LANGUAGES AND CULTURE IN HISTORY

Sarah Irving, Karène Sanchez Summerer, Rachel Mairs and Lucia Admiraal (eds)

# Colonial Vocabularies

## Teaching and Learning Arabic, 1870-1970

Amsterdam University Press

Colonial Vocabularies

# Languages and Culture in History

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*Edited by*
*Sarah Irving,*
*Karène Sanchez Summerer,*
*Rachel Mairs, and*
*Lucia Admiraal*

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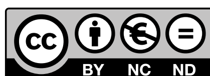


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# Notes on Transliteration

In transliterating Arabic, this volume generally follows the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* system, albeit maintaining the diacritical marks. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule: personal names where a specific spelling was preferred and used by the individual in question or has become recognized as the norm over time. Proper names of places that have recognized English equivalents have been preferred. All Arabic terms that have entered the English dictionary have been used in their English form without italics or transliteration. Capitalization in transliterated Arabic sentences and book or journal titles occurs only in the first word and personal names. Bibliographic references respect the original transliteration of the publications cited.

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# 1. Introduction

*Sarah Irving, Karène Sanchez Summerer, Rachel Mairs and Lucia Admiraal*

Speakers of Arabic have been teaching their language to people from other cultures for perhaps two millennia; this much we can surmise from examples of traders, diplomats, and scholars throughout late antiquity and the medieval period. Perhaps there were peaks and troughs, for instance in the period of heightened contact in al-Andalus and the wider Iberian Peninsula during the Islamic presence there. But it seems safe to say that the nineteenth century witnessed both an increase in demand for Arabic tuition and an institutionalization of the learning of Middle Eastern languages. This arose firstly from the greater density of contacts between peoples centring on the Mediterranean as steamships and railways enabled faster and cheaper travel. Secondly, it emerged from European imperial expansion – famously beginning with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 – and the intertwined dynamics of trade, missionizing, and scholarship of more or less nefarious intent.

This collection of essays offers insights into some of the trends and developments in the teaching of Arabic and Tamazight over the past two centuries or so.[1] The selection of studies and cases emphasize the use of social history approaches and tracing of networks and contacts as a way of situating language teaching and learning in a broader context of social, political, and cultural relations. Languages, those who taught and learned them, and the pedagogies employed – in schools, universities, professional environments,

1 This volume was inspired by the conference *European and Arab linguistic endeavours and exchanges in interwar Europe (1898–1948): Teaching and learning Arabic,* at the end of the NWO project 276-25-002 *CrossRoads* (20 November 2017–September 2022; PI: Karène Sanchez Summerer). Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sarah Irving would like to thank all participants who could not, for personal reasons, publish in this volume. Through their contributions to the conference, but also the workshops before the conference and through extended email conversations, they helped us to flesh out our questions and approaches. We are also grateful to Rachel Mairs and Lucia Admiraal who agreed to join as co-editors, as well as to the HoLLT network (History of Language Teaching and Learning), co-organizer of the conference.

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and self-study using phrasebooks and manuals – are examined not just for their own fascination, but for what they have to say about the history of relations between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, and grand themes such as Western colonialism and Arab nationalism. The experiences of language teachers and learners are also foregrounded – from authors of phrasebooks to European scholars butchering the pronunciation of Arabic words, or from Egyptian-Greek schoolchildren to Tamazight-speakers on YouTube. These chapters offer granular detail of the ways in which language pedagogy and its reception vary and shift under the influence of state policies and colonial demands – whilst also containing within them possibilities for resistance and subversion.

## Arabic language teaching: A historiography

The first significant scholarship on historical language learning in the Middle East and North Africa emerged in the 1940s and 1950s. Jacques Tagher reviewed the 'translation movement' that began after the first Egyptian educational missions to Europe in the 1820s.[2] Tagher discusses the language learning that laid the foundation for the production of translations between Arabic and European languages. In the same year, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl published his study of Rifāʿa al-Ṭahṭāwī, who learned and taught languages in Paris and Cairo from the 1830s onwards.[3] Shayyāl followed this with works on the history of translation in the period of the French occupation of Egypt and the reign of Muḥammad ʿAlī.[4] These are foundational works in the history of translation in the Arab world, and are still essential reading on the subject. They deal primarily with Arabic and Turkish speakers learning European languages for the purpose of producing written translations, but they also contain useful discussions of the study of Arabic by Europeans, and the European scholars of Arabic encountered by figures such as al-Ṭahṭāwī.

The 2010s saw renewed scholarly interest in the historical teaching and learning of Arabic as a foreign language, which might be linked to a number of factors: the rise in the discipline of Nahḍa studies; academic and popular interest in confronting the colonial foundations and legacy of Europe's relationship with the Arab world; and the consolidation of

2 Tagher, *Ḥarakat al-tarjama bi-Miṣr khilāl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar* ('The Translation Movement in Egypt during the Nineteenth Century').

3 al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, *Rifāʿa al-Ṭahṭāwī: zaʿīm al-nahḍa al-fikriyya fī ʿaṣr Muḥammad ʿAlī*.

4 al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-tarjama fī Miṣr fī ʿahd al-ḥamla al-Faransiyya*.

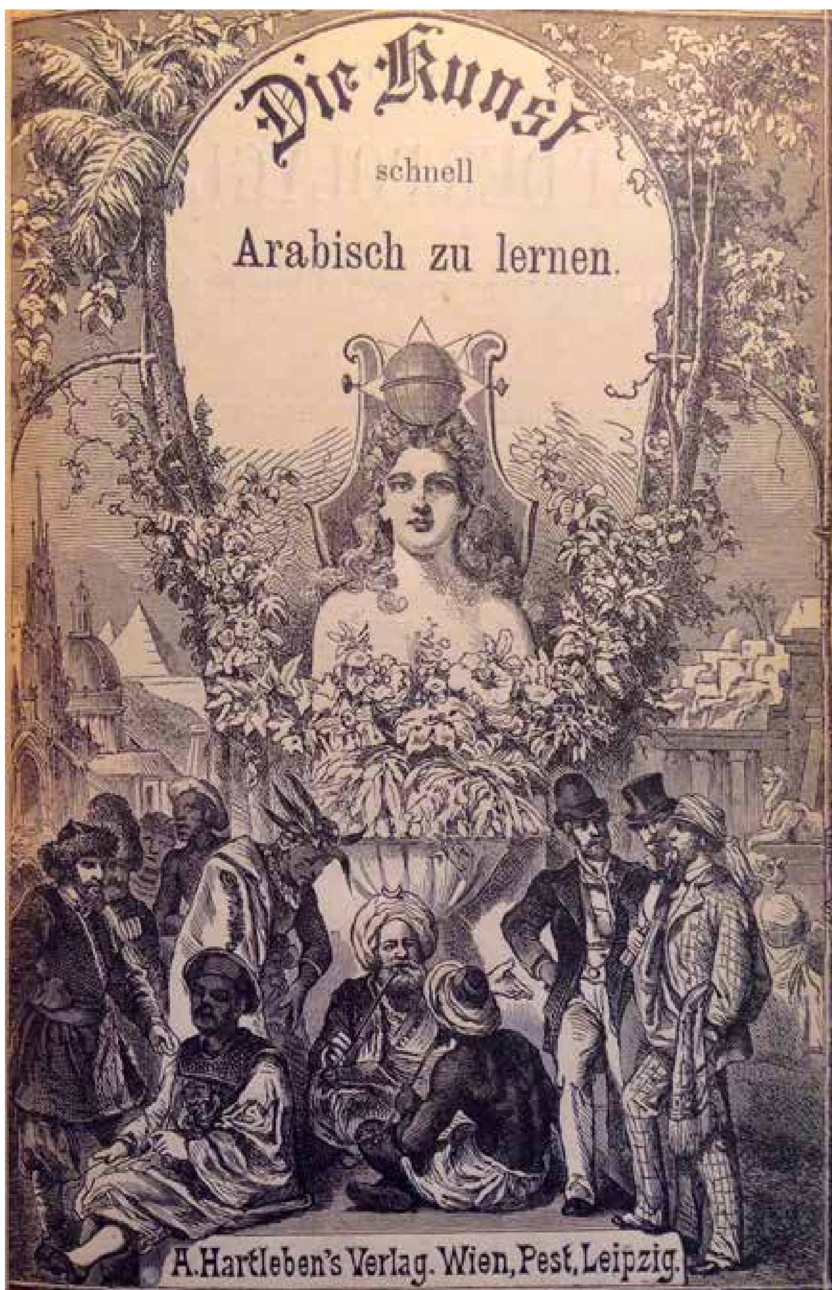


Fig. 1. Manassewitsch, Boris (1895) *Die Kunst die arabische Sprache durch Selbstunterricht schnell und leicht zu erlernen: Theoretisch-praktische Sprachlehre für Deutsche auf grammatischer und phonetischer Grundlage unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der vulgär-arabischen Sprache*. Wien, Pest, Leipzig: A. Hartleben's.

historical language learning and teaching as its own discipline. One of the foundational works in this trend is *Manuels d'arabe d'hier et d'aujourd'hui: France et Maghreb, XIXe–XXIe siècle* (2013).[5] The contributions to the volume take Arabic instruction books as their primary unit of study, with a focus on the French colonial Maghreb from the early nineteenth century to the twenty-first century. Rather than treating Arabic as a subject of formal academic study, in European universities, this attention to textbooks, their authors, and users allows the contributors to offer a new perspective on the teaching and learning of Arabic, one that prioritizes the lived experience of language teachers and learners. Loop, Hamilton, and Burnett's edited volume *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe* (2017) brings together a wide range of case studies from the period from post-Renaissance Europe. Most consider Western Europe (the Netherlands, England, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Italy), and there is also important material on the teaching and learning of Arabic to and by Europeans in the Ottoman Empire, European proto-colonial 'factories' overseas (for example entities such as the East India Company and the structures that preceded it), and in informal contexts outside European universities.

The volume by Savatovsky et al., *Language Learning and Teaching in Missionary and Colonial Contexts* (2023), studies the linguistic aspects of missionary, colonial, neo- or decolonial enterprises with a diachronic perspective (fifteenth–twentieth centuries), and includes several case studies on the teaching and learning of the Arabic language.[6] Facchin studies the emergence of the field of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) in South Sudan, the first of its kind in the Arab world, as part of an Arabization impulse in response to British colonial administration of language education.[7] El Kak looks at the teaching of Arabic alongside French in Lebanon, specifically at the Collège de Beyrouth during the early years of the French mandate.[8] Abouelgamal discusses the notion of 'diglossia' as a framework to describe the Arabic language in Western universities since the 1930s, by analysing Egyptian Arabic textbooks written by foreigners, particularly French scholars.[9]

5 Larzul and Messaoudi, eds., *Manuels d'arabe d'hier et d'aujourd'hui: France et Maghreb, XIXe–XXIe siècle.*

6 Savatovsky, Albano, Phạm, and Spaëth, *Language Learning and Teaching in Missionary and Colonial Contexts: L'apprentissage et l'enseignement des Langues en contextes missionnaire et colonial.*

7 Facchin, "From Teaching Non-Arabs Arabic to Arabization in 1950s Sudan".

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9 Abouelgamal, "How to Create a Language by Describing It? Orientalists and Pure Colloquial Arabic".

Fig. 2. Rudelsberger-Moltan, Hans (c. 1904) *Arabisch (Aegyptisch). Polyglott Kuntze: Schnellste Erlernung jeder Sprache ohne Lehrer*. Köln: Polyglott Kuntze.

Individual regions have also received more focused attention. Messaoudi's *Les arabisants et la France coloniale. 1780–1930: Savants, conseillers, médiateurs* (2015) looks at teachers and learners of Arabic in their colonial North African context, with a wealth of information on individual figures. The historical study of Arabic in Malta is assessed by Cassar.[10] Halperin includes Arabic in her study of how the Jewish settlement in Palestine was transformed from a multilingual linguistic landscape to a monolingual state,[11] and Mairs looks at the teaching of colloquial Arabic(s) of the Mashriq through phrasebooks, from the *Expédition d'Égypte* to the Second World War.[12]

The present work stands in dialogue with these existing studies. Like many of them, our emphasis is not on the 'armchair' study of Classical Arabic (or Tamazight languages) at venerable European universities, but on the practical aspects of how people learnt to communicate, the social context of this learning and communication, and the values accorded to

10 Cassar, "Malta and the Study of Arabic in the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries".

11 Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948.*

12 Mairs, *Arabic Dialogues: Phrasebooks and the Learning of Colloquial Arabic 1798–1945.* For the teaching of Arabic after the Second World War, see Idem, *Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language: Origins, Development, Current Directions.*

Fig. 3. Marlborough's Self-Taught Series, as advertised in *The Sphinx*, No. 239, 26 December 1908, 13.

it. Whether in classrooms in the Middle East or North Africa or university lecture halls in Europe, the focus of this volume is on language history as social history: the people who taught and learnt Arabic and other regional tongues, what they thought and believed about the society and politics of their times, and how they encountered and intersected with one another. Here, the technicalities of language learning represent an opportunity to interrogate relationships of power and social interactions in colonized spaces and across political and institutional lines.

## Colonial and imperial networks

The contributions to this volume examine the teaching and learning of Arabic in Europe and around the Mediterranean during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, within the contexts of colonial expansion, imperial rivalry, and cultural diplomacy in the Middle East. The predominant focus is on Arabic teaching and learning in and between Europe and the Middle East and North Africa, extending beyond a focus on North-Western Europe

to include a broad understanding of European scholarship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Accordingly, Lora Gerd sheds light on the extensive political and cultural interactions between Russia and the Arab world. The teaching of Arabic in Russia occurred in the context of Russian diplomatic efforts and Great Power rivalry in the Middle East. For Russia, the Oriental languages were important for several reasons: the expanding ties with local Orthodox churches and communities in the Arab world, especially in Palestine and Syria; foreign trade; and the Muslim populations in the RussianEmpire, which grew in number with Russian expansion into Central Asia and the Caucasus. Gerd's contribution underlines that the history of Arabic teaching and learning was not exclusively and one-sidedly marked by Russian imperial dominance. The presence of Arab students and teachers from Syria and Palestine in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Russia and in Russian Orthodox educational networks in the Middle East created, Gerd argues, a reciprocal relationship of cultural influence and translation. Though initially dominated by non-native teachers, the 1840s marked the inclusion of native speakers in the field of Arabic studies in Russia, mainly from Greater Syria. Russian theological seminaries hosted various Arab students and teachers, many of whom would play an important role in the Orthodox church and its educational programmes, and in the study of Arabic and Arabic literature, upon their return to Palestine and Syria, as well as in the spread of Russian influence in the region. The establishment of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society in 1882 marked a new phase in Russian cultural and diplomatic expansion in the Middle East and represented an attempt to organize an Orthodox educational system rivalling the British, French, and American missionary schools. The graduates of these schools, having been taught by both Russians and Arabs, were deeply involved in Russian culture and contributed to its spread amongst their contemporaries. Some of them became professors of Arabic and related subjects in Russia.

Just as Russia's economic, diplomatic, and cultural interests in the Middle East went in tandem with the expansion of the teaching and learning of Arabic, so Arabic gained importance in Britain in the context of its colonization of Egypt and, later, its Mandate authority in Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. Anthony Gorman gives a historical overview of the development of Arabic at the University of Edinburgh between the second half of the eighteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century. Initially, Arabic served under the umbrella of Hebrew studies as a linguistic resource for comparative religious studies and Semitic philology. But there were other incentives as well, including Christian missionary works and the use of Arabic in commerce and imperial administration, notably the East India

Company. Following the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and, later, British Mandate rule in Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq, Arabic gained further importance at the University of Edinburgh beyond the academic realm. A lobby emerged for the establishment of a specific Arabic lectureship because of British imperial rule over millions of speakers of 'oriental languages'. These concerns were expressed at the national level as well, ultimately resulting in the establishment of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. The post at Edinburgh was eventually created in 1912. Though the Arabic curriculum was initially heavily focused on historical and literary texts from the 'classical' period of Islam, from the 1920s colloquial Arabic was taught. Egyptian colloquial was the preferred language because of its usefulness for British officers in occupied Egypt.

Arab scholars working in institutions and Arabic departments in Europe and Russia, Gerd and Gorman show, played a role in transforming the predominant focus on the textual study of ('classical') Arabic. While the development of Arabic teaching in Russia shows the involvement of native speakers from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, as well as the importance there of literary and spoken Arabic, Gorman's examination of Arabic at the University of Edinburgh demonstrates that the teachers of the language from the eighteenth century up until the mid-twentieth were all clergymen born and educated in Britain or Scotland, whose scholarship strongly focused on classical and religious texts. The appointment of the Egypt-born Pierre Cachia (1921–2017) in 1949 and the Palestinian teacher 'Abdin Mahmud Dajani in 1950–1951 marked a break from this tradition. Cachia, in particular, wrote his dissertation on Taha Hussein and introduced a course on modern Arabic literature.

Gerd emphasizes the notion of 'reciprocity' to underline the exchange of knowledge between Russia and the Arab world. A similar focus on intellectual networks and (trans-) regional knowledge circulation is present in Amit Levy's contribution. Levy uncovers a forgotten intellectual and scholarly network in Mandate Palestine, focusing on scholars at the School of Oriental Studies (1926) of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The study of Arabic and Islam at the institute was intended to create common ground between Jewish and Arab scholars. Predominantly schooled in the German orientalist tradition, its staff forged connections and relations with Arab scholars based on two commonalities: an appreciation of the German orientalist tradition and a dedication to Jewish and Islamic reform. Reaching beyond the borders of Mandate Palestine, scholars at the institute maintained a cross-national and non-formal network of scholars in the fields of oriental studies, ethnography, and archaeology, including the Egyptian intellectual

Taha Hussein, the Syrian intellectual Muhammad Kurd Ali, and Palestinian scholar Tawfiq Canaan. As these networks and, sometimes, friendships developed under the shadow of the Jewish–Arab conflict in Palestine, they never became formal and did not endure for the long term. By now largely forgotten or deliberately excised from the historical record, it is only by reading between the lines and cross-reading archives that it is possible to find traces of this 'invisible college'.

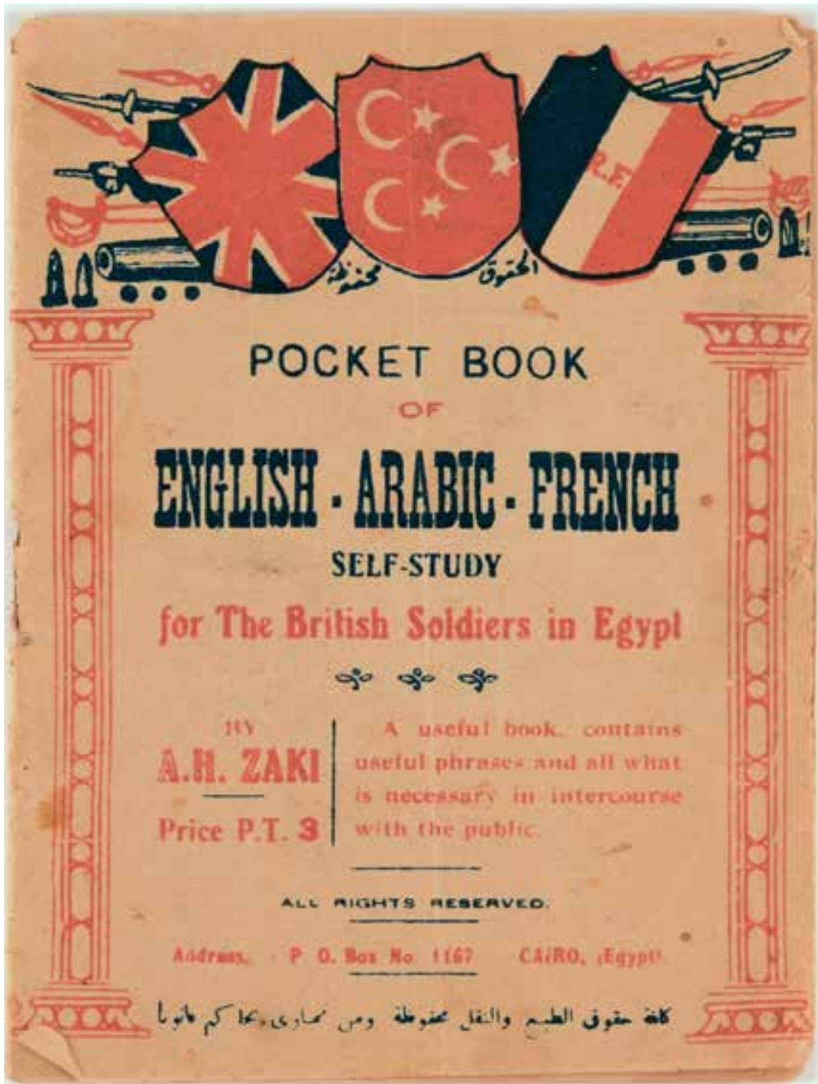


Fig. 4. Zaki, Abd al Hamid (1915) *Pocket Book of Arabic Self Study for the British Soldiers in Egypt: Contains useful phrases and all what is necessary in intercourse with the public*. Cairo: The Author.

## Arabic phrasebooks and the colonial politics of knowledge

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the colonial encounter between Europe and the Middle East went in tandem with the rise of the tourism industry and the publication of numerous Arabic phrasebooks for, amongst others, tourists, traders, and soldiers. These included, from the Khedival period to the era of British occupation, various phrasebooks of Egyptian Arabic written by Europeans and native speakers. While these mainly covered touristic themes such as food and drink, shopping, accommodation, the planning of trips and doctor's visits, Liesbeth Zack also points to instances of phrases to be used in professional or cultural contexts, such as archaeological excavations. Focusing on the conversations included in these manuals, Zack analyses the interactions foreigners were supposed to have with Egyptians – or a lack thereof, as appears from the lists of possible answers to solve the problem of the foreigner not understanding the answer of the interlocutor. The latter is especially clear in the 'dialogue with an Eastern Lady', derived from a manual for Syrian Arabic, in which the female interlocutor's answers were not included. How Egyptians responded to the phrasebook users remains an open question. The common inclusion in these books of terms to express anger and scolding might point, Zack notes, to neglect of the broader cultural context or assumptions of colonial superiority. She also notes a subtle difference between phrasebooks composed by native and non-native speakers; the former devoted more attention to polite requests and included less offensive scolding.

While Zack's analysis underscores that Arabic phrasebooks primarily reveal the authors' expectations of how a foreigner should converse with Egyptians, Sarah Irving draws attention to a phrasebook that contains social and political commentary on life in the Levant at the end of the Ottoman Empire. Focusing on the creators of the *The Manual of Palestinean* [sic] *Arabic* (1809), Elias Nasrallah Haddad and Hans Henry Spoer, the former a Jerusalemite with Lebanese origins and the latter a Prussian orientalist and protestant clergyman, Irving shows that, in addition to catering to foreign tourists, the manual was also used to educate its readers about social and political issues in Ottoman Palestine. Published in the wake of the Young Turk revolution of 1908, the book commented on the political atmosphere, praising the reinstitution of the Ottoman constitution and welcoming the brief period of press freedom before the unsuccessful 1909 counter-revolution and the subsequent hardening of political lines. As opposed to common stereotypes in Arabic phrasebooks about the 'East' as backwards and simple, the authors presented Ottoman Palestine as a modern society, highlighting

Fig. 5. Arab school, Jaffa, 1922, Frank Scholten collection UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jaffa_09_0044.

technological advances such as modern transportation and print culture. Their choice to publish a manual for colloquial Arabic further represents, wittingly or unwittingly, a stance in modern Arab reformist debates about the value of *fusha* versus *'ammiyya*. Irving also notes the 'colonial politics of knowledge and authenticity' at play: the fact that Elias Haddad was a native speaker was deployed by the authors to stress the 'authenticity' of the manual in order to attract readers.

Native speakers of Arabic were, however, not always regarded as more authoritative than European orientalists. As Gerd's contribution shows, Arab native speakers did occupy prominent positions in Russian universities and institutes. One of them was the first Arab woman to become a university professor: Kulsum (Klavdia) Ode-Vasilieva (1892–1965). The Arab native speakers who taught in Russia often faced critique by their contemporaries for their alleged lack of a scientific approach. Despite the involvement of native speakers in the teaching and researching of Arabic and the production of phrasebooks and instruction books, both Zack's and Mairs' analyses show that most learners of Arabic in Europe did not have access to the knowledge of native speakers.

