954), 108.

for capitalism. They had reasons to minimize these contexts and emphasize personal valour and a break from the past.

One source of linguistic knowledge historically was Arabic-speaking Middle Eastern Jews who came to work in the colonies during their early years. Yehuda Raab recalls in his memoirs that the Petah Tikva colony hired two Oriental Jews, one from Baghdad (Daoud Abu Yusef) and one from Jaffa (Ya'qub Bin Maimun Zirmati), as guards in the early colony. When Abu Yusef arrived in the colony, Raab says, its residents were "still trainees in the ways of the Ishmaelites." But the Baghdadi Jewish guard provided a path out of this situation as soon as he set up a hut for himself in Petah Tikva "he became my teacher and Rabbi in the ways of guarding and neighbourly-relations."[47]

Abu-Yusef, in representing a world largely (but not fully) alien to Raab's, immediately demonstrates Raab's own ignorance; his texts render Raab illiterate, unable to make out the "strange letters" of the two languages that he claims to know, Hebrew and Arabic. But this intermediary helps him bridge the linguistic gap and allow the representatives of the "First Aliyah" to claim nativeness. Indeed, Haviv cited access to such native figures and willingness to employ him as evidence of this founding generations' commitment to positive Jewish-Arab relations.

A second source of linguistic knowledge came from the new colonies' roots in and connections to the existing Jewish communities of Palestine, especially those of Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Safed. The founders of Petah Tikva were Orthodox Jews from Jerusalem and over time both Jaffa and Jerusalem served as starting points and way stations for later immigrants who would become landowners in the colonies. Historical literature about Jewish land settlement in Palestine tends to obscure these connections, preferring to present the farmers as pioneers (or foreign colonists) wholly unmoored from the older Jewish communities Palestine. But there is evidence to demonstrate these connections. In the memoirs he had transcribed in 1939, Avraham Shapira from Petah Tikva suggested that he learned Arabic in Jerusalem and then Jaffa when his family had just arrived. Amazed at the perceived cowardice of other Jerusalemite Jews, that "turned a person's simple walk on the earth into a source of danger and bravery" the young Shapira imagined himself as someone

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47   Yehuda Raab, *Ha-Telem ha-rishon: zikhronot, 1862–1930* (Jerusalem: Ha-Sifriyah Ha-Tsiyonit 'al-yede ha-Histadrut ha-tsiyonit ha-'olamit, 1988), 68. See also Liora R. Halperin, "Trading Secrets: Constructions and Contexts of Two Middle Eastern Guards in the Early Petah Tikva Agricultural Colony," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 51:1 (January 2019): 1–22.

who could transcend these stereotypes.[48] Like Jewish modernists of all stripes in Europe and Palestine, he had been fantasizing about such a transformation. While in synagogue on the holiday of Shavuot he dreamt of "Vassily and Ivan fleeing from him just as he and his friends had to flee from them."[49] According to Shapira, this transformation into a Jewish version of "Vassily and Ivan," his Russian persecutors, began in earnest in Jaffa. Language, and specifically curses, motivated him: "*Yil'an dīnak*" (cursed be your religion), "*Yahūdī kāfir*," (Jewish infidel) and "*Shekenāzī Khanazīr*" (Ashkenazi pig) but "other than that, [Shapira] didn't understand anything." Remembering the insults of Ukrainians, Shapira claimed to be motivated to learn the language "so he could respond." And, indeed "through this exchange of 'compliments' Avraham came to realize that he knew how to speak Arabic, and within a few months could 'quarrel and play' with them without inhibitions."[50]

Arabic, which by all accounts Shapira did indeed come to know very well, became central to the narrative of his subsequent interactions and his striking ability to charm, impress, and intimidate the region's Arabs. Shapira's Arabic knowledge was unusual among settlers in the colonies, but less so when we understand him as a product of his Jerusalem origins, derisively called the "Old Yishuv" by those who imagined a rupture caused by nationalist settlement.

4   Conclusions

The Jewish agricultural colonies established in Palestine in the last two decades of the nineteenth century were tiny and surrounded by Arab villages, which provided most of their early workforce. Although their founders imagined a project targeted exclusively toward Jews and had not systematically considered possible effects on Arab populations, they generally presumed that Jewish-Arab market contact would be an essential part of their project.[51] Even as conditions changed, as Palestinian resistance to Zionist settlement grew and national conflict loomed large, some of these founders nostalgically and often counterfactually constructed or evoked an image of past coexistence based in language knowledge.

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48   Yehuda Idelstein, *Avraham Shapira* (*Sheikh Ibrahim Mikhah*), vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Yedidim, 1939), 34.
49   Idelstein, 1:32.
50   Idelstein, 1:37.
51   Dimitry Shumsky, *Beyond the Nation-State: The Zionist Political Imagination from Pinsker to Ben-Gurion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

This vision, however, was not of equality. It was of what I call hierarchical coexistence, i.e., between an employer and a menial worker. This is not true co-existence but rather a compelling illusion, so compelling that in retrospect advocates of it have become models not only to the capitalist right, but also to the left. One such advocate was Yitzhak Epstein, a Zikhron Yaakov landowner, who in a 1907 essay, "The Hidden Question," argued that colonists could assuage Arab protests through awareness of possible opposition and paternalistic benevolence. Epstein, a Hebrew teacher in Zikhron Yaakov who had immigrated to Palestine in 1886, warned that when Jews purchased land being worked by native Arabs, they left a festering wound in the heart of the peasant. He cautioned that even if Arab workers seemed compliant "as long as the wages were good," they would protest later if they sensed they were going to be removed from the land they held so dear. This protest, however, could be mollified if Jews committed to purchasing fallow lands, allowed Arabs to remain on land that they were working at the time of purchase, and instructed these peasants in modern farming practices.[52]

Epstein is often regarded as one of the few early Zionists to recognize the ethical and national problem of dispossessing Arabs in the course of European Jewish immigration and settlement. Some, therefore, regard him as a spiritual predecessor to those on the Zionist left, as well as those non-statist Zionists who would echo his call for coexistence work during the Mandate period, including bi-nationalist groups such as Brit Shalom. But it is more appropriate to see Epstein's vision of Jewish-Arab coexistence as an early voice in a bourgeois, capitalist coexistence discourse premised on Jewish-Arab hierarchy.

Epstein celebrated the fact that colonies hired Arab workers: "the situation of the [Arab] cities and villages near the colonies has been elevated; many craftsman, stone masons, builders, whitewashers, donkey and camel drivers, and thousands of workers find work in the colonies."[53] Not only Jewish settlement but also the hiring of low wage Arab labour seemed justified so long as it was accompanied by modernizing and civilizing reforms. Agriculturalists who hired Arab labour and considered it wrongheaded to do otherwise echoed variants of this position in the decades that followed.

The Arabic language sat at the heart of narratives about Jewish-Arab "coexistence," not only those from the Zionist left, whose efforts to study Arabic while promoting labour separation have received the bulk of scholarly addition, but also those criticised for their continual hiring of Arab workers.

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52   Yitzhak Epstein, "She'elah ne'elmah," *Ha-Shiloah* 17 (July–December 1907) Odessa: Ahiasaf, [193–206], 195

53   Ibid., 199.

Narratives of past language knowledge, during a period of growing political contention, were tools in an unfolding Zionist conversation about the links between language knowledge, conflict, and the possibility of harmony in a situation of European Jewish land settlement.

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United by Faith, Divided by Language: the Orthodox in Jerusalem

Merav Mack

1 Introduction

The Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, known also as the Greek Orthodox or Rum Orthodox Church, is home to a number of ethnic communities speaking different languages, including Greek, Arabic, Russian, Georgian, Romanian and Serbian, and more recently Hebrew as well.[1] This chapter focuses on the grassroots of the two main communities, the Greek-speaking Hellenic community and the Arabic-speaking Palestinian one, in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The first half of the twentieth century was a period of growing tension between the leaders of the Arab community and the senior Greek clergy, i.e., members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and the Synod of the Church; the scope and depth of this tension is well analysed by Konstantinos Papastathis in his contribution to this book. In this chapter, however, I would like to shift the attention from the leadership to the members of the community and ask: how does a community function when united by religion but divided by language? In other words, I question the relationship between the Greeks and the Arabs at the community level, with an emphasis on the role of the language barrier between them. The focus is on the axis of religion and language and examining the Greek community against migration theories and the studies of language shift and language loyalty, and I concentrate on three expressions of the language divide: the choice of churches, liturgical preferences, and naming patterns.

My sources include archival material that I found in 2014 when I took part in an ERC-funded research project "Open Jerusalem." I worked with a team of scholars and collected baptismal records and marriage certificates from two

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1 The ethnic composition of this denomination has been going through major changes in recent years, mainly due to Russian influx in Israel. There are also Hebrew-speaking Christian communities in Israel, in the Latin Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

local Orthodox archives, some in Greek and some in Arabic.[2] The first analysis of this material was published under the title "Matrimony and Baptism: Changing Landscapes in Greek (Rum) Orthodox Jerusalem (1900–1940)" (*BJMES*, 2017), which I authored together with Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire.[3] I have expanded the sources of this chapter with material from the Greek Club in West Jerusalem, and supplemented the archival sources with three autobiographies of Orthodox members of the two communities: Wasif Jawhariyyeh (1897–1972) who grew up in an Arab family, Panayotis Vatikiotis (1928–1997) who had a strong sense of belonging to a Greek community, and the late John Tleel who was also born in 1928 and was descended from a mixed Arab-Greek family. When interviewed, at age ninety, he was still active and assiduously collecting documents regarding the Orthodox community.[4]

2   The Orthodox Community of Jerusalem

Much has been written about the Greek-Arab relationship during the Late Ottoman and British Mandate periods, especially regarding the episodes of open conflict between them, or the "rebellion" as some preferred to call the struggle of the Arab lay community against the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. The Greeks, who were among the first nations around the Mediterranean to gain independence (1832), were proud of their success and were often guilty of over-patronising the local Arab congregation. At the same time, this Arab congregation (much encouraged by the Russians) had begun to question the exclusivity of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, which did not allow Arabs into its ranks. Criticism was expressed against the Greek patriarch and what

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2 The records are kept in two archives, the Ecclesiastical Court of First Instance (henceforth ECFI) at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the archives of the Orthodox *Mukhtār*, the lay head of the Arabic-speaking Orthodox community in Jerusalem, located inside the complex of the church of St. Jacob (Mār Yaʿqūb) (henceforth SJBR). In addition to records of the local Jerusalemite community, the ECFI book contains records of pilgrims who celebrated their confirmation (chrismation) in Jerusalem and its surroundings as well as members of communities in the region. They include 170 matrimonial records (1920–1925) and baptism registers (selected copies in Greek of 513 records from 1875 to 1970, and a chronological register of 1,825 records in Arabic spanning the period of 1928–1944/5).

3 I am grateful to my colleagues: Rana Musa transcribed 1,825 baptismal records from Arabic (SJBR), Dr Gabriel Haritos translated 170 marriage certificates (ECFI), and Dr Falestin Naili reviewed and corrected many of the Arabic records.

4 Wasif Jawhariyyeh, *Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948* (Northampton MA: Olive Branch, 2013); John N. Tleel, *I Am Jerusalem* (John N. Tleel, 2007); Panayotis J. Vatikiotis, *Among Arabs and Jews, 1936–90* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991).

was viewed as Greek control of Palestinian patrimony.[5] Even the official name of the community or the church was contested. To date, the patriarchate adheres to the title "Greek-Orthodox," whereas the Arab community, distancing itself from the misleading Greekness, prefers "Arab Orthodox" or the historical "Rum Orthodox." The terms are of course synonymous but can be emotionally charged.[6]

But how deeply rooted was the divide between the communities? By turning to baptismal and matrimony records I have found fresh means to study communal relations. Who married whom, what churches did people prefer to attend, in what language did they pray, and what names did they give their children. These particular questions may shed light on the role of Greek language and culture in the lives of the Arabs and the usage of Arabic by the Brotherhood as well the Hellenic community of Jerusalem.

3   The Religious Landscape of the Orthodox Community

3.1   *Language of Prayer*

During the British Mandate period sixteen different Orthodox churches in the Old City of Jerusalem had been in use by members of the Orthodox communities. Most of them are churches within small monasteries that date from the middle ages.[7] They rarely attract visitors from outside the Orthodox

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5 Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "Colonialism and Religious Power Politics: The Question of New Regulations within the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem during the British Mandate," *Middle Eastern Studies* 50,4 (2014): 589–605; Sotiris Roussos, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Church-State Relations in the Holy Land between the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," in *Christianity in the Middle East: Studies in Modern History, Theology, and Politics*, ed. Anthony O'Mahony (London: Melisende, 2008), 219–31; Laura Robson, "Communalism and Nationalism in the Mandate: The Greek Orthodox Controversy and the National Movement," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41,1 (2011): 6–23; Merav Mack, "Orthodox and Communist: A History of a Christian Community in Mandate Palestine and Israel," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42,4 (2015): 384–400; Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914; Church and Politics in the Near East* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1969); Daphne Tsimhoni, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem during the Formative Years of the British Mandate in Palestine," *Asian and African Studies* 12,1 (1978): 77–121.

6 The term "Rum" has its origins in the Byzantine roots of the community when Constantinople was known as the "New Rome." Some of the Arab members of the community prefer to use the prefix "Rum" to distance themselves from the contested denotation of the term "Greek." Both terms are used in this article as well as the more generic reference to the Orthodox community as a whole.

7 Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*: Volume 3, The City of Jerusalem: A Corpus (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

community and are not mentioned in tourist maps of the city from this peri-od.[8] Judging by the baptism and matrimony records we can divide them into three types: those that served almost exclusively Greek-speaking monks and Hellenic families; those that served the Arabic community, where liturgy was celebrated exclusively in Arabic; and a few mixed churches where both Greek and Arab families attended the services.[9]

Thus, it was language which mainly divided the churches and parish com-munities. The most popular churches attended by the Arabic-speaking families were St Jacob's (also called St James, and in Arabic Mār Yaʿqūb) and al-Saidnaiya (formerly known as St. Anne's church). The Hellenic community's most pop-ular church was St Simeon, located at the Qatamon monastery outside the Old City. However, some of the churches were mixed and served both Greek and Arab families. In his autobiography of this period John Tleel mentions St. Basil's as his family's parish church. Tleel's family traces its Jerusalem roots to 1650. John's Arab father and grandfather both married Greek wives from other parts of the Ottoman Empire. The mothers spoke Greek to their children and at the patriarchate school John was also trained in reading and writing Greek. At St. Basil's the Tleels were joined by other mixed families: "We were not the only regulars, many other families came too, all local Jerusalemites, Arabs as well as Greeks. The Sic-Siks and the Hananias were in charge of singing in both Arabic and Greek…. Among the Greek families were the Spathopoulos and the Papadopoulos and Michel Emmanuel."[10] All four priests who served in this church were Greek, and according to Tleel the liturgy was held solely in Greek.[11] The surnames of the community members in each church seem to indicate that mixed congregations were found also in St. George (Mar Jiris), St Euthymios (Mar Eftimos), Charalampos (Mar Karalambos, formerly Mar Chariton), St. Michael (Mar Mikhail), and St. Nicolas (Mar Nicola).[12]

The wedding certificates show cases of cross marriages between the Greek-speaking congregation and the Arabic one. Thus, for example, one of the Kallona family (Greek) married Khamis[13] (Arab), Vakaris married into the family of Abdallah Issa,[14] Papa Anastassios and Qamar; Abu ʿĪd and

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8   See for example a tourist map produced by a Jerusalem engineer who was also the sec-
     ular leader of the Greek community. The Greek churches are marked modestly with a
     small cross and are not included in the list of sites mentioned at the back. S.N. Spyridon,
     "Jerusalem: Pictorial Plan" (Jerusalem: Goldberg's Press, 1930).

9   See Mack et al. "Matrimony," Fig. 1, 11 and Appendix 1–2, 20–21.

10   Tleel, 47, 53–54.

11   Interview of 11/07/2014.

12   Cf. note 8 above.

13   The Greek-speaking monk transliterated Khamis as Καμίς.

14   ECFI: MC record 147, 20 November 1924.

Babathobus (Papadopoulos); Georgiathes and Abu Slema (or Abu Salim).[15] Of course, many of the Arab Palestinian Orthodox families have their roots in Byzantium. One example is the family of George Qamar, the current Arab Orthodox *Mukhtār* (lay leader) of the community, who belongs to one of the oldest Orthodox families in Jerusalem. According to family tradition their forefather originated from Constantinople in the seventh century where the family name was Kamaris. Over the centuries the name was Arabized to Qamar.[16]

3.2   *Religious Rituals*

The two communities were also divided by religious practices, particularly those related to pilgrimage. It may be trivial to say that local Christians do not have the same concept of pilgrimage as Christians who live outside the boundaries of the Holy Land. One example concerns rituals relating to the Jordan River, an important pilgrimage site and favourite destination for baptism and chrismation in this period. The baptism records contain evidence of dozens of families from various parts of Greece, from Istanbul, and even Tehran and Baku who visited the Jordan River. Four Egypt-born Greeks, from Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said and Suez (Qantara) were baptised in the holy river.

For many Greek pilgrims the journey to the Jordan River was a transformative experience which, as in Islamic practice, changes the status and name of the pilgrim. The word for 'pilgrim' in modern Greek is *chatzis* (χατζής), which is derived from the Arabic *ḥajj* and is also used as a prefix of Greek surnames, such as Hadjandreas.

According to our sources, 46 children from Jerusalem, all descendants of Hellenic families, were baptised in the Jordan River. Figure 10.1 is a blurred, unnumbered photograph from the collection of the Greek Club, probably from the 1920s or 1930s, showing a priest with a couple holding a baby in a boat with seven other men.

The Arabic-speaking congregation did not follow the practice of baptism and chrismation at the Jordan River. When I asked John Tleel why the Arab Orthodox do not follow this tradition he said:

> we are not like the Greek hadji; they must go to the Jordan River. We were born "proskinites" (προσκυνητές, pilgrims) because we live in Jerusalem.[17]

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15   In Arabic Qamar and Bābā Anāstī, SJBR record 411 (31 August 1933); Abū ʿĪd and Bābādūbus, record 1526 (17 May 1943); Abū Salīma and Jiyūrjiyādhus, record 1732 (27 November 1944).

16   Interview, 12 April 2016.

17   Interview 18 July 2014.

FIGURE 10.1 The Greek Club Collection: at the Jordan River

The attitude to the holy sites was just one example of the divides between the two sub-communities. Other differences often included wealth, education, professions (possibly class) and locations of residence in the city, all of which contributed to their separation from each other and also affected the language divide.[18]

4   Language Divide

Wasif Jawhariyyeh, known also as "the oud player" and "the storyteller of Jerusalem" (after his autobiography which was published under this title by Salim Tamari) was born in Jerusalem in 1904. His childhood home *Dar Jawhariyyeh* was in the neighbourhood of al-Saʿdiyya, at a hilltop between

18   Mack et al., see note 1 [above].

Damascus Gate and Herod's Gate. Christian families had lived in this part of the Old City in the early twentieth century, but they were exclusively Arab. Wasif's father was a lawyer and an autodidact who "taught himself Arabic, Turkish and then Greek."[19] His prestigious profession and abilities secured him a high position at the community. In 1884 he was appointed *Mukhtār*, working closely with the heads of the municipality and the municipal council, and had especially close relations with al-Nashashibi and al-Husseini families. Patriarch Damianos appointed him a member of the ecclesiastical court.[20]

Wasif himself, however, did not receive any Greek education. Instead, he was first sent to the Lutheran Dabbagha School near the Church of the Redeemer in the Old City, were he learnt Arabic and "some German." "The school was mainly attended by Arab Greek Orthodox pupils" explains Jawhariyyeh, so it was a remarkable choice considering that the Orthodox school of St. Dimitri was only a few streets away. As Konstantinos Papastathis shows, it was not unusual for the Arab Orthodox families to prefer other denominational schools. Wasif was later transferred to Khalil al-Sakakini's modern *dustūriyya* School (an Arabic national school of no religious affiliation), where he learnt Quranic Arabic, Turkish and French but not Greek.[21] The school director and famous educator Khalil al-Sakakini was an Arab Orthodox. The decision not to include Greek as one of the languages taught at school was probably pragmatic, but may also reflect Sakakini's personal antagonism against the Greek administration of the patriarchate and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.[22]

Nevertheless, in the eyes of Wasif Jawhariyyeh Greek education was superior. In one of his diary entries he compares his childhood education with his wife's, and says: "Victoria was fortunate to receive a superior Greek education and lived a quiet aristocratic life, broadening her knowledge of astronomy and classical Greek."[23] In another entry he describes his visit to the patriarch, during which Victoria had to translate the conversation. The memoirs reveal no resentment against the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre or the patriarch. Rather, he writes: "I stood admiring his extraordinary looks, glorious beauty, and lofty stature which he maintained despite his old age."[24]

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19   Jawhariyyeh, 10.
20   Ibid., 10–13.
21   Ibid., 19, 74–75.
22   Haiduc-Dale, 35; Robson, 29–30.
23   Jawhariyyeh, 162
24   Jawhariyyeh, 164.

5   Greek Identity

For the children of Greek families in Jerusalem, even after several generations, Greek language and a sense of separate identity were important. In the Arabic baptism register of St. Jacob's church there is a unique column header: "*waṭan al-muʿammad*," which translates as "the homeland of the baptized" and is separate from the column "place of birth." There are 115 cases of children for which this column indicates "Greece," even though 108 of them were born and raised in Jerusalem, and many of them were baptised in their own homes, or in some cases even in their grandparents' houses. They were clearly neither pilgrims nor visitors, but rather second- and even third-generation Jerusalemites. Yet, the community classified them Greek in the Arabic register. The Arab members of the community would have understood and felt connected to this notion of belonging. Cyrus Schayegh shows the importance attributed to the notion of *waṭan* to Arab nationalists in this period. He quotes the Lebanese scholar Butrus al-Bustani: "*waṭan* is the house of residence of a man and his (fixed) abode whether he was born in it or not." Al-Bustani elaborates that "in modern times, love of the homeland is [an article] of faith."[25]

The Greek notion of national belonging is not unique to those living in Jerusalem or the Holy Land. Greek migrants had long settled throughout the Mediterranean and even beyond, following work and other opportunities, but often kept their sense of belonging. When describing such communities, Greek scholars prefer to use the term *homogenia* (ομογένεια) over *diaspora* to describe members of ethnic Greek minorities in foreign countries who themselves or their ancestors have never lived on Greek soil.[26] Still, for Hellenic Christians Jerusalem is not the same as other foreign cities. After all, one of the unique facts about Jerusalem is that Greeks have been present in the city continuously for nearly two thousand years, and that Greek has been one of the city's principal languages.

6   Language Loyalty

Language shift plays a central part in theories of migration and acculturation. Scholars refer to a "third generation principle" as a rough indication of the

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25   Butrus al-Bustani, *Muhit al-Muhit* (Beirut: s.n., 1870), 2:2265, translated by Cyrus Schayegh, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Harvard University Press, 2017), 45.

26   Yiorgos Anagnostou, "Where Does 'Diaspora' Belong? The View from Greek American Studies," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 28 (2010), 85.

period of erosion of pre-migration identities. In a classic, often quoted (and criticized) essay Joshua Fishman wrote:

> The erosion of ethnicity and ethnic identity experienced by most (but not all) American ethnic groups takes place in the course of three generations ... ethnic heritage, including the ethnic mother tongue, usually ceases to play any viable role in the life of the third generation.... [The grandchildren] become literally outsiders to their ancestral heritage.[27]

However, the Greek diaspora in Jerusalem in the first half of the twentieth century did not follow these patterns of migration. Having Greek-speaking churches, clergy who continued to come from Greece, schools and clubs helped them keep their communal identity. And so they preserved their national affiliation and maintained a loyalty to their language and ethnicity over the course of three generations and longer. One indication of the growing gap between the communities can be seen by the choice of names. Breaking away from the common religious naming patterns, both communities seem to have preferred given names that were more closely related to their cultures and national identity. In the Appendix to this chapter the more popular female names in the 1930s are listed to demonstrate the differences between the two communities.

7   Hellenic Jerusalemite Identity

The story of Hellenic life in Jerusalem in this period is exemplified also by the biography of Panayiotis Vatikiotis. Born in 1928, Panayiotis was a third-generation Greek in Palestine. His grandfather Yannis travelled from the island of Hydra to Acre, where he married a poor Orthodox Nazarene girl named Evmorphia (Jamila), a maid at a local tavern in Acre, a girl he described as "thoroughly Hellenized."[28] Panayiotis's father Gerasimos was born in Acre in 1900, worked as a telegrapher and married Panayiotis's mother, a Jerusalem woman born of Greek parents (Emanuel and Zoe Meimarakis). From Jerusalem Panayotis's parents moved to Qantara, following work opportunities at the maritime company of the Suez Canal. There, they founded "a lively community with its own

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27   Vladimir C. Nahiri and Joshua A. Fishman, "American Immigrant Groups: Ethnic Identification and the Problem of Generations (1965)," in *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, ed. Werner Sollors (NYU Press, 1996), 266.

28   Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis, *Among Arabs and Jews, 1936–90* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991), 9. In the wedding certificates in the ECFI records she is mentioned by her Arabic name Zemile, which means Jamilla. Matrimony Records, 128 of 19 August 1928.

church (St Spyridon) and school ... and generally continued to be as Greek in the diaspora as ever."[29] As a child, Vatikiotis had both Jewish and Arab friends, but he was brought up to view himself as different from both.

> I was born in Palestine (Jerusalem) and spent the first seventeen years of my life there: my childhood, boyhood and adolescence ... I was surrounded by Arabs and Jews in school, in my neighbourhood, in the streets, on the bathing beaches ... I am, incidentally, neither an Arab nor a Jew.
>
> What is significant perhaps is that a Greek home, a Greek school and the Greek Church made sure that no Greek growing up in the Holy Land – in Palestine – forgot for a moment that he or she was neither Arab nor Jew, but plain Greek.[30]

In later years Panayiotis Vatikiotis became an important scholar, with meaningful views on the same subjects analysed here. He reflects, for example, on the "religious ingrained patriotism" that characterized the Greek community, which was extended through marriage to the local Palestinian population, too. Greek women married local Arabs continued to bring up "Hellenized" children.[31] Many years after he left Palestine-Israel and moved to live in Britain, Vatikiotis criticized the nationalistic sentiment of his childhood. In his memoirs he blames the community that "turned us into fanatic Greeks encumbered by all the ignorant chauvinism of nationalism."[32]

Figure 10.2 is a photograph from the collection of the Greek Club, showing some of the children of the community of similar age as Panayotis Vatikiotis, with Patriarch Damianos (1897–1931) standing at the top of the patriarch's residence's staircase. It was taken in Qatamon, near St. Simeon's Church, probably in the late 1920s.[33]

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29   Vatikiotis, *Among Arabs and Jews*, 19.
30   Ibid., 1.
31   Ibid., 8.
32   Ibid., 13, 28.
33   These children were probably a little bit older than Panayotis Vatikiotis, who was born in 1928. The children in this photograph could be the same ones listed in the baptismal records, although I could not find anybody who could still identify them by name.

FIGURE 10.2 Greek boys in scout, cub and band uniforms with Patriarch Damianos at his
Qatamon residence

8   Conclusions: between Religion and Language, between Greek and Arabic

Sixty years after the end of the British Mandate, the small Greek Club today stands in the heart of West Jerusalem, but its Greek members amount to just a handful of families. The vibrant Hellenic people had moved away, some to Greece and some, keeping with the tradition of travel, had moved on, some as far away as Australia. A few families remain, headed in 2018 by Anastas Damianos, who continues to keep the club active. The club continues to host multilingual events where Greek remains a dominant language alongside English, Hebrew and Arabic.

The issues of language, religious practicalities and ethnicity remain sensitive in Jerusalem even today. Therefore, scholars sometimes fall into the trap of judging the early twentieth-century community according to the situation

today. This is a mistake. Many of the senior members of the synod, including the patriarch, speak Arabic fluently today, and the patriarchate issues weekly sermons in Arabic. None of that existed in the first half of the twentieth century. At that time Greek served as an alternative to Arabic, often suppressing it. Greek families kept separate from the Arab faithful and remained loyal to their language and ethnicity. And so, despite their shared faith, the children of the Arab and Greek communities grew up separately.

Appendix: Comparison between the Names Given to Orthodox Greek and Arab Girls in Jerusalem in the 1930s and 1940s

Popular female names in Jerusalem's Greek community in the 1930s and 1940s	Popular female names in Jerusalem's Arab community in the 1930s
Anna (17%)	Laylā (15%)
Eleni (14%)	Mary (Mārī) (14%)
Anastasia (12%)	Nadia (Nādiya) (10%)
Maria (12%)	Georgette (Jīrjīt) (9%)
Hariklia (10%)	Violet (Fīyūlīt) (7%)
Evangelia (7%)	ʿĀʾida (6%)
Fotini (7%)	Jamīla (6%)
Irini (7%)	Suʿād (6%)
Ourania (7%)	Nāhida (5%)
Stavroula (7%)	Ilīnī (4%)

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Arabic vs. Greek: the Linguistic Aspect of the Jerusalem Orthodox Church Controversy in Late Ottoman Times and the British Mandate

Konstantinos Papastathis

1   Introduction

The Orthodox Church of Jerusalem has had a continuous historical presence in Palestine, recognized by the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) as the fifth See in the hierarchy of the Christian Church. It enjoys extensive custodianship rights over the Holy Places according to the so-called *status quo* agreement, and up until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the great majority of the local Christians belonged to the Orthodox creed. From early Ottoman times, the patriarchate was institutionally structured as a monastic brotherhood. This means that the Patriarch, i.e., the Head of the Fraternity, exercises more or less absolute power over all the affairs of the institution. Moreover, during Ottoman times the Patriarchate acquired an ethnically Greek character, to the detriment of the other national Orthodox groups, and especially the indigenous population. Theoretically any Orthodox individual can become member of the brotherhood. In practice, however, since the mid-nineteenth century the basic criterion for admission to the Brotherhood has been loyalty to the Greek national idea. Overall, the Arab Orthodox movement represented the great majority of the native lay members of the Church from all over Palestine. It was closely related to the Arab national cause, which explains partially its close bonds with the Muslim element of the population as well. In the Mandate period, the native Orthodox were organized in local clubs and were represented at a central level by the Arab Orthodox Executive, except of a small minority that formed the so-called "Moderate party." The Arab Orthodox viewed the Greek rule as cultural imperialism and demanded their emancipation from Greek control, as well as the abolishment of the centralized structure of the institution via Arab inclusion in decision-making processes.[1] Overall, the Arab Orthodox demands were for: a) the establishment of a

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1   ʿA. al-Aḥad al-Shāfī, *Lamḥa taʾrīkhiyya fī akhawiyyat al-qabr al-muqaddas al-yūnānīya* (Beirut, 1893) [translated by Michel Najim, *An Historical Glance at the Brotherhood of the Holy*

mixed council for the administration of communal affairs, including finances; b) the free admission of Arab Orthodox people to the patriarchal organization; and c) active participation in the electoral processes of the high clergy. The role of Russian diplomacy and religious apparatus in the affair was crucial, and fuelled the intercommunal division along ethnic lines as a means to strengthen the Russian position with regard to the inter-Orthodox power competition, as well as to promote Saint Petersburg strategic goals in relation to the Ottoman Empire.[2]

The aim of this chapter is to contextually elaborate on the linguistic aspect of this controversy, namely the congregation's endeavour to upgrade Arabic to a 'higher' status language, on equal footing with Greek.[3] In particular, I examine the demands of the indigenous congregation to use Arabic as the working language in education, Church liturgy and administration, which was viewed as an act of resistance to Greek linguistic dominance. In other words, I elaborate on the claim to fill the gap between on the one hand language ideology, i.e., Arabic as a central factor in the respective nation-building process, being a unifying element between the religiously diverse Palestinian Arab collective agent, and on the other hand language practice, i.e., the primacy of Greek within the Church institution imposed from the outsider clerical establishment, and effectively the use of Arabic as a second-order language despite being the standardized language of the native population. My thesis is that the Greek officials were not in principle unwilling to accept the use of Arabic, and actually they did as long as it did not work as the breeding ground for

Sepulcher (California, 1996)]; P.J. Vatikiotis, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem between Hellenism and Arabism," _Middle Eastern Studies_ 20 (1994): 916–929; Daphne Tsimhoni, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem during the Formative Years of the British Mandate in Palestine," _Asian and African Studies_ 12 (1978): 77–121; Sotiris Roussos, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem," in _The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land_, edited by A. O'Mahony, G. Gunner and K. Hintlian (London, 1995): 211–224; Sotiris Roussos, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem: Church, State and Identity," in _The Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Studies in History, Religion and Politics_, ed. A. O'Mahony (Cardiff, 2003): 38–56; Sotiris Roussos, "Eastern Orthodox Perspectives on Church-State Relations and Religion and Politics in Modern Jerusalem," _International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church_ 5 (2005): 103–122.