Criticisms and expressions of superiority towards native speakers are also found in European discussions on phonology and pronunciation. In her analysis of a wide corpus of Arabic phrasebooks and instruction books published between 1798 and 1945, Rachel Mairs shows how authors (both

non-native and native speakers) tackled the issue of phonology and pronunciation for European learners of Arabic who did not have the ability to hear unfamiliar sounds as spoken in real life. Europeans especially struggled – as they continue to do today – with the Arabic consonants *ṣād*, *'ayn*, and *khā'*. In line with European constructions of the Arab world as barbaric, incomprehensible, and incompatible with European civilization, Mairs shows, phrasebooks used descriptions such as spitting or bleating to help foreigners pronounce these 'difficult' consonants. These curious descriptions and analogies, or simply the advice to consult an Arabic speaker, continued until the arrival of sound recordings and more scientific and physiological explanations in the 1940s. These changes occurred in the context of the Second World War in North Africa and growing demand for Arabic, as well as closer commercial and diplomatic ties with the Arab world.

While the focus in studies on the teaching and learning of Arabic is often on European perceptions of Arabic and its pronunciation, Rachel Mairs provides an important counterpoint by including Arab perspectives on the topic. The remarks by 'armchair' orientalists on pronunciation, such as that dropping the 'difficult' consonant *'ayn* altogether was not a problem, stand in stark contrast with the views of native speakers of Arabic

Fig. 6. Alfagnah, Abu Isaac (1924) *ספר תורת שפת ערב : זהו ראשית למודי שפת ערב לתועלת יודעי שפת עבר הרוצים לנסוע לארץ אבותינו או להשוות שתי הלשונות, עברית וערבית Sefer Torat sefat `Arav : zehu reshit limude sefat `Arav le-to`elet yod`e sefat `Ever ha-rotsim li-neso`a le-erets avotenu o le-hashvot shete ha-leshonot, `Ivrit ve-`Arvit*. Varshah: Hotsaat "Oryent".

of European pronunciations of their language. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, orientalists had already established a reputation in the Middle East as not being able to pronounce and speak the tongue they had studied and mastered as a written language, as appears from Arabic memoirs and satirical writings. The latter included imitations of the faulty Arabic of foreigners, and stereotypes of the lazy foreigner dropping or mispronouncing consonants. As such, language reveals itself as an opportunity for colonized peoples to push back against European assumptions of superiority and to undermine and subvert colonial power.

## Language discourse, colonialism, and anticolonial nationalism

The teaching and learning of Arabic in the Middle East and North Africa was also tied to the rise of the various regional nationalisms and Arab anticolonial movements. Most studies on Egyptianized foreigners (*mutamassirun*) in Egypt have focused on the period until the 1950s, which was followed by the departure of many of these communities in the context of Nasser's anticolonial and nationalist politics. Eftychia Mylona focuses, however, on the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, during the rule of presidents Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat, analysing the teaching of Arabic in Greek schools in Egypt established by the Ellēnikē Koinotēta Alexandrias (EKA, Greek Community Organization of Alexandria, founded 1843). Many Greeks came to Egypt during the nineteenth century for economic and social reasons, and their numbers peaked at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Greek community institutions were exceptional amongst the *mutamassirun* in Egypt as they served as the main representative bodies for Greeks in Egypt.

Until the 1950s, Mylona shows, foreign schools in Egypt had enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in their curricula. The EKA schools prioritized Greek national education; it was only in 1926 that Arabic was introduced into the curriculum, and it remained neglected until the late 1950s. In 1955, the Egyptian government introduced a new programme of education, emphasizing Arabic in line with its nationalization policies. Students now had to graduate both in Greek and Arabic, while the government sent native Egyptian Arabic speakers to the schools to guarantee the level of Arabic. Relying on the archives of the Greek community's institutions (instead of the now almost inaccessible Egyptian National Archives), Mylona shows how the introduction of Arabic at the Greek schools led to concerns about pedagogical difficulties, but especially about the autonomy of the institutions in educational matters and its execution. As a result of the

liberalization policies of the Sadat era, foreign institutions, including the EKA, reclaimed their autonomy in the sphere of education. From then on, Arabic and Egyptian education at EKA schools declined. Mylona's analysis ultimately exposes how the EKA, through its language education, was able to shape and refashion the community's identity and belonging.

The articles by Brahim El Guabli and Kaoutar Ghilani, meanwhile, focus on language discourses in colonial and post-independence Morocco and Algeria concerning Arabic and Tamazight. Ghilani demonstrates how the narrative of the marginalization of Standard Arabic in French protectorate Morocco is a product of the discourses of both colonial officials and anti-colonial nationalists in Morocco after independence. Both Tamazight and Arabic were central to French colonial rule and tied to a French scholarly discourse on Morocco that produced a racial Berber/Arab binary. As the Arab 'race' became primarily associated with Islam, the Berber race had to be protected from corruption by Islam through Arabic. This binary was also reflected in the schooling system, where Arabic and Tamazight were strictly separated. Ghilani signals the start of a new wave of historical research that stands against colonialism without taking nationalist narratives for granted, but rather treats these as historical products of their time.

Anti-colonial nationalism, often tied to Arabization policies, also excluded and oppressed the teaching and learning of other languages. El Guabli analyses teaching and research in Tamazight in post-independence Morocco and Algeria, and its marginalization, both inside North Africa and in the Anglophone academy, the latter since the 1990s. Because of this marginalization, the trajectory of Tamazight, El Guabli argues, illustrates the limits of post-coloniality in Morocco and Algeria. El Guabli further argues that a distinction needs to be made between the position of Tamazight in the pre-independence and the post-independence periods. Between the nineteenth century and the late 1950s, Tamazight attracted strong scholarly and educational interest, which halted abruptly in the post-independence period. France promoted the learning of both Arabic and Tamazight to facilitate its colonial rule; the colonization of Algeria and Morocco saw the publication of French instruction books for Tamazight and bilingual or trilingual (Tamazight, French, Arabic) dictionaries. These colonial scholarly efforts have resulted, Guabli argues, in a rich corpus of primary sources and cultural heritage. The self-definition of independent Morocco and Algeria as Arab-Islamic states left Imazighen with no option but to Arabize. After independence, colonial 'knowledge' about Tamazight and Amazigh moved to France, and was thereafter known under the name of 'Berber Studies'. In addition, an Anglophone tradition of 'Berber Studies' emerged. The latter witnessed its demise during the 1990s

due to a combination of increased interest in the Middle East, Arabic, and Islam at the expense of Tamazight and Amazigh, alongside budget cuts and retirements. While Tamazight has therefore 'moved out of the academy', it has been slowly rehabilitated in Morocco and Algeria from the 1980s and 1990s onwards. Recent years have witnessed the emergence of what El Guabli calls 'Amazigh You-Tubea': an online utopia created by Amazigh youth in the absence of a full official inclusion of their language and culture, where they offer free online courses in Tamazight.

In sum, therefore, this collection offers a broad perspective on the many ways in which Arabic teaching and learning in the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe have played a role in the social, cultural, and political currents of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Without erasing or denying the cultural violence of colonialism and of attitudes that sought to ignore indigenous expertise and experience, it highlights the ways in which language also offered an opportunity to resist and subvert colonial claims to power and knowledge. Furthermore, it points to the importance of considering histories of Arabic teaching alongside those of other Middle Eastern and North African languages – in this case Tamazight, but in doing so proposes future avenues for research on the treatment of Kurdish languages, Farsi, Mehri, Socotri, Syriac, Mandaic, and other tongues in the contexts of Arab nationalist politics and regimes. The approaches adopted throughout this volume – of social histories and networks of individuals and institutions, with focuses on multidirectionality and (albeit often unequal) exchange – will, we hope, offer ways in which histories of language can intersect productively with broader studies of the cultures, society, and politics of the Middle East and North Africa, and of those in Europe who have sought to study and understand them.

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# 2. For God and empire: Arabic at the University of Edinburgh: Its development, character and mission

*Anthony Gorman*

**Abstract:** Arabic was first taught at the University of Edinburgh in 1751, but it was not officially introduced as a regular subject until 1859 when it became an extra subject of study for the Senior Hebrew class. Over the following decades, it was taught by professors of Hebrew (and Semitic languages) until a dedicated lecturer in Arabic was appointed in 1911. Thereafter, it continued to be taught within the framework of Semitic languages until the early 1950s when a Department of Arabic was established, along with Turkish and Persian departments, in response to changing post-war needs. This chapter explores the development of the teaching of Arabic at the University of Edinburgh from the mid-nineteenth century until the early 1950s, looking at its practitioners, curriculum, degree, and student body. Originating from a milieu of religious studies and continental philology that also served staffing needs of imperial administration, it was taught largely by churchmen for much of the period and it was not until the early 1950s that the first native speaker of the language was employed on staff. It further examines the changing character of Arabic teaching at Edinburgh, the programme of study, its approach to spoken Arabic, and other changes within the curriculum that saw it begin to move slowly away from a traditional orientalist construct towards a more area studies model.

**Keywords:** Arabic language, Arabists, University of Edinburgh, Scottish university education, orientalism/ oriental studies, missionaries, imperial administration

A great many of the Arabists of the past – not least in Scotland – had been members of the Christian clergy, who studied Islamic thought for

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> comparative purposes. They and the historians had done sterling work for their disciplines, laboring patiently on difficult texts with very basic aids at hand. For them, acquaintance with Arabic was an indispensable tool, but it was deciphering of ancient written texts that was necessary to them, not the interaction with a living language.[1]

In the period from the second half of the eighteenth until the middle of the twentieth century, Arabic emerged and established itself as subject of study at the University of Edinburgh. In institutional terms, this development occurred principally under the umbrella of Hebrew studies where it served as a comparative linguistic resource for the study of comparative religious studies and Semitic philology. Yet, the importance of Arabic as a language extended beyond its scholarly interpretation and classical form to include both the concerns of the Christian missionary impulse and the more political and material priorities of the secular world. Almost from the beginning, the demand from Scottish students eager to ply their knowledge of Arabic in the service of commerce and imperial administration, most evident in the staffing needs of the East India Company and the administrative requirements of the British Empire, would expand with greater British engagement with the East. These different sources of inspiration would engage with each other in different and uneven measure in the development of Arabic pedagogy at Edinburgh in a way that reflected the profile of its practitioners, the structure of degrees and course curricula, and in the character and interests of the student body.

## Semitic beginnings

The establishment of Arabic as a subject of academic study in Britain dates to the seventeenth century with the creation of the Sir Thomas Adams Chair at Cambridge (1632) and the Laudian Chair at Oxford (1636). In Scotland, across its four ancient universities the study of Arabic emerged more gradually as an extension of Hebrew studies. This first occurred at the University of Glasgow with the appointment of Charles Morthland (d. 1744) as Professor of Oriental Languages in 1709, following his successful oral examination and a supportive testimonial from Aadrian Reland, Chair

1 Cachia, "A Road-Map of Opportunities Made and Missed", 13.

of Oriental Languages at the University of Utrecht.[2] Principally tasked to teach Hebrew, Morthland would also deliver classes in Arabic, as well as Aramaic, Chaldean, and Syriac. Founded more than a century after Glasgow in 1583, the University of Edinburgh lagged behind but followed a similar path of development. Its chair in Hebrew had been established in the Faculty of Theology in 1642 but the teaching of Arabic only began after the appointment of James Robertson (1714–1795) to that post in 1751. Born in northern Scotland in the parish of Cromarty, Robertson had first attended the theological school at the University as a student before taking a position at Northampton Academy, a notable nonconformist school.[3] He left this employment in the summer of 1749 to go to Leiden University 'to gain such a knowledge of eastern languages as might render me capable of teaching them with some credit'.[4] There, he worked under the preeminent Dutch orientalist Albert Schultens (1686–1750) and became acquainted with his son and successor Jan Jacob Schultens, both of whom greatly influenced him, and the latter with whom he would maintain contact.[5] Upon his return to Britain, Robertson secured a testimonial from Thomas Hunt (1696–1774), then Laudian Professor of Arabic and the Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, before he successfully applied for the vacant position of Hebrew chair at Edinburgh.[6] According to a later University Principal, Sir Alexander Grant (1826–1884), the appointment of Robertson in June 1751 represented 'the first really qualified professor who held the Chair'.[7]

During his tenure, Robertson enhanced his prestige at Edinburgh both in terms of scholarship and teaching, albeit in different ways. Known as 'Rabbi' among his colleagues, his record of publications were clear testimony to the quality of his Hebrew language scholarship. Among his notable works was *Clavis Pentateuchi* (1770), which represented a learned analysis of the Hebrew version of the Pentateuch, printed in Latin and English, that was prefixed with two studies, one of them on the Arabic language. Robertson's scholarship was also recognized, in 1763, with his appointment as University Librarian, in which capacity he prepared the first alphabetical catalogue

2 Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow*, 190; Emerson suggests that the Glaswegian merchant community, echoing its Dutch counterparts, may have played a role in this appointment, see Emerson, *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 55–56.

3 For the following, see Fell-Smith, rev. Philip Carter, "Robertson, James".

4 Cater, "James Robertson", 105 and 100 (quote).

5 Cater, "James Robertson", 105; Robertson would later return to Leiden in 1753, 107. On the Schultens, see Vrolijk and Van Leeuwen, *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands*.

6 Cater, "James Robertson", 111.

7 Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh*, vol. II, 289.

of the library collection that demonstrated his particular interest in Arabic and Persian texts. However, there were mixed views of his teaching, with at least one observer remarking that his Hebrew classes were little attended.[8] However, his teaching of Arabic and Persian was more successful, particularly in attracting students interested in entering the service of the East India Company. Robertson appears to have launched these classes in the late 1760s on his own initiative and thereafter maintained correspondence with former students working in the East whose experience he used to inform his teaching methods.[9] He was, for example, of the firm view that Arabic as a 'pure' language should be taught before learning Persian, and that European students should work with vowelled texts, the latter a view he had adopted from the Schultens.[10] In 1792, Robertson's declining health forced him to share his duties as chair and he died three years later, but not before demonstrating the relevance of Arabic not only to the academic field of religious and linguistic studies, but also the secular world of international commerce and empire.[11]

The commitment to teaching Arabic of those who directly followed Robertson in the Hebrew chair at Edinburgh is unclear. His near-immediate successor, William Moodie (1759–1812), taught Arabic and Persian during his occupancy (1793–1812) but thereafter the record is uncertain; the opening of Haileybury in 1806 (see below) may have dampened demand locally.[12] In fact, Arabic would not become a formal subject at Edinburgh until the long tenure of Rev. David Liston (1847–1880). Liston had actually studied Hebrew at Edinburgh as a student before taking up missionary work in India.[13] On his return in 1847, to fill the chair at Edinburgh, he first taught Hebrew, as well as Syriac and Hindustani, according to the curriculum for the Senior Hebrew Class. Liston's decision to offer Arabic in Advanced Hebrew to three senior students, John Barbour, George Purves, and James Johnstone, at the beginning of the academic year 1859 would mark an important stage in its standing as a university subject.[14] The practice was maintained by his

8 Somerville, *My Own Life and Times 1741–1814*, 18; Grant, *Story of the University of Edinburgh*, vol. II, 289.

9 Cater, "James Robertson", 199.

10 Cater, "James Robertson", 202–204, 252.

11 Fell-Smith, rev. Philip Carter, "Robertson, James". It is worth noting that, at this time, there had been a suggestion to split the Hebrew Chair into one of Biblical languages for those studying for the ministry, and the other of Arabic and Persian for those with future careers in trade and imperial service. Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 251 n.79.

12 On Moodie, see Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 246.

13 Grant, *Story of the University of Edinburgh*, vol. II, 292.

14 *Edinburgh University Calendar 1859/60*, 20, 89.

successor, Professor David Laird Adams (1880–1892), with Arabic alternating with Syriac in the early years. Since that time, Arabic has been taught continuously at University of Edinburgh.[15]

## Arabic and empire

The reasons for Liston's decision to teach Arabic were both personal and professional. According to Grant, Liston was an accomplished linguist but felt 'depressed about the low salary' of the chair.[16] Teaching languages other than Hebrew therefore offered the possibility of extra remuneration for an impecunious don. More significant, however, was Britain's expanding international imperial commitments and the demand this created for those with the necessary qualifications to administer its authority. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the East India Company had addressed this issue by deciding to establish a specialized institution to educate its future agents and officials for overseas service. To that end, in 1806, it founded the East India Company College, popularly known as Haileybury, north of London, as a place where young men between sixteen and eighteen years old would receive such training.[17] Over time, this arrangement and, indeed, the governance of the East India Company more generally, came to be questioned amidst accusations of patronage and favouritism.[18] Calls were made for merit, rather than connections, to be the basis for company employment and that British universities, and not only Haileybury, should play a role in preparing aspiring candidates for such a career. Following the passing of the Charter Act of 1853, a committee was formed with Thomas Macaulay MP and historian at its head and including luminaries such as Benjamin Jowett and Henry Melvill (Principal of Haileybury) to report to Parliament on the matter.[19]

Published at the end of 1854, the Macaulay Report made various recommendations regarding the selection process of those who wished to embark on a career in the Indian Civil Service.[20] Central to its thrust was the setting

15 Turner, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 57–58, 365.

16 Grant, *Story of the University of Edinburgh*, vol. II, 292.

17 Misra, *Central Administration of the East India Company*, 397–402.

18 Ibid., 404–414. With regard to Scottish applicants, accusations of patronage had been levelled for some time, particularly in relation to the influence of the powerful Henry Dundas, see Blunt, *The I.C.S: The Indian Civil Service*, 66; O'Malley, *The Indian Civil Service*, 1601–1930, 230.

19 Blunt, *The I.C.S*, 198.

20 The full report can be found at "The Indian Civil Service", *The Times* 27 December 1854, 7.

up of a public examination, open to all, to test the educational and linguistic skills of applicants. First and foremost, this involved an examination of English language and literature, along with mathematics, and natural and moral sciences. The remaining subjects proposed were languages, with a heavy emphasis on classics, with Greek and Latin being given the most significant weighting, along with French, German, and Italian. The report also gave extensive consideration to the question of Asian languages that were of relevance to those working in India. It was decided that Indian vernacular languages, such as Bengali or Tamil, should not be part of an entrance examination since they were regional and could be more easily learnt out in the field. However, the classical languages of India, Sanskrit, and Arabic, which occupied a special status in the Indian religious and literary tradition for Hindus and Muslims, respectively, were singled out. Of the latter last language, the report noted,

> [...] Arabic has contributed, though not in the same degree with the Sanskrit, to the formation of the vocabularies of India; and it is the source from which all the Mahometan nations draw their religion, their jurisdiction and their science.[21]

For these reasons, the report recommended Sanskrit and Arabic as examinable subjects, despite its authors believing it unlikely that many students would choose to be tested in them. Following the acceptance of the committee's report, a law was passed in parliament in 1855 establishing a competitive public exam for entry into the Indian Civil Service, a change made all the more pressing following the Indian mutiny in 1857 and the passing of the Government of India Act the following year, which brought India under direct rule. Haileybury was closed that same year.[22]

The Macaulay report had explicitly regarded Oxford and Cambridge as being the universities most likely to attract aspiring Indian Civil Service applicants but the change opened up a potential role for other universities. At Edinburgh, the importance of the academic study of Sanskrit and Arabic in the context of imperial service would be embodied in the careers of two Scottish brothers, John and William Muir, both of whom had attended Haileybury and gone on to serve as imperial administrators in India. The elder, John Muir (1810–1882), had retired to Edinburgh in 1853, after more than two decades in India, where he wrote and published Sanskrit texts and

21 Ibid.

22 O'Malley, *The Indian Civil Service*, 241–243.

endowed a chair in Sanskrit at the university in 1862.[23] His younger brother, William Muir (1819–1905), after a short period of study at Edinburgh, then Glasgow, had entered Haileybury like his elder brother with the help of family connections. His subsequent posting to India by the East India Company, in 1837, marked the beginning of a significant career that saw him serve in various administrative capacities. Muir returned to Britain in late 1876 and was subsequently appointed Principal of Edinburgh University in 1885, in which capacity he served until 1903 before final retirement. It is unlikely that Muir ever taught Arabic at Edinburgh but his work on the life of Muhammad and the early Caliphate, and particularly his use of original Arabic sources, marked him out as a significant scholar, even if his attitude towards Islam was polemical.[24] His specific role in the promotion of Arabic and oriental languages at Edinburgh must remain a matter for further research but the record shows him as a strong advocate for greater Scottish opportunity in the Indian Civil Service.[25] More clearly, the public lives of both the Muir brothers demonstrated an obvious interplay between the knowledge of oriental languages, imperial service, and university administration.[26]

India loomed significantly in the professional careers of Hebrew Professors at Edinburgh – both David Liston and John Dobie (1892–1894) had spent time there – and in the career aspirations of their students across the nineteenth century. However, following the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, the importance of Arabic as a language relevant to the everyday running of empire and international trade grew substantially. That would be even more the case with the postwar settlement after 1918, which saw Britain take on major responsibilities in Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. This shift of emphasis would be reflected in changes in the provision of Arabic at the University of Edinburgh.

While, doubtless, different voices took up the cause, one of those who would most publicly lobby for a dedicated Arabic lectureship at Edinburgh was Archibald Kennedy. Born in December 1859 to a poor family in Whitehills, a small fishing village in Banffshire, Scotland, Kennedy had graduated in Arts at Aberdeen University in 1879.[27] He continued his studies at the Theological Hall at the University of Glasgow, before

23 Powell, "Muir, John".

24 Powell, "Muir, William". For a fuller discussion of Muir's scholarship, see Powell, *Scottish Orientalists*, 140–143.

25 On this, see Powell, *Scottish Orientalists*, 268–270.

26 Cf. a listing of French scholars in colonial service, Messaoudi, *Les arabisants et la France coloniale: Savants, conseillers, médiateurs (1780–1930)*.

27 "Death of Professor A.R.S. Kennedy", *The Scotsman* 25 October 1938, 8.

taking the familiar route of further study on the Continent, this time at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin. Kennedy returned to Scotland to take up a Fellowship at Glasgow in 1885 before being appointed professor of Semitic Languages at Aberdeen two years later, at the age of 28. Seven years later, in 1894, he was appointed to the vacant Chair of Hebrew and Semitic Languages at Edinburgh, following the death of his predecessor, John Dobie, in a train accident.[28]

In many ways, Kennedy resembled his predecessors in the Hebrew chair at Edinburgh. A cleric with primarily scriptural interests, he was a product of the Scottish university system, then consolidated his learning on the Continent, before returning to Scotland for employment. His chief expertise centred on Semitic languages and, over the course of a full academic life, he edited a series of grammars translated from the original German, of Hebrew, Syriac, Assyrian, and Arabic, and wrote commentaries on books of the Old Testament. In addition, he was a noted authority on the archaeology as well as the economic and social life of ancient Palestine. However, in a graduation address titled, 'A Plea For the Encouragement of Oriental Studies', delivered to Arts students in 1897, apparently the first time the Hebrew chair had addressed such a gathering, Kennedy put a strong case for the relevance of the study of Semitic languages that extended well beyond the boundaries of his academic discipline.[29]

Kennedy began his address by praising Scottish universities for their recognition of the importance of learning the classical languages of the East, conspicuously evident in the long tradition of professors of Oriental Languages, even if, as he noted, this often effectively meant only Hebrew and Semitic Languages. Having granted this, Kennedy went on to compare this situation with the provision of Oriental languages in various European states: the situation in Russia at the Oriental Faculty of the University of St Petersburg and the Imperial Academy of Science, in Vienna with the Imperial Oriental Academy, and the School of Modern Oriental Languages in Paris, which offered a free course over three years. He continued with a review of the facilities in Holland and Italy, and ended with the recently established Seminar for Oriental Languages attached to the University of Berlin, which he regarded as 'perhaps the best equipped of all the continental schools for the practical study of the living languages of the East'.

28 "Dr A.R.S. Kennedy, Hebrew Studies at Edinburgh", *The Times*, 26 October 1938, 16; on Dobie, see Turner, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 58.

29 A full report on the speech appeared in "Edinburgh University Graduation Ceremonial", *The Scotsman* 12 April 1897, 8.