2   Abdul Latif Tibawi, _Russian Cultural Penetration of Syria-Palestine in the Nineteenth Century_ (London: Luzav and Co., 1966); Elena Astafieva, "La Russie en Terre Sainte: le cas de la Société Impériale Orthodoxe de Palestine (1882–1917)," _Cristianesimo nella Storia_ 24 (2003): 41–68; Derek Hopwood, _The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914: Church and Politics in the Near East_ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

3   Tinatin Bolkvadze, "Eastern Christian Tradition and the Georgian Language," in _Explorations in the Sociology of Language and Religion_, edited by Tope Omoniyi and Joshua A. Fishman (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing House, 2006), 60–67.

challenging their own power over the patriarchal affairs. However, in practical terms this norm meant that language worked as a criterion for defining the *alien in-group*, whose mother-tongue was Greek and which thus could become a member of the Brotherhood, from the *native outgroup*, who spoke Arabic and whose members thus were eligible only to become parish priests without having the possibility to advance their careers. Subsequently, whereas from a political perspective Arabic worked as an inclusive element for the local Arab Orthodox in the dominant Muslim social body, it became the reason for exclusion from the institutional church organization.

Accordingly, the research questions to be addressed are:

1. How was Arabic used within the Jerusalem Patriarchate, and how did the unequal status of Arabic vis-à-vis the Greek language contribute to the construction of the Arab Orthodox collective identity?
2. What were the underlying reasons for Greek religious establishment for rejecting the Arab claims?

Besides the published public records, Church documents and secondary literature, this chapter builds on primary sources from the British National Archives, the Greek Foreign Ministry, the Israel State Archives, and the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The method used for elaborating the material is built on the historical-critical paradigm.

The chapter is divided into three parts: (1) The context within which the Arab Orthodox movement was developed; (2) The stance of the Greek clergy, and (3) the role of language in the Arab Orthodox cause, to be followed by a Conclusion.

2 The Context

The number of Jerusalem Orthodox was estimated to be 1,400 individuals in 1800; 1,850 in 1850; 5,000 in 1900; and 5,945 in 1922. Throughout this time, the Orthodox Church had the most members of any Christian body, comprising about 10% of the city's total population.[4] There is no concrete demographic evidence with regard to the whole of the Palestine region in Ottoman times. According to the 1922 census, the Orthodox congregation had 33, 369

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4 Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, "Patterns of Christian Activity and Dispersion in Nineteenth Century Jerusalem," *Journal of Historical Geography* 2,1 (1976): 50–51.

members, forming 45% of the total Christians.[5] From the mid-nineteenth century onward a wave of Greek immigrants from both the Ottoman Empire and the Greek state settled in Jerusalem in search of employment. This group did not integrate into the dominant community, despite its close contact with the local Orthodox Arabs, but kept its separate Greek identity and loyalty to the national centre.[6] On the one hand, the two groups had a common religious identity and in some cases shared the same churches, where both languages were used in religious ceremonies. On the other hand, many Greek residents spoke their mother tongue as their first language, and attended mass, where Greek was used exclusively; many of them were settled in a delimited area of Jerusalem (i.e., the so-called Greek Colony), sent their children to different schools, and frequented different social clubs. In short, the fact that the two groups had close links between them did not imply their fusion into a cohesive communal whole, but they actually remained separated from one another.[7] The existence of the Greek group in Jerusalem was not related to the controversy between the Arab congregation and the Greek religious establishment, because the diaspora group did not work as a pool for recruiting members for the Brotherhood; nor did the hierarchy plead its authority or base its arguments for the patriarchate's supposedly Greek character on the presence of the city's Greek diaspora. In short, any identification between the Brotherhood and the ethnic Greek community in Jerusalem is not historically substantiated. Of course this does not exclude the interaction between the two actors, which was very close especially in the field of education. However, the Greek Brotherhood/Arab congregation divide was an affair strictly of the hierarchy, not the war of the Greek diaspora.

This dispute dates back to the nineteenth century. It was a result of social restructuring and the formulation of a new ideological frame within the multi-ethnic Orthodox community after *Tanzimat*, leading to the gradual transformation of this community from a coherent collective group (the Rum-Millet) into a fragmented cluster of antagonistic national movements (Greek vs. Bulgarian; Greek vs. Arab) with a shared religious affiliation. In turn, this process led to the nationalization of the ecclesiastical structures, with the development of 'separatist' movements within the Church, which was transformed from an

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5   J.B. Barron, *Palestine: Report and General Abstracts of the Census of 1922* (Government of Palestine, 1923).

6   Merav Mack, Angelos Dalachanis, and Vincent Lemire, "Matrimony and Baptism: Changing Landscapes in Greek (Rum) Orthodox Jerusalem (1900–1940)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 45,3 (2018): 443–463; online Jan. 2017: 5–8.

7   Merav Mack, "United by Faith, Divided by Language: The Orthodox in Jerusalem," in the current volume.

imperial institution into ethnic-based religious jurisdictions. An important development in this direction was the institutionalization of the so-called *General or "National" Regulations of the 'Rum-Millet'* (1862), which triggered the partial 'democratization' of communal operation.[8] Involving the laity in the decision-making process proceeded via the creation of the Mixed Councils, composed of both clerics and lay representatives. Consequently, there was a transition of power from the religious bureaucracies to the lay elites.[9]

However, although these regulations were applied in the Patriarchate of Constantinople and later in that of Antioch, they were not accepted by the high clergy of Jerusalem. The normative ground put forward for their rejection was the monastic structure of the institution. This meant that the patriarchate was recognized by law to be in actual terms a Monastery. As such, the congregation could not be entitled to rule an institution whose system of administration, as defined by Canon and the Ottoman Civil Law, gave this right only to its friars. This aspect of the operation of the Jerusalem patriarchate constitutes its difference with the patriarchates of Constantinople and Antioch, which due to their community-centred internal structure were free to open the doors to the creation of the Mixed Councils.[10] On the other hand, in practical terms the Regulations were rejected because the hierarchy viewed them as a potential threat to the Greek rule, despite the fact that the *millet* system did not imply a national grouping, but rather had a religious meaning indicating the Orthodox community *per se*.[11] As the British Commission argued, there was no legal Ottoman document regarding the Jerusalem Church distinguishing between 'Greek' and 'Arab' – both were considered 'Rum.'[12] From the Greek perspective, the distinction between 'Greek' and 'Arab' in national terms (based on the

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8   George Young, *Corps de Droit Ottoman*, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), 21–34.

9   Demetres Stamatopoulos, *Metarrythmisi kai ekkosmikeusi: pros mia anasynthesi tis historias tou Oikoumenikou Patriarcheiou ton 19o aiona* [Reformation and secularization: towards a reformulation of the history of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the 19th century] (Athens: Alexandria, 2003).

10   Kallistos Miliaras, "Character and Composition of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem," in *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire into the Affairs of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem*, edited by Anton Bertram and Harry C. Luke (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 284–291.

11   Paraskevas Konortas, *Othomanikes theoriseis gia to Oikoumeniko Patriarcheio, 170s – arches 200u aiona* [*Ottoman vetting concerning the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 17th – beginning of the 20th century*] (Athens: Alexandreia, 1998), 303–315.

12   Anton Bertram and John W.A. Young, *The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire and Report upon Certain Controversies between the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Community* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 58–78.

idea that within the modernist framework they represented diverse political aspirations and antagonistic collective loyalties on the basis of different senses of civic belonging) was in practice developed after the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Authors who wrote during this period, such as Neophytos, Maximos, and Prokopios, explicitly refer to the "Arab Orthodox," differentiating them from the "Greek." The paradox is that while 'Greek' is identified with the 'Rum,' the 'Arab Orthodox' are also considered to be part of the 'Rum.'[13] On the other hand, for the Greeks learning Arabic was a sign of 'degradation.'[14] As both the 'nationalization' and the 'democratization' of the Jerusalem Church were objected to by the same opponent, namely the Greek establishment, the two processes gradually collapsed into one. The 'Arabization' of the Patriarchate was perceived as a central stage for 'secularizing' the ecclesiastical administration, while the 'reformation' of power structures within the religious organization was presented as an important step towards the fulfilment of the Arab Orthodox national programme.[15]

In this regard it should be noted that the congregation did not view this struggle, in its first stages, as part of a broad Arab national movement (which in any case did not exist in the nineteenth century), but mainly represented the quest for secularizing the communal operation. In other words, it had an ethno-religious character, reflecting the power game between two distinct collective bodies within the same community, but did not represent a 'national' cause in the sense that the two groups (the Greek hierarchy and the Arab congregation) were not viewed as antagonistic political subjects championing diverse national ideologies. Considering nationalism as the nodal point of the Arab Orthodox cause before the early twentieth century, or of the Greek Brotherhood before the mid-nineteenth century, seems to be more of a social projection than a historical reality. Assessing the history of the lay community in Ottoman times on the basis of an analytical framework (i.e., modern nationalism) that did not apply to the social conditions at the time seems problematic. The establishment of the Greek rule was the outcome of religious colonialism of the 'metropolis' towards the 'periphery,' namely the intrinsic force of Constantinople's religious elites to expand their authority over the other church jurisdictions (Churches of Antioch, Jerusalem, etc.). This process became *culturized*, i.e., it was founded on orientalist stereotypes

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13   Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analekta hierosolymitikēs stachiologias* (Petersburg) II (1894), 408; III (1897), 37–38, 55, 246, 466.

14   Hopwood, *The Russian*, 38.

15   Konstantinos Papastathis, "Religious Politics in Mandate Palestine: The Christian Orthodox Community Controversy in the Thirties," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43,3 (2016): 265.

representing the native Orthodox as inadequate to assume religious office.[16] This is why the detachment of Jerusalem from the Ecumenical patriarchate, as well as the deconstruction of the negative portrait of the native Christian created by the Greek ecclesiastics, were considered to be two of the most critical stakes for the overall development of Jerusalem church in the nineteenth century. It seems, therefore, more appropriate historically to place the congregation's struggle in the name of Arab nationalism after the Young Turks period.[17] This representation of the hierarchy as the foreign Greek usurpers of the Arab cultural patrimony crystallized after the Great War and the creation of the new collective subject, i.e., a common Palestinian national identity.[18] The Orthodox elites, identifying their cause with the broad national movement, contributed heavily towards the development of mass literacy and the 'print elevation' of Arabic via the newspapers *al-Quds*, *al-Karmil* and *Filasṭīn*, which heavily questioned Greek rule and opposed Zionism.[19] Arabic being the shared medium of expression, it worked as a central unifying element between the Christian and Muslim populations, and was a core element in the diversification of the collective body in relation to both colonialism and what Sakakini labelled as the tyrannical and corrupted Greek establishment.[20]

The Arab Orthodox struggle was directly linked to language. The clergy spoke Greek, a language allocated the virtue of being *sacred*, but which the congregation could not understand. Language, being the differential element, worked as a core criterion for the gradual construction of a distinct identity: that of the

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16   Konstantinos Papastathis, "Constructing the 'intra-communal out-group': the Greek religious imperialism and the Arab Orthodox 'quantité négligeable'," in *Middle Eastern Christians and Europe: Diasporas – Relations – Entangled Histories*, edited by Andreas Schmoller (Berlin et al.: Lit, forthcoming).

17   Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "Orthodox Communal Politics in Palestine after the Young Turk Revolution (1908–1910)," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 56/57 (2014): 118–39.

18   Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Laura Robson, "Communalism and Nationalism in the Mandate: The Greek Orthodox Controversy and the National Movement," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XLI (2011): 6–23.

19   Salim Tamari, "Issa al Issa's Unorthodox Orthodoxy: Banned in Jerusalem, Permitted in Jaffa," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 59 (2014): 16–36; Noha Tadros Khalaf, *Les Memoires de ʿIssa al ʿIssa: Journaliste et Intellectuel Palestinien 1878–1950* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 2009), 61–64; Michael Bracy, *Printing Class: ʿIsa Al-ʿIsa, Filastin, and the Textual Construction of National Identity, 1911–1931* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2011), 19–40.

20   Khalil Sakakini, *The Diaries of Khalil Sakakini*. Volume II: *Orthodox Renaissance, World War I, Exile to Damascus*, ed. Akram Mousallam (Ramallah: Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, and the Institute for Jerusalem Studies, 2004); Elie Kedourie, "Religion and Politics," in *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004), 317–342; Nadim Bawalsa, "Sakakini Defrocked," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 42 (2010), 5–25.

lay Orthodox, who spoke Arabic. Within the context of the developing Arab nation-building process, this state of affairs implied that the collective group could not be culturally self-sufficient, and had to accept its linguistic inferiority. In short, the Greek narrative was to a certain extent viewed as linguistic colonialism, and as such could not be accepted. In other words, language was the field on whose lines the self-determination process took place, producing the 'us v. them' distinction, i.e., the indigenous Arab self v. the foreign Greek other. Moreover, not being acquainted with the working language, the congregation could not have access to the upper religious bureaucracy, admission to which depended on knowledge of Greek. In effect, language worked as a factor for the reproduction of the existing power relations between the establishment and the congregation, and the linguistic dichotomy within the community reflected the structural hierarchies between the dominant high clergy and the dominated native laity. In other words, the language question was related to power and the question of who would be the agent of this power. The hierarchy did not in principle reject Arabic, but at the same time put limits to its use, because equalizing Arabic with Greek would drive forward the overall claims of the congregation to put an end to the Greek dominance. The question that arises then is: What was the rationale behind the Greek stance of accepting the use of Arabic, but not to such an extent as to elevate Arabic to the same status as Greek?

3   The Greek Narrative

My position here is that language, instead of being a cohesive element within the Church, actually worked as a criterion for exclusion. The strategy of not recognizing Arabic as the second official language of the Patriarchate had political, symbolic, and economic foundations. In short, since language had been a crucial factor for legitimizing Greek dominance, giving an equal footing to Arabic would promote Arab nationalism and provide fertile ground for the congregation to further dispute Greek authority and claim an active role in decision-making. In turn, this would lead to the questioning of: a) the 'invented' Greek national character of the institution; b) the management of the vast religious property; and c) the imagined Greek proprietorship of the Holy Places.

In particular, the Greek narrative was based on the idea that Greek dominance was not a modern phenomenon, but was grounded in the continuous use of Greek as the working language of the Patriarchate from the time of its establishment. According to the religious discourse, Greek was given the virtue

of holiness and thus acquired a *sacred* character. The use of Greek demonstrated the linear continuity of the institution since the early Church, upon which was founded the primacy of the Patriarchate in the Holy Land, as opposed to the other churches. This was allegedly why, despite the fact that within the Orthodox commonwealth the use of the local vernacular was widespread, by representing Greek as the one official language of the Jerusalem Church, the use of any other tongue, or even worse replacing Greek, would signify a change in the historical normativity and thus the loss of religious purity.

This analytical framework was founded on the 'invented tradition' of *Helleno-Orthodoxia*, according to which there exists a primordial, and thus essentialist, equation of Orthodoxy with the Greek 'imagined community.' Accordingly, in order for someone to be considered a member of the national body, he or she should by definition belong to the Church. One presupposes the other: Greek means Orthodox and *vice versa*.[21] Within this analytical framework, developed in the early 20th century, the native Orthodox population was not considered to be Arab, but was rather seen as an originally ethnically Greek population that had gradually been assimilated linguistically and became Arab-speaking. Their supposed Arab or Aramaic origin was thought to be historically false,[22] constructed to serve Russian objectives. However, because they denounced their Greek origins, the natives had lost the right to intervene in patriarchal affairs.[23] In effect, as 'out-groups' the non-Greek Orthodox were not allowed any power over the management of the vast tracts of urban and agricultural real estate, and were not entitled to a share in the revenues derived from their use or lease.[24]

In addition to this, the Greek hierarchy was in favour of the Greek national structure of the Patriarchate forming part of the *status quo*. Consequently, the

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21   Paraskevas Matalas, "To Patriarcheio Hierosolymon kai i ellino-orthodoxia," in *Orthodoxia, ethnos kai ideologia*, edited by Moraiti School (Athens: Moraiti School, 2007): 116.

22   P. Jouse, "L'Origine des habitants orthodoxes de la Syrie et de la Palestine," *Chronos: Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand* IV (2001): 249–273 (First publication: *Palestinskii Sbornik* XVII,2 (1906): 161–182).

23   Pavlos Karolides, *Peri tis ethnikis katagogis ton orthodoxon christianon Syrias kai Palaistinis* [On the ethnic origins of the Orthodox Christians of Syria and Palestine] (Athens: P.D. Sakellariou Press, 1909).

24   Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its Congregation: Dissent over Real Estate," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005): 509–534; Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, "The Church and Landed Property: the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43 (2007): 383–408; Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "The Politics of Church Land Administration: the Case of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 40/2 (2016): 264–282.

sanctuaries should not belong to the religious community *per se*, but to the Greek nation.[25] This in turn meant that the Patriarchate, as the authority responsible for the administration of the shrines, had to be an exclusive 'club,' admission to which should be restricted solely to Greeks. Given the special significance of the Holy Places for the collective conscience, this status allegedly established a direct link between the national idea and the Christian tradition: since the Greek nation protects the Christian Holy of Holies, Greeks are represented as the new *chosen people*. The introduction of Arabic in the liturgy would therefore effectively question the myth of Greek proprietorship of the Holy Places, and thus the imagined Greek national superiority.[26] Within this context, in the following section the areas are examined on which the claim for cultivating Arabic and language equality within the institution were focused, namely the educational system (ideology), religious services (symbolic), and administration (normative).

4   Language and Education

Before the mid-nineteenth century, the Orthodox education network was extremely limited.[27] The Papadopoulos-Kerameus collection of patriarchal documents show that in 1705 Patriarch Dositheos ordered the annual allocation of 160 *piastres* for the creation of schools in Jerusalem, Gaza, Ramallah, Taybeh, Petzala, Beit Jala, and Kerak. The primary aim of the curriculum was the teaching of both Greek and Arabic.[28] The operation of the schools was validated by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Gavriil III, the following year.[29] This was also confirmed by the subsequent patriarch, Chrysanthos,[30] who according to

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25   Kallistos Miliaras, *Oi Agioi Topoi en Palaistini kai ta ep' ayton dikaia tou ellinikou ethnous* [The Holy Places of Palestine and the rights of the Greek Nation over them] (Thessaloniki; University Studio Press, 2002/reprint); Timotheos Themelis, "Memorandum: Greeks and Franciscans in the Holy Places. 1919," *Nea Sion* 15 (1920): 381–392.

26   Konstantinos Papastathis, "Religious Politics and Sacred Space: the Orthodox Strategy on the Holy Places Question in Palestine, 1917–1922," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 65,1/2 (2013): 78–81; Konstantinos Papastathis, "Secularizing the Sacred: the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem as a Representative of Greek Nationalism in the Holy Land," in *Modern Greek Studies-Yearbook* 2014/15, edited by Theophanis Stavrou (University of Minnesota, 2016), 37–54.

27   Hopwood, *The Russian*, 101.

28   Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta* I (1891), 305–307.

29   Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta* I (1891), 379.

30   Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta* I (1891), 310–311.

Stathi was responsible for Dositheos ruling in the first place.[31] Chrysanthos established a new school in Jaffa as well.[32] Neophytos of Cyprus testifies that in 1826 the Patriarchate could not operate the school established in St. Nikolaos Monastery in Jerusalem due to budget constraints, and accepted a donation from American Protestant missionaries. The agreement was finally withdrawn however, because the American missionaries were accused of converting the pupils.[33] This state of affairs led many Orthodox parents to send their children to the schools organized by other denominations (Catholic, Anglican). It is illustrative of this development that 80% of the pupils at St. George Anglican School were Orthodox.[34] This in turn contributed to the massive conversion of the indigenous Christian population to Latin, Greek Catholic, and Protestant denominations. Within this context two distinct networks of Orthodox schooling developed, one organized by the Patriarchate and one organized by the Russian Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society.

Within the Patriarchate's network in Palestine and Trans-Jordan the number of schools fluctuated between 20 and 40, depending upon the finances of the institution. Dowling estimated the numbers at 65 boys' schools and 18 girls' schools,[35] but the operation of at least some of them was 'imagined,'[36] and most of the teachers were untrained parish priests. The language of instruction in Jerusalem schools was Greek, while in Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala and Ramallah schools it was Arabic. On the occasion of the Arab Orthodox protests, Patriarch Hierotheos (1875) circulated an encyclical in which he promised the establishment of a supreme council, comprising six monks and six members of the Jerusalem congregation, for the administration of all the affairs of the schools, including finances. Moreover, he ruled in favour of the creation of a council with an Arab Orthodox majority in each ecclesiastical province for the regulation of the local schools,[37] but this order was never implemented. In fact, a patriarchal statute (1902) stipulated the creation of an Education Committee comprising only three members, all from the Brotherhood, which

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31   Penelopi Stathi, *Chrysanthos Notaras patriarchis Ierosolymon: prodromos tou neoeelinikou Diaphotismou* [Chrysanthos Notaras Patriarch of Jerusalem: a precursor of neo-Hellenic enlightenment] (Unpublished PhD Thesis: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1995), 153.

32   Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta* IV (1897), 58–59.

33   Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta* III (1891), 485.

34   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 148.

35   Theodore Edward Dowling, *The Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1909), 43.

36   Hopwood, *The Russian*, 141.

37   Timotheos Themelis, *Episima eggrafa peri ton dikaion tou Patriarcheiou Ierosolymon (1908–1913)* [Official Documents Concerning the Rights of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem (1908–1913)] (Jerusalem: Press of the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre, 1914), 51–52.

would decide in all Orthodox school affairs.[38] The Young Turks revolution gave a new impetus to the Orthodox Arabs, who by invoking art. 111 of the restored Ottoman Constitution demanded, among other things, the creation of a Mixed Council with full powers over a number of administrative spheres including the schools system, and the yearly allocation of 60,000 Napoleons in order to cover their various social and educational needs.[39] In the ensuing negotiations the Brotherhood agreed to this demand.[40] Finally, the so-called Turkish Order (1910) stipulated the creation of a Mixed Council composed of six lay members and six patriarchal representatives, whose duties included the supervision of all educational activities. However, the Brotherhood retained control of the daily administration as well as the responsibility to appoint school directors and teachers. The Patriarchate, for its part, was ordered to allocate to the Mixed Council one third of its revenues, an amount no less than 30,000 Turkish pounds, "as long as the revenue flow is unhampered." A representative elected by the community of each town was to participate in the administration of the local schools.[41] Procrastination in the negotiations regarding the Council's functions, and World War I, bequeathed the Orthodox schools problem to the Mandatory authorities. In 1925 the British Commission created to inquire into the national dispute within the Church, proposed the transfer of power over all aspects of the administration of the Orthodox education system (i.e., financial management, direction and supervision of schools, appointment of staff) from the Brotherhood to the Mixed Council, which was just being formed. The British proposed a similar formulation in the Orthodox Patriarchate Draft Amendment Ordinances of 1938 and 1941, without any reaction on the part of the Greek Brotherhood. However, this plan was ultimately abandoned because of Arab Orthodox objections to its overall pro-Greek character.[42]

Poor education was one of the most pressing problems during the Mandate. It is revealing that Arab Orthodox allegations were even acknowledged by the Brotherhood officials.[43] For this reason, the congregation requested the creation of an elementary schooling network covering as many towns and vil-

38   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 364–365.

39   Anton Bertram and Harry C. Luke, *Report*, 250–251.

40   Themelis, *Episima eggrafa*, 49, 54.

41   Papastathis and Kark, "Orthodox Communal Politics," 131.

42   Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "Colonialism and Religious Power Politics: The Question of New Regulations within the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem during the British Mandate," *Middle Eastern Studies* 50 (2014): 589–605.

43   Greek Foreign Office Archives [hereafter GFOA]: File 43/1 Jerusalem, sub-file (4), *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, num. 10134, 22/4/1920.

lages as possible, as well as secondary schools in the urban centres.[44] Except for the self-evident intrinsic value of education, it was also necessary to counteract the conversion activities of the other Churches promoted by their own schools. To this end, English classes were introduced in secondary education, for which however no funding resources were available.

The British had taken full control of the Patriarchate's administration and reduced the funds for education in order to address the financial crisis caused by more than 500,000 Egyptian pounds in debts.[45] The annual expenditure required by the Brotherhood to maintain its schooling system was roughly estimated by the British to be around £8,000 in 1921, while £2,500 was needed for the teachers' payroll. However, the funds allocated to education for the year 1920 only amounted to £3,750, 2,744 of which were donated by the Greek government. In contrast, the amount spent on education in 1913 reached £9,186.[46] Indeed, leading up to 1923, some of the Arab Orthodox schools had closed.[47] In 1925 the budget for education was £3,781, 960 of which was allocated to the two Greek schools in Jerusalem, and the remainder to the four Arab schools in Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala and Ramallah, the three schools in Transjordan, and the seven village schools in Palestine. It should also be noted that three schools were established and run by the community.[48] At the end of the thirties, funding for education reached £4,500.[49] Nevertheless, teachers were abandoning their jobs,[50] and requests to open new schools in order to "save the children from the Catholic propaganda," such as that put forward by the community of Nazareth, were all rejected.[51]

Within this context, Orthodox Arabs demanded either the changing of the medium of instruction in the Jerusalem high school from Greek to Arabic, or its closure in order to establish Arab schools.[52] Their argument was that the

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44   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 144.

45   Konstantinos Papastathis, "Church Finances in the Colonial Age: the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem under British Control, 1921–1925," *Middle Eastern Studies* 49 (2013): 712–731.

46   Bertram and Luke, *Report*, 301–313.

47   GFOA: File 39 (1923), *Executive Committee of the First Arab Congress to the Jerusalem Patriarchate*.

48   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 145.

49   GFOA: File B/36, File Jerusalem 1929, sub-file 1, *Ypomnyma peri tis enestotos katastaseos tou patriarcheioy Ierosolymon.*

50   GFOA, File B/36, sub-file 1, Jerusalem General, *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 524, 24/9/1927.

51   GFOA: File 57.1 (1927), *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 51, 23/2/1927.

52   GFOA: File 39 (1923), sub-file 3, *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 535 (9/11/1922).

Patriarchate could not afford to spend a large sum of money on just a few students while not providing education to the numerous Arab Orthodox pupils. The Arab proposal involved obtaining financial aid from Athens to operate the Greek schools, so that the Patriarchate could spend revenues allocated for education solely on the Arab schools.[53] In response to that, Athens stopped making deposits directly to the account of the Patriarchate, but supported its educational activities indirectly through 'donations' to the Jerusalem Greek Club.[54] This trick allowed the payment of teachers' salaries at the Greek schools, while blocking the congregation's claim to the managing of the patriarchal fund.[55] Throughout the Mandate, almost each annual volume of the official patriarchal gazette *Nea Sion* reports a different number of schools operating each year. According to the same gazette, it seems that more schools were operating in Transjordan than in Palestine where the Orthodox community was more numerous. Overall, the Orthodox schooling network was not as popular or influential as the other denominations. This was because of: a) the politicization of communal education, represented as part of the broad controversy between the clergy and the laity; b) the limited teaching of foreign languages (English and French), which was important for the overall training of pupils, but was also a condition for acquiring high offices and a better social position;[56] c) the limited budget; and d) the poor quality of services and facilities in comparison to the other churches' schools.

On the other hand, the Russian network faced certain difficulties in opening schools because of the need to get permission from the Sultan, who refused due to French pressure. Thus, the Russians depended on the Greek Brotherhood, i.e., they needed permission from the Patriarch to operate, who in turn perceived the Imperial Society's activities as an attempt to undermine Greek authority. Patriarchal hostility led the Society to focus its activities more on Syria. From 1880 to 1883, the Society opened four schools in the region of Nazareth, two girls' schools in Nazareth and Bethlehem, as well as a teachers' seminary to tackle the problem of finding trained Arab and Russian teachers. The language of instruction in Nazareth was mainly Russian, whereas in Bethlehem it was

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53   GFOA: File 39 (1923), sub-file 3, *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 378 (14/7/1922).

54   The Jerusalem Greek Club was founded in 1902 in Katamon with the support of the Patriarchate and the Greek Consulate. It flourished during the Mandate, when the community reached 3,000 members, and its main fields of activity involved education, sports, organization of social events, and others.

55   GFOA: File 39 (1923), *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 228 (19/7/1923).

56   Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "The Language of the Nation: The Rise of Arabic among Jews and Christians (1900–1950)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43:2 (2016): 176–190.

Arabic. The curriculum in the training school included the study of Russian, Arabic, Greek and French.[57] By the 1890s the schools operating under the aegis of the Imperial Society had reached the number of 23, with a total enrolment of 1,074 pupils,[58] who studied free of charge and were also provided with books, pens, etc.[59] The Russians did not adhere to the colonial conception of their Western counterparts, who taught in English or French,[60] and the language of instruction was Arabic; Russian was taught in the day schools.[61] The aim was not the *russification* of the pupils, but rather the strengthening of their communal identity via the development of the indigenous vernacular. In 1914, the teaching of English and French was introduced in the curriculum as well, in order to counteract the flow of Orthodox pupils to the Catholic and Anglican schools. To conclude, despite its significant influence, the Russian schooling network did not contribute to the educational boom to the same degree as its competitors. It seems that the decision to put emphasis on Syria, due to the obstacles put forward by the Patriarchate and the Great Powers, was a major factor in this outcome.