In returning to the subject of Britain, Kennedy recognized that there had been some recent efforts to ameliorate the situation in the study of eastern languages. The Royal Asiatic Society had taken up the matter and the Imperial Institute had set up a school for modern Oriental Studies, albeit this had been inadequately resourced by the government. In Scotland, the Universities Commission had encouraged the universities, and particularly Edinburgh, to establish honours courses in Semitic and Indian languages.[30] Nevertheless, the overall situation was not promising.

Kennedy then addressed a central point: Britain now ruled over 300 million speakers of Oriental languages, and probably supplied the markets of a thousand million people in the East, and yet it was doing much less than Russia, France, and Germany in producing young graduates with the necessary academic and practical knowledge of these languages to maintain Britain's position in the East. Quoting trading figures between Britain and India and the expanding commercial relations with Egypt, China, and the Levant to strengthen his case, he called on funding from the public purse to remedy the situation, given the interests that were at stake, and on the University of Edinburgh to push for the creation of a Semitic honours degree, noting: 'It would be one of the most difficult degrees in the University, especially if it included Arabic, but all the more valuable on that account'. In hammering the point home, Kennedy ended that,

> [h]e hoped to see the day when that great metropolitan University, the only Scottish University with a Sanskrit Chair, would be able to secure the services of at least a lecturer in the other great classical language of the Orient – the language of the Sacred Scripture – of the sixty millions of their Mohammedan fellow-subjects.

As Kennedy had noted, he was not alone in expressing these concerns about the neglect of eastern languages in Britain. Over the course of the last previous half century, a national conversation on the issue had been slowly brewing on the matter. While Arabic had already been established at University College London and Trinity College Dublin, in a paper delivered at the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS) in 1883, Professor Habib Salomé of Kings College was still calling attention to the national importance of studying

30 At Edinburgh, some of these changes had been reflected in the change of name of the Hebrew Chair to the Chair of Hebrew and Oriental Languages in 1882 (and, subsequently, to the Chair of Hebrew and Semitic Languages in 1894) and the inclusion of Oriental Languages in the Faculty of Arts in 1888.

Arabic and the unfavourable situation in Britain as compared to some other countries.[31] The RAS would continue to be a critical venue for this discussion following the setting up a committee to deal with the matter during William Muir's presidency of the Society (1884–1887) and later during that of his successor Lord Reay, a Scottish peer and himself a graduate of Leiden University, who would serve in the post for almost thirty years (1893–1921).[32] In Scotland, James Robertson, professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages at the University of Glasgow, echoed Kennedy's sentiments a few years later, in 1902, when he called for the teaching of Arabic and oriental languages citing 'the imperative need of their study in the universities which are to furnish the men who are to become the brain-power in the Far East with which we are closely connected'.[33] Ultimately, on a national level, many of these concerns would be taken up and expressed in the Reay Report of 1909, which would lead to, among other things, the establishment of the School of Oriental Studies in London in 1916.[34]

## The creation of an Arabic lectureship

In Scotland, the call for the establishment of a lectureship in Arabic was answered first not at Edinburgh but Glasgow, with the appointment of Rev. Thomas Weir in 1902.[35] At Edinburgh, Arabic continued to be delivered by the Hebrew chair at junior and senior levels with support from an assistant. Only in 1912 did Kennedy's call for an Arabic lectureship bear fruit following the recommendation by the Faculty of Arts to establish such a post. The duties of the holder of the post were sketched out: the teaching of classical Arabic at elementary, senior, and honours level, and the delivery of lectures on Arabic literature and on the comparative grammar of the Semitic languages. When required, the teaching of 'one or other dialects of the Modern Spoken Arabic' would also be part of the workload, although for an extra payment above the annual salary of £300. The new lecturer was also expected to work closely with the Hebrew professor who, although formally in Divinity, would contribute to the teaching of the new honours

31 Salomé, "On the Importance to Great Britain of a Study of Arabic", 38–44.

32 Hartog, "The Origins of the School of Oriental Studies", 6–9.

33 Robertson, *Five-and-Twenty Years in a Hebrew Chair*, 14–15.

34 Brown, *School of Oriental and African Studies*, 13–17.

35 Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow*, 454; see also "Dr. T.H. Weir", *The Times* 9 May 1928, 18. Weir was the son of Duncan Harkness Weir, Professor of Hebrew at Glasgow (1849–1876).

degree in Semitic languages in the Faculty of Arts. This new programme would require specialization in Arabic and Hebrew across four years of study and both recognized the growing stature of Arabic as a subject and put the study of Semitic languages on a higher footing.[36]

The first appointed Arabic lecturer was Rev. Richard Bell (1876–1952), one of the graduating mathematics and natural philosophy students present at Kennedy's address fourteen years before. Bell had taken up the study of Arabic and Syriac during his Divinity degree where his talents were recognized with the award of the Vans Dunlop Scholarship in Semitic languages. He continued his studies at the Universities of Jena, Strasbourg, and Berlin and returned to Edinburgh in 1901 where, for the next three years, he worked as an assistant to Kennedy teaching Arabic and Hebrew. In July 1904, he was awarded a Carnegie Trust Fellowship in the historical category at Edinburgh and was licenced as a minister in the Church of Scotland that same year and, subsequently, posted to the parish of Wamphrey in Dumfries and Galloway in 1907.[37] It was while in this post that Bell received the offer of the Arabic lectureship in October 1912 for a five year term.

The successful appointment of Bell, the subsequent engagement of Alexander S. Fulton of the British Museum as the external examiner in Hebrew and Arabic, and the plans already in place for the new Semitic languages degree suggested that the future of Arabic at Edinburgh looked promising.[38] Perhaps another auspicious omen was that among the Arabic students in that first year was a young Hamilton Gibb, who, as H.A.R. Gibb (later Sir Hamilton Gibb), would become one of the pre-eminent Orientalists of the English-speaking world. In fact, staffing issues and the outbreak of war soon created difficulties. For reasons unknown, Bell resigned his post after only a year and returned to his parish duties. He was replaced by Rev. Dr Edward Robertson (1879–1964) whose background demonstrated the familiar combination of academic learning and missionary activity. A Fife-born St Andrews graduate, first in mathematics and natural philosophy, and then Divinity in 1904, Robertson had stayed on as assistant to Rev. Professor David Miller Kay, Chair of Hebrew and Oriental Languages, for the next two years.[39] After further study on the continent, this time to Leipzig, Berlin, and Heidelberg, Robertson spent time studying written and spoken Arabic

36 University of Edinburgh, *College Minutes* (1908–), vol. XV, 7 December 1911, 8.

37 "Arabic at Edinburgh", *The Scotsman*, 6 September 1921; "The Carnegie Trust", *The Times* 16 July 1904, 5.

38 UEA, *College Minutes* vol. XV, 6 March 1913, 185.

39 Turner, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 403.

in a 'little mountain village in Mount Lebanon', before taking up his duties at Edinburgh in October 1913.[40] His inaugural lecture to the Arabic class, titled 'Pilgrimage to Mecca', reflected the perspective and concerns of a clergyman as he discussed the Haj as a great invigorating force in Islam and wondered how different Christianity might be if it had adopted such a unifying practice.[41] Following the outbreak of war the following year, Robertson enlisted in the Edinburgh Battalion of the New Army and was granted leave by the university in order to take up munitions work in nearby Musselburgh. To fill the gap, the Hebrew staff were redeployed, with Kennedy taking the junior Arabic class and Arthur Tritton, an assistant teacher in Hebrew, given responsibility for the senior Arabic class.[42] Despite these measures, wartime conditions created obvious difficulties and Arabic, along with some other subjects, was suspended for the academic year 1916/17.[43]

Robertson would return to Edinburgh and the classroom after the war in 1919, this time opening his Arabic class with a discussion of the Caliphate and its future and the emergence of the Arab national movement in Syria and the Hejaz, both subjects of obvious contemporary interest.[44] Yet, he would soon leave Edinburgh again, this time definitively, to assume the post of professor of Semitic Languages and Literature at the University College of Northern Wales, Bangor (1921–1934), and, subsequently, the Chair in Semitic Studies at the University of Manchester (1934–1945).[45] Robertson would nevertheless keep his connections with Edinburgh. In 1921, he assisted in the publication of a catalogue of Arabic and Persian manuscripts held in the Edinburgh University Library, a project that had been held over during the war and

40 "St Andrews Graduate's Appointment", *Dundee Courier*, 21 June 1913, 4.

41 "Edinburgh University Classes, The Pilgrimage to Mecca as a Religious Asset", *The Scotsman*, 16 October 1913.

42 UEA, *Senatus Academicus*, *Minutes*, vol 1 (October 1913–July 1917), 7 October 1915, 301. The son of a Congregationalist minister, Arthur Stanley Tritton studied in London, then Oxford, before working under Wellhausen at Göttingen. After two years of missionary work at Brumana, Lebanon (1909–1911), he took a position in Hebrew at Edinburgh. He left the University in 1916, and was later appointed professor of Arabic at Aligarh in the United Provinces of India (1921–1931) but returned to Britain to take up the post of Lecturer in Arabic at SOAS, ultimately succeeding H.A.R. Gibb as Professor of Arabic there in 1938. Beckingham, "Obituary", 446–447; Lambton, "Prof. A.S. Tritton", *Times,* 14 November 1973.

43 UEA, *Senatus Academicus*, *Minutes*, vol 1, 6 July 1916.

44 'Edinburgh University. Inaugural Lectures', *The Scotsman* 16 October 1919, 5.

45 After retiring from the chair at Manchester, Robertson served as the librarian of the John Rylands Library before stepping down at age 83 and joining family in Canada where he died soon after, see Bleddyn J. Roberts, "Professor Edward Robertson, DLitt., D.D. (St Andrews), Hon. D.D., LL.D (Manchester)", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* Oct 1964: 3/4 (October 1964), 158–160.

delayed by the death of professor of Sanskrit, Julius Eggeling, which appeared four years later.[46] In what seemed to be a revolving door, Robertson would be replaced as Arabic lecturer by Richard Bell in 1921, now apparently determined on an academic career. Over the next 25 years, he would set the tone for Arabic pedagogy at Edinburgh and establish his reputation as an eminent scholar of the Quran based on a translation of the Quran and a radical thesis that sought to challenge the traditional order of the suras.[47]

## The curriculum

From the time of its introduction as a regular subject in 1859, Arabic courses at Edinburgh were structured around a reference grammar and a chrestomathy, a series of readings, with a wider set of texts developing over time at more senior level. By the 1890s, these had become established across the three levels at which the language was taught.[48] Elementary students were referred to the latest edition of Albert Socin's *Arabic Grammar* in conjunction with readings from Jacob's *Bible Chrestomathy*.[49] Second year students could look forward to selections from Bruennow's *Chrestomathy of Arabic Prose Pieces* (1895) for prescribed readings, along with exercises in elementary Arabic composition. Final year students were directed to William Wright's *Arabic Grammar* (3rd ed., 1896), a work based on a translation of Caspari's German language grammar but substantially rewritten in later editions by Wright and others.[50] Among the set texts were Fluegel's recently reissued

46 Hukk, Hermann Ethé, and Edward Robertson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in Edinburgh University Library*, 1925. Robertson would also be appointed Gunning Lecturer 1929–1932; Turner, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 403.

47 Bell, *The Qur'an, Translated, with a Critical Re-Arrangement of the Surahs*. Bell was also appointed as Gunning Lecturer for the period 1921–1924 (UEA, *Senate Minutes*, 3 June 1920) and the lectures were subsequently published as *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment: The Gunning Lectures, Edinburgh University, 1925*. He was also awarded a Doctor of Divinity from Aberdeen University in 1927. "Aberdeen University Honours", *Aberdeen Journal*, 23 February 1927.

48 Based on the *Edinburgh University Calendar*, 1896/97.

49 Socin and Kennedy, *Arabic Grammar: Paradigms, Literature, Exercises and Glossary*. Second English edition, trans from the 3rd German edition by A.R.S. Kennedy. B. Westerman, 1895. Albert Socin (1844–1899) was professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Leipzig. Jacob, *An Arabic Bible-Chrestomathy with a Glossary*, 1888.

50 The member of a family dedicated to Indian service, William Wright (1830–1889) began his academic studies at St Andrew's, whence he proceeded to Halle to study, and, subsequently, held Arabic posts at University College London and Trinity College Dublin. He ultimately occupied the Adams Chair of Arabic at Cambridge. His *Arabic Grammar* had been published first in 1859, again in 1875, and the 3rd edition in 1896.

edition of the Quran,[51] David Margoliouth's *Chrestomathia Beidawiana* (1895), and a collection of Arabic poetry edited by Nöldeke and Mueller.[52] Such works drew deeply from the well of the German academic tradition and its focus on religious writings and classical literature, something made clear to prospective students by the *Calendar*'s advice that 'a working knowledge of German is indispensable for the advanced study of the Semitic Languages'.[53] Little changed over the next twenty years save for the adoption of De Goeje's selections from the *Annals of Tabari*, and the collection of fables, *Kalila wa-Dimna*.

This menu of texts began to change during the 1920s. The foundational writings, the Quran and the Hadith collection *Sahih* of al-Bukhari, along with the commentaries of Baydawi remained central but, by the end of the decade, selections from *Alf Layla wa-layla* (A Thousand and One Nights), twelfth-century works such as *Al-Mufassal* by Zamakhshari, and Ibn Tufayl's novel *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan*, and the *Diwan* of Hassan b. Thabit, a companion of the Prophet, had begun to appear on the reading list. Honours students engaged with the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Khaldun, and for poetry drew from the work of pre-Islamic poet Zuhayr b. Abi Sulma (in the *Mu'allaqat*), the early Arabian poet Labid, and the thirteenth-century *Burda* of al-Busiri. In time, al-Tabari's annals gave way to the Umayyad section from the ninth-century work of Al-Fakhri and the ninth-century *Futuh al-Buldan* by the Abbasid historian of the great Arab expansion, al-Baladhuri, would be added.[54] While offering a range in terms of the literary genre, these works were all firmly anchored to the classical period of Islam. Only after 1945 did modern writers such as Taha Husayn begin to appear on the curriculum.

## The spoken language

The teaching of spoken Arabic might seem to sit rather at odds with this emphasis on classical literary and historical texts but, as has been noted, the teaching of an Arabic dialect had been one of the original duties of the

51 *The Quran* (Leipzig, 1834 and 1893).

52 *Delectus Veterum Carminum Arabicorum,* published in 1890, is known for its extensive annotations. As professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Strasbourg, Theodore Nöldeke (1836–1930) would be awarded an LLD by the University of Edinburgh in 1892, "Edinburgh University Graduation Ceremony", *The Scotsman*, 15 April 1892, 7.

53 *Edinburgh University Calendar* 1919/20, 176.

54 All texts are taken from the *Edinburgh University Calendar* of 1928/29, save for al-Baladhuri, which was set for 1938/39.

Arabic lectureship. It is unclear when colloquial Arabic was first offered but, by 1920, one hour a week of Modern Arabic was being delivered in the junior class (out of a total of three hours), with indications that it could be taken as a separate course in the summer.[55]

From the outset, Egyptian appears to have been the dialect of choice, something possibly determined as much by the teaching materials available as the interests of staff, whose connections seem to have been at least Levantine in part. The first textbook of colloquial Arabic was *A Practical Arabic Grammar* by Major Arthur O. Green, prescribed for classes in 1919. First published in Egypt in 1883, the prominent dedication of the book to General Sir Frederick Stephenson, former commander of the British Army in Occupation in Egypt, made clear its military origins and imperial context. Indeed, as Green explained in the preface to the third edition, 'the work was originally undertaken to meet the requirements of English officers in Egypt [...] and to English officers serving in the Egyptian army, Gendarmerie and Police'.[56] The book appeared in a number of editions over the next two decades as it sought to expand its readership beyond the officers of the empire to include 'all persons desirous of becoming acquainted with the Arabic language as spoken in Egypt'.[57] The structure and layout demonstrated its range and scope, with the now familiar introduction to the alphabet and pronunciation followed by grammar sections and a wide selection of readings that included short stories, fables, press extracts, and telegrams. The final section dealt with manuscript letters, notably reproduced in handwritten form rather than printed text.

By the early 1930s, Green's work had been dropped in favour of Temple Gairdner's *Egyptian Colloquial Arabic*, a work inspired by missionary rather than military requirements.[58] Scottish by birth, William Henry Temple Gairdner (1873–1928) had graduated with a BA from Oxford where he studied under David Margoliouth before going to work for the Church Missionary Society in Egypt.[59] Gairdner showed himself to be a skilled linguist and scholar, authoring a number of books on language and Islam and co-editing an Arabic language magazine, *Orient and Occident*. In cooperation with Samuel Zwemer, an American missionary of the Reformed Church of America, he established the Cairo Study Centre and became its Superintendent of Arabic

55 *Edinburgh University Calendar 1920/21*, 716.

56 Green, *A Practical Arabic Grammar*, 3rd edn, vii. Green thanks 'Mr Shaker-el-Khowri', Interpreter to the Chief Paymaster of the Army of Occupation, for his assistance.

57 Ibid.

58 See *Edinburgh University Calendar 1933/34*, 153.

59 "Canon Gairdner", *The Times*, 23 May 1928, 21.

Studies.[60] The first edition of his colloquial Arabic textbook was written with the assistance of Sheikh Kurrayim Sallam, and other teachers of Arabic at the Cairo Study Centre.[61] Like Green's work, it adopted the conventional format of an introduction and grammar, followed by a series of readings of dialogues and stories but was particular in having a dedicated section with stories on the life of Christ, parables, and Christian beliefs that showed its clear missionary inspiration (although it is not known to what extent these religious passages may have featured in Arabic classes at Edinburgh). Green's text had employed Arabic script, whether in printed or handwritten form; Gairdner used the International Phonetic Alphabet, a feature that drew approval, at least from some. In his review of the work, H.A.R. Gibb, now a rising star at the University of London's School of Oriental Studies, declared with easy condescension that:

> The mentally inert will be put off by the phonetic script employed throughout, but no one who has used it can fail to recognise that it is preferable to any Roman script and infinitely preferable to Arabic script.[62]

Gairdner's text would remain in use until the early 1950s, challenged only briefly by Elder's *Arabic Grammar* (Cairo, 1937) before the war, and then directly after the war by Tritton's *Teach Yourself Arabic*, an odd selection for a teacher-led course. Yet, throughout the period, while the relevance of spoken Arabic was recognized, its place in the regime of Arabic courses was always a secondary consideration. Taught only in the first year of Arabic, it was thereafter put aside while the more serious business of studying literary texts formed the major component of the Arabic classes.

## In the classroom

During the interwar period, the teaching of Arabic at the University of Edinburgh was very much an afternoon affair that ran across the whole week. It began with lectures in history and literature on Monday at 3pm, with the remainder of the week dedicated to language. These classes were

60 The Cairo Study Centre would be renamed the School of Oriental Studies in 1920 and be incorporated into the American University in Cairo, Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt*, 93, 153.

61 Gairdner and Sallam, *Egyptian Colloquial Arabic: A Conversation Grammar and Reader*.

62 Gibb, "Review", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1 (January 1928), 220.

taught on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at introductory or junior level at 2pm (one of which was dedicated to Egyptian colloquial), with senior Arabic classes dedicated to prose, poetry syntax, and prose composition directly after, at 3pm. Held in the Old College, this continued across the three terms amounting to about 25 weeks of teaching and culminating in the summer examination period, when students were required to sit three exams in one day.[63]

The graduation lists of the period suggest that the number of students taking Arabic as part of their Semitic languages degree was very small, usually only three to five students in total across all years. Issues of costs and access to university education at this time were clearly one obvious restriction. Nevertheless, the names reveal that Arabic attracted both men and women, as well as British and Muslim if not Arab names being represented. Among the former was Robert B. Serjeant (1915–1993), a graduate in Semitic languages (Hebrew and Arabic) in 1936, who would become an accomplished Arabist with particular expertise in South Arabian dialects, and, ultimately, holder of the Adams Chair at Cambridge. Another was Hew Blair-Imrie, an officer in the Black Watch who was killed in Normandy in August 1944. From the student societies that operated on campus at the time, the Egyptian, Jewish, and Islamic Societies may have attracted students of Arabic.[64]

## Postwar developments

The years after 1945 saw a number of important changes in Arabic at Edinburgh, prompted both by academic staffing needs and government policy initiatives on the teaching of foreign languages. Richard Bell, now Reader in Arabic, had initially sought to retire in the summer of 1946 but the University prevailed upon him to stay on for one more year.[65] When Bell finally stepped down his replacement was William Montgomery Watt (1909–2006), at that time a temporary lecturer at the university in Greek philosophy. Born in Fife, Watt had graduated in Classics at Edinburgh in 1929, before going on to an Oxford undergraduate degree in philosophy and ancient history, then a BLitt on Kant.[66] His return to Edinburgh saw an unsuccessful PhD submission in philosophy but, by the late 1930s, Watt

63 Based on *Edinburgh University Calendar 1933/34*, 111, 213.

64 *Edinburgh University Calendar 1935/36*, 100.

65 UEA, Prof N.W. Porteous to Secretary, Faculty of Divinity, Mr Jardine Brown, 10 June 1946.

66 For the following, see Hillenbrand, *Life and Work of W. Montgomery Watt*, 4–6.

had turned his attention to Arabic, which he studied with Bell, and to the church, subsequently becoming an Episcopalian priest in 1940. His second attempt at a PhD under Bell's supervision was a happier experience when he successfully submitted a dissertation, 'Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam', and graduated in 1944. Watt's commitment to missionary work convinced him to accept the position of chaplain to Weston Stewart, the Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, that year but the disturbing reality of political violence in Palestine persuaded him to return to Britain in 1946 to the relative tranquillity of academic work. He accepted the post at Edinburgh vacated by Bell the following year, on the maximum salary of £800 per year, on the recommendation of the selection committee.[67] By his own account, Watt had little experience as an Arabic teacher but he doubtless drew on his own personal experience of studying languages and the fact that there were relatively few Arabic students at Edinburgh allowed him to ease himself into the position.[68]

During the period of Watt's leadership, the study of Arabic and Islamic studies at Edinburgh would take on a new energy and scope invigorated by significant changes in both staff appointments and the character of the student body. Up to and including the time of Watt's appointment, all teachers of Arabic at Edinburgh since the days of James Robertson in the eighteenth century had been clergymen born and educated in Britain, if not Scotland, often after a period of continental study, whose scholarship was strongly focused on religious and literary texts. Some had spent time in the Middle East (Egypt, Palestine, Beirut, Arabia), or in India, but this appears to have been in the context of missionary contacts and personal networks rather than field research. Richard Bell's trip to Egypt and Palestine in the autumn of 1934, and on which he would later speak publicly at a Rotary meeting in Edinburgh, offers an unusual case.[69] Thus, while they may not have been quite the 'armchair scholars' (*Stuben gelehrten*) that Hillenbrand suggests, the character of their professional work showed little interest in the contemporary Arab world beyond religious discourse.[70]

The appointment of Pierre Cachia (1921–2017) in 1949 represents a genuine break in this long-established tradition. Born in the Fayyum in Egypt, to a Maltese father and Russian mother, Cachia had been educated in Upper

67 UEA, Faculty of Arts, Department of Arabic, Prof N.W. Porteous to Jardine Brown, 9 January 1947.

68 Hillenbrand, *Life and Work of W. Montgomery Watt*, 7–8.

69 See "Edinburgh University", *The Scotsman*, 31 May 1934; "Palestinian Jealousies", *The Scotsman*, 12 April 1935.

70 Hillenbrand, *Life and Work of W. Montgomery Watt*, 9.

Egypt where he attended a range of French, Italian, Egyptian, and American schools.[71] Thus, while not strictly speaking a native speaker of Arabic, he had a near native facility in the language.[72] After completing his school education, Cachia enrolled at the American University in Cairo (AUC), where he earned an Arts degree and then, as a British national, was called up to the British 8th Army, where he served in North Africa, Italy, and Austria. With the end of war, Cachia returned to AUC, where he taught for three years, before embarking on doctoral study at Edinburgh.