5   Arabic in the Liturgy

From a macro-historical perspective, both Greek and Arabic were always used within the Patriarchate at the church services. Greek had been the liturgical language since the creation of the Church of Jerusalem, and the language of the educated classes in the south-eastern Mediterranean for many centuries. In short, being acquainted with Greek was the medium for acquiring social status and attaining ecclesiastical office. On the other hand, this did not establish a linguistic monopoly. Pilgrim itineraries and ecclesiastical records attest to the translation of the original liturgical texts from Greek to Syriac/ Aramaic (*Itinerarium Egeriae*) and Arabic. In late Ottoman times, Greek remained the liturgical language in both the Holy Places and in monasteries. On certain occasions, such as the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel in the Holy Sepulchre, or the sermon of John Chrysostom during the holy week, there was

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57   Theophanes G. Stavrou, *Russian Interests in Palestine, 1882–1914: a Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1963), 110–114.

58   Stavrou, *Russian Interests*, 164.

59   Stavrou, *Russian Interests*, 190.

60   Karène Sanchez Summerer, "Linguistic Diversity and Ideologies among the Catholic Minority in Mandate Palestine. Fear of Confusion or a Powerful Tool?," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43:2 (2016): 191–205.

61   Hopwood, *The Russian*, 148.

a simultaneous translation into Arabic.[62] Moreover, it was customary to have a choir singing psalms in Arabic (the basilica in Bethlehem; the Holy Fire ceremony). Arabic had been established as the liturgical language in the church of Mar-Jacob and in all parish churches. To this end, the printing press of the Patriarchate published a number of liturgical books in Arabic.[63]

In this regard, it is interesting to note that as early as 1908 one of the Arab Orthodox demands was for the extension of the use of Arabic to all religious services, and the establishment of an Arabic choir at the Holy Sepulchre and the other shrines.[64] However, the Greek Brotherhood rejected the request, probably fearing that Greek would be gradually abandoned.[65] It was believed that giving space to Arabic rather than calming the locals would fuel their national aspirations. Officially, the Greek establishment justified its stance on the basis of the *status quo* agreement, which regulates the custodianship rights and privileges of each denomination over the Holy Places, as well as the protocols, processions and all other liturgical practices followed during the services of each cult. The *status quo* doctrine is based on unquestioning adherence to the arrangement which was established by special edicts (1852–1853) and since then has been under the protection of the international community.[66] In effect, the introduction of an Arabic choir, as a modification of the existing *modus operandi*, would signify a violation of the *status quo*. The same would apply if the Greek clergy had changed the language of services in Mar-Jacob from Arabic to Greek. As such, these demands could not be accepted by the political authorities either. The Ottoman stance should not be attributed to domestic politics, but rather to external considerations. The Western powers, being recognized as the protectors of their affiliated churches, used the religious field instrumentally as a means to legitimize their interventions in Palestinian and Ottoman affairs. For instance, an incident between the Orthodox and Franciscan monks in Bethlehem was employed as the pretext for the declaration of the Crimean War. Therefore, any event that might present an opportunity to reopen the question, especially within the volatile political context of the time, was an unwelcome scenario. In short, the rejection of the Arab demands was not only

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62   Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta* II (1893), 200.

63   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 100–101.

64   Themelis, *Episima eggrafa*, 64.

65   Joshua A. Fishman, "A Decalogue of Basic Theoretical Perspectives for a Sociology of Language and Religion," in *Explorations in the Sociology*, 17–18.

66   Paolo Pieraccini, *Gerusalemme, Luoghi Santi e Communità Religiose nella Politica Internazionale* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 1997); Walter Zander, "On the Settlement of Disputes about the Christian Holy Places," *Israel Law Review* 3/3 (1978): 331–366.

a matter of prestige, but more importantly, had a legal foundation as well as a diplomatic/political background, which could not be circumvented. The same applies to some degree to the question of using Arabic in the administration.

6   Language and Patriarchal Administration

Greek was to all intents and purposes the official language of patriarchal administration and hence of the upper clergy, while Arabic was the everyday language of contact with the laity. Monks spoke other languages as well, as they came from all over the eastern Mediterranean. Needless to say, numerous patriarchs and members of the clergy were natives, having Arabic as their mother tongue and mastering Greek during their youth as novices. However, the use of Arabic was widespread, even after the Ottoman conquest when the Greek element became dominant. Dositheos explicitly states that the minutes of the Synod on Patriarch Germanos' resignation and the election of Sophronios (mid-16th century) were written in Arabic.[67] The fact that Dositheos does not consider this event strange indicates that the use of Arabic was a normal practice, even in his time. A possible confirmation of this point may be the Arabic signatures of two synodal members on the document confirming the appointment of Patriarch Nectarios (1661).[68] Furthermore, the large number of Arabic codices in the archives of the Patriarchate is an additional indication of the extended use of the local language.[69] However, during the late Ottoman period and the Mandate, the Patriarchate gave little room to the use of Arabic in the administration. The one and only ordinance with regard to language is found in the Fundamental Law of the Patriarchate (1875), which defined the knowledge of Arabic as a condition for the appointment of bishops in Acre and Nazareth (art. 15/ par. 4).[70]

Within this context, the strategy of the Orthodox Arabs was, on the one hand, enthusiastically to demand the modification of the Regulations, and on the other hand to expose the illegal practices of the Greek establishment and violations of the existing legal framework. Such a case was the election of

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67   Dositheos Patriarch of Jerusalem, *Historia peri ton en Hierosolymois patriarcheusanton diirimena en dodeka vivliois, allos kaloumenis dodekavivlos Dositheou* (Thessaloniki: Rigopoulos, 1982/reprint), v. VI. b. IA΄, 50–52, 56, 69.

68   Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta* II (1893), 280.

69   Agamemnon Tselikas, *Deltio tou Historikou kai Palaiografikou Archeiou – Katagrafi tou archeiou tou Patriarcheiou Hierosolymon* (Athens: MIET, 1992).

70   Timotheos Themelis, *Episima eggrafa peri tou proskynimatikou kai dioikitikou kathestotos tis Ecclesias Ieroslymon* (Jerusalem: Orthodox Patriarchate Printing Press, 1944), 18.

Bishop Cleopas in Nazareth, who did not speak Arabic. The congregation considered his election a violation of art. 15 of the Fundamental Law (mentioned earlier), an allegation widely accepted by the British authorities. At the time of this affair, the Orthodox Arabs held a Conference in Haifa (July 1923) where they articulated their overall demands with respect to the Church.[71] With regard to the language question, they had three claims:

(a) In addition to the Patriarch and the Bishops of Acre and Nazareth, all patriarchal representatives to the Mixed and Local Councils should speak Arabic.[72]

In cases where this regulation was not followed, the appointments should be recalled and the positions filled by the local parochial clergy. The emphasis on the use of Arabic had a political aspect, i.e., projecting the language as a unifying element for the Orthodox population and the Muslim community, and a shared source of identity; hence *politicizing* language as a means to promote the national agenda. On the other hand, this claim seems to be void in the sense that the Turkish Order (1910), while not questioning the dominance of Greek within the Brotherhood, implicitly recognized the use of Arabic in the Mixed Council and Local Councils. It should be noted that during the inaugural session of the Mixed Council Patriarch Damianos' talk was simultaneously translated into Arabic, and the representatives of the congregation spoke in their native tongue. Moreover, the regulation concerning the election of the representatives was published in both languages.[73] Thus, it might be inferred that both Arabic and Greek were used as the two working languages of the Mixed Council, and accordingly of the Local Councils as well. If we take into account that only two members of the Synod spoke Arabic fluently,[74] the issue at stake seems not to be the use of Arabic as such, but the creation of a mechanism to ensure that the linguistic rights of the congregation would be institutionally respected. The Mandatory administration actually supported this claim by proposing knowledge of Arabic as a condition for the appointment of all bishops as early as 1926.[75]

(b) Cleopas' nomination should be annulled.

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71   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 273–278.

72   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 115–117.

73   Themelis, *Episima eggrafa*, 70–80.

74   GFOA: File B/36, File Jerusalem-Patriarchal Question 1929, *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 298, 17/6/1929.

75   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 299.

The fact that the election of Cleopas was contrary to the Fundamental Law of the Patriarchate meant that the synodal decision violated the *status quo*. However, despite this legal constraint Cleopas remained in office because there were no legal means to impose his immediate deposition. Neither the authorities nor the congregation had an official say in his election or the right to confirm the procedure. In effect, they could only take the matter to court. However, the competent authority to judge on any affair related to the *status quo* was neither the local courts nor the High Commissioner, but the so-called Holy Places Commission as defined by art. 14 of the Palestine Mandate. This commission had never been established, because London considered it a potential threat to its rule over Palestine, and because of a disagreement within the international community regarding its composition.[76] In effect, the only body empowered to withdraw the nomination of the bishop was the Patriarchal Synod. However, Damianos refused to appoint another prelate, because he aimed to isolate Cleopas from Jerusalem and the Brotherhood due to their difficult relationship.[77] The affair ended in 1929 when Cleopas died under suspicious circumstances.[78]

(c) Church law should be translated into Arabic.

The ecclesiastical judicial system comprised two bodies: the Spiritual Court and the Mixed Ecclesiastical Court in each diocese (Jerusalem, Acre, Haifa, Nazareth, Jaffa, Gaza, etc.). The president was the local Greek bishop, but in both courts the congregations' representatives, either parish priests or laymen, retained the majority. Thus Arabic, together with Greek, was widely accepted as a working language of the communal judiciary.[79] In this regard, it is interesting to note that Arabic was used in the Ecclesiastical Court of Nazareth, presided over by the parish priest Georgios during the period the See was vacant after Cleopas' death.[80]

The language of the religious judiciary became an extremely important issue during the Mandate period because of the extension of the Ecclesiastical

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76 Zander, "On the Settlement."

77 GFOA: File 39, *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 231 (25/6/1923).

78 GFOA: File B/36, Politics Jerusalem (1929), *Jerusalem Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, no. 579 (30/9/1929).

79 Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem Archives [hereafter OPJA], File High Commission, *Locum Tenens of the Patriarchate to the Chief Secretary of the Mandatory Government*, no. 64 31/1/1931.

80 OPJA: File High Commission, *Locum Tenens of the Patriarchate to the Chief Secretary of the Mandatory Government*, no. 114 18/2/1932).

Courts' jurisdiction. The British decision had been determined by an over-
all strategy to exploit or further develop existing internal divisions within
Palestinian society, which was not seen by the new regime as a coherent col-
lective body, but as a juxtaposition of distinct communities divided along sec-
tarian lines. To this end, the British maintained the *millet* system.[81] Practically
speaking, the legislator, instead of absorbing the competences of religious
courts as a step towards legal modernization, gave the religious institutions
extra fields in which to exercise judicial control. In particular, under the
Ottoman legal system, Orthodox subjects were exclusively under the jurisdic-
tion of ecclesiastical courts in matters of family (marriage, divorce, adoption
of minors, etc.) and inheritance, whereas in all other cases the Ottoman civil
jurisdiction was deemed competent to judge. However, the Palestine Order
in Council 1922, the Succession Ordinance 1923, and the Jurisdiction of Civil
and Religious Courts Ordinance (1924) prescribed that the ecclesiastical courts
should not only maintain the right to judge family and inheritance law affairs,
but must also assume the adjudication of disputes concerning the administra-
tion of the *vakf* properties.[82]

The problem lay in the fact that under the Ottomans, the judicial power to
settle affairs related to the *vakf* administration was tried by the Sharia court,
so that the legal framework was in Arabic. The British transferred this power
to the ecclesiastical courts, which based their verdicts on the Byzantine and
Canon law, written in Greek. In effect, the congregation had no access to the
relevant legal sources, and as such was vulnerable to pressure. Hence, instead
of safeguarding open access and equal footing within the legal system for the
community, the new system gave a further boost to the authority of the Greek
establishment. The inability of the local population to participate in the judicial
process because of a lack of knowledge of Greek rendered the Arab Orthodox
reliant upon the upper clergy for questions far from the clergy's competences,
such as the distribution of family revenues or the management of family prop-
erties. This state of affairs in turn worked as a breeding ground for arbitrary
decisions, corruption and clientelism.[83] A characteristic example was the pri-
vate prosecution of the Bishop of Madava, Meliton, at the Magistrates' Court in

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81   Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: the Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Oxford:
      Oneworld Publications, 2007), 48–64.

82   Daphne Tsimhoni, "The Status of the Arab Christians under the British Mandate in
      Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 20 (1984): 169.

83   Israel State Archives [hereafter ISA]: File: b/22/35, 4309/26-n, *Complaint against the ortho-
      dox ecclesiastical courts* (1935–1945).

Acre, who was accused of fraud and forgery during his time as President of the Ecclesiastical Court of Appeal.[84]

The claim for access to legal texts was not only a matter of justice, but was directly related to the overall secularization process. Understanding the law meant that litigants considered themselves to be able to properly interpret a text (which used to be the privilege of the religious bureaucracy), as well as to assess the court's verdict, thus undermining the symbolic authority of the ecclesiastical tribunal. In this regard it is important to note that as early as 1862 family law and inheritance law cases were settled by the ecclesiastical courts according to the Byzantine legal code, with which the congregation was not familiar anyway. The request to translate the legal code was first and foremost based on the idea that the religious authority was not unquestionable, and that its decisions should be placed under scrutiny. The Arab Orthodox demand was not in principle rejected by the Greek establishment. However, due to a lack of funding,[85] in the 1930s the British decided to translate the legal codices of family, cessation and Personal law of the Byzantine Legal Code themselves.[86]

To sum up, from the mid-nineteenth century onward the congregation had energetically presented the demand for the use of Arabic in schools, church administration, and liturgy to the Greek Brotherhood. The Patriarchate, for its part, had no other option but to accept it, in light of the fact that speaking Arabic in all fields of religious activity was practically a *fait accompli*. In short, the religious establishment could neither impose on its congregation the use of a language they did not understand, nor did it have the intention to *hellenise* the Arab Orthodox linguistically. Arabic was the basic medium for instruction in schools, had been used for liturgical purposes for centuries, and was spoken within the Brotherhood. On the other hand, Arabic had never been officially recognised as equal to Greek.

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84   GFOA: File B/36/1, Patriarchal Election Jerusalem (1934), *Benetatos to the Greek Foreign Office* (24 December 1934), reg. num. 13830; Public Record Office: Colonial Office [CO] 733/ 258/11, 'Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister' (30 Nov. 1934).

85   Bertram and Young, *Report*, 209.

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7   **Concluding Remarks**

The controversy between the Greek hierarchy and the Arab congregation had
a political, economic, and a social background. In this chapter I have discussed
the question of how the use of language within the Jerusalem Church, and
particularly in the spheres of education, church services, and administra-
tion was related to the secularization and nationalization processes of the
Orthodox Palestinians. Overall, I have argued that while the Arabic vernacu-
lar was widely used in religious services, as a medium of instruction, and as
a working language in the administration, it did not enjoy the same status as
Greek. The Greek Brotherhood accepted the need to further develop the use
of Arabic, but was against granting Arabic the status of an official language of
the Patriarchate. Such a decision would in the long run entail questioning the
exclusivity of the Greek dominance within the institution. The refutation of
the Arab claims, therefore, was founded on the hegemony of Greek phyletism
within the Church.

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Between Local Power and Global Politics: Playing with Languages in the Franciscan Printing Press of Jerusalem

Leyla Dakhli

As part of an organization that placed *Propaganda Fide* at the centre, both in Jerusalem and in other capitals of the region such as Beirut – where the Jesuit missionaries set up their College, library and Printing house (1853) between 1847 and 1875[1] – and Cairo – where the Dominicans began their intellectual missions a little later,[2] the Franciscan Printing Press (FPP) of Jerusalem, founded in 1846, played a fundamental role in the mid-nineteenth century. Its work took place on different levels, all related to what Henry Laurens calls the "rediscovery of the Holy Land."[3] First, there was teaching and pedagogical support: the printing house produced and distributed school materials, textbooks and other educational tools to schools throughout the Middle East. Thus, the Franciscans entered a highly competitive race to set up educational institutions in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, while the Empire itself opened its own state institutions in line with the ethos of the *Tanzimat*. Secondly, they supported Roman Catholics in the Holy Land,[4] notably by the publication and dissemination of guides for pilgrims and Mass programmes for local churches. Ultimately, an evolution took place regarding languages and transitions between them. The printing house progressively became a centre for translation and for distributing religious and secular material translated into Arabic, reflecting the need to place importance on this language, which

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1 Chantal Verdeil, *La mission jésuite du Mont-Liban et de Syrie (1830–1864)* (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2011).

2 Dominique Avon, *Les Frères prêcheurs en Orient: Les dominicains du Caire, années 1910 – années 1960* (Paris: Cerf/Histoire, 2005).

3 Henry Laurens, *La Question de Palestine, 1: L'invention de la Terre sainte (1799–1922)* (Paris: Fayard, 1999).

4 Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeil, "The 'Jesuits' discourse on the Holy Land (Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries)," in *New Faith in Ancient Lands, Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Heleen Murre-van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 19–42.

had become the main vehicle of expression for Christians in the region, gradually replacing the languages of worship.

The role of the FPP was nevertheless different from the role it played at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut, for example, where it was central to the construction of the Arab Christian *Naḥḍa*,[5] notably in the work of Father Louis Cheikho and the Oriental school built around the university and the Oriental Library, as well as the journal *Al-Mashriq*. In Jerusalem, the work was of a different sort: the printing house focused less on science and intellectual studies and more on the city itself, its daily activities (in particular the increased production of stationery and the supply of materials such as visiting cards, labels and letterhead paper) and the politics that played out between the various churches and denominations on the one hand, and between those who held power on the other.

At the intersection of these different levels a certain kind of language politics played out within the Custody, visible in the works of the *Tipografia* (the Italian name for FPP). This chapter is based on papers kept in the archives of the Franciscan Printing Press – which now have been inventoried and organized thanks to the work of the archivist friars – as well as papers in the library of the Custody, where there were some unidentified boxes containing copies of the materials manufactured at the printing house as well as some archive pieces.[6]

This chapter deals with the question of *citadinité*, i.e., ways of inhabiting the city of Jerusalem,[7] through the question of language and its uses – spoken, written, recited, displayed. I try to articulate a local approach to the more international and global dimension of language politics at work in the city. Thus, I discuss the linguistic question not a priori as a mark of identity, as a language linked to a segment of the urban population, or as contributing to a teleological reading of national identity construction (especially through the arabization of the people of Jerusalem or the rites in the Holy Land). The aim of language approach is more modest: to account for the "sound of the city" between 1847 (the date the printing house was founded) and the time of the British Mandate. This perspective is also at the heart of the strategy established by the Custody

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5 Anon., "L'imprimerie catholique de Beyrouth et son œuvre en Orient," in *Fascicules supplémentaires des Relations d'Orient* (Brussels: Polleunis et Ceuterick imprimeurs, 1903).

6 Special thanks to Fr Serguey Loktionov and Fr Narcyz Klimas for their continued help and support. The archives will be referred to here by their Italian name, Archivo Storico della Custodia di Terra Santa (ASCTS). The inventory of part of the collection has been published: A. Maiarelli, *L'Archivio storico della Custodia di Terra Santa (ASCTS) (1230–1970)* (Milan: Edizioni Terra Santa, 2012), 3 vol.

7 This work was carried out within the framework of ERC Open Jerusalem, coordinated by Vincent Lemire. The concept of *Citadinité* is at the centre of this programme, following the works of urban historians and focusing on material archives of the city.

in the Holy Land, i.e., that of political influence and profitable commerce as much as spiritual support, which I will try to analyse here.

It is a matter of understanding the different levels of politics at work linguistically, starting from the typographical workshop itself and then the Franciscan mission in its spiritual and temporal dimensions, in order to clarify the role of this linguistic production in the context of an international rivalry for control of the region. Paradoxically, the work of the FPP is little known, although Ami Ayalon, referring to it briefly in his great history of writing in Palestine, notes that "the Franciscans, starting as early as 1846, ran the most active operation in this field [printing]" and mentions the considerable number of works published in Arabic at the FPP before 1900 and between 1900 and 1948.[8]

1 Learning and Teaching Languages, at the Heart of the Mission in the Holy Land

At the turn of the twentieth century Jerusalem could be considered a classical Levantine city, where many possible definitions of cosmopolitanism were in play,[9] and where the many religions generated and maintained ancient *polyglossia*, stemming from the languages of worship, sacred or sanctified languages, overlaid communities, successive migrations, and also of the presence of tutelary powers, linking together Church and State, or churches and states.[10] In 1920, one could hear and read Arabic, Hebrew, Ladino, Syriac, Ethiopian, Greek, Armenian, and also English, German, Russian, French and Italian. Within the Custody, the *lingua franca* among the friars was Italian, at first. However, they learned or improved their Arabic as soon as they arrived, and some of the textbooks produced by the Press were intended to sustain the

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8   Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine. Printing and Literacy, 1900–1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 57.

9   On these debates: Khaled Fahmy, "For Cavafy, with love and squalor" and "Towards a Social History of Modern Alexandria" in *Alexandria: Real and Imagined*, ed. A. Hirst and M. Silk (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2004), 263–280 and 281–306; Ulrike Freitag, "Cosmopolitanism in the Middle East as part of global history," *ZMO Programmatic Texts* 4, 2010; Will Hanley. "Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies," *History Compass* 6, 2008: 1346–1367.

10   Among the many works on these questions of belonging I refer to the figure of "Tâlib Mushtâq;" see Peter Wien, "Waiting for the Superman. A New Generation of Arab Nationalists in 1930s Iraq," in *The Making of the Arab Intellectual. Empire, Public Sphere and the Colonial Coordinates of Selfhood*, ed. Dyala Hamzah (London – New York: Routledge, 2013), 219–220; Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, *Smyrne, la ville oubliée? 1830–1930. Mémoires d'un grand port* ottoman (Paris: Autrement, 2006); Robert Ilbert, *Alexandrie 1830–1930. Histoire d'une communauté citadine* (Cairo: IFAO, 1996); and even to the first pages of Edward Said, *Out of Place, A Memoir* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

brothers in this apprenticeship. In the library of the Custody we can find books annotated by clergymen, and vocabulary lists bearing the visible traces of their labour (Figure 12.1). These objects allow us to easily imagine the struggle faced by European newcomers as they put their rudimentary Arabic into action for everyday use. Vocabulary lists and conjugated verbs were copied diligently, in ink, in notebooks. These markings can tell us about the confrontation between their painstaking learning and the less rigid but more confusing language of everyday. The Italian language used in the convent was part of the domestic universe of all those who entered into religious life, something they could brandish as a sign of belonging to an order, as others did with French, Greek or Russian as the language of the mission.

On the other hand, the language of the workshop was not a given, it was a fundamental question that arose as soon as the printing house and the other
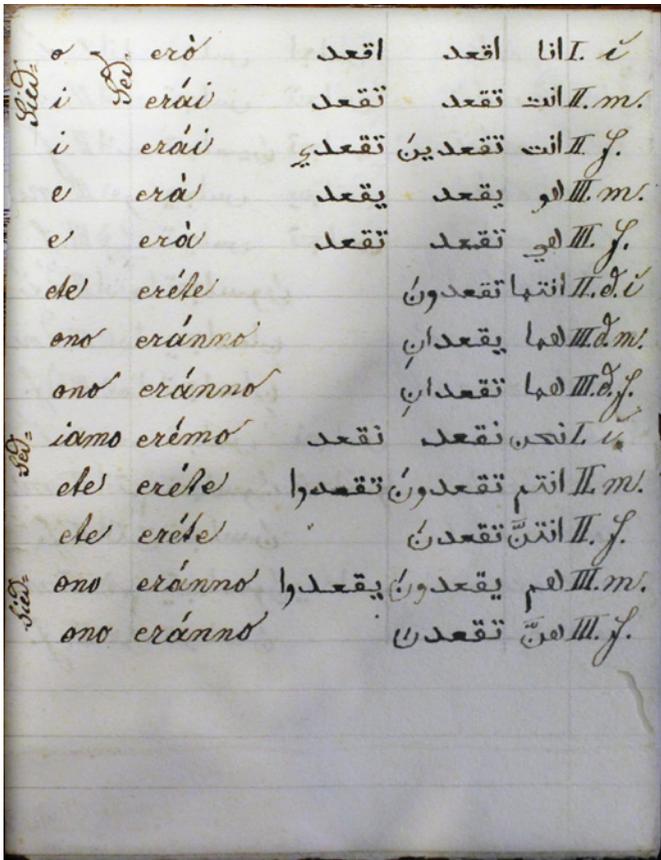
FIGURE 12.1   A vocabulary list written by clergymen at the Custody library

productions of the Convent were installed.[11] At the end of the nineteenth century, the director of the printing house, a European Franciscan, Fr Guido, ensured that the technical operations ran smoothly and also that the workers received a Christian education: he specifically required them to go to morning Mass before work, and organized weekly spiritual conferences. These were held in Italian, or sometimes in Latin. But from the 1870s, in the interest of reaching out to the workers, the spiritual directors began carrying out this mission in Arabic. The notes taken by Fr Guido in the early 1880s show that he experienced considerable difficulty with this task because it called into question his authority over the workers, whom he considered his spiritual and temporal responsibility. On 27 August 1879 he gave a spiritual conference in Italian, which he then summarized in Arabic.[12] These appearances in Arabic were always difficult, as was the recruitment of an Arabic-language corrector or the performance of various tasks in that language. This may seem surprising, but it mostly reveals the difficulty for the Catholic clergymen to constitute a loyal flock. The search for Arabic speakers, however, was largely based on practical needs. For the Franciscans of Jerusalem, the Arabic language was not presented as an end in and of itself. The Custody did not develop one of those missionary orientalist laboratories such as could be found in Rome, Paris or Beirut.[13] It developed a service that was totally in line with the mission of teaching, or even evangelizing, or sometimes simply spreading the Catholic presence. The essential point was to be able to offer an efficient and high-quality service in the languages of the region and especially in Arabic, which was still underrepresented in the middle of the nineteenth century in printed material.

It was to this end that the FPP developed a specialization in linguistic tools from the very first decades of its existence, logically connected to its mission of settlement in the Holy Land and the management of pilgrimages – by definition intended for a multilingual Christian community – and its mission of teaching and charity, via a dense network of schools and orphanages, from Aleppo to Alexandria and beyond. It developed specific techniques for printing in several languages and alphabets. Bilingual textbooks were produced in large numbers and distributed to schools throughout the region. The textbooks

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11   Leyla Dakhli, "The Tipografia di Terra Santa. Men at Work (1847–1930)." in *Jerusalem 1840–1940. The Ordinary City*, ed. Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 326–365.

12   ASCTS, "Brevi notizie sulla tipografia e sui direttori della medesima." Memorie della tipografia, Jerusalem, 1879 lug. 22–1899 mag. 24, p. 10 "ne ho fatto un riassunto in arabo."

13   For a critical view on this encounter between missionaries and local churches, beyond the question of languages, see Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven. American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca – New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).

were also sent to the regional outposts. Thus, on 1 March 1859, 541 copies of an Italian-Arabic language textbook were sent to Beirut.[14]

Specialization in languages allowed the printing house, as a publishing house, to launch major projects such as the Arabic-Italian bestseller diction-ary[15] and the quadrilingual dictionary that the printing house team worked on throughout the year 1880. This was a French-Turkish-Italian-Arabic dictionary, to be used in the secondary school in Aleppo. On the cover the following cap-tion was printed: *Usus huius Dictionarii – pro scholis Custodiae scripti, praecipo vero pro collegio Alepensi – notitiam linguae gallicae supponit, qua deficiente vocabula aliarum linguarum inveniri non possunt.* (i.e., "The use of this diction-ary, intended for the schools of the Custody, such as the secondary school of Aleppo principally, assumes the readers' proficiency in French, so that they can to cope with the vocabulary that may be missing in the other languages"). This sentence, written in yet another language (Latin, i.e., the "universal" lan-guage of the Catholic Church) is appended as a kind of user instruction for the reader. It seems to imply an "inequality of languages" and the decision to opt for a single reference language – French – to organize the others and create a hierarchy between them.

This point can also be understood by reading the notebooks of the direc-tor of the *Tipografia*, and the notes taken during the implementation of the project. The difficulty for the dictionary lay in the fact that at that time there was no scholar at the Convent capable of dealing with each of these four lan-guages and the flow between them. It was therefore necessary to ease the paths from one language to another by establishing a reference language, so that a three-person system for corrections was put in place: "*Da qualche tempo si sta stampando un dizionarietto in 4 lingue, e le correzioni si fanno dal P. Pino, dal P. Leone, e dal P. Vincenzo. Siccome è difficile combinarsi nelle 4 lingue, è stato stabilito che si tirino 3 stamponi, e che tutti tre i correttori si radunino insieme per consultarsi e far così d'accordo la prima correzzione.*"[16] The use of French as a reference language can further be explained by the fact that Aleppo was already a territory where many Catholic missions were present at that time,

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14   ASCTS, "Registro dei libri spediti. C," 1857 giu. 22–1876.

15   Somehow the counterpart of Father Abougit's famous Arabic-French grammar manual and of Father Cuche's Arabic-French dictionary, both printed at the Imprimerie orientale in Beirut in the late 1850s.

16   "For some time a dictionary in four languages was printed, with corrections made by Father Pino, Father Leone and Father Vincenzo. Since it was difficult to manage with four languages, it was decided that three sets of proofs would be printed, and that the three correctors would meet to consult and do the first correction together." ASCTS, "Brevi no-tizie sulla tipografia e sui direttori della medesima." Memorie della tipografia, Jerusalem, 1879 lug. 22–1899 mag. 24, 21 November 1879, p. 18.

mostly French-speaking (such as the Lazarists and Capuchins). This trilingual (or even quadrilingual, if we add the language of the Empire) composition of the Catholics of Aleppo was observed by Henry Bretonneau, who in 1847 recorded these figures regarding the expansion of Catholicism: "In Aleppo there are four churches or chapels of the Latin rite. There are eight missionaries: two Lazarists, two Capuchins, three Fathers of the Holy Land and one Carmelite. The main church is that of the fathers of the Holy Land, also known as the guardians of the Holy Sepulchre; it is strictly the parish church of the Latins. They preach in Arabic and Italian, and sometimes in French."[17]

The specific and official goal of the clergymen, which was constantly reiterated, and corresponded to the mission of growing and spreading the Catholic faith according to the idea of the universal Church, was to circulate languages and translations. The printing house is a place to observe the techniques used for this circulation; the printers followed a colonial vision that manifested itself in appropriations of languages and gestures, and which viewed its presence as an unequally shared labour of "exchange" and "reciprocity." In doing this, translation can be seen as one of the strongest and most subtle weapons of conquest.[18]

2 The Franciscan Printing Press: a Linguistic and Commercial Hub

The Printing House, as a company that was open to anyone in the city, had first and foremost the task of adapting to the *polyglossia* that surrounded it. It printed in multiple languages, and the material it purchased, built and collected had to be adaptable to orders, and to moving from one language to another. Thus, the types used by the Printing house were ordered project by project,[19] adjusted with time, and modified in such a way that the writing could meet the requirements of the authors as well as the readers. The account books for the first three decades of business show how the printing of Arabic type created specific problems and required regular adjustments. The search for a competent

17 Henry Bretonneau, *La Religion triomphante, par les plus grands hommes, dans toutes les carrières, dans tous les pays et dans tous les siècles* (Paris: Librairie de Sagnier et Bray éditeurs, 1847), 718.