From a career point of view, Cachia's timing in arriving at Edinburgh was fortuitous. The Scarborough Report on Oriental, Slavonic, East European, and African Studies, the product of a government committee asked to report on foreign language study in British universities, had been published in early 1947 and provided a blueprint for university expansion in the postwar world.[73] While not strictly speaking funded by the recommendations of Scarborough, Cachia's appointment as assistant lecturer in 1949 while still a PhD student, and his rapid promotion to lecturer the following year, was consistent with its thrust.[74]

In other respects, Edinburgh was a strange choice for Cachia. As he later acknowledged, the dominant intellectual tradition in Arabic studies at Edinburgh (and elsewhere) was not particularly sympathetic to his academic interests, which were much more concerned with modern literature. As he later noted,

> When I started teaching Arabic at Edinburgh University in 1949, fellow Arabists were deeply immersed in the study of classical Islam, political thinkers were concerned about the role Arabs might play in the post-war world, but hardly anyone was interested in what the contemporary Arab thought and wrote. I did institute an optional course in modern Arabic literature, but during the first nineteen years there were only two takers.[75]

In fact, Cachia's decision to go to Edinburgh had been determined less by academic interests and more because of financial and personal reasons: studying in Scotland was a more affordable option than America and he had developed personal connections in Scotland while serving with

71 See Cachia and Cachia, *Landlocked Islands: Two Alien Lives in Egypt.*

72 "Sphinxphax", *Campus Caravan*, 14 March 1940.

73 For fuller discussion of the Scarborough Report as it related to SOAS, see Brown, *School of Oriental and African Studies*, 110–124.

74 UEA, Faculty of Arts, Department of Arabic, Secretary to Watt, 24 April 1950.

75 Cachia, *An Overview of Modern Arabic Literature*, 1990, vii.

Scottish soldiers during the war.[76] Ultimately, Cachia's doctoral dissertation, 'Taha Husayn, His Place in the Egyptian Literary Renaissance', was successfully completed in 1951, under Watt's supervision, and, according to its author, represented the first English language book-length study of Arabic modern literature when it appeared in 1956.[77] Despite this intellectual incongruence, Cachia would stay on at Edinburgh until 1975 when he accepted an appointment as Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at Columbia University. From that position, he was much better able to consolidate his international reputation in modern Arabic literature and particularly in developing the sub-field of Egyptian folk literature.[78]

The funding made available by the Scarborough Report encouraged Watt to push for an additional appointment of a tutorial assistant to teach spoken Arabic following advice he received from Gibb. Watt advised the Faculty, 'I have in mind a Palestinian Arab who would be suitable for the post and I believe he is willing to accept it'.[79]

The result was the appointment of 'Abdin Mahmud Dajani for the academic year 1950/51, and the first bona fide native teacher of Arabic in the Department. Born in Jerusalem, in 1921, the son of Sheikh Mahmud Dajani, Dajani hailed from a prominent Palestinian family and had graduated with a BA from the American University in Beirut. Probably soon after the war ended, Dajani had gone to Britain to study law where he qualified as a barrister at Lincoln's Inn in 1947. The following year, he began doctoral study at Edinburgh in Theology where, working under the supervision of Watt, he completed a dissertation on 'The Polemics of the Qur'an against Jews and Christians' and graduated in 1953. His appointment as a tutor during this period clearly offered the advantages of a native speaker, although it is not known how long he worked in the post and he probably left the university not long after his graduation in 1953. His interest in interfaith relations demonstrated in his doctoral research was later evident in his involvement in Muslim–Christian conferences held in Egypt during the 1950s.[80]

76 Cachia, "A Road-Map of Opportunities", 13.

77 Cachia, *Taha Husayn: His Place in the Egyptian Literary Renaissance*.

78 Among his most notable works are *Popular Narrative Ballads of Modern Egypt* (1989) and various essays collected in *Exploring Arab Folk Literature* (2011).

79 UEA, Faculty of Arts, Dept of Arabic, Watt to Prof. Bonford, 11 October 1950.

80 Dajani worked for a time for the United States Information Services in Amman and subsequently for the Jordanian Ministry of Education where he became the Chair of Cultural Relations (email communication with Nur Masalha, 7 May 2019).

## Expansion and consolidation

The arrival of Cachia and Dajani in the immediate postwar years said something not only about the changing relationship between Britain and its empire where students from the Middle East aspired to academic qualifications from the metropolis, but it also signalled the beginning of a period of PhD expansion at Edinburgh. The doctoral degree, itself a creation soon after the First World War, had numbered barely half a dozen candidates working on subjects relating to Islam or the Middle East during the whole interwar period, almost all of whom were aspiring churchmen and missionaries who took degrees in Divinity. The period after 1945 witnessed a steady increase in the number of doctoral students, especially from the Middle East, many drawn to Edinburgh to work with Watt on Islamic subjects. Indeed, in his submission for the post that Dajani would secure, Watt had noted, 'I also have about five PhD students to look after, some of whom are Orientals who require a good deal of training in the methods of research. This takes about one to two hours extra every week'.[81] With few exceptions, such as Cachia, those who used Arabic in their research were largely concerned with classical texts or matters of theology, not contemporary issues.

By 1952, on the back of the impetus created by Scarborough, the University of Edinburgh could boast not only an expanded Arabic department, but also Persian, Turkish, Sanskrit, and Urdu sections, soon all to be housed at 6 Buccleuch Place, a configuration that suggested an emerging area studies conception. In that year, and on the initiative of Watt, the building was named the William Muir Institute, in honour of a man who represented the dynamic engagement of imperial administration, comparative religious scholarship and the study of Arabic.[82] Watt himself would remain the dominant figure in Arabic and Islamic Studies at Edinburgh until the end of the 1970s, a standing recognized locally by the university with his appointment to a personal chair in 1965. Internationally, his academic status and sympathetic view of Islam attracted students from around the world, including the Middle East. This intellectual legacy was also said to be one of the reasons why the University of Baghdad donated the sum of £250,000 in 1979 to endow the new Iraq Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies, which would secure the basis for the future of the field. With Watt's retirement in 1980, the separate departments of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish were merged to form the Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

81 UEA, Faculty of Arts, Dept of Arabic, Watt to Prof. Bonford, 17 November 1950.
82 Ibid., Watt to Charles Stewart, Secretary of University, 3 April 1952.

(IMES) Department, still the current configuration of the teaching of Middle Eastern languages, of which Arabic is the most popular by far, at the University of Edinburgh.

## Conclusion

The development of Arabic language teaching and scholarship at the University of Edinburgh over the period 1750–1950 was the product of diverse intellectual, social, and economic influences. Institutionally, it emerged from the context of Semitic studies and biblical scholarship in Scotland and intellectually was strongly influenced by Dutch and German traditions. Its practitioners were churchmen, Scottish-born and educated, whose interest in the language was largely determined by a professional and personal Christian perspective, where the interpretation and translation of the literary text prevailed over the pedagogy of colloquial conversation, save perhaps in the missionary context which offered some scope for the spoken language. Alongside this intellectual, religious, and philological tradition was the practical need of the Arabic language for those involved in the maintenance of imperial and commercial networks, most clearly manifest in India and later in the Arab world, which was more evident in the career aspirations of students than the academic scholarship of their teachers. These competing if allied interests that projected the soft power of Western learning and the hard power of British imperium precipitated changes in government policy that enhanced teaching capacity and generated greater interest in the study of the region and its languages at Edinburgh and elsewhere that was reflected in the profile of the teachers, students and purpose of the Arabic language.

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## About the author

Anthony Gorman is Senior Lecturer in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of *Historians, State and Politics in Twentieth Century Egypt* (*2003*) (later translated into Arabic) and the co-editor of a number of publications*: The Long 1890s in Egypt* (with Marilyn Booth) (2014); *Diasporas of the Modern Middle East* (with Sossie Kasbarian) (2015); *The Press in the Middle East and North Africa, 1850–1950* (with Didier Monciaud) (2018); *Cultural Entanglement in the Pre-Independence Arab World: Arts Thought and Literature* (with Sarah Irving) (2021), two of which are now translated into Arabic. He continues to work on a history of the Middle Eastern prison, the anarchist movement in the Eastern Mediterranean before 1914, and aspects of the Greek presence of modern Egypt.

# 3. Arab intellectuals in Russia (nineteenth–twentieth century): Teaching, research and politics

*Lora Gerd*

**Abstract:** Teachers of Arabic appeared in Russia in the early nineteenth century, but native Arabs start their activities in Russian high schools from the 1840s. Studying Arabic was necessary to support Russian diplomatic activities in the Middle East. The professors of Arabic in Russian universities and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs primarily came from the Christian Arabic world of Syria and Palestine. The cultural diplomacy of the Russian Empire, however, went beyond political targets, also influencing education, literature and other spheres of 'soft power'. This chapter aims to show how educational processes in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were reciprocal: the schools of the Palestine Society provided national Arabic education to their pupils, and some graduates from these schools later became professors of Arabic and translators in Russia, some of them continuing to participate in Oriental studies and teaching in Soviet universities.

**Keywords:** Arabic language, history of Oriental Studies, Middle East, Russian foreign policy, Eastern question, Palestine society

Russia's political interest in the Middle East was concentrated around the military campaigns against the Ottoman Empire till the end of the eighteenth century and did not result in serious systematic attempts to encourage the study of Arabic. The church policy always played a significant role in Russia's relations with the Middle East. At that time, the Greek language was enough to maintain the ecclesiastical links between Moscow and Eastern Christianity. In the Ottoman period, the Eastern Christian churches were

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mainly ruled by Greek high clergy, and the Arabic and Slavonic languages were left for local use in the parishes. From the second half of the seventeenth century, all four Orthodox Patriarchs were Greeks. Oriental Studies in Russia was therefore established in the eighteen century, when Peter I's[1] reforms were followed by a number of young men being sent to Iran to study Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. A dictionary of these languages was then composed under Catherine II.[2] The new period came in the first half of the nineteenth century, in the context of the colonial ambitions of the great powers towards the Ottoman Empire.

The nineteenth century saw a revival and rapid increase in the work of foreign Christian missionaries on Ottoman territory.[3] Supported by diplomats, they acted as 'soft power' in spreading the influence of the great powers, mainly France and Britain, as protectors. By opening schools and hospitals and converting the Eastern Christians to Catholicism and Protestantism they created a clientele in the Ottoman Empire, ready to work towards the imperial aims of the Western powers. Education has always been the main method of deploying cultural diplomacy in the Middle East,[4] and Russia was no exception to this rule. It was embroiled in the competition amongst the great powers in the early 1830s, using both the traditional tactic of supporting local Orthodox churches and communities, and the newer instruments similar to those of the Western powers, such as creating ecclesiastical and educational institutions in Palestine and Syria. A Russian consulate in Beirut was opened in 1839; an ecclesiastical mission in Jerusalem in 1847; a consulate in Jerusalem in 1858; a Palestine Committee was founded in 1858, aiming at support and organization of mass pilgrimage from Russia; and, finally, the Imperial Orthodox Palestine

1 Tsar Peter I (1682–1721) started a new period in Russian history. His reforms were aimed at creating a European empire following the model of the Protestant monarchies. In 1721, a Synod replaced the Patriarch at the head of the Russian church, and it became a department of the state administration. Peter's foreign policy was active against the Ottoman Empire during the first period of his reign, but later focused on wars against Sweden.

2 Krachkovskii, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi arabistiki*, vol. V: 46–47.

3 Bocquet, *Missionaires français en terre d'islam*; Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*; Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Palestine*; Verdeil, *La mission jésuite du Mont Liban et de Syrie*; Sharkey, *Cultural Conversions: Unexpected Consequences of Christian Missions in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.*

4 Frantzman, "Education and Empowerment: Lessons and History of the Christian Education Network in Israel and Palestine"; Nassif, "The Melkite Community, Educational Policy and French Cultural Diplomacy"; Neveu, "Orthodox Clubs and Associations". On the specificity of 'cultural diplomacy' in the Middle East, see Hillel, "Cultural Diplomacy in Mandatory Haifa", 127–128.

Society in 1882.[5] Contacts with the Arab Orthodox required knowledge of the language, especially after the 1840s, when Russian politicians started acting as protectors of the Arabs in the Patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem. Along with imperial ambitions to increase its influence in the Middle East, parallel to those of Britain and France, Russia had its own interest in Oriental Studies because of its geographical position: a great deal of Russian foreign trade, especially the export of grain, came through the Black Sea and the straits, the Bosporus, and the Dardanelles. The common border with Turkey in the Caucasus was another destination of political interest and activities. The large Muslim population inside the empire also required studies of their languages.[6] Turkish was of great importance as the official language of the Ottoman Empire, and also of the Turk nations of the Russian Empire; Arabic was the language of the Middle East Arab world and of its Christian population; finally, learning Persian was needed for activities among the Persian-speaking population of Eastern Turkey and the Persian Empire, a border territory to the Russian Empire, which was regarded as a potential target for colonial expansion.

## Arabic in Saint Petersburg: Shaykh Muhammad Ayyad al-Ṭinṭawy

According to the first general statute of Russian universities issued in 1804, teaching of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic was officially included in the programmes of the universities of Moscow, Kharkov, and Kazan. St Petersburg University was restored in 1819 on the basis of the Central Pedagogic Institute and soon became the main centre of Oriental studies. Practical needs like preparing diplomats for the Middle East and translators for the Ministry of

5 For a general overview of Russian policy in Syria and Palestine in the nineteenth century, see Stavrou, *Russian Interests in Palestine, 1882–1914*; Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914*; Astafieva, "How to Transfer 'Holy Russia' into the Holy Land? Russian Policy in Palestine in the Late Imperial Period"; Anastassiades (ed.), *Voisinages fragiles*; Meaux, *La Russie et la tentation de l' Orient*; Lisovoi, *Russkoe duhovnoe i politicheskoe prisutstvie v Sviatoi Zemle i na Blizhnem Vostoke v XIX–nachale XX v.*; Jakushev, M.I., *Antiohiiskii i Ierusalimskii patriarhaty v politike Rossiiskoi Imperii*.

6 See Crews, "Empire and the Confessional State"; Firouzeh Mostashari, "Colonial Dilemmas: Russian Policies in the Muslim Caucasus". According to the first pan-Russian census (1897), Muslims accounted for 10.8 per cent of the population. The regions of their compact residence were the Caucasus, Central Asia, and also the Lower Volga. Attempts at converting the Tatars and other inhabitants of the Volga region into Orthodoxy were undertaken from the first half of the nineteenth century. The Kazan' Theological Academy had a 'Missionary department' whose programme included the teaching of Arabic and Turkish.

Foreign Affairs were combined here with scientific interest in exploring the Orient. In the early period, teaching of Arabic language, literature, and history was carried out mostly by foreigners, among them the French Jean François Demange (1789–1839, at the university between 1818–1821) and the Polish Osip Julian Senkowsky (1800–1858, professor at the university in 1822–1847).

A new era started in 1840 when the Egyptian Shaykh Muhammad Ayyad al-Ṭinṭawy (1810–1861) arrived in St. Petersburg.[7] The idea of inviting him came from Christian Martin Frähn, a Russian orientalist of German origin, who recommended that Vice-Chancellor Karl Nesselrode issue an order to find a teacher of Arabic 'among the educated Arabs'. Ṭinṭawy's candidature was supported by the Russian consul-general in Egypt, Alexander Medem, who was already well aware of this 'exemplary intellectual product' of the reign of Muhammad Ali (1805–1848). Despite his young age, Ṭinṭawy (educated and teaching at Al-Azhar) was well known among European diplomats in Cairo and, indeed, he taught some of them (the French Fulgence Fresnel, and the German Gustav Weil, a famous German philologist and editor of Arabic literature). He had assisted Edward William Lane in his translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Two more Russian diplomats played an important role in Ṭinṭawy's invitation to Russia: the dragoman of the Russian consulate, Nikolai Mukhin, and his successor Rudolf Frähn; both had taken Arabic lessons with Ṭinṭawy. They asked Muhammad Ali's permission for Ṭinṭawy to be delegated to Russia. Muhammad Ali agreed, which made sense given the significant role played by Russia in the Middle East at the time, after the signing of the Treaty of Hunkar Iskelesi in 1833.[8] However, he added a condition that Ṭinṭawy should learn Russian as well, in order to use it on his return to Egypt. The project of returning to Egypt, however, failed with the end of the reign of Muhammad Ali in 1844.

On arriving in Petersburg in the summer 1840, Ṭinṭawy started teaching Arabic at the Educational Board of Oriental Languages in the Asiatic department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This institution was founded in 1823,

7 Krachkovskii, *Sheikh At-Tantawy, Professor Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta; Russia and the Arab World. International Conference, Dedicated to the 200th Anniversary of Shaikh Muhammad Ayyadh At-Tantawi*. On arriving in Russia, Tintawy wrote an autobiography, later published in German, translation by J. Kozengarten, "Aus einem Briefe des Bibliothekar Dr. Gottwaldt". For a new edition of the Arabic text with Russian translation, see Dolinina, "Avtobiografiia Sheikha Tantavi".

8 The treaty was signed on 26 June/8 July 1833 in Hunkar Iskelesi, a small island in the Bosporus. It was a military agreement of mutual support in case of attacks from third countries. Sultan Mahmud II was forced to sign the treaty facing the landing of Russian troops in the Bosporus. Russia helped the sultan against the revolt of Muhammad Ali of Egypt, and to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The treaty, which had a term of eight years, provided Russia with the exclusive right to block the entrance of foreign military ships in the straits.

based on the example of the French École des langues orientales (founded in 1795 in Paris), for training diplomats for service in the Middle East. Ṭinṭawy prepared a manual titled *Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire*.[9] In 1847, he was appointed professor at St Petersburg University.[10] Apart from his teaching duties, he was kept busy with translating diplomatic papers to and from Arabic at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ṭinṭawy took part in the official ceremonies of the Russian Court, and wrote poems in Arabic on important occasions. During his career, he was awarded with many orders, and with a diamond ring from the heir to the throne, the future Tsar Alexander II, as thanks for decorating his chamber with calligraphic inscriptions in Arabic.

At the university, Ṭinṭawy taught spoken Arabic and calligraphy to senior students, and lectured on Arabic literature, offering his own commentaries on medieval texts (such as Maqamat al-Hariry (1054–1122). After 1855, he delivered a special course on Arab history, paying special attention to the Abbasid Caliphate before the Mongol invasions. His course was based on reading medieval chroniclers such as Ibn Khaldun and Al-Suyuti. During his service in Russia, Ṭinṭawy wrote essays on Arabic philology.[11] When the Oriental faculty of St Petersburg University was founded in 1855, Ṭinṭawy continued teaching. However, the same year he fell seriously ill, dying in 1861. He remained Muslim, and a devoted pupil of his alma mater, the school of al-Azhar. He left a collection of more than 300 Arabic manuscripts to St Petersburg University.[12] His only son, Ahmad, born in 1850, stayed in Russia, and his granddaughter converted to Christianity.

9 Ayyad el-Tantavy, *Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire*.

10 Kim and Shastitko (eds.), *Istoriia otechestvennogo vostokovedenia do serediny XIX v.*: 158; Diakov, "Shaikh Muhammad Ayyad Al-Tantawi professor Vostochnogo faculteta Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta".

11 In total, 35 of Ṭinṭawy's works are known, six of them only by title. Ayyad el-Tantavy, "Observations sur la Rhétorique des nations musulmanes, de Garcin de Tassy"; "Observations sur l'Extrait du voyage d'Ebn-Djobair, par M. Amari"; "Observations sur la traduction de quelques vers arabes". Ṭinṭawy was also the author of a treaty on Egyptian fests (translated into Russian, but still unedited). Ignatii Krachkovskii has studied precisely his archives and made a detailed list of his papers.

12 The manuscript collection includes handwritten copies of textbooks, treaties on Arabic grammar and metrics, his own works, and commentaries on other authors. Of special interest is the Glossary of Egyptian Dialect by Yusuf al-Maghriby (seventeenth century), and some Sufi treaties from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (the works of al Shaikh al-Akbar Ibn 'Araby, Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rāny, and Badr al-Dīn al Shurunbabīli). In the early 1920s, the Russian Arabist Ignatii Krachkovskii obtained the text of Ṭinṭawy's description of Russia, which includes his itinerary from Egypt to Petersburg, and the translation of a historical essay by Nikolai Ustryalov. The manuscript was bought by one of Krachkovski's disciples in a bouquiniste shop, having probably been kept by Irinei Nofal', Tintawy's successor at the Asian Department

## Church contacts, politics, and education: After the Crimean War

Most teachers of Arabic in Russia after the Crimean War (1853–1855)[13] originated from the Arab Christians of Greater Syria,[14] who had established long-term contacts with Russia since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[15] They worked side by side with their colleagues of Russian or Western European origin. Many of them did not have a scientific education and approach to the subject, and were criticized for this by both their contemporaries and later scholars; nevertheless, they were native speakers of Arabic, and created a living link between Russia and the Middle East.

The church channel of nineteenth-century Russian policy brought many fruitful contacts with the Arab world, starting with a political enterprise, the mission of Porfirii Uspenskii to Syria and Palestine in 1843–1844.[16] After the foundation of the Russian Ecclesiastical mission in Jerusalem in 1847, with Porfirii at its head, Fadlalla Sarrouf from Damascus (1826–1903) became his dragoman. He continued working as translator and intermediary for the Mission from the 1850s to the 1870s, performing a range of diplomatic tasks.[17] In 1870, he participated in the expedition of Antonin Kapustin (at that time, chief of the Russian mission in Jerusalem) to Mount Sinai, and

of the Foreign Ministry. It is now preserved in the Russian National Library in St Petersburg (Manuscript Department, fund Krachkovskii 47). Krachkovskii, *Nad arabskimi rukopisiami*, 104.

13 The Crimean War was the crucial event for Russian policy in the Middle East in the nineteenth century. The defeat of the Russian army by the joint British, French, and Ottoman forces caused long-term consequences, limiting Russian activities and influence in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.

14 The term 'Greater Syria' includes the area of Arab-speaking population of modern Syria, Palestine, and Southern Turkey.

15 On the contacts of Russia with the Arab Christian world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Panchenko, *Blizhnevostochnoe Pravoslavie pod Osmanskim vladychestvom*, 412–472.

16 Archimandrite (later Bishop) Porfirii Uspenskii (1804–1885) was the first clergyman who represented Russian ecclesiastical and political interests before the Greek Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem. The target of his first mission in 1843–1844 was to gather information about the state of the Orthodox Church of the East, to establish contacts with the Greek and Arabic clergy, and, where possible, to pursue Russian interests in the Syrian and Palestine region. Apart from political activities, he carried out research on church history and gathered an important collection of Greek and Arabic manuscripts (now preserved in the Russian National library in St Petersburg). Porfirii is usually known as the originator of the pro-Arabic policy of the Russian government in the East. In fact, his position was not to favour any special local nation, but rather to create a pan-Orthodox union with Russia going forward. See: Gerd and Potin, "Foreign Affairs through Private Papers: Bishop Porfirii Uspenskii and His Jerusalem Archives"; Gerd, "Russia and the Greek Catholics of Syria. The Mission of Porfirii Uspenskii (1843–1844)".

17 See the numerous mentions of Sarrouf in the Journals of Porfirii: Porfirii Uspenskii, *Kniga Bytiia moego*, vol. III, IV (1896), vol. V (1899).

wrote descriptions of over 500 Arabic manuscripts. In 1882, Sarrouf became lector of Arabic at St Petersburg University. He prepared a manual of Arabic, and a collection of Arabic proverbs and songs. After Sarrouf's death, the St Petersburg University graduate Anthun Hashab (born in 1874) taught Arabic at the University from 1904 to 1919. He edited phototype examples of modern Arabic letters and documents (1908), and a grammar of literary Arabic (1910), used by several generations of students.[18]

In the educational department of the Asian Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ṭinṭawy was succeeded by Salim (Irinei) Noufal, who originated from a Christian family in Tripoli (Lebanon) and who also taught Arabic and Islamic law. He was known as an ardent opponent of Islam, provoking indignation from the Ottoman ambassador. Nevertheless, he made a successful career. At the university, Ṭinṭawy's successor was Abdallah (Feodor) Kelzi (1819–1912), an Armenian Catholic, who taught there for about 25 years. Obviously, despite the sympathies of the Russian government towards the Orthodox Christians, the university chair could be equally open to Muslims and non-Orthodox Christians.

From the 1840s onwards, a number of Arabs were sent to study at theological academies in Russia, and later played a significant role in the Orthodox Church and education systems of Syria and Palestine. The first among them was Spyridon Aboud, recommended by Patriarch Methodios of Antioch. He studied at the Moscow Seminary and later at the Theological Academy, and graduated in 1856. Niphont Mousseios, also from the Patriarchate of Antioch, studied at the Kiev Theological Academy between 1863 and 1867, on the recommendation of Antonin Kapustin.[19] More than ten names of Arab students who graduated from the four Russian theological academies are known from the period between 1856 and 1913. Most of them returned to their homeland, becoming priests and teachers who were well-disposed towards Russia and contributed to its cultural influence in Syria and Palestine. Others stayed in Russia and became known for their educational and political activities.

## Arabic in Moscow: The Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages

'The second capital' of Russia, Moscow, traditionally had more links with the Orient. Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a diaspora of

18 Krachkovskii, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi arabistiki*, 138–139.

19 Suhova, "Duhovno-uchebnye kontakty Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Cerkvi i blizhnevostochnyh Pravoslavnyh Cerkvei".

Armenians, Georgians, Greeks, and also some Persians were living there. Refugees, tradesmen, and clerics, they settled in Moscow and created their own networks, churches, and schools. The Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages in Moscow was founded by a rich family of Armenian origin. In 1815, Joachim Lazarev donated, on behalf of his family, 200,000 rubles to organize a school, originally for children from Armenian families; later, pupils from other nations were allowed. From 1848, the Armenian, Georgian, Turkish, Tatar, Persian, and Arabic languages were taught there.[20] Starting in 1872, special classes for teaching Arabic were aimed at preparing candidates for diplomatic and missionary service in the Orient. The first head of the Arabic department was George Murkos (1846–1911), a professor of Arabic and translator and researcher of Arabic language and literature, who was deeply involved in contemporaneous church policy. After Ṭinṭawy, he was the second Arab in Russia to head a department of Oriental Studies. The son of a priest in Damascus, Abraham, who was close to Patriarch Hierotheus, George graduated from Halki Theological School, and later moved to Russia, studying at St Petersburg Theological Seminary and the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg University. In July 1871, he adopted Russian nationality and settled in Moscow, where he took the position of extraordinary professor of the special class of Arabic philology at Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages. His knowledge of Russian was perfect, even better than that of Ṭinṭawy: according to his contemporaries, Murkos spoke without any accent. Later Arabists judged his teaching and research talents to be rather modest, but his diligence was obvious.[21]

Murkos is known, primarily, as a translator from Arabic into Russian. He published an annotated translation of the Mu'allaqat of Imru al-Qays (Moscow, 1882, and St Petersburg, 1885).[22] The work that made Murkos really famous in learned circles was his translation of the Arabic manuscript of the journey of Patriarch Macarios Ibn al-Za'im of Antioch to Russia in 1652–1659, during the reign of Tsar Alexei Mihailovich. This work took Murkos almost thirty years. The manuscript from the library of the Patriarchate of Antioch was first discovered in 1844 by Ioannis Papadopoulos, the archigrammateus (chief secretary) of Patriarch Methodios of Antioch. At the time, he was looking for historical documents at the request of Porfirii Uspenskii.[23] A

20 See Zinov'ev, *Istoricheskii ocherk Lazarevskogo Instituta vostochnyh iazykov*; Kananov, *Semidesiatipatiletiie Lazarevskogo Instituta Vostochnyh iazykov.*

21 Krachkovskii, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi arabistiki*, 113–115.

22 Other publications: "Noveishaia literatura arabov"; *Izvlecheniia iz Korana i drugih avtoritetnyh musul'manskih knig*. See Kirillina, "Arab Scholars in Russian Universities".

23 Ioannis Papadopoulos-to Porfirii Uspenskii, Damascus, 7 September 1846. Received 17 January 1847. St. Petersburg Department of the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences (hereafter

copy of the text (366 folios) was made between 1846 and 1849: in a number of letters Ioannis reported on the process of the work and on the money paid.[24] In the early 1860s, the Arabic manuscript was brought to Moscow by Spyridon Aboud, at that time active at the Antiochene dependence in Moscow. The text of Macarios's journey is a unique primary source for the history of the seventeenth-century Russian church and the relations between Russia and the Christian East of that time. The discovery and translation of the Arabic manuscript was very important both for studies of Arabic literature and of the history of Syria.

Murkos was also deeply involved in political affairs in the Middle East. In the 1880s and 1890s, he published a number of articles against the Greek high clergy in the Patriarchate of Antioch, in which he drew a parallel between the Bulgarians and the Orthodox Arabs regarding the right of the Arabs to autonomy within the church.[25] By the end of the nineteenth century, the contradictions between the rising nationalism of the Orthodox Arabs and the Greek high clergy of the Patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem reached a peak. An Arab Patriarch (Meletios Dumani) was first elected in Damascus in 1899. In Jerusalem, the Arabs of Palestine aimed at the same but met with strong resistance from the Greek clergy (the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre). Murkos published a number of articles, under the pseudonym 'Russian Pilgrim', in the conservative newspaper *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, on the claims of the Arabs to the holy places of Palestine. His anonymous opponents (probably related to the Greeks of Constantinople) edited a booklet, *Novye poborniki Pravoslaviia* (*New Defenders of Orthodoxy*, Moscow, 1892). Eventually, his political activities were forbidden by the Russian government, to avoid complications with the Greek Patriarchs. He remained the unofficial head of the Arab diaspora in Russia till the

SPbFA RAN), f. 118, op. 1. d. 105. This text was already known in English translation, made in 1824–1829 from an Arabic manuscript bought in the early nineteenth century in Haleb by Frederic Guilford: Belfour, *Travels of Macarios, Patriarch of Antioch*. See the edition of the Russian translation: *Puteshestvie AntiochiiskogoPatriarcha Makariia v Rossiiu, v polovine XVII veka*.

24 On 30 December 1848, Ioannis reported that his work was still not finished. SPbFA RAN, f. 118, op. 1. d. 105. f. 298.

25 "Mnenie pravoslavnyh arabov o greko-bolgarskoi raspre". In 1870, the Bulgarian church received independence with a Sultan's firman. Two years later (1872), a Synod of the Greek Patriarchs proclaimed the Bulgarian Schism – a break in the relations between them and the newly created independent church. Russian diplomacy was strongly supporting the Bulgarian church and national independence, and, at the same time, supporting the Arab national movement, also using mainly ecclesiastical channels. This policy was estimated by most West European and Greek observers to be the equivalent of Pan-Slavism, though obviously the Arab world was out of any Pan-Slavic political aspirations.

end of his stay in the country, during which time he often travelled to his homeland. Apart from his scholarly and literary activities, he was a successful businessman, organizing the export of lemons and oranges from Syria to Russia. In 1906, he finally left Russia for Syria, and died in 1911 in Saydanaya monastery near Damascus. He left an enormous sum of money, 18,000 rubles, to Arab charitable organizations and Russian institutions. Murkos was neither a scholar nor a teacher ex professo. His contribution to Arabic studies did not go far beyond the Russian translation of the journey of Patriarch Macarios. Nevertheless, as a relatively influential journalist and media person, he was an important figure in the church and the political relations between Russia and the Syrians of that period.

## Gerasim Jared: An Arab bishop in Russia

In the second half of the nineteenth century, along with other methods of asserting its influence, Russia tended to replace bishops in Syria and Palestine with graduates from Russian theological academies or persons who had served at the dependencies in Moscow. Some of these were regarded as candidates for the patriarchal thrones. The most famous example was Patriarch Nikodemus of Jerusalem (1883–1890), who did not study in Russia but was ordained in St Petersburg and was close to Russian high officials. From amongst the Arab students in Russian ecclesiastical schools, Gerasim Jared (1849–1899) made a brilliant career in Russia. Gerasim followed the usual pattern of Orthodox ecclesiastical education for his time. Born in Syria, he studied at the school of the Patriarchate in Damascus, and later at the Chalki school of the Patriarchate in Constantinople. Similar to many other Arabs and South Slavs of that period, he continued his studies in Russia (having arrived there in 1862). Studying in Russian high schools was encouraged both by the local communities and the Russian government. Bursaries were offered to the best pupils to prepare them to become clergymen devoted to Russia in the Middle East. Some of them could not finish their studies. Unlike other less successful compatriots, Gerasim demonstrated exemplary diligence and abilities. In 1866, he graduated from the Moscow Seminary, and in 1869 from the St Petersburg Theological Academy with a Master of Theology degree.[26] He was appointed assistant professor in Byzantine history at Petersburg Academy, and taught Greek at the seminary until 1873. In 1872, he defended a doctoral thesis on Patriarch Photius of Byzantium, and later

26 Suhova, “Duhovno-uchebnye kontakty”, 40–41.

wrote a number of research works.[27] It is interesting to note that in Russia his language skills were used not as a teacher of his native Arabic language, but of Greek, and of Greek history. This may be explained by the fact that Greek education predominated among the Arabic high clergy of the late nineteenth century, despite their national sentiments. Gerasim made a rare career for a foreigner in Russia: in 1876, he was appointed rector of Pskov seminary, and in 1881 rector of Riga seminary, but, due to a conflict with the Bishop of Riga, he had to resign soon after and returned to Petersburg.

In the last decade of his life, he was involved in the political intrigues in the Church of Antioch. He left for Jerusalem as an assistant to the Russian protégé, the new Patriarch of Jerusalem, Nikodimos. Gerasim Jared was a Russian subject from 1871, and there is no doubt that the Russian foreign ministry was interested in him principally as a means to implement their political projects. In 1885, he followed Patriarch Gerasimos of Antioch to Damascus, and stayed on in Syria. Initially, he was on the side of the Arab party against the Greeks in the conflict over primacy in the Orthodox Church, but in 1891 he suddenly switched sides to the Greek party of Patriarch Spyridon. The reasons for this are not very clear; it may be that he saw more profit for his future career with the Greek party. During the next patriarchal crisis of 1898, he was regarded by the Russian foreign ministry as a suitable candidate for the patriarchal throne. This time, after a hard struggle, the Arab party won the victory, thanks to the strong support of the Russian diplomacy, and especially that of the consul-general in Beirut, Konstantin Petkovich (1827–1897) and the vice-consul in Damascus Alexei Beliaev (1859–1906, in Damascus since 1893). In April 1899, Patriarch Meletios Dumani (the first Patriarch-Arab on the Antiochene throne) was elected, and in September the same year Gerasim Jared suddenly died – according to some, he was poisoned by his enemies. Subsequently, and till the First World War, Russia stood with a firm foot in Syria, steadily subjugating the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch under its financial and political influence, and being a serious competitor to France.

## The Palestine Society and its educational enterprises

A new period in the history of the Russian penetration and presence in Palestine and Syria (Greater Syria) started in 1882, with the foundation of

27 See his dissertation: *Otzyvy o sviatom Fotii, Patriarhe Konstantinopol'skom*; also: *Istoricheskii ocherk ob Antiohiiskom Patriarhe Anfimii*).

Fig. 7. Students and teachers of Nazareth Pension.

the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society.[28] The Society regarded one of its main tasks as the organization of schools for the Orthodox Arabs in Syria and Palestine: more than a hundred elementary schools and two teachers' seminaries were opened by the 1910s. This was the first attempt from the Russian side to organize an Orthodox educational system, independent from that of the Patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem, and at the same time concurrent with the missionary schools of Britain, France, and the United States.

The creation of these schools and especially the perspective that all Orthodox schools of the Patriarchate would soon come under the direction of the Palestine Society provoked strong indignation among French diplomats, because France already regarded Syria as its sphere of influence and almost a colony. Unlike the French Catholic schools, where the use of Arabic was strongly discouraged and sometimes even forbidden, the teaching in Russian schools was in Arabic, and Russian was taught as a foreign language. At the same time, the programmes as a whole followed those of the Russian secondary schools, and used Russian textbooks translated into Arabic. Arabic language and literature were also taught in these schools. The education was aimed mainly at creating Arab cultural self-consciousness.[29] The Russian schools of the Palestine Society resulted in several generations of Arab intellectuals deeply involved in Russian culture, who contributed to the spread of this culture among their compatriots in Syria and Palestine during the twentieth century. Novels and poems from Russian literature

28 Gerd, "The Palestine Society: Cultural Diplomacy and Scholarship in Late Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union".

29 Grushevoi, *Iz istorii russkih shkol na Blizhnem Vostoke.*

were translated by the teachers and ex-pupils of these schools. Many of the pupils of the Russian schools continued working in Palestine and Syria, some of whom became famous writers and journalists.[30] It is also noteworthy that, in the 1910s, the Russian professor of Arabic from Petersburg, and future head of Russian Arab studies, Ignatii Krachkovskii, was writing poems and novels in Arabic and publishing them in local journals in Syria, Iraq, and Palestine.[31]

The teachers in the schools of the Palestine Society included both Russians and Arabs. Among the first Arabs active in this educational project was Iskander (Alexander) Djubrail Kezma (1860–1935). Born in Damascus, in 1881 he graduated from the St Petersburg Theological Seminary, and until 1883 studied at the Moscow Theological Academy with a special recommendation and a bursary from the Metropolite of Moscow, Makarii Bulgakov. Between 1883 and 1885, he started teaching at the Palestine Society school in Beirut. This school had been run by the Patriarchate, but, since the 1840s, had been under the direct control of the Russian consulate and received annual financing from Russia. At that time, the Russian consul in Beirut was K.D. Petkovich, an ardent fighter for the interests of the Orthodox Arabs in Syria. After 1886, Kezma was appointed as head of the Galilee directorate of the schools of the Palestine Society and Director of the Nazareth Pension for Boys, which, in 1889, was reorganized as a Nazareth teacher's seminary. For a number of years, he was the head of all Russian educational institutions in Syria and Palestine. He also translated some Russian textbooks into Arabic. In the beginning, the schools of the Palestine Society used British missionary textbooks, but later Russian textbooks in History and Geography were translated and used, and the programmes followed those of the schools in Russia. In 1914, Kezma remained the only representative of the Palestine Society in northern Palestine and kept this position under the directors of the Russian dependencies Roman Seleznev (1919–1925) and V.K. Antipov (1925–1948). Kezma died in Nazareth in 1935.[32] Kezma was probably the best and most active Arab organizer of Russian educative institutions in Greater Syria, combining traditional for the Arab Orthodox communities' views with the educational approaches he adopted in Russia.

30 Scoville, *The Agency of the Translator: Khalil Baydas' Literary Translations*; Idem, "Reconsidering Nahdawi Translation"; Agsous, "The Making Stage of the Modern Palestinian Arabic Novel in the Experiences of the Udaba Khalil Baydas".

31 Ode-Vasilieva, "Moi vospominania ob academike I. Ju. Krachkovskom", 129.

32 Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine*, 164–171; Suhova, "Duhovno-uchebnye kontakty", 41–42.

Fig. 8. Iskander (Alexander) Djubrail Kezma (1860–1935).

The younger generation of Arab professors in Russia came mainly from the schools of the Imperial Palestine Society. Like their predecessors, they were devoted to Russia and its cultural policy in the Levant. The regular education according to the Russian model made it easier for them to continue their studies in Russian universities and to integrate into the academic life of that country. Though they received a conservative religious education, later their political and ideological views could be different and shift to progressive and even left-wing ones. Here, a parallel can be traced with the graduates from the Anglican schools in Palestine who took part in the Arab national movement of the 1920s and 1930s. The turbulent events in Russian political life in the first half of the twentieth century provided an opportunity to those of them who tended to left-wing views; at the same time, it was a severe challenge for those who remained true to the monarchist and religious trends of their education.

Panteleimon Jooze (Bendeli al-Jawzi, 1870–1942), born in Jerusalem, graduated from the Nazareth seminary and moved to Russia in 1889.[33] He studied at the Moscow Theological Seminary, then at the Moscow

33 Krachkovskii, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi arabistiki*, 129–130, 169; Kostriukov, *Zhuze Panteleimon Krestovich (1870–1942): Nauchno-pedagogicheskaia i obshchestvennaia deiatel'nost*; Fain, *Zhizn' vostokoveda.*

Theological Academy, and finally graduated from the Kazan Theological Academy. After defending his thesis, he was appointed to the chair of Arabic language and taught there until 1916. Already at the beginning of his academic career he showed interest in social and economic history and the history of Muslim institutions from a positivistic secular point of view. In 1899, he defended a doctoral thesis on the doctrinal foundations of the Mu'tazilites. Nevertheless, for several years, as a professor at a Theological Academy, he had to follow the traditional studies of the Orthodox Church. During his service at the Kazan Theological Academy, he travelled to the Middle East twice, in 1897 and 1909–1910, to work in libraries and archives. On his return from Jerusalem, he reported on the state of the Orthodox Arabs in Palestine, and wrote an essay "Iz istorii Ierusalimskoi cerkvi" ("From the History of the Church of Jerusalem"), in which he defended the Arabs against the Greeks in the conflicts surrounding the Patriarchate. In 1916, he moved to the Kazan Academy, where he taught Muslim law. For several years, he was also the censor of Islamic periodicals. However, he encountered difficulties at the Kazan Academy because he avoided criticizing Islam, and his research was mainly concentrated on secular history. His major article "The Koran" for the *Orthodox Encyclopaedia* (1914) was refused and published instead as a separate booklet. In fact, Jooze's views were in contradiction with the mainstream of the Kazan Academy, which, for decades, operated as a missionary institution among the Muslim nations of Russia. Jooze also wrote a manual of Russian for Arabs (1898–1899) and composed a Russian–Arabic dictionary (1903).[34] Before the revolution of 1917, Jooze continued his scholarship in support of the Arabic national revival, and remained within the frames of religious Muslim and Christian subjects. Already in the 1910s, his interests went beyond the requirements of Russian ecclesiastical science.

From 1920, Jooze worked in Baku, between 1922 and 1926 as dean of the Oriental Faculty of Azerbaijan University, and from 1938 at the Institute of History of Azerbaijan. There, he continued his work on the history of the earlier periods of Islam in the Caucasus, and translated some treaties on the

34 See his works of the Kazan period: *Gruziia v XVII veke po izobrazheniiu Patriarha Makariia*; "Proishozhdenie pravoslavnyh zhitelei Sirii i Palestiny"; "Eparhii Antiohiiskoi Cerkvi"; Ocherki *istorii drevnei cerkvi na Vostoke*; "Islam i prosveshchenie"; *Muhammed Mekkskii i Muhammed Medinskii*. Jooze's Arabic–Russian dictionary was already the fourth one in Russia, and was superior in quality and lexical material. Since then, only one academic Arabic–Russian dictionary has been edited, by H. Baranov. See: Kostriukov, "Izuchenie arabskogo jazyka v Rossii: Istoriia sozdania arabsko-russkih slovarei", 46–51.

history of the region from Arabic into Russian.[35] In his later works, Jooze adopted a Marxist approach, re-evaluating European romantic Orientalism and classical Muslim heresiography. Early Islam was, for him, an ideology aimed at solving social problems, and Muhammad was regarded as a great reformer.[36]

Taufic Kezma (1882–1958), the younger brother of Iskander Kezma, was born in Damascus and educated at the Nazareth seminary; in 1906, he graduated from Kiev Theological Academy.[37] From 1907, he taught at Slavonic, Old Hebrew, and Greek and Latin languages at Kiev University. Between 1913 and 1915, he taught Arabic at Kiev Commercial School, and after studies in Persia in 1914 became professor of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic at the Kiev Institute of the Middle East, and later at Kiev University. In the 1930s, he was a research assistant at the Academy of Sciences and, during the 1920s and 1930s, together with Agafangel Krymskii, he established a school of Oriental Studies in Ukraine.[38] In the second half of the 1930s, he was persecuted by the Soviet authorities and imprisoned in 1938–1939. After the Second World War, Kezma survived by giving private lessons in Arabic and Persian at his home, but later was again allowed to teach at Kiev University. He authored a manual of Arabic, published a collection of Turkish proverbs with an accompanying glossary, and translated stories by the contemporary Lebanese writer Mihail Nuayme[39] and, by the eleventh-century, Arab historian Abu Hodji.[40] In 1921, he translated into Russian the Kiev manuscript of the Travel of Macarios of Antioch to Russia (seventeenth century). The manuscript (a short version of Makarios's travelogue) was acquired by Krymskii in Saydanaya monastery

35 Jooze, "Papak i Papakidy"; "Mutagaliby v Zakavkaz'e v IX–X v.v. K istorii feodalizma v Zakavkaz'e"; "K vyiasneniu znacheniia slova 'tat'".

36 See Sonn (ed.), *Interpreting Islam. Bandali Jawzi's Islamic Intellectual History.*

37 On him, see Kovalivskii, "Taufik Gavrilovich Kezma"; Kochubei, "Arab i arabist Taufik Kezma (1882–1958)".

38 Agafangel Krymskii (1871–1942) was a Russian and Ukrainian orientalist, Academician of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and translator of modern Arabic literature. See: Krymskii, *Arabskaia literatura v ocherkah i obrazcah*; Idem, *Istoriia arabov I arabskoi literatury svetskoi i duhovnoi*; Idem, *Istoriia novoi arabskoi literatury.*

39 Michail Nuayme (1889–1988), a classic of twentieth-century Arabic literature, was born in a Christian Orthodox family in Biskinth near Beirut and studied in the local school of the Palestine Society. In 1906, he finished at the Nazareth seminary and continued his studies at the Poltava Theological seminary. Having graduated in 1911, he returned to his motherland, later spent some time in the US and France, and, finally, in 1932 he returned to Lebanon. Till the end of his life, he kept links with Russia and visited the USSR in 1956 and 1962.

40 Shcherbina and Kezma (eds.), *Sbornik tureckih rasskazov i poslovic*; Krymskii and Kezma (eds.), *Rasskaz arabskogo istorika.*

in the late nineteenth century.[41] Kezma started this work in the early 1920s; it was finished on 26 February 1924, and remained unedited. For seventy years, the manuscript and its translation were thought to have been lost, but in 2007 they were returned to Ukraine with the collection of Omeljan Pritsak, a Ukrainian orientalist emigrant to the US, to whom Krymskii had given the documents in 1940. Recently, they were published by the Ukrainian Arabologist Julia Petrova.[42] Taufic Kezma, like his teacher Krymskii, worked in the difficult period of the first decades of communist rule. As many other intellectuals, both were persecuted by the authorities. Kezma tried to keep true to the traditions of his education and the school of Arab philology, with the thorough analysis of the texts and wide literary interests. Ecclesiastical topics were not welcome during the Soviet period, but nevertheless he remained personally faithful to the church and for many years was the warden of St. Andrew parish in Kiev.

The first Arab woman to become a university professor was Kulsum (Klavdia) Ode-Vasilieva (1892–1965). She was born in Nazareth and completed studies at the Beit Jala Seminary in 1908. She taught at the Nazareth Seminary, but in 1913 she married the Russian doctor I. K. Vasiliev who was working at the ambulatory service of the Sergiev dependence of the Palestine Society in Nazareth. In 1914, the couple went on holiday to Russia but could not return to Palestine because the First World War broke out. Before the revolution, she worked as a nurse in the Russian army, and between 1920 and 1924 was involved in the campaign against typhus in Ukraine. After the death of her husband in 1924, Ode-Vasilieva was invited by Ignatii Krachkovskii to become a teacher of Arabic at the Institute of Spoken Oriental languages in Leningrad. She embarked on both research work and teaching, becoming, in 1928, a lecturer at the Institute of History, Philosophy, and Linguistics. Between 1928 and 1930, she actively participated in the semi-official Arabist Circle named after the famous Russian Arabist Baron Victor Rosen. During the years of the Great Terror of the mid-1930s, she tried to help her colleagues who had been arrested, and, in 1938, was herself imprisoned for a short period. In 1939–1941, she taught at Leningrad University, and in 1943 moved to Moscow and continued teaching Arabic at

41 On the manuscript, see Olesnickii and Krymskii, "O neissledovannom stareishem spiske puteshestviia Antiohiiskogo Patriarha Makariia 1654 goda".

42 Petrova, "Puteshestvie Patriarcha Makariia Antiohiiskogo. Perevod Taufika Kezmy". Ignatii Krachkovskii knew about this translation from his correspondence with Kezma, and it was one of his arguments for recommending Kezma for a professor's position at Kiev University: Krachkovskii, "Opisanie puteshestviis Makariia Antiohiiskogo kak istochnik arabskoi geograficheskoi literatury i kak istochnik dlia istorii Rossii v XVII v.", 269.

the Moscow Institute for Oriental Studies, the High School for Diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and at Moscow State University. Ode-Vasilieva was active mainly in the sphere of practical teaching. She was the author of several Arabic language manuals and literature textbooks, as well as edited translations of Arabic literary works into Russian. She also wrote a number of articles on the rites and customs of the Arabs of Palestine.[43] Given the lack of contacts – at least for most of the students – with the Arab world during the Soviet period, a native-speaker like Kulsum Ode was really a good opportunity. She was a living tradition: many of her works are not exactly research, but are based on the reminiscences from her early life in the Orient. Despite the difficulties that the Soviet regime created for the academics, she forged a career in Russia that she could never have made at that time in her motherland.