18 Shaden M. Tageldin, *Disarming Words. Empire and the Seductions of Translation in Egypt* (Stanford: University of California Press, 2011); Samah Selim, "Pharaoh's Revenge: Translation, Literary History and Colonial Ambivalence," in Hamzah, *The Making of the Arab Intellectual*, 20–39.

19 Particularly at the Catholic Press of Beirut, Cf. the order presented in "1863–1947. Commerciali (selezione). Archivio morto," ASCTS, Stamperia di Terra Santa (STS), Jerusalem.

proofreader of Arabic texts was a source of great worry for the directors of the *Tipografia* in the early years. They also had to find a skilled person to modify the Arabic types on the machines, make necessary adjustments, order the right drop caps. This expert technician was often "imported" from Mount Lebanon, because he had to be both an Arab-speaker and a Catholic. Thus, the name "Simon Hallac" appeared in pencil in the registers: *Simon Hallac aggiustò le matrici dell'Egiziano arabo corpo 14* (Simon Hallac fixed the masters for the Egyptian Arabic font 14), and as for corrections in Hebrew – for 1895, we find that "*Levi Nahum aggiustò le matrici del'Ebreo*" (Levi Nahum fixed the masters for the Hebrew) – they continuously worked with this kind of local workforce.[20]

Reading the list of the printing jobs conscientiously recorded by the workshop directors, citing the work, the customer and the workers in charge, one can get an idea of the diversity of texts and languages, but also of the manifestations of these languages in various places of the city. On the one hand the Franciscans printed catechisms, including 1500 copies of the famous 1847 catechism in Arabic, which was said to be the first printed book in Arabic in Palestine, and books on the history of the Crusades, on the other hand they also created 200 copies of letterhead paper for the Austrian consulate, probably in German with an Arabic or French translation.[21]

At the beginning of the twentieth century we can see how the printing house was transforming and adapting. A random sample of names culled from the payment books includes the Jerusalem Hotel, *Governo* (Government), Grand New Hotel, *La signora Maroun* (Mrs Maroun), *Banco ottoman* (The Ottoman Bank), *le Consulat de France* (The French Consulate), *Bisciara di Betlemme* (Bisciara of Bethlehem), *Hallac per ligature* (Hallac for the bindings), *Suore Giuseppine del Pensionnato* (Sister Giuseppine from the Pensionate), *Ospedale francese* (French Hospital).[22] In the midst of World War I the market seems to have shrunk to only a few clients, but apparently the friars did manage to get supplies of paper. Indeed, it would seem that they largely became stationery suppliers: visiting cards, labels, printed envelopes, letterhead paper, and also programmes for Mass and catechisms. The customers were less diverse and more specific, often linked to the Patriarchate, a number of religious orders, schools, and a few faithful – and financially stable – customers such as Banco di Roma and Crédit Lyonnais.[23]

20   ASCTS, Miscellanea Stampi della tipografia, 1890 gen. 2–1909 gen. 11.
21   List of works made at the printing house, "Stampe giornaliere dal 1882–1895," archive boxes kept at the Biblioteca Generalis custodiae terrae sanctae, Jerusalem.
22   ASCTS, Miscellanea Tipografia, "Dare Avere," 1913 giu. 17–1919 ott. 15.
23   ASCTS, Miscellanea Tipografia, 1919 ott. 17–1925 apr. 17.

These are the customers that we can also find after the war, some so well known that they are simply referred to as *avvocato turco* (Turkish lawyer) or *L'Ebreo dei Fiori* (the Hebrew of flowers). The books are organized "by customer": *Tribunale del Patriarcato* (Tribunal of the Patriarcate), *Salesiani di Gerusalemme* (Salesians of Jerusalem), *Scuola Inglese Cattolica di Betlemme* (Catholic English school of Bethlehem), *Mons. Fellinger* (Bishop Fellinger), *Suore Carmelite* (Carmelite Sisters), *Padri gesuiti* (Jesuit Fathers), Fast, D. Dunkel, Consulate of France, Consulate of Spain, *ospedale italiano* (Italian Hospital), Department of Antiquities.[24]

It is this growth in production that ensured that the Custody's printing house became a kind of central printing house for the city, both a service provider for its many private clients and official printer for the Ottoman Empire, and then also for the British Mandate. At the end of the First World War, thanks to the technical advances made in the Franciscan workshop and its capacity to deal with orders, the Custody produced all of the official material for the British government: posters, ads for public squares, trilingual or quadrilingual war reports,[25] and even order forms for police boots (Figure 12.2). At the same time, they were printing railway tickets, receipt books for banks, luggage labels, letterhead paper for hotels, shops, post offices and schools.

The FPP's distinctive capacity to move between languages explains why it would take on the role of national printing house[26] at the time of the British arrival. In this it differed from other printers, who remained very much oriented towards the particular demands of their communities (Armenian or Greek printing presses, for example). The work carried out for the Mandate (Jerusalem Head Quarters) was the subject of a separate book from 1918, where could be found laisser-passers, official declarations in four languages ("*inglese, arabo, francese, ebreo*"), labels, administrative stationery, forms, posters, notices, musical programs, blank passports, prisoner's cards, telegram forms, post office registers, the Daily Hospital report, the Register of Wanted Persons, gendarmerie papers, building permits, conversion tables (for exchange rates), passes for entering the City Walls, commodity prices, contract forms, medical prescriptions, papers for the Jerusalem School of Music, a profusion of paper pronouncing political power in the languages of the city. They formed a very large part of the orders, later grouped under the name "Central Stores," in which large sums of money figure, among the only ones to be settled monthly.

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24   ASCTS, Miscellanea Tipografia, 1925 apr. 20–1930 nov. 17.

25   ASCTS, "Bollettini di Guerra" (1918), Proclami e ordinanze del governo premandatario, in Carteggio, Archivio Mort01/1918–1919.

26   Some elements in the account books suggest that the Franciscans also performed this type of task for the Ottoman government prior to this (1873, in 1857 giu.15–1879 dic.31, "Giornale de' lavori. B." "Giornale delle prestazioni della tipografia," ASCTS, STS, Jerusalem).

FIGURE 12.2   An order form for police boots issued by the Custody library

In addition to this particular customer there were other major clients such as
Banco di Roma, Crédit Lyonnais and institutions such as the French Hospital
or the Régie des Tabacs, as well as the consulates, which appear in the account
books from March 1920.

The archives of the printing house beyond the Custody thus allow us to ob-
serve how the administration of the Mandate established itself, creating its
place in the city, and to understand the Mandate's organization on a city-wide
scale. The British adapted themselves to the already ancient customs that gov-
erned public life, that of the business of men and gods in Jerusalem, that of
transitions between worlds that were at once diverse and places of ordered co-
existence. When reading printed material from the *Tipografia*, we can perceive
the diversity of both the languages in use and their corresponding registers.
Visiting cards indicated a merchant's trade in the languages of the custom-
ers, real and desired. They were ordered in English in the hope of attracting
"international" clientele, and printed in several languages to highlight the mer-
chant's Dragoman talents.[27] Banking forms were also bilingual, or even trilin-
gual, for use by the country's inhabitants. Consulates printed holiday menus in
their own language, sometimes translated into English, French or, more rarely,

27   Maria-Chiara Rioli, "Introducing Jerusalem: Visiting Cards and Urban Identities at the
        Turn of the 20th Century," in *Jerusalem 1840–1940 The Ordinary City*, edited by Angelos
        Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

into Arabic. Sounds, noises, and even the clamour of the city are transmitted through these papers, murmuring with urban life in all its diversity. They reveal the customs of various social circles.

Continuous translation can also be seen in the exchanges of/between currencies, which also seem to have been a natural part of conducting business in the city of Jerusalem. One could pay in francs, centimes, pounds, or old piastres, and the exchange rates fluctuated as much as the currency in use. Even before printing, the raw materials and tools used for the task, such as the printing machines, travelled routes that linked these urban papers with other geographic zones: the machines and the early types came from Vienna, Mainz or Leipzig, the beech tables for the workshop, binding yarn, and the linseed oil used as siccative for the vegetable inks, from Venice. The colours were ordered in Turkey, some paper – notably *carta fiorita* – in Lyon, other types – paper for visiting cards for example – in Paris. After printing, books and papers circulated far beyond urban boundaries to supply warehouses and secondary schools in Alexandria, Mansoura, Ismailia, Port Said, Beirut, Syria, Cairo, Nazareth and even Iraq. In these ways, the printing house was indeed a hub.

3 Languages, an Entry into the Global Political Game

The FPP's work with and on languages was not only practical and commercial, from the outset it was also political. First, it assisted the mission, and seriously applied itself to making the Catholic message universal. In the typographic workshop and in the printing house, the languages that circulated had to meet the twofold injunction of work and spiritual elevation.

The emphasis placed on being and remaining the first Arabic-language printing house can be seen as a desire on the part of the FPP to distinguish itself from other communities, who were oriented towards their own language of worship or that of their patrons. In the 1920s this issue was no longer as fundamental, as printing houses had expanded and did not hold the same power. They soon abandoned the role of an Arabic-language printing house, and were gradually replaced by other service providers in this field, more specialized and more integrated with the emerging market of Arabic publishing. From 1908 onward Arabic printing developed in the region, in Palestine, and Jerusalem. Newspapers and magazines flourished and Arabic authors could print their books for a good price in Cairo, Beirut or Baghdad.[28] Jerusalem

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28   See, among many others, Leyla Dakhli, *Une génération d'intellectuels arabes. Syrie-Liban 1908–1940* (Paris: Karthala, 2009); Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq. Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

did not escape the printing boom that followed the revolution of 1908, and newspapers, printing presses, and even training for printing work flourished (notably at the German orphanage, *Dār al-Aytam*[29]). Alongside small everyday papers, dictionaries became a particularly sought-after product from the Franciscan Printing Press. We can see that the Levantine diaspora community placed orders for dictionaries or glossaries to help them live in the countries where they had settled. Thus, a Lebanese living in Chicago would order an English-Arabic vocabulary book, another in Brooklyn ordered an English textbook in Arabic, and others who were not necessarily looking for linguistic tools but a way of transmitting some of their familiar world into the other language placed orders as well.[30]

In the same way that the production of visiting cards was a means for the Custody to enter into the circulation of political writing in the city, the printing and translating of dictionaries was a political space that had gone unnoticed until then. In the 1920s–1930s it was notably the Custody's specialization in moving between Arabic and Italian that would gradually open up new markets for it, linked to Italian colonial expansion and to fascist politics in the East. Thus, we can see the orders for Arabic-Italian dictionaries appearing and then increasing for the Italian community in Egypt, then in Tripolitania.

In 1922 a letter from the Apostolic Vicar of Tripolitania to the Custos refers to a whole strategy of "publicity" to promote the dictionary with schools and administrations in Libya: *se lei vuole ne mandi qua un centinaio di copie: ne faremo esporre dai librai. Questi, se si lascerà loro un guadagno discreto, certo faranno il tutto per venderlo, ed una volta conosciuto dal pubblico certo continuerà a vendersi bene* (i.e., "If you would like, send a hundred copies here: we will have them displayed in book stores. If the stores are given some profit, they will certainly do everything they can to sell it, and once the public is aware of it, it should continue to sell strongly.") He gave advice on the distribution of the Custody's linguistic production, at a time when the Italian government needed a set of tools to translate from Arabic to Italian and, as pointed out in the same letter, also needed to develop linguistic tools to translate from Italian to Arabic. He encouraged the friars of Jerusalem to get to work: a market was opening up, and they needed to be part of it.[31]

This policy seems to have been followed by an increase in orders for books and dictionaries from Tripolitania, particularly in the 1930s. In 1937, thanks came in the form of a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of fascist Italy.

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29   Ayalon, *Reading*, 59.

30   ASCTS, 1923 set. 7–1932 lug. 21, "Registro delle spedizioni dell'introito attivo."

31   ASCTS, 1863–1943, "Corrispondenza (selezione). Archivio morto."

The Printing house had donated books to a certain number of institutions, following advice from the Apostolic Vicar of Tripolitania as early as 1922. We can hypothesize that this was a new Arabic-Italian dictionary, a project of 1935 that can be found in the archives, and whose purpose was to be "eminently practical." This new edition was intended to summarize basic knowledge, but also "eliminate all the verbal and nominal forms which are too rarely found in the ordinary style of both ancient and modern authors; to give greater importance to scientific and technological terms, to indicate the meanings of the terms in Arabic in various regions such as Egypt, Syria, Tripolitania and Algeria, not to exclude frequently used vulgar words or words that foreigners will frequently find in newspapers and periodicals." The goal was to remove language from a purely academic realm, in order to give it a practical dimension. The dictionary was specifically adapted to the areas in which Italian communities with colonial aspirations could be found. These ambitions were made quite explicit in article 10 of the proposal: "Italy needs this new Arabic-Italian dictionary for its colonies and resident *connazionali* in Egypt and other Muslim countries."

My point here is not to mention a shameful political collusion, but to see how the opportunity for linguistic competence combined with the fascist Italian colonial vision – which was centred on the support for missions and scholastic textbooks, as well as on learning Italian – would allow for a synergy between these two institutions. The example put in place in France via the work of the Écoles d'Orient (1865), *vis-à-vis* the Jesuit and Lazarist missions in nearby Syria, showed, from the nineteenth century, how cultural and intellectual policies based on Christian – Catholic – missions could be a means of establishing a strong political influence. It should be noted that the Franciscan Printing Press/FPP became more "Italian" under Mandatory Palestine. Its most loyal customers, besides the Mandate government, included leading Italian institutions such as the Banco di Roma, where the Custody also kept its money. By printing posters and visiting cards in Italian the FPP helped to make Italian a language that circulated inside the city of Jerusalem. As Liora Halperin has shown, making languages visible in public spaces was a strategic move for Mandatory Palestine.[32]

From 1922 onward Italianization was linked with fascist politics, enabling the printing house to develop a whole section of its commercial activity around translations between Italian and Arabic. It is significant to note the role played by fascist politics in the Custody, which was considered a national symbol in charge of spreading Italian in the Holy Land, and the values of an

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32   Liora R. Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2015).

Italy in which Saint Francis was considered the national saint par excellence.[33] Thus, the range of work produced by the FPP played a role in the educational propaganda developed in particular by the Minister of Education Giovanni Gentile, making the *Istituto per la Propaganda della Cultura italiana* a legal persona from November 1921. Moreover, it became a key element, in the Arabic-speaking territories, of the Lateran Treaty between Mussolini and the Roman Catholic Church signed in 1929.[34]

4   Conclusion

At the end of this exploration by languages of one of the major cultural institutions of Jerusalem at the turn of the twentieth century, we can understand that writing and printing in this city occurred in the context of multiple complex politics. From the outset, the installation of the Franciscan Printing Press supported the Vatican's political and religious ambitions during the reconquest of the Holy Land. Its development in one of the major urban centres of the Empire's Arab territory allowed it to create a bridge between the languages of the city and the region, by becoming an efficient multilingual printing house. Thus, from the time of the British Mandate, it was the national printing house, a place where the voices behind the policies were created, and next published in the streets of the city in multiple languages. Finally, it was as a Franciscan convent, a micro-world where Italian was the language spoken and the unofficial embassy of the Vatican, that the Press took over Italian politics in Arabic-speaking territory, politics that exempted it from the local demands of the British Mandate in Palestine so that it could engage in what was at that time a very offensive Italian imperialism.