Unlike the conservative and church-orientated graduates from the Palestine Society schools, some Arabic teachers of the twentieth century in Palestine shared left-wing and, later, communist ideas. Mikhail Attaya (1852–1924), born in Midan near Damascus, completed commercial school and medical training in Beirut.[44] In the early 1870s, his progressive views meant he had to emigrate to Moscow, where, from 1873, he became an assistant to Murkos at the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages, teaching Arabic, calligraphy, and Muslim law. He was a lecturer in Arabic and a translator for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Attaya was also the author of several manuals: *A Textbook for Learning Spoken Arabic* (*Syrian Dialect*) (Kazan, 1884, Moscow 1900, 1910); *Arabic-Russian Dictionary* (1913), and *Handbook for Arabic Colloquial Language* (1923). After the revolution, he continued teaching Arabic in Soviet institutions. In 1920, he was elected Director of the Institute of Living Oriental Languages, as, at the time, he was teaching at the Moscow Institute for Oriental Studies, had many pupils and was quite popular. He was also the translator of the first Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federation into Arabic.

43 *Nachal'naya arabskaia hrestomatiia*; *Obrazcy novoarabskoi literatury* (*1880–1925*); *Uchebnik arabskogo jazyka*; *19 Egipetskih rasskazov*. Also see her articles on Arabic ethnography, literature, and language: "Otrazhenie byta sovremennoi arabskoi zhenshiny v novelle"; "Obychai sviazannye s zasuhoi u palestinskih arabov"; "Obychai sviazannye s rodami i otnoshenie k novorozhdennomu u severopalestinskih arabov"; "K istorii problem jazyka v arabskih stranah"; "Problemy jazyka dramaturgii v sovremennoi arabskoi literature". Of special interest are her memoirs about the studies in Nazareth and Beit-Jala: Ode-Vasilieva, "Vzgliad v proshloe".

44 Krachkovskii, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi arabistiki,* 115; Smirnova, "Mihail Osipovich Attaya i ego vklad v rossiiskoe vostokovedenie".

## Conclusion

During the nineteenth century and until the First World War, in the context of the political tension around the Eastern question, Russia struggled in the competition with the other great powers to create a sphere of influence in the Middle East. Like the other great powers, it was active among local populations, using the methods of soft power, founding ecclesiastical philanthropic institutions, and supporting the Orthodox Patriarchates of the Ottoman Empire. Education was a matter of paramount importance here: young Orthodox were sent to Russia for studies in the theological schools and universities of the Russian Empire, the Russian government financed Greek Orthodox schools in Syria and Palestine, and, from 1882, the Russian schools of the Palestine Society operated across the region. This Russian presence in the region required personnel who were fluent in Arabic. Arabs arrived in Russia as students and language teachers already in the 1840s, and cultural diplomacy was carried out through the Russian institutions in the Middle East with a reciprocal effect. The schools of the Palestine Society became a cradle of cultural links and translations both of Arabic literary works into Russian, and of Russian literature into Arabic. This contributed to the expansion of Russian influence in Syria and Palestine, and persuaded Arab Christians to be well-disposed towards Russia. Several graduates from the schools and seminaries of the Palestine Society arrived in Russia and over many decades worked as professors of Arabic in Russian and later Soviet universities. In the longer term, a further study of Russian orientalist personalities, through a wider dedicated study (biographies, activities and networks) will contribute significantly to the analysis of cultural and political interactions between Russia and the Arab world.

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# 4. “I hope you will teach your daughters to read”: Dialogues in Arabic language guides from nineteenth-century Egypt

*Liesbeth Zack*

**Abstract:** The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of increasing contact between Egypt and the West. Travellers to Egypt, whether they went there for tourism, trade, or a more prolonged stay, were keen to learn some Arabic. This resulted in the publication of a number of language guides such as textbooks and grammars. Some of these contained conversational phrases and dialogues, often divided into categories describing every-day activities such as ‘in a shop’, ‘visiting antiquities’, and ‘with a camel driver’. Other topics are more unexpected, such as a dialogue ‘with an Eastern lady’, discussing women’s literacy. The chapter examines the contents of these dialogues: who were the foreign travellers expected to talk to, and what topics would they discuss with their interlocutors? It also discusses how the type of language used (dialect, Classical Arabic, or a mix) relates to the contents of the dialogues and the persons they were directed at.

**Keywords:** Egyptian Arabic, nineteenth century, travellers, phrasebooks, dialogues, terms of address, politeness

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of increasing contact between Egypt and the West. During the Khedival period, international projects such as the construction of the railroads (the first stage was completed in 1854) and the Suez Canal (inaugurated in 1869) opened up relations between

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Egypt and Europe and made travelling in Egypt easier and quicker.[1] At the same time, the emergence of the middle class and the rise of companies that organized packaged tours, such as Thomas Cook, made travel to Egypt popular.[2] From the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 onwards, British government officials and military personnel travelled to Egypt for more prolonged stays. Travellers to Egypt, whether they went there for tourism, trade, or to reside in the country, were often keen to learn some Arabic, resulting in the publication of a great number of language guides such as textbooks and grammars. Some of these contained conversational phrases and dialogues, often divided into categories describing every-day activities such as 'in a shop', 'visiting antiquities', and 'with a camel driver'. Other topics are more unexpected, such as a dialogue 'with an Eastern lady', discussing women's literacy.

Phrasebooks from this period have received relatively little attention from scholars until now. Linguistic studies on some of the books were published by Woidich (1995) and the current author,[3] whereas Mairs and Muratov (2015) give an overview of some language guides, their contents and intended uses.[4] Besides being rich sources of Egyptian Arabic in the nineteenth century, phrasebooks like these also give an interesting insight into the kind of interactions that travellers were expected to have with Egyptian interlocutors. In this chapter, the following aspects of the interactions in these phrasebooks will be discussed:
- Who were the language learners expected to talk to?
- What topics would they discuss with their interlocutors?
- How are the Egyptian interlocutors addressed?

This covers topics such as the use of imperatives, formal forms of 'you' and expressing displeasure.

## Selection of the primary sources

A selection of eleven phrasebooks was made by the author of this article, the oldest one dating from 1868 (Cadri) and the newest from 1900 (Nallino).

1 See Zack, "Egyptian Railway Vocabulary", 2020, 260, and the sources mentioned there.

2 See Spiro, "Leading Nineteenth Century Publishers", 2007, and Mairs and Muratov, *Archaeologists, Tourists, Interpreters*, 1–2.

3 Woidich, "Das Kairenische im 19. Jh.", 1995; Zack, "Arabic Language Guides", 2016a; Idem, "Nineteenth-Century Cairo Arabic", 2016b; Idem, "Vulgar and Literary Arabic", 2017; Idem, "Three Cases of Plagiarism?", 2023.

4 Mairs and Muratov, *Archaeologists, Tourists, Interpreters*, 31–44. At the time of writing this present contribution, Mairs' book *Arabic Dialogues*, 2024, was not yet published; it has since been released but was unavailable for consultation in the preparation of this contribution.

The books were written both by native speakers of Arabic and by European authors. The focus is on phrasebooks that use Egyptian Arabic; some that claim to do so are actually Levantine and are therefore not included, while others use classical Arabic rather than Egyptian Arabic, such as the book by De Vaujany and Radouan, which presents phrases in transcribed, somewhat simplified, classical Arabic.[5]

The books were selected on the basis that they could be used by people who did not know Arabic, and were not scholars, or would not be making a very thorough study of the Egyptian dialect. For these reasons, works such as Tantavy's *Traité* (written in Arabic script) and Spitta's *Grammatik* (a scholarly description of the dialect) have not been included here. This chapter focuses on books with substantial sections of conversations, useful for travellers who wanted to have some phrases at hand for their daily interactions with Egyptians.[6] Military phrasebooks are not considered here, as they are a different class of work, written for a different purpose and with specialized vocabulary. I have covered these in another publication.[7]

This leaves us with the following selection of works (full title details can be found in the References). The list contains some very concise background information about the authors and the books:

1. Cadri, *Nouveau guide de conversation française et arabe*, 1868: Muḥammad Qadrī (1821–1888) was born in the province of Al-Minyā in Egypt. He studied at the famous *Madrasat al-ʾalsun* ("the School of Languages") and at Azhar University. He was private teacher to the crown prince, worked as an advisor to the Mixed Courts, and held the posts of Minister of Public Instruction (*maʿārif*) and Minister of Justice (*ḥaqqāniyya*).[8] The book, in two volumes, consists of a vocabulary, useful phrases, and model letters. It also contains sentences for illustrating the verbs 'to be' and 'to have'.[9] The many phrases about lessons and doing homework probably indicate that Cadri wrote this for his own students.

5 It contains phrases such as '*Hal tourîdoûna an' tasnaou maaî maaroûfan?* Voulez-vous me faire un plaisir?' [Do you want to do me a favour?] (De Vaujany and Radouan, *Vocabulaire*, 298). For an analysis of the contents of this work, see Zack, "Three Cases of Plagiarism?", 2023.

6 Books with a very short section on phrases (e.g. Dirr, *Grammatik der vulgär arabischen Sprache*, which contains just two pages of greetings and expressions) have not been taken into consideration.

7 Zack, "Arabic Language Guides", 2016a.

8 See Idem, "Vulgar and Literary Arabic", 2017, 235–236, and Idem, "Nineteenth-Century Cairo Arabic", 2016b, 558 for more information on Cadri's life.

9 'Le verbe avoir': of course, *ʿand* and *li*, which figure in these phrases, are prepositions, not verbs. However, this section also contains verbs such as *malak* 'to own' and *taḥaṣṣal* 'to obtain'.

2. Haggenmacher, *Grammatik des ägyptisch-arabischen Vulgärdialektes*, 1892: Karl Haggenmacher (1847–1910), German orientalist.[10] The book explains the alphabet, transcription and pronunciation, and grammar; it contains useful sentences, expressions, folk and children's songs, and a German–Arabic glossary.
3. Hassam, *Arabic Self-Taught*, 1883: I have no information about the author. The book contains a vocabulary, exercises, a short grammar chapter, practical phrases, and an English–Arabic vocabulary. Its author seems to have only a basic grasp of Egyptian Arabic; the book contains some classical and Levantine Arabic.[11]
4. Hassan, *Kurzgefasste Grammatik der vulgär-arabischen Sprache*, 1869: Anton Hassan (1819–1876), born Muḥammad Ḥasan in Egypt. He worked in Vienna as an Arabic teacher from 1843.[12] The book contains an extensive grammar and dialogues; the Arabic is written in transcription and Arabic script.[13] It also contains a collection of short texts, in Arabic script only, presumably for more advanced students. The dialogues with an Arabic teacher (216–217) indicate that Hassan probably wrote this book for use in his own classes.
5. Nakhlah, *New Manual of English and Arabic Conversation*, 1874: Yacoub Nakhlah (Yaʿqūb Naxla Rūfīla) (1847–1905 or 1908) was a Copt from Cairo. He was a teacher of English and Italian, newspaper editor, and founder of several schools.[14] The book contains a grammar, vocabulary, and dialogues.
6. Nallino, *L'Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 1900: Carlo Alfonso Nallino (1872–1938) studied Persian under Italo Pizzi in Turin. He spent extended periods of time in Egypt and his Arabic was known to be excellent: he lectured

10 https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz25357.html. I have no other information about Karl Haggenmacher (he calls himself Khalīl on the Arabic title page). However, he wrote his book in Winterthur (Switzerland), where several members of the Haggenmacher family lived in the nineteenth century. According to the Deutsche Biographie, he is related to Gustav Adolf Haggenmacher (1845–1875), who spent time in Somaliland, Sudan, and Egypt and published a grammar of Somali. See https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/gnd128120363.html.

11 An example of mixing dialects is *êsh fi chabar, shû fi chabar gedîd* 'What is the news?' (61). The transcription is also fairly curious; for instance, *ṯ* is transcribed with *ts*: لك منى الثنا *lak minni-tstsanâ* 'I thank you' (58), and *ḏ* with *tz*: ذو ضباب *tzu dhabâb* 'it is foggy' (59).

12 For information on Hassan's life, see Chahrour, "Vom Morgenhauch aufstrebender Cultur durchweht", 2007.

13 For more information on Hassan's use of dialect mixed with classical Arabic, see Zack, "Vulgar and literary Arabic", 2017.

14 See al-Miṣrī, *Qiṣṣat al-kanīsa al-qibṭiyya*, 380 and http://arz.wikipedia.org/wiki/يعقوب_نخله_روفيله. See also Zack, "Vulgar and Literary Arabic", 2017, and Idem, "Nineteenth-Century Cairo Arabic", 2016b, for more information on Nakhlah's book.

in Arabic at the Egyptian University in Cairo.[15] The book contains a grammar, dialogues, vocabulary, and some Egyptian Arabic texts.

7. Pizzi, *Piccolo manuale dell'arabo volgare d'Egitto*, 1886: Italo Pizzi (1849–1920), Professor of Persian at the University of Turin. He taught at the universities of Naples, Rome, and Palermo and lectured at Egyptian universities.[16] The book contains a grammar, Arabic–Italian vocabulary, and some useful expressions and phrases. It is based on Spitta, Wolff, and Hartmann.
8. Probst, *Arabischer Sprachführer in ägyptischem Dialect*, 1898: Friedrich Probst (?–?) was a student of Professor Adolf Wahrmund at the Orientalische Akademie in Vienna.[17] The book contains a grammar, vocabulary, dialogues, and some practical information. Partially based on Spitta (1880).
9. Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 1874: Gabriel Sacroug (Ǧabrāʾīl Sakrūǧ) (d. 1895) was an interpreter for the British consulate.[18] The book contains a vocabulary, grammar, information on weights and measures, and an Islamic calendar, proverbs, and dialogues. Parts of the book are plagiarized from Nolden (1844), and the proverbs from Burckhardt (1830).[19] The dialogues, however, are plagiarized from Kayat (1844).[20]
10. Thimm, *Egyptian Self-Taught* (*Arabic*), 1898 (2nd. ed.): Carl Albert Thimm (1855–1932).[21] He wrote a number of books in the *Self-Taught* series. The book contains a very short grammatical note and a vocabulary, which also contains useful sentences. Reworked version of Hassam (1883), without acknowledgement.[22] The first edition was not available to me.
11. Wied, *Betitkállim biʾl-ʿárabi?* 1887: Carl Wied (?–?), author of language guides for Turkish, Greek, Danish, and Swedish. I have no information about him; he wrote *Betitkállim biʾl-ʿárabi?* in Smyrna.[23] The book consists of a grammar, vocabulary, dialogues, and reading texts.[24]

15 For information on Nallino, see Littmann, "Carlo Alfonso Nallino".

16 For information on Pizzi, see Mutti, "Un orientalista dimenticato".

17 See Probst, *Arabischer Sprachführer*, v. I have no other information about him.

18 See Hertslet, *The Foreign Office List*, 191.

19 See Zack, "Three Cases of Plagiarism?", in press.

20 See Mairs, *Arabic Dialogues*, forthcoming.

21 See https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/carl-albert-thimm-24-1740fz6.

22 See Mairs, *Arabic Dialogues*, forthcoming.

23 Wied, *Arabischer Sprachführer*, Vorwort (unpaginated).

24 I will use the transcription of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (*EALL*) (Eid et al., "Transcription of Arabic Characters"). However, when I quote from the phrasebooks, the

## Contents of the dialogues

The books have different approaches of arranging the dialogues and phrases:
– some phrasebooks arrange them around certain verbs (e.g. being, having, knowing, saying, walking);
– others arrange them according to activities, such as taking a train, renting a carriage, or making a trip to the pyramids;
– others divide them into interactions with certain people (a servant, donkey boy, physician, laundress);
– lastly: making polite conversation: greetings; asking about someone's health; talking about the weather or the news; and also sometimes impolite conversation: scolding or expressing anger.

Most of the works combine two or more of these. An example is Nallino (1900), who, amongst other things, includes a section on greetings, one on selling and buying, and another on talking with coachmen and donkey drivers. Others have no clear division of the dialogues into sections (e.g. Hassam, Pizzi, Thimm). The most interesting dialogues for this research are those in which the interlocutor is specified, so we can study how different classes of people were addressed.

Popular topics of conversations are food and drink, buying things, enquiring about a hotel room, talking to a doctor, and preparing for a trip. The latter can contain conversations about taking the train or renting a camel, carriage, or donkey.[25] An interesting topic is the chapter 'Playing at Cards' in Nakhlah's dialogues, because it is the only one of its kind in this selection of phrasebooks. It provides the reader with all the necessary Arabic vocabulary to play a game of whist.[26] The conversations that are

transcription as used by those books will be kept. These often do not follow a fixed system (a very simple example can be found in Figure 11 below, in which Sacroug writes *sitt* as both *sitt* and *sett*). See e.g. Zack, "Three Cases of Plagiarism?", 2023, for the discussion of the transcription of four books, among them Sacroug, and Idem, 2016b, "Nineteenth-Century Cairo Arabic", 561–562, for the transcriptions used by Cadri and Nakhlah. Whenever I deem them too unclear to be readily understood, I have added a transcription according to the *EALL* between square brackets. For the names of the Egyptian authors, I use the names as written in Latin script on the title pages of the works, even if there is an Arabic title page, as this is the way the authors chose to write their own names. Therefore, I write Cadri, Hassan, Nakhlah, and Sacroug, not Qadrī, Ḥasan, Naxla, and Sakrūj.

25 Nallino, *L'Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 157, remarks that donkeys are still the main means of transportation within towns and between villages, and that there are hardly any horses available.

26 Nakhlah, *New Manual*, 271–276. Although a set of playing cards dating back to Mamluk times has been identified, attesting to a long tradition of card games in Egypt (see Mayer, *Mamluk Playing Cards,* 1971), the game of whist originates in England. Nakhlah, who among his many

the most puzzling in their contents are often those with an interpreter or dragoman. Sacroug has such a conversation, in which the traveller asks the interpreter: '*Taaraf tet-kallim ingleézi?* Do you speak English?'[27] The answer is: '*Atkallim ingleëzi wa franssawee* I speak English and French'. After this exchange, one would expect the traveller to continue the conversation in English, to check the claim of the interpreter about his command of the language. However, the conversation continues in Arabic, and ends with the tourist hiring the interpreter.[28]

Topics of polite conversation often describe ways to enquire after someone's health, greetings, talking about the weather, and getting to know a person, for instance talking about one's age and where one is from. The following sections describe the way various people are addressed in these phrases.

## Addressing people: The vocative

Some people are addressed with the vocative *ya* followed by their profession, for instance:

– '*jâ lukandágī, ‹andákšị̊ šê lil'ákl?* Wirth! Hast du was zu essen?' [Innkeeper, do you have something to eat?].[29]
– '*Ya tabbâkh aândak aih lil ghàda?* Cook, what have you for dinner?'[30]
– '*Ya gam'mâl aândak hageên maleëhh?* O Camel Driver! have you a good dromedary?'[31]

Servants and other people from the working classes are addressed with the vocative particle *ya* followed by their first name, a generic noun like 'boy' or 'uncle' or a noun used only for certain professions (like *ya-ṣṭa* for craftsmen or coachmen, or *ya rayyis* for captains of a boat). Examples are:

– '*ya-walad hât hhomâr* Boy, bring a donkey'.[32]

other activities was an English teacher and founder of "the Anglo-Egyptian Discussion Club" (see Zack, "Nineteenth-Century Cairo Arabic", 2016b, 558), could have come into contact with the game through his English-speaking acquaintances.

27 In some books, the phrase in Arabic is mentioned first / in the left column, and in others, the phrase in the foreign language. For the sake of consistency, I will always mention the Arabic phrase first.

28 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 310–311.

29 Probst, *Arabischer Sprachführer*, 269. All translations from German, French, and Italian are my own.

30 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 314.

31 Ibid., 319.

32 Nakhlah, *New Manual*, 258.

- ‘*yâ wâd, ‘and-ak ê nitġaddâ-bo?* ragazzo (cameriere) cosa hai [che] noi [possiamo] desinare con essa?’ [Boy (waiter), what do you have (that) we (can) have for dinner?][33]
- ‘*Warríny tuffāḥak ja ‘amm!* he, Gevatter, zeige mir deine Äpfel’ [Uncle, show me your apples.][34]
- ‘*yâ gada‘a tiqdar tidill-ĭ-ni ‘ala aḥsan lôkanda fî ’l-balad dî* giovanotto, puoi indicarmi il miglior albergo [che sia] in questo paese?’ [young man, can you point me to the best inn (that is) in this village?][35]
- ‘*ta‘âla yâ-sṭâ* vieni o cocchiere!’ [come, coachman][36]
- ‘*Ya ràïs Ibrahim hàl markebak gedeêdeh?* Captain Ibrahim, is your boat new?’[37]
- ‘*Ya hanna hàt il fawâkih* Jean, apportez le dessert’ [Ḥannā, bring the dessert].[38]

The pronoun *inta* can be followed by *ya* and a name or a profession, or it can even be used on its own, preceded by the vocative *ya*:[39]

- ‘*inte, jaḥmad, uṭbuḫ ruzzẻ ḥilu wẻ farriḳ minnoh lilḫaddāmîn el’úḫar wẻlikárab bárdůhum* du, Ahmed, koche einen süfsen Pilav und gib den anderen Dienern und auch den Beduinen ihr Theil davon’ [you, Ahmad, cook a sweet pilaf and give some of it to the other servants and to the Bedouins].[40]
- ‘*enta yâ marâkbî ta‘âle, anâ ‘âuz anzil ‘ala ’l-barr* tu, o barcaiuolo, vieni! voglio scender a terra’ [you, boatman, come! I want to disembark.][41]
- ‘*ya enta* holloa there! oh you!’[42]

33 Nallino, *L’Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 128. Nallino uses *wâd*, the shortened form of *walad* ‘boy’, consistently in the dialogues to address a waiter.

34 Haggenmacher, *Grammatik*, 80. Haggenmacher uses the word *Gevatter* ‘godfather’ in German. *Gevatter* (now obsolete) can be used to address a male acquaintance (see https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Gevatter). Something similar happens with *‘amm* ‘paternal uncle’, which can be used to address older men, even strangers (see Parkinson, “Terms of Address”, 2011).

35 Nallino, *L’Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 142.

36 Ibid., 155. Nallino explains that calling a coachman by his profession, *‘arbagi*, might hurt his pride, as this word is also used for carters.

37 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 315.

38 Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, 448. Of course, *fawâkih* literally means ‘fruits’, but in Egypt these are often eaten as dessert, which explains this translation.

39 For the construction *inta + ya…* see Woidich, *Das Kairenisch-Arabische*, 241. Anani, *Arabic and English Imperative Structures*, 239, argues that the 2nd person pronoun + *ya* expresses impatience, irritation, or annoyance.

40 Probst, *Arabischer Sprachführer*, 264.

41 Nallino, *L’Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 137.

42 Thimm, *Egyptian Self-Taught*, 61.

For 'Sir', *ya sīdi* is used when addressing Muslims, and *ya xawāga* for addressing foreigners and Christian Egyptians (for the latter, an example is '*Ya khawâga Gérges bed'dee assalak baádd ashia takhèss elmat'gar* Mr. George, I want to ask you something respecting commerce').[43] Spitta notes that the word *xawāga*, like *xōga*, came from Persian خواجه through Turkish. About the use of *xawāga* he writes:

> ḫawâga war anfänglich nur ein Ehrentitel für Kaufleute, was es im pers. ja auch ist [...], gieng von ihnen auf die europäischen Kaufleute und dann auf alle Europäer über.[44]

> ḫawâga was initially only an honorary title for merchants, which it also is in Persian; it was then transferred from them to European merchants, and then to all Europeans.

This seems to be a very likely scenario. Arnaud (1992), who describes the use of the term at the end of the nineteenth century, notes that the term *xawāga* was never used to address Muslims; it could only be used for Christians and Jews. These could be either European, e.g. French, English, or Italian, or people from other parts of the Ottoman Empire, for instance Syria, Lebanon, or Armenia, or Egyptian Copts or Jews. They belonged to the upper middle class and practised a variety of trades.[45]

Another neutral way of addressing men is *yafandi*.[46] Women are addressed with *ya sitt* or *ya sitti*, e.g. '*lêlt-ik sa'îda yâ sitt-î* la tua notte [sia] felice, o signora mia' [may your night [be] happy, o my lady].[47]

## The use of polite 'you'

There is no polite form of 'you' in Arabic, like the French *vous* or German *Sie*, for instance. However, there are certain nouns that, combined with the suffix of the second person, can be used as a polite way to say 'you'. Parkinson calls these the 'sisters of *ʾinta*'.[48] Parkinson lists these nouns as: *siyadtak* 'your

43 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 327. Girgis is a typical Christian name.

44 Spitta, *Grammatik*, 137 fn. 2.

45 Arnaud, "Des *khawaga* au Caire", 40–43.

46 E.g. Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 331 and Nallino, *L'Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 100.

47 Nallino, *L'Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 100.

48 Parkinson, *Constructing*, 1985, 15. In Idem, "Terms of Address", 2011, he calls them 'pronoun substitutes'.

dominance', *ḥaḍritak* 'your presence', *faḍiltak* 'your excellency', *ʾudsak* 'your holiness', *niyaftak* 'your excellency'.[49] He mentions *saʿadtak* 'your felicity' to be obsolete (it is actually still in use),[50] but does not mention *ganābak* or *dawlitak*, which are both found in the nineteenth-century sources.[51] In Arabic, the verbs and any other words referring to this formal 'you' remain in the second person singular, except for some very formal situations in which 'you' plural is used. The 'sister of *inta*' does not have to be repeated every time the person is addressed:

> Using Egyptian Arabic as an example, terms like *ḥaḍritak* 'Your Presence' and *siyadtak* 'Your Excellency' are used to replace *ʾinta* and its clitic counterpart. However, unlike the use of *vous* in French, this replacement does not happen every time a 2nd person form appears, and 2nd person verb forms appear both with and without it in the same conversation. It is enough to sprinkle the honorific forms every so often to have the whole speech marked as respectful. Thus, there is not the same degree of exclusivity in choice of forms. This means that a single use of the plain pronoun to a respected addressee does not have the same insulting quality that using *tu* in French would have.[52]

Probst is one of the few who has an extensive explanation on forms of address in his chapter with dialogues. He writes:

> Bei der Anrede an Personen jedweden Standes bedient man sich gewöhnlich der 2. pers. sing. „du". Die 2. p. plur. (frz. vous) ist nur in der feinsten Umgangssprache und höher gestellten Persönlichkeiten gegenüber verwendbar, im Allgemeinen aber sehr wenig üblich. Wenn man mit jemandem in höflichem und achtungsvollem Tone spricht, kann man sagen ḥáḍrêtak („deine Gegenwart") oder ganâbak („deine Seite").
>
> Mein Herr! (monsieur) heifst gegenüber Muslimen: jâ sîdī, schnell gesprochen: jâ sî; gegen Christen jâ ḫawâga. „Der Herr" (von Abwesenden): essaíjid — elḫawâga. Zu den genannten Ausdrücken kann auch der eigene Name der Person treten, z. B. jâ sî ‹álī *Herr Ali!* elḫawâga jûsuf *der Herr Josef.* Europäer werden häufig mosjû = monsieur betitelt.

49 Idem, *Constructing*, 17–18. Note that *faḍiltak* is only used for high class Muslim sheikhs, and *ʾudsak* and *niyaftak* for popes and bishops.

50 See e.g. Badawi and Hinds, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, 413.

51 Both are now considered obsolete, see Badawi and Hinds, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, 174 and 313.

52 Parkinson, "Terms of address".

> Gnädige Frau! (madame!) heiſst jâ síttī, die Frau N. N. essítt…, doch bleibt essítt gewöhnlicher weg und steht der Eigenname allein, z. B. jâ fáṭma od. jâ faṭmá; *mein Fräulein!* jâ síttī, *o Mädchen!* jâ bint, ja ‹arûs, ohne Nennung des Eigennamens, oder aber der Eigenname allein.[53]

> When addressing a person of whichever rank, one normally uses the 2nd sg "du".[54] The 2nd pl (French vous) is only used in the most refined colloquial language and with higher-ranking persons, but in general it is very uncommon. When one addresses someone with a polite and reverential tone, one can say ḥáḍrẹ̊tak ("your presence") or ganâbak ("your side").
>
> Sir! (monsieur) is jâ sîdī when addressing Muslims, with fast pronunciation: jâ sî, and jâ ḫawâga when addressing Christians. "Mr" (for persons who are not present): essaíjid – elḫawâga. To these expressions the name of the person can be added, e.g. jâ sî ‹álī *Mr Ali!* elḫawâga jûsuf *Mr Josef.* Europeans are often called mosjû = monsieur.
>
> Madam! (madame!) is jâ síttī, Mrs N. N. is essítt…, but usually essítt is left out and the personal name is used on its own, e.g. jâ fáṭma or jâ faṭmá; *Miss!* jâ síttī, *Girl!* jâ bint, ja ‹arûs,[55] without mentioning the name, or just the name on its own.

Of the eleven books discussed here, only Cadri mentions mosjû: 'مسيو دورى هو اللى بيعلمنى الفرنساوى *M. Douri howa illi biyallimni ilfaransawi* C'est Mr. D. qui me l'apprend' [it is Mr Douri who teaches me French/it].[56] Probst has some examples with polite forms of 'you' in a conversation titled 'Anknüpfen einer Bekanntschaft' [striking up an acquaintance]. In this conversation between an Egyptian and a representative of a German firm, the Egyptian starts the conversation with the German with '*titkallim bil‹arabī, jâ ḫawâga?* sprichst du Arabisch, mein Herr?' [do you speak Arabic, Sir?], and then asks him: '*ḥáḍrẹ̊tak ti‹mil ê fî biládnā?* was machst du in unserem Lande?' [what are you doing in our country?]. After explaining his purpose, the German asks the Egyptian: '*weḥáḍrẹ̊tak mîn, biznak?* und wer bist du, mit Erlaubnis?' [and who are you, with permission?].[57] In a conversation about illness, the even more reverential *ganābak* is used in some phrases: '*simí‹t in ganâbak miríḍtẹ̊ muddet ḫamastâšär jôm* ich habe gehört, daſs du durch

53 Probst, *Arabischer Sprachführer*, 253-254.
54 That is, *inta / inti*.
55 Literally: 'bride'.
56 Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, 490–491.
57 Probst, *Arabischer Sprachführer*, 257.

14 Tage krank warst' [I heard that you were ill for 14 days]; '*mâ kuntiš ‹âraf in ganâbak ‹aijân kíde* ich wufste nicht, dafs du so krank seist' [I did not know that you were so ill].[58]

Nallino also devotes a page on the polite 'you'. He mentions *ḥaḍret-ak* and its plural *ḥaḍret-kum*, *genâbak* and its plural *genâb-kum*, and *saʿâttak*,[59] and adds that the Khedive should be addressed with *semù* 'highness': *semù 'l-ḫidêwî*.[60] Whether the last term was ever needed by the purchasers of these phrasebooks, or was only included for the sake of completeness, remains speculative. One can hardly imagine a common tourist having use for the expression, but ambassadors and other high-ranking dignitaries would have been introduced to the Khedive;[61] however, it is unlikely that they would have addressed the Khedive in Arabic.

Haggenmacher also uses some polite forms of 'you', although he does not clarify to whom these should be addressed:

*zaj* [sic] *ḥaḍrétak*? wie befinden sich euer Ehrwürden? [how is your Reverend?]
*kēf ganābak?* " " " " "
*saʿādtak* euer Ehrwürden [your Reverend]
*dōletak* eure Hoheit [your Highness][62]

Although the German *Ehrwürden* (and its most common English translation "reverend") may suggest otherwise, the word *ḥaḍritak* (literally 'your presence'), is the most neutral form of polite address in Egyptian Arabic and is not reserved for members of the clergy. *Dōletak* (*dawlitak*), translated with 'eure Hoheit' ('your Highness') by Haggenmacher, literally means 'your state', from *ṣāḥib iddawla* 'owner of the state', the title of the Prime Minister (now obsolete).[63]

Hassan also sometimes uses the polite 'you': '*kêf ḥâl ganâb'kum* Wie befinden Sie sich?' [how are you?]. He also uses the very reverential plural 'you'-suffix *-kum*: '*ána masrûr min rú'jatkum fi çéḥḥa gajjíde* Ich bin entzückt, Sie bei guter Gesundheit zu sehen' [I am delighted to see you in good health].[64]

58 Ibid., 255–256.

59 From *saʿadtak* with assimilation of the *d* to the *t*.

60 Nallino, *L'Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 97–98.

61 A good example is the correspondence of Sir Edward Stanton (1827–1907), British Consul-General of Egypt, about his meetings with the Khedive Ismāʿīl in 1875 concerning the latter's sale of shares in the Suez Canal. See [House of Commons], 1876, 1–2; 13–14; 21–22.

62 Haggenmacher, *Grammatik*, 11.

63 See Badawi and Hinds, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, 313.

64 Hassan, *Kurzgefasste Grammatik*, 181.

Sacroug has a section on 'Titles of dignity to be used in addressing any of the following orders'. He lists the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Archbishop *or* Bishop. | *Seeädetak* [*saʿādatak / saʿadtak*], *Qood'sak.* |
| Gentlemen, &c. | *Hhadrêtak.* |
| Governor *or* Prince. | *Genâbak.* |
| Pasha. | *Saâdatak.* |
| Patriarch. | *Tubanîyetak.* |
| Priest. | *Abawêyetak.*[65] |

The list is copied from Kayat, with adjusted transcription; Sacroug added *Qood'sak* to Kayat's list.[66] The conversations found in Sacroug are also partially taken from Kayat; Sacroug added phrases related to travelling by train, which did not yet exist in the Middle East at the time when Kayat's book was published in 1844, and left out the conversations to do with missionary work ('missionary discourse'; 'discourse respecting schools'; 'discourse with an eastern bishop'), which he apparently did not find useful for his intended readership, tourists. The 'discourse with a governor-general or pasha' that Sacroug did copy from Kayat (one wonders what kind of tourist would have a need for such a conversation?), is interesting because it shows a consistent use of *saʿadtak* (in various transcriptions) in addressing the pasha or governor, contradicting the list of titles given above, according to which a governor should be addressed with *genâbak*. Some examples are:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ahh'na multameseén el hhemäyah min saádetak.* | We come to solicit your Highness's protection. |
| *Benāzar saādetak yumken'nā nessāfer ila kool makán bi amàn.* | By your Highness's good will, we can travel every where in safety. |
| *Ahh'na beyadĭna khatt min al-ssadr el-aàzam le saàdetak.* | We have a letter of His Highness the Grand Vizier to your Highness. |
| *Netrag'ga saàdetak taateêna amr*[67] *aamoômi éla metsallemeën el belàd.* | We beg your Highness to give us a general order to all the Governors of different places. |

65 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 335.

66 See Kayat, *The Eastern Traveller's Interpreter*, 82.

67 Kayat, *The Eastern Traveller's Interpreter*, 73 uses 'بولردي *bulurdi*' here, probably a misspelling of 'بیورلدی *buyuruldu*, An order, mandate, decree, or rescript; especially, a safe-conduct addressed

| | |
|---|---|
| *In shàllah be anzarkoom el belàd tengahh.* | Please God, through you the country will prosper. |
| *Madàress tan'fàa belàdkoom qáwee.* | Schools will do your country much good. |
| *Baizen* [*bi-ʾizn*] *saàdetak.* | We beg leave.[68] |

Beside the use of *saʿadtak*, the pasha or governor is referred to in the second person plural, using the suffix *-kum* 'your (pl.)': *anzarkoom*, *belàdkoom*. On the use of the plural forms of 'you' for a single addressee, Parkinson writes:

> [...] on rare occasions the plural form is used to address a singular addressee. This type of usage would usually involve an extremely formal situation and a very high addressee (on the level of president or king).[69]

In Hassam, there are two instances of polite forms of 'you' (without any explanation as to why they are being used here): '*beddak aj hazritak* What do you wish for?', '*tiḥki genâbak bil-arabi* Do you speak Arabic?' There is also an instance of *ḥaḍrit* used for the third person: '*werrini el-bêt bitâʿ ḥazret el-kunçul* Show me the house of the Consul'.[70]

The most commonly found form of polite 'you' in modern Egyptian Arabic, beside *ḥaḍritak,* is *siyadtak*. The latter is not found in the selected texts. Parkinson gives an insight into why this might be:

> Although both terms are used both up to an addressee above speaker on some scale, and across to an addressee equal to speaker but who is not an intimate friend, we find that *siyadtak* is more commonly used up, while *ḥaḍritak* is more common in across usages. This is, of course, in keeping with the lexical meanings of the terms, *siyadtak* 'your dominance' directly implying speaker's subservient position and *ḥaḍritak* 'your presence' implying only distance and respect.[71]

to those whom it may concern, delivered to an individual about to travel in Turkey' (Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon*, 427). I thank Margreet Dorleijn for this suggestion.

68 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 322–324.

69 Parkinson, *Constructing*, 17.

70 Hassam, *Arabic Self-Taught*, 61–63.

71 Parkinson, *Constructing*, 24.

One can imagine that travellers would not feel the need to speak 'up' by using *siyadtak*; the more neutral *ḥaḍritak* would do. In cases where the interlocutor is indeed much higher in rank (as with a governor or pasha), there were other, more appropriate forms of address.

## Ordering versus asking politely

Imperatives are frequently used in these phrases. Note that in Egyptian Arabic the use of the imperative is not necessarily considered impolite. As Taha observes:

> Requests in the imperative form are perfectly acceptable in Arabic as long as there is something in the tone of the expression that reduces the imperative force. In Egyptian Arabic, for example, there are several expressions that Egyptians use for requests. Simple imperatives are used in different situations depending on status, age, relationship, and nature of the communicative situation.[72]

The other advantage for the users of these phrasebooks of using imperatives would be that no answer is required, as the problem with most of these phrases is that even if the speaker would be able to formulate an intelligible question, he/she would probably not understand the answer. The artist Robert Talbot Kelley (1861–1934), who lived in Cairo for a long time, gives the sensible advice to travellers 'to confine their earlier efforts to the acquisition of such sentences only as give absolute instructions to servants, drivers, etc., and to which no response is required'.[73] Orders to servants, donkey boys, waiters, etc. are often formulated in the imperative. See, as an example, a page from the section 'Rising' in which Nakhlah addresses an unnamed servant in the imperative (Figure 9).

Although most of these books were meant to make interaction with Egyptians easier when visiting the country for tourism, Thimm's has a section titled 'Directions to Workmen', which mainly focuses on digging ('*hat turyeh* Bring a hoe', '*ifhat heneh* dig here', etc.). From the other vocabulary that is contained within these phrases, it becomes clear that this is meant to be used in the context of an archaeological dig, e.g. '*shuqf*

72 Taha, "Toward Pragmatic Competency in Arabic", 359.

73 See Kelly, *Egypt Painted and Described*, 13, and Mairs and Muratov, *Archaeologists, Tourists, Interpreters*, 35.

— 250 —

Give me another pair. *iddî-ni gôz gheir deh*
اعطى زوجا آخرا

Clean my boots. *imsahh al gazmah* امسح جزمتى

Have you cleaned my boots? *ma-sahht al gazmah*
هل مسحت الجزمة

Give me my black silk waistcoat. *iddî-ni al ssodeiri al hharreer al isswid* اعطى الصديرى
أو العنترى الحرير الاسود

Brush my coat. *imsahh al sittrah bil forshah*
امسح سترتى بالفورشة

Give me a handkerchief. *iddî-ni mandeel*
اعطى منديلا

Now; we can go. — Let us go. *yalla bina baka* لنذهب الآن • الآن نقدر نذهب أو نروح

Go and bring a carriage. *rooh hât ara-bi-ya*
رح هات عربية

Go and get th carriage ready. *rooh had-dar al ara-biya* رح حضر العربية

We want another carriage. *â-wizeen ara-biya tanyah — nê-ooz ara-biya tânyah*
يلزمنا عربية أخرى

Fig. 9. ‘Rising’. Nakhlah, *New Manual*, 250.

potsherds’, ‘*kitâbeh* inscription’ and ‘*kôm*, or *tell* mound of ruins’, for the use of Egyptologists.[74]

When addressing someone from a higher rank, using a direct imperative is usually avoided. In contrast to the frequent use of imperatives in Nakhlah’s book, shown above, it also contains a section ‘Asking and Thanking’: three pages of ways to ask somebody to do something in the most polite ways imaginable, such as ‘*akdar* or *yimkinni âkallif khatrak* Might I trouble you to…?’ ‘*teminn alayya* Will you oblige me?’, and ‘*mot-âssif kôni àkallif khatrak*

74 Thimm, *Egyptian Self-Taught*, 67–68.

I am sorry to trouble you so much'.[75] Also, Nallino starts his dialogues with a long section about greeting, asking politely, and thanking,[76] as does Hassan.[77]

In Cadri, there are hardly any imperatives (the example with Ḥannā above is an exception). Requests are formulated in an extremely polite way; for instance, when asking someone (presumably a servant) to take care of one's clothes, the person says '*Tiridchi tiw'à lihodoumi* Voulez-vous prendre soin de mes habits?' [Would you like to take care of my clothes?].[78] The very few imperatives that are present are often not orders to do something, but rather asking the addressee to accept something, for instance: '*Tafaddal oc'oud choi-ieh* Vouillez vous asseoir un moment' [Please sit down for a moment], and in a dialogue about a book: '*Khoudoh in aradt* Prenez-le, si vous voulez' [take it, if you want].[79]

Another way to circumvent the problem of the tourist not understanding the answer to a question is to follow the question with a list of all possible answers; the traveller would then have to hope that the answer provided by the interlocutor could be recognized as one of the answers in the phrasebook. Alternatively, the interlocutor could be asked to point out the right answer in the phrasebook (a strategy that would be unlikely to work if the phrases were only given in transcription). An example is Wied's conversation about the weather, which gives a long list of possible weather conditions, although how useful a phrase like 'it is snowing' would be for the traveller in Egypt remains to be questioned.[80] Another example is Cadri, who lists almost all possible answers to the question 'what time is it?'[81]

One way to make an order or a request sound friendlier is to add some form of 'please' to the phrase. *Min faḍlak*, literally 'out of your goodness', appears relatively frequently. Besides this, *iʿmil maʿrūf* (literally: 'do a favour') is also used, e.g. *Eaâmil maaroòf ibree lee reêsheh* 'Would you be so kind as to make me a pen'.[82] In some phrases, *kallif xaṭrak* 'go to trouble' is found, e.g. '*kallif chātír-ak nāwíl-ni schikfet 'ēsch* Bitte, reichen Sie mir ein Stück Brod' [please, hand me a piece of bread].[83] The phrase *law samaḥt* (literally:

75 Nakhlah, *New Manual*, 215–217.

76 Nallino, *L'Arabo parlato in Egitto*, 99–110.

77 Hassan, *Kurzgefasste Grammatik*, 179ff.

78 Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, 676. For the interrogative *-š*, see Zack, "Nineteenth-Century Cairo Arabic", 2016b, 563–564.

79 Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, 770, 764.

80 Wied, *Betitkállim bi'l-ʿárabi?*, 74.

81 Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, 792–800.

82 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 281. Literally 'sharpen me a feather [pen]'.

83 Wied, *Arabischer Sprachführer*, 77.

'if you allow'), used very frequently in modern Egyptian Arabic, does not feature at all in the selected texts.[84]

## Expressing displeasure

Several works include phrases expressing displeasure, anger, or exasperation. Nakhlah has three pages in the section 'Blame'. The phrases vary from expressing mild disappointment such as '*ana moosh mabsoot minnak* I am not pleased with you', to scolding, e.g. '*da moosh tayyib minnak – da ma ye-ssah-hish* That is bad of you', to expressing strong displeasure: '*ikhss* Fye! – for shame!', '*izzay lak ga-sârah tê-mil keda* How dare you to do so?' There are various ways to tell someone to hold their tongue: '*osskot* Be quiet', '*moosh â-wiz tesskot* Won't you be still?', '*ikhrass – kaffil* Hold your tongue', '*wala kilmeh* Not one word'. There are admonitions not to do the offending act any more: '*ma â-ttiksh keda* I won't suffer that', '*a-waa* [*iwʿa*] *têmil keda marra tanyah* Mind for another time', '*maneesh bahazzar* I am not joking'. The section ends with '*rooh min wishshi* Get out of my sight'.[85]

Sacroug contains a short section on 'Scolding Phrases' that is comparable to that of Nakhlah's, with phrases such as '*Ikhlas ba qoollak* Have done, I say', '*uwâa* [*iwʿa*] *in…* I warn you that…', '*Ma teqëllish hhayák* Don't be impertinent', '*Shoof shŏghlak* Mind your own business'.[86]

Thimm, whose phrases are ordered alphabetically, has some scolding phrases scattered here and there: '*uskut* hold your tongue (shut up)', '*ana za'alân wiyyak* I am angry with you', '*ya! mâ-enteh wisikh* oh! how dirty you are', '*ihtazar! mâ takdibsh!* take care! no lies!'[87]

Haggenmacher also has some scolding phrases, such as '*ichtíschy fy 'arḍak, 'ala 'arḍak!* schäme dich in deiner Seele, bei deiner Ehre!' [be ashamed in your soul, on your honour!], '*etlíhy wa͡ itrízy wa͡ ikkítim ja chāi* halt's Maul, du! schweig!' [shut up, you, be silent], '*ja schēch mā tefāʿnī́sch!*[88]mein Herr,

84 It also is not found in Spiro's dictionaries of Egyptian Arabic (1895, 1897). Moreover, Spitta, *Grammatik*, 436–437, and Willmore, *The Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, 292–293, mention *law* only as used in ounterfactual conditional sentences. It seems, therefore, that the use of *law samaḥt* in Egyptian Arabic is a more recent development, but this point needs further research.

85 Nakhlah, *New Manual*, 225–228.

86 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 287–288.

87 Thimm, *Egyptian Self-Taught*, 63–65.

88 Perhaps *ma-tifʾaʿnīš* 'don't infuriate me'. *šēx* can be used in Egyptian Arabic for addressing scholars of Islam, or as a title of respect for old men (see Badawi and Hinds, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, 489).

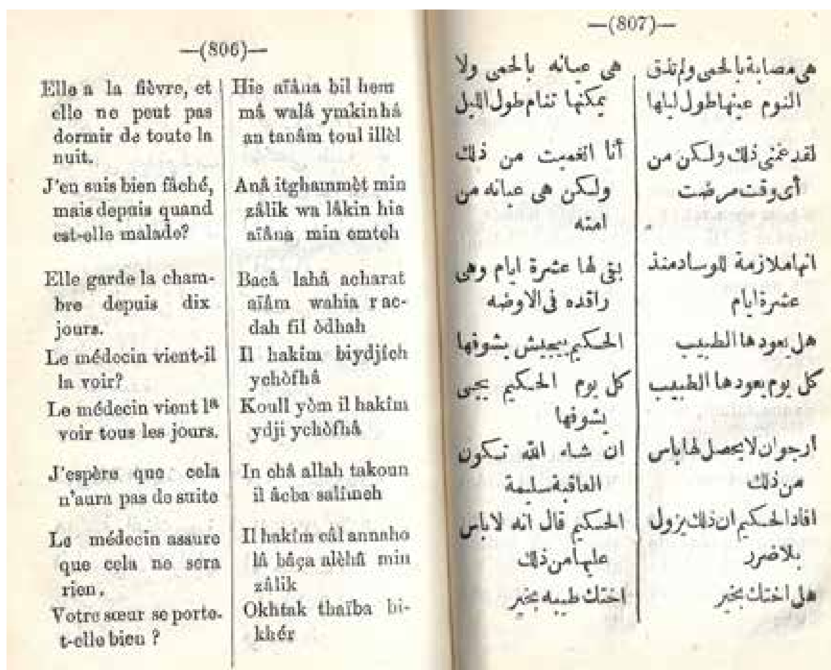
langweilen Sie mich nicht' [Sir, don't bore me.], '*uskut wa͡illa aḍrábak ja qabīḥ!* schweig, oder ich schlage dich, du Unverschämter' [be silent or I will beat you, foulmouth], '*git hena u waḥált* du bist schön in den Dreck gefallen' [you have already fallen in the filth].[89] Hassam mentions '*rûḥ lil-gehennum* Go to the d—l', which, although apparently too terrible an expression to be printed in English, could be printed in Egyptian Arabic without a problem.[90]

The books offer no instructions on when, how, or to whom these phrases were to be used. One wonders if anyone ever got into trouble for saying, for instance, *ixraṣ* to the wrong person. Although this type of language might have been used to the likes of donkey boys, it would have been very likely to provoke anger in the average Egyptian. The inclusion of these phrases without further comment can mean a few things. It could indicate a lack of knowledge of Egyptian society on the side of the author. We do not know, for instance, if Haggenmacher or Thimm had ever been to Egypt at all. This, however, does not hold for Nakhlah, who was Egyptian himself. What authors of language guides, textbooks, etc. often tend to forget, is that effective communication in another language is more than just learning vocabulary and grammar; the just as important cultural component is often overlooked. Another aspect that could play a role here, is that foreign travellers felt to be superior; as Mairs and Muratov put it, '[…] they were also representatives of colonial powers, of foreign mechanisms of control which consumed the resources of the Middle East'.[91]

## Dialogues involving women

The interlocutors in these phrasebooks are almost always men. If no specific person is addressed (for instance, a coachman), this can still be concluded based on the masculine forms used in the conversations. This is not very surprising from a practical point of view, as it would take up more space if both masculine and feminine forms needed to be printed. It is also not much of a problem if there is a grammar section that explains what the feminine pronouns and verbs look like. Readers could then relatively easily adjust the phrases to feminine forms. Such a grammar is missing in Thimm, *Egyptian Self-Taught*; the reader is referred to 'the companion volume 'Arabic Self – Taught''.[92] Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, does not contain any section on grammar at all.

89 Haggenmacher, *Grammatik*, 86, 87, 92.
90 Hassam, *Arabic Self-Taught*, 63.
91 Mairs and Muratov, *Archaeologists, Tourists, Interpreters*, 2.
92 See Thimm, *Egyptian Self-Taught*, unpaginated Preface.



—(806)— —(807)—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elle a la fièvre, et elle ne peut pas dormir de toute la nuit. | Hie aïâna bil hem mâ walâ ymkinhâ an tanâm toul illèl | هي عيانه بالحمى ولا يمكنها تنام طول الليل | هي مصابة بالحمى ولم تذق النوم عينها طول ليلها |
| J'en suis bien fâché, mais depuis quand est-elle malade? | Anâ itghammèt min zâlik wa lâkin hia aïâna min emteh | أنا اتغمت من ذلك ولكن هي عيانه من امته | لقد غمني ذلك ولكن من أي وقت مرضت |
| Elle garde la chambre depuis dix jours. | Bacâ lahâ acharat aïâm wahia racdah fil ôdhah | بقى لها عشرة ايام وهي راقده في الاوضه | انها ملازمة للوساد منذ عشرة ايام |
| Le médecin vient-il la voir? | Il hakim biydjich yehôfhâ | الحكيم بيجيش يشوفها | هل يعودها الطبيب |
| Le médecin vient la voir tous les jours. | Koull yôm il hakim ydji yehôfhâ | كل يوم الحكيم يجي يشوفها | كل يوم يعودها الطبيب |
| J'espère que cela n'aura pas de suite | In châ allah takoun il âcba salimeh | ان شاء الله تكون العاقبة سليمة | ارجو ان لا يحصل لها باس من ذلك |
| Le médecin assure que cela ne sera rien. | Il hakîm câl annaho lâ bâça alèhâ min zâlik | الحكيم قال انه لا باس عليها من ذلك | افاد الحكيم ان ذلك يزول بلا ضرر |
| Votre sœur se porte-t-elle bien ? | Okhtak thaïba bi-khêr | اختك طيبه بخير | هل اختك بخير |

Fig. 10. Discussing the health of the addressee's mother. Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, 806–807.

Women do feature as subjects of conversations, sometimes. This mostly stays within the subject of enquiring after a female family member's health. For instance, in Nakhlah we find: '*izzay al sitt*... How is M^rs^....?'; '*hiya fi ghâ-yit al ssihhah* She is perfectly well'; '*sallim-li alay-ha – billâhi sallim-li alayha* Present my respects *or* compliments to her. Will you?'[93] Similarly, Pizzi writes: '*Kêf ḥâl es-sitt?* Come lo stato della signora?' [how is the condition of the lady?]; '*Sallim ly 'alê-hâ* Falle i miei saluti' [give her my regards].[94] Probst writes: '*ezáj ṣaḥḥet bintẻ ‹ammak?*' This is, interestingly, translated as 'wie steht es mit der Gesundheit deiner Gemahlin?' [how is the health of your wife?], rather than 'your cousin' or 'the daughter of your paternal uncle'.[95] This refers to the tradition of marrying one's paternal uncle's daughter, which is still common in modern Egypt. In Sacroug, the traveller reads: '*Esh'hhál ookh'tak?* How does your sister do?', '*Esh'hhàl oom'mak*? Is your mother in good health?'[96] Likewise, Has-

93 Nakhlah, *New Manual*, 243.

94 Pizzi, *Piccolo manuale*, 173.

95 Probst, *Arabischer Sprachführer*, 255.

96 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 279. The uninformed reader must have wondered how *esh'hhal* could both mean 'how does .... do?' and 'is .... in good health?'.

san includes phrases enquiring after the interlocutor's mother's health: '*wa's-sitt wâlidatak hal çéḥḥat'hā thajjíbe* Und Ihre Frau Mutter, besitzt Sie eine gute Gesundheit?' [And your lady mother, is her health good?] What follows is a whole page of ailments the mother might suffer from.[97] On a different note, Sacroug also records someone asking about a Miss N…, who happens to be out at church or to see some friends.[98] Women figure most often in the dialogues of Cadri: questions are asked about mothers, sisters, daughters, paternal, and maternal aunts (see Figure 10). These persons, however, are never addressed directly,[99] with the only exceptions two greetings: '*Allâh ymassîki bil khèr ya sitti* Bon soir, madame' [Good evening, madam], '*Lèltik mobârakah yâ sittî* Bonne nuit, madame' [Good night, madam].[100]

The only conversations that directly address women in this sample of books, are a conversation with a laundress and a conversation with an eastern lady. These will be discussed in the following two sections.

### *The laundress*

Phrases for addressing a laundress are found in Nakhlah.[101] The conversation in Nakhlah's book starts with the question '*inti al ghassâlah* Are you the laundress?' The phrases contain the expected information, such as that the traveller has some linen that needs to be washed, and enquiries about how long it will take before the laundress brings it back. To a comment that he wants it in three days, the laundress answers '*lamma ashoof* I'll try' (literally: 'when I see', which could be interpreted as 'when I can'). The only other sentence uttered by the laundress is when the traveller asks '*gibt-i hhawây-gi* Have you brought my linen?', and she answers '*ây-wa ya-seedi gibtehom* Yes Sir, I have'. The rest of the monologue consists of complaints about badly washed / badly ironed / missing linen.

### *The eastern lady*

The following conversation with an eastern lady, originally published in Kayat's Syrian language guide, was used in its entirety (but without the Arabic script) by Sacroug.[102]

97 Hassan, *Kurzgefasste Grammatik*, 183–184.

98 Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 284.

99 See for instance Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, 518, 554, 556, 646, 648, 744, 786, 804-808.

100 Cadri, *Nouveau Guide*, 802.

101 Nakhlah, *New Manual*, 251–252.

102 Kayat, *The Eastern Traveller's Interpreter*, 75–78; and Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 328–329.

| **Kayat 1844 Ar. script** | **Kayat 1844 transcription** | **Sacroug 1874** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| صباح الخير يا ست | *sâbâh alkheïr yâsét.* | *Sabahh el khèîr ya sett.* | Good morning, madam! |
| انا مبسوط الذى نظرت ست شرقيه | *ânâ mâbsoott allâthie nâzâret sit shârkiéh.* | *Ana mabsoôt ill shooft sitt sharqieh.* | I am glad to see an Eastern lady. |
| ستات بر الشام علي الاغلب مسكر عليهن | *setât bâr alshâm âlâ alâghlâb messâcâr āālâïhen.* | *Settat barr Massr aghlab'hoom maqfoól aalèïhom.* | The Syrian (K) / Egyptian (S) ladies are shut up in general |
| انت بتقري | *ânti btekrie.* | *Enti teq'ree?* | Do you read? (*fem.*) |
| نحن نسمع ان البنات لا يتعلمن القرآه بالشرق | *nâhhen nâssmāāh ân albânât lâ yâtaālâmân alkârāā bâl-shârâk.* | *Ahh'na ness'maa in el banàt la ya taàllamoo el qara'at fil sharq.* | We hear that the females are not taught to read in the East. |
| ستات الشرق شاطرين في شغل الابره | *setât alshârek shâttreen fee shegâl alâbréh.* | *Settat el sharq shatreĕn fee shughl el îbreh.* | The Eastern ladies are very clever in needle-work. |
| ستات الانكليز يعملن كلما يقدرن ليسعفن ستات الشرق | *setât alânghleez yāāmâlân kelâmâh yâkdârn lyâssāāfen setât alshârâk.* | [not in Sacroug] | The English ladies will do all they can to help the Eastern ladies. |
| ستات الشرق جميلات جدًا | *setât alshârâk jâmeelât jedân.* | *Settat el sharq gamalât gëdan.* | The Eastern ladies are very handsome. |
| نحن نستحلي لبسكن | *nâhhen nâstâhhlee lâbsocon.* | *Ahh'na nestāhh'la lïbsĕkoom.* | We admire your costume. |
| خليني انظر خواتمك | *khâleeni anzor khuâtmék.* | *Tesmàhhee lee a shoóf khawátmek.* | Will you allow me to look at your rings? |
| كتير ظريف | *keteer zâreef.* | *Kowayeseén qâwee.* | Very pretty. |
| ان كان بتريدي يا ست | *âncân betredee yâ-sit.* | *In kan tereêdi ya sitt.* | Please, madam. |
| كلفي الخاطر يا ست | *câlefee alkhattér yâ-sit.* | *Kallëfee el khàtir ya sitt.* | Have the goodness, madam. |
| الامهات في بلاد الانكليز يعلمون بناتهن القرآه | *alâmâhât fee belâd alânghleez yāālâmoon bânâtehen al-kârāāh.* | *El umahât fee belàd el engleëz ye aalēmoo banat'hoom el qara'at.* | Mothers, in England, instruct their daughters to read. |
| العشم ان تعلمي بناتك القرآه | *alāāsh [sic] antāālémie benâtâc al-kârāāh.* | *Aashami innik taalími banàtik el qara'at.* | I hope you will teach your daughters to read. |
| هذا من شغل ايادي ستات الانكليز | *hâdâ min shâghel ayâdie setât alânghleez.* | *Deh min shughl ayàdi settăt el ingleéz.* | This is a specimen of English ladies' hand-work. |

Fig. 11. Table "Discourse with an eastern lady"

It seems that Sacroug had less faith in the intentions of the English ladies, as he left out the phrase 'The English ladies will do all they can to help the Eastern ladies'.

Sacroug changed some of the Syrian vocabulary to Egyptian (e.g. *nâzâret* 'I saw' became *shooft*, *messâcâr* 'shut up' became *maqfoól*, *keteer* 'very' became *qâwee*, *-oon* 'them' became '*-hoom*'). Sacroug also, curiously, made some changes that made the text less grammatically correct, for instance

by removing the *bi*-imperfect in *btekrie* → *teq'ree* 'you read' and in adding a *-t* in *al-kârâāh* → *el qara'at* 'reading', which is the form the word would have taken if it was the first component of an *iḍāfa* construction (which it is not in these phrases).

We will now focus only on the Egyptian text by Sacroug. It is unclear who is supposed to be the interlocutor of the eastern lady. Logically, it would be an English lady. Male travellers would sometimes come into contact with lower-class women such as washerwomen (as we have seen in the dialogues with a laundress above), but they would not meet, much less have a chance to talk to, an eastern lady.[103] However, the only indication we have of the sex of the speaker is the second phrase, '*ana mabsoôt* I am glad', in which *mabsoôt* is in the masculine form.

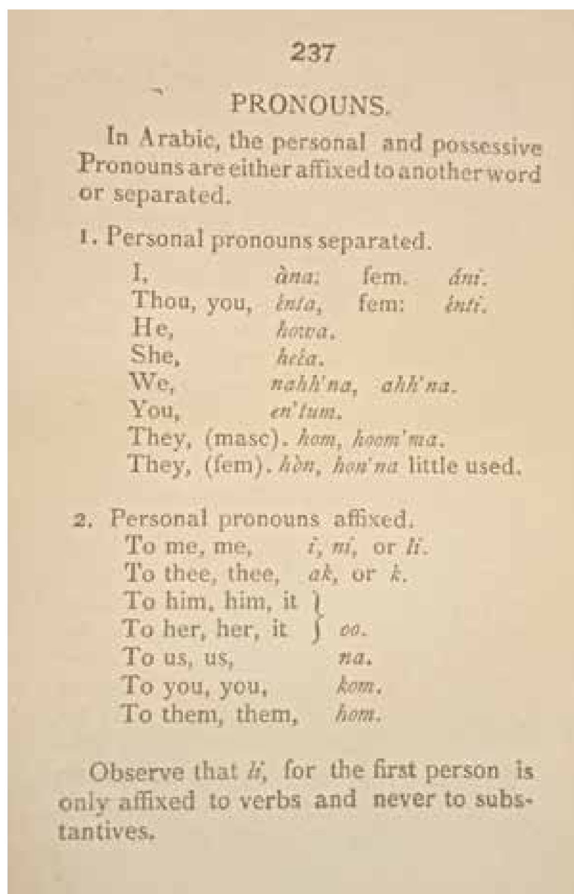
The lady is addressed with '*ya sitt* madam'. Although *sitt* is now the common, neutral word for 'woman' in Egyptian Arabic, in the nineteenth century the neutral word was *mara* and *sitt* was more respectful. Nowadays, *mara* is used as an insult only, and the word for 'lady', *sitt*, has taken over its role as the neutral word for woman.[104]

As can be seen in the text, the lady is addressed in the 2nd person singular; the feminine ending *-i* is written by Sacroug alternately with *-i* and *-ee*: '*Enti teq'ree?* do you read?', '*tesmàhhee* allow', '*tereêdi* you want', '*kallëfee* have the goodness', etc. Also the feminine suffix *-ik* is used, for instance in *banàtik*. This is all the more interesting as Sacroug does not mention the feminine suffix *-ik* in his overview of the suffixes (although *inti* is mentioned as the independent personal pronoun), see Figure 12. Whether this omission is intentional, because the target readers were not expected to be in frequent contact with Egyptian women, or it was a simple oversight, is hard to determine.

The lady is not addressed with a formal form of 'you' such as *ḥaḍritik*. Although that may seem to indicate a lack of respect, this does not actually have to be the case. In a study on terms of address in Egyptian Arabic in

103 Note that the eleven books discussed here do not contain conversations of an amorous nature. None of the phrasebooks from this period in my possession have such conversations, although they can be found in some (much) earlier phrasebooks. For instance, Arnold Von Harff's (1471–1505) list of Arabic words and phrases contains the (ungrammatical) phrase '*marrat nyco* frauwe sal ich by dir slaeffen' [woman, shall I sleep with you?] (Von Harff, *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff*, 1860, 112). Wilkinson (1847) contains some phrases of a more romantic nature, see Mairs and Muratov, *Archaeologists, Tourists, Interpreters*, 2015, 33.

104 See for instance Spiro, *An Arabic–English Vocabulary*, 1895, 269: '*sitt*, lady, grandmother, Mrs., Miss'. 'Woman' is not mentioned as one of its meanings. *Mara* is still in use with its neutral meaning in the Egyptian countryside, see Behnstedt and Woidich, 2011, *Wortatlas*, part 1, 15.



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PRONOUNS.

In Arabic, the personal and possessive Pronouns are either affixed to another word or separated.

1. Personal pronouns separated.

I, *àna:* fem. *áni.*
Thou, you, *ìnta,* fem: *ìnti.*
He, *howa.*
She, *heia.*
We, *nahh'na, ahh'na.*
You, *en'tum.*
They, (masc). *hom, hoom'ma.*
They, (fem). *hòn, hon'na* little used.

2. Personal pronouns affixed.

To me, me, *i, mi,* or *li.*
To thee, thee, *ak,* or *k.*
To him, him, it }
To her, her, it } *oo.*
To us, us, *na.*
To you, you, *kom.*
To them, them, *hom.*

Observe that *li,* for the first person is only affixed to verbs and never to substantives.

Fig. 12. 'Pronouns'. Sacroug, *The Egyptian Travelling Interpreter*, 237.

the 1980s, Parkinson comments on the relatively low occurrence of formal terms of address like *ḥaḍritik* (the 'sisters of *'inta*', see above) to female addressees:

> The statistical data on addressee sex indicate that male addressees are more likely to receive a sister of *'inta* than are female addressees. This result reflects the actual situation in the society in which men are more likely to be in socially dominant positions than are women, but it also indicates that speakers, even when addressing women in socially dominant positions, are much less likely to choose a sister of *'inta* than they would be if addressing men in similar situations. Instead they choose another term, like *madaam*, or possibly avoid using a term at all.[105]

105 Parkinson, *Constructing*, 19.

The explanation, therefore, could be twofold: either the interlocutor of the eastern lady is supposed to be of higher standing that the lady herself, or the convention of less frequent use of 'sisters of *ʾinna*' when addressing women was already present in nineteenth-century Cairene Arabic. Of course, a combination of these two is another option. However, the contents of the conversation ('The Egyptian ladies are shut up in general'; 'We hear that the females are not taught to read in the East'; 'I hope you will teach your daughters to read') certainly show condescension from the side of the English person who utters them.

Finally, it can be remarked that questions and comments are directed at the eastern lady, but no possible answers are recorded. One would love to hear what the reaction of an Egyptian lady would be!

## Conclusion

This chapter investigates how Egyptian interlocutors are addressed in eleven language guides for Egyptian Arabic from the second half of the nineteenth century. The phrases and dialogues presented in these books give a good insight into how the authors thought foreigners were supposed to talk to Egyptians. Three of the books written by native speakers (Cadri, Hassan, and Nakhlah) have the most extensive sections on making polite requests, thanking, and making polite conversation. Polite forms of 'you' do not figure often in these books, but when they do, *ḥaḍritak* and *ganābak* are found the most often. This is noteworthy, as the latter is now considered obsolete. In contrast, *siyadtak*, which is frequently used in modern Egyptian Arabic, does not figure at all in the nineteenth-century sources. The reason could be that *siyadtak*, literally 'your dominance', implies subservience of the speaker, whereas *ḥaḍritak* is more neutral. In cases where the addressee was indeed of higher rank, there were other forms of address that needed to be used, such as *saʿadtak* when addressing a governor or pasha. The most elaborate information on polite forms of 'you' can be found in Probst, Haggenmacher, Hassan, and Nallino, who, perhaps not surprisingly, wrote in languages (German and Italian) that have polite forms of 'you'.

To make orders and request sound more polite, equivalents of English 'please' could be added. There were two very common expressions: *min faḍlak* 'out of your goodness' and *iʿmil maʿrūf* 'do a favour'. The phrase *law samaḥt* 'if you allow' is very common in modern Egyptian Arabic, but it does not appear at all in the works discussed in this chapter.

On the other end of the spectrum are phrases used for scolding or displaying anger. These range from fairly timid (‘*da moosh tayyib minnak* That is bad of you’) to nothing short of rude (‘*ikhrass* Hold your tongue’, ‘*rûḥ lil-gehennum* Go to the devil’). The scolding phrases are found in the works of Nakhlah, Sacroug, Haggenmacher, and Hassam; although the phrases used by the first two (native speakers) are of a less rude nature than those by the latter two. The problem with these is that the books do not give guidance on how to use these phrases, and one can imagine a traveller getting into trouble for uttering a phrase of which he/she does not know the real meaning or cultural (in)appropriateness, to the wrong person.

Women only rarely figure in these books. This could be for cultural reasons: the market for phrasebooks was geared towards a male audience, and men would hardly encounter Egyptian women. The only two examples of conversations with women are those with a laundress (Nakhlah) and with an eastern lady (Sacroug). Another reason for the absence of phrases in the female form is that the authors might have considered that these could be easily constructed, if needed, by adding the appropriate suffixes. For instance, if a book has a grammar section that explains that the feminine imperative is formed by adding *-i*, it would not be necessary in the phrases section to add the feminine *xudi* to the masculine form *xud* ‘take!’ Some books, however, completely lack a grammar section, leaving language learners at a loss on how to address Egyptian women correctly, and, in the event that the language learner is a woman, how to speak about herself in the feminine form.

Of course, it would be fascinating to know what Egyptian interlocutors made of all this, when they were confronted with a western traveller, phrasebook in hand, trying out their Arabic on them. This goes beyond the scope of this chapter, but would be a very interesting subject for further study.

## Acknowledgements

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## About the author

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# 5. "Like the bleating of a goat": Teaching learners to pronounce the 'difficult' Arabic consonants (1798–1945)

*Rachel Mairs*

**Abstract:** This presentation draws on my current project 'Arabic Dialogues: Learning Colloquial Arabic through Phrasebooks 1798–1945' (monograph forthcoming), and focuses on attempts to teach Arabic consonants often considered 'difficult' by Europeans. The classic example is 'ayn, which receives bizarre and usually not-very-helpful descriptions in Arabic grammars and phrasebooks. This chapter examines how such phrasebooks often borrowed the description of consonants from one another, without reflection on how to teach phonology. It also explores whether there is a contrast between Arab and European authors of phrasebooks in their perception of whether it is possible to teach phonology through a book, or whether it is essential to learn from native speakers.

**Keywords:** Arabic language, phonology, phonetics, 'ayn, pronunciation, history of language learning and teaching

For native speakers of European languages, learning to distinguish and accurately reproduce Arabic consonants can be a challenging task.[1] Present-day learners of Arabic are able to take advantage of sophisticated audio-visual resources, a worldwide distribution of native-speaker teachers, decades of phonological and pedagogical research, and (for some) inexpensive travel to Arabic-speaking countries, in order to get over their trepidation about

1 Shehata 2018. NB: no page numbers are given for references to many of the Arabic phrasebooks cited here, because the phonetic descriptions tend to be in the opening, unnumbered, pages of the book. Open Access for Rachel Mairs's chapter was funded by the University of Reading.

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the 'difficult' Arabic consonants, and learn to pronounce them accurately. For much of the history of the teaching and learning of Arabic as a foreign language, however, there existed a constituency of learners who did not have these advantages. Until the late nineteenth century, native-speaker teachers of Arabic were rare in European academic institutions. The few such teachers who found positions in Europe in the early-mid nineteenth century (for example Anton Hassan in Austria, or Don Raphaël de Monachis in Paris) were usually subordinate to European Orientalist scholars whose experience of the spoken language was limited or non-existent.[2] Ironically, these native speakers tended to be regarded as less authoritative experts on their own language than armchair Orientalists.

In the period from the Expédition d'Égypte to the Second World War (1798–1945), war, colonialism, commerce, pilgrimage, and tourism brought more Europeans into contact with the Arabic language. As well as the growth and consolidation of Arabic studies as an academic discipline,[3] this created a market for Arabic instruction books among a less scholarly audience. In my forthcoming monograph,[4] I analyse a corpus of just over 200 Arabic phrasebooks and instruction books for *ʿāmmiyya*, the regional colloquial varieties of Arabic, for use in the Mashriq, published in the period 1798–1945 (I use here the extended definition of the Mashriq, to include Egypt and Sudan as well as the Levant and Iraq). The languages of publication are (in descending order of popularity) English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Yiddish, Urdu, Spanish, Russian, and Portuguese.[5] Despite the variety of languages, many of these phrasebooks conform to the same models and teaching methods. In the present, briefer study, I explore how these books approach the challenge of teaching Arabic phonology and pronunciation to readers trying to learn the language without the benefit of a native-speaker teacher or audio recordings. Phonology and pronunciation are, of course, two different things. Teaching the first means accurately describing the ways in which Arabic sounds are articulated, according to the scientific standards of the time.[6] Teaching pronunciation, on the other hand, requires

2 Mairs forthcoming "Il me dit toujours Ebni"; Idem 2024 "Arabic Dialogues".

3 Beyond the scope