A linguistic reading makes it possible to pinpoint the level of engagement that was held by this institution. It did not just serve as a mirror of the languages spoken, written and printed in the city, but displayed the *polyglossia* specific to the city of Jerusalem. As a host city for the pilgrims of the world, we can see that considerable efforts were made towards them, particularly from the 1920s onward. Beyond its spiritual vocation the Franciscan Printing Press played a key role in welcoming this particular kind of tourist. It published and printed all the papers they needed: guides, postcards, tickets to enter the city, luggage labels, forms for hotels, letterhead paper for writing down their

33   Tommaso Caliò and Roberto Rusconi (eds), *San Francesco d'Italia. Santità e Identità nazionale* (Rome: Ed. Viella, 2011). See particularly T. Caliò, "Il ritorno di San Francesco: il culto francescano nell'Italia fascista," 45–65.

34   Lucia Ceci, *L'interesse superiore: Il Vaticano e l'Italia di Mussolini* (Rome-Bari: Laterza 2013).

thoughts, even the checks they endorsed. It also provided their guides and translators with visiting cards to aid their exposure and reputation. In this, too, the FPP followed the city as it transformed into a space where holy places were commodified, another form of politics by language.

Until the end of the Second World War the FPP remained a window for local life, where people came to order the printed material that would mark important urban moments (marriages, graduations, celebrations, funerals), or items needed for everyday professional life (labels, transport tickets, business cards, posters). Thus, the papers that were printed at the Convent of the Custody connected not only the wide world, but also urban micro-localities. At the heart of this integration is language politics, in its most concrete sense.

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Epilogue

Cyrus Schayegh

I am neither a philologist nor a historian of languages. Hence, the following lines do not – for I cannot – critique details of language history and politics as argued by contributors to this volume. Rather, this comment is an exercise in synthesis and contextualization. I have sorted my notes into four sets: on historical background; Arabic; speaking multiple languages; and minority communities.

To start with, a word on the late Ottoman era. As for instance Heleen Murre-van den Berg and Michiel Leezenberg have shown in their chapters, the nineteenth-century Middle East saw vernacularization trends, including increased usage of Arabic and Ottoman Turkish texts, also by Eastern churches. Vernacularization had an eminently practical purpose: to solidify and preserve the flocks of these churches, by whatever linguistic means worked best. Earlier, in the early modern period, this same purpose had been fulfilled by vernacularizing – and trying to spread the use of – "minority" languages such as Syriac. Among the reasons, then, was religious competition between Eastern churches and the Catholic Church headquartered in Rome.[1]

A three-step observation may be made here. Firstly, one underlying reason why in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire minorities, too, vernacularized Arabic and Ottoman Turkish was modern state re-formation. In fits and spurts, the Ottoman state became societally more intrusive and interventionist. 'Big' *linguae francae* such as Arabic and Ottoman Turkish became more important for the empire's authorities, to communicate with varied groups and to try tying these into a more connected whole. (This development in Ottoman state formation – and its linguistic implications, manifestations, and outcomes – formed an integral part of a global process, which started in the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century and, according to some, reached a decisive turning point in the 1860s–1870s.[2]) Secondly, another cause

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1   For an example, see John-Paul Ghobrial, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory," *Past and Present* 222 (2014): 51–93.

2   A classic is Charles Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," *American Historical Review* 105 (2000): 807–31.

for a rise in the use in Eastern churches of especially Arabic in the nineteenth century was another round of inter-Christian competition after that of the early modern period. But now, it was not only Catholics but also Protestants who threatened the flocks of Eastern churches, seeking to convert them. Often operating under the umbrella of Western imperialism, U.S. and European Protestant missionaries were indeed among the first in the nineteenth century to print religious texts in Arabic in order to reach larger audiences. This made it doubly important for Eastern churches to pull rank, compete, and publish more in Arabic, too. If we look at the above two points together, a series of questions may be asked, including: How did those two processes interplay? Did churches that were most directly touched by one also play a greater role in the other? And how did it matter that Arabic was spoken and printed beyond the Ottoman Empire, not least – indeed, in great volumes – in Egypt? Thirdly and finally, Western missionary work, Ottoman state re-formation, the interactions of Eastern churches with both, and the linguistic dimension of this complex: together, they may be said to have rung in the age of religious mass politics in the Middle East – one intersecting with secular mass politics. (This double Middle Eastern mass politics formed part of a global trend, too.[3]) Reaching out to and listening to one's flock became an ever more incumbent duty for religious authorities and confessional elites; and those flocks became ever more recognizably vocal.

This brings me to Arabic. The editors of this volume and some contributors have paid considerable attention to the fact that especially after World War I Arabic became a crucial tool and litmus test for Arab nationalism, in particular for *qawmiyya*, pan-Arab nationalism; and the question how minorities – ethnic ones, such as Kurds, as much as religious ones! – positioned themselves *vis-à-vis* that development is often asked in the pages of this book. However, contributors have also shown that Arabic served other ends and developed in other ideological, political, and cultural contexts, too. Two such contexts, i.e., a second and a third, have just been noted, and been mentioned elsewhere in this book: state formation and inter-Church competition. Two others, a fourth and a fifth, were the *naḥḍa*, the Arab enlightenment, which crucially was also a project of language renewal, and changing Muslim uses of Arabic. All five date back to the nineteenth century and were interrelated. This circumstance

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3 A wonderful example is David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in a Nineteenth-Century German Village* (New York: Random House, 1995). See also Olaf Blaschke (ed.), *Konfessionen im Konflikt: Deutschland zwischen 1800 und 1970: ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

has to be kept in mind when we explore the relationship between post-war Arabic, Arab nationalism, and minorities. It matters all the more because the reasons for as well as the effects of the use of Arabic could be dissimilar, even disparate. Arabic could bring people together or pull them apart, for instance, or be employed to show somebody either formed part of the larger world or was very distinct from it.

When studying the post-war interplay between Arabic and Middle Eastern religious minority languages from the point of view of Arab nationalists (and especially pan-Arab nationalists, *qawmiyyūn*), we also need to keep in mind that for them this interplay constituted only one of many fronts on which Arabic had to be buttressed and/or (re)-defined. There were at least four challenges on top of that, posed by "minority" languages current within areas populated by Arabic speakers. One was the preponderance, of Turkish and Persian the neighbouring countries of Turkey and Iran. These related languages continued to influence Arabic through loan words and because some people in Arab countries practiced those languages. Another challenge was the global spread, from the nineteenth century onward, of languages centred in European empires, such as English, French and Russian. Yet another challenge was written standard Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) versus spoken Arabic (*ʿāmmiyya*), that is, the question of how to bring under one umbrella, or even unite, so many different dialects that in extreme cases were mutually quasi unintelligible. And lastly, there was the issue that Arabic was not simply the medium *par excellence* of *qawmiyya*, but also important to Muslims outside the Arab world, for instance to intellectually and politically significant communities in India, Indonesia, China, and the Soviet Union.

Last, a note on Iraq. It appears that here, *qawmiyyūn* felt and waged a linguistic competition between Arabic and other languages with particular vigour. To be sure, there was *The Other Iraq*, to quote the title of Orit Bashkin's monograph on inter-community ties and intellectual-cultural collaborations.[4] But at the same time, to *qawmiyyūn* in Iraq at least two of the above five 'fronts' were particularly problematic. The country had a massive non-Arabic speaking population, mainly Kurds as well as some Christians and Jews. Moreover, it bordered on both Turkey and Iran, which posed not only a geostrategic, but to *qawmiyyūn* also an existential-political challenge. Given these multiple 'problems,' the question of how to ensure that their country became 'really' Arab,

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4 Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

and what role Arabic could play in this regard, was particularly pressing for *qawmiyyūn* in Iraq.

From Arabic I move on to multiple languages. Several chapters in this volume, and other texts, can be pulled together to show how in the interwar Middle East speaking multiple languages could be a socio-political advantage. Liora Halperin argues that the first Ashkenazi colonists promoted narratives of a small number of Arabic-speaking founder figures from the late nineteenth century in order to promote their own centrist political program within the Yishuv. In a text entitled "Jews in an imperial pocket," Orit Bashkin has shown how some Northern Iraqi Jews used their mastery of several languages – which included Arabic, and echoed the late Ottoman imperial past – to try to become a linguistic bridge between the ethnic and religious groups in Mandate Iraq. And again in this volume, Franck Salameh highlights the insistence of Lebanese (and perhaps especially Beirutis) on the worth of bi-, if not trilingualism: Arabic, French, and English.[5] To be sure, these three groups used language skills in different contexts. Ashkenazis did so within an ideologically and socially complex ethno-religious community, the Jewish Yishuv, situated within a country, Palestine; Iraqi Jews manoeuvred within a multi-ethnic country, Iraq; and Lebanese multilingualism was not simply humanist, but also powerfully signalled and practiced, especially in Beirut's role as a connector between the Arab World and the West. Still, what these cases have in common is the socio-political use of speaking multiple languages as a source and symbol of power – as a form of capital, one may say.

They shared another trait. Arabic was a key language for the socio-political interaction central to all three cases above. (In fact, it was the only language they had in common. The other main language that counted in the first case was Hebrew; in the second, Kurdish and to a degree Turkish and Syriac; and in the last, English and French.) That fact does not simply reflect the weight of Arabic in the Middle East in the age of nationalism or, to be more precise, of nation-state building; it also illustrates that nation-state building simply homogenizes, but in some ways simultaneously renders the world more heterogeneous – and as a result creates opportunities for some people. The

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5   Liora Halperin, "Past Perfect," this volume. See also Orit Bashkin, "Jews in an Imperial Pocket: Northern Iraqi Jews and the British Mandate," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (London: Routledge, 2015), 370–82; Frank Salameh, "Twentieth-Century 'Young Phoenicians' and the Quest for a Lebanese Language: Between *Lebanonism*, *Phoenicianism*, and *Arabism*," in this volume. For Beirut, see Cyrus Schayegh, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017).

Yishuv was a highly specific settler colonial variant in that it willy-nilly had to spread within another national community, the Palestinian, which did not disappear, and communication with which thus mattered to the Yishuv and, since 1948, Israel. Further, new and sometimes also well-established nation-states carry complex linguistic traces of pre-national, often imperial pasts. Hence, actors such as Northern Iraqi Jews could play a role even in a country like Iraq, whose (Arab) nationalists insisted on the preponderance of their language; Iraq's past and its present reality have trumped their ideology. Last, the world comprises more than one nation-state; hence, some people and certain places, like Beirut, try to play the role of urbane transnational communicators between multiple nation-states in different world regions.

What about the minority communities themselves? Regarding this fourth and last issue, I raise follow-up questions to this volume's contributions. These can be sorted into three sets: relations within a given minority community; relations and comparisons between communities; and relations beyond communities, especially beyond their Middle Eastern spaces.

Regarding the 'within' question, we may ask how the case studies in this volume relate to theories of nationalism, including linguistic aspects. After all, this volume is empirically very rich, and hence can significantly contribute to theorizing nationalism.[6] Further, did Arab nationalisms – both *qawmiyya* and single-country nationalisms, *waṭaniyya*s – and the challenges and opportunities that resulted from turning the Arabic language into a nationalist tool, tend to cause specific churches and their members to close ranks? In which cases do we see opposite tendencies, and why? And how did entering the age of nation-state building affect the relationship between religious elites, i.e., clergymen high and low, and other members of a given community, some of which – think of the Palestinian Khalil Sakakini – had secular elite status?[7] This question matters doubly because already in the nineteenth century, state re-formation and global economic integration, among other changes, deeply impacted relations within communities, sometimes empowering members of a specific community *vis-à-vis* clergymen in specific *millet*s.[8]

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6   Related, see Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity: a Study in Ideology* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2003).

7   For Sakakini, see Khalīl Sakākīnī, *Yawmiyyāt Khalīl al-Sakākīnī* (Ramallah: Markaz Khalīl al-Sakākīnī al-Thaqāfī, 2003).

8   Some historians argue that lay community leaders became stronger than religious ones already in the late eighteenth century. See e.g. Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Millets: Past and Present," in *Religious Minorities in the Middle East*, ed. Anh Nga Longva and Anne Sofie Roald (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 32, 34.

Still regarding the 'within' question, we may note that quite a few communities discussed in the pages of this volume were present in more than one Middle Eastern country. Thus, did the role they played in Arab nationalism and their approach to Arabic differ from country to country? Did a given community follow more than one approach? And if yes, what would that tell us about transnational dimensions of a region such as the Arab world, and more broadly the Middle East, that was characterized by multiple, parallel, interrelated nation-state projects? On a related note, what are the differences between *qawmiyya* and *waṭaniyya*s as far as minorities, including their take on language, are concerned? Could it be that minority languages posed little or no challenge to some *waṭaniyya*s, or even formed a key ideological-political ingredient for a given *waṭaniyya*, rendering it more distinct from others? After all, in *waṭaniyya*s 'place' is at least as central an ingredient of national belonging as ethno-linguistic identity, which is front and centre in *qawmiyya*. A last note concerns leftism. As historians such as Anna Belogurova have shown, the very internationalism of leftism triggered language questions and allowed some men and women to become translators both literally and figuratively. How did this linguistic dimension of leftism play out in the Middle East? And what role did minority members play here – especially given the fact that many were quite prominent in Middle Eastern leftist movements?[9]

Regarding relations and comparisons between communities two questions come to mind. One is: how did the changing political situation in the interwar period affect relations between different minority communities across the Middle East? Historians have explored that question for specific countries such as Syria or Palestine. What do we see when we zoom out? Is the resulting picture 'simply' the sum of all parts, i.e., of all countries? Or do other or additional regional features appear? The other question is: how did the attitudes to Arabic and Arab nationalisms in one minority community influence other communities? Was a logic of competition at play here? Do we need to look sideways, to third parties, to fully understand the attitudes in a specific community?

I conclude with a short paragraph on relations beyond minority communities, especially beyond their Middle Eastern spaces. For some time now, historians of the Middle East have explored and unearthed the significance of a wide-ranging networks of diaspora communities – some more powerful,

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9   Anna Belogurova, "The Chinese International of Nationalities: the Chinese Communist Party, the Comintern, and the foundation of the Malayan National Communist Party, 1923–1939," *Journal of Global History* 9 (2014): 447–70. On Middle East leftisms, see e.g. Tareq Ismael, *The Communist Movement in the Arab World* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).

others less so; some older, others newer – for the historical development and shape of Arab nationalism and, as importantly, of the *naḥḍa*. The Americas played a role. Africa mattered, its western parts as well as eastern regions such as Zanzibar. Communities in Europe were influential, too, in west and east (and the USSR as a state certainly played a role as well). India can't be ignored, either, as historians also of Iran, for example, have shown, and as Tijmen Baarda notes in his contribution to this volume.[10] How, then – to sum up and to raise one last question – would the picture that emerges from this volume shift if we incorporated those diasporas into our historical analysis?

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10   See e.g. Andrew Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire: the Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Stacy Fahrenthold, "Sound Minds in Sound Bodies: Transnational Philanthropy and Patriotic Masculinity in al-Nadi al-Homsi and Syrian Brazil, 1920–1932," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46 (2014): 259–83 (online: https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east -studies/article/div-classtitlesound-minds-in-sound-bodies-transnational-philanthropy -and-patriotic-masculinity-in-al-nadi-al-homsi-and-syrian-brazil-192032div/0F313048F 18022844A44A6F62AE78315); Christoph Schumann, "Nationalism, Diaspora and 'Civilisational Mission': The Case of Syrian Nationalism in Latin America between World War I and World War II," *Nations and Nationalism* 10 (2004): 599–617; Monica Ringer, *Pious Citizens: Reforming Zoroastrianism in India and Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011). Tijmen Baarda, "Arabic and the Syriac Christians in Iraq: Three Levels of Loyalty to the Arabist Project (1920–1950)," this volume.

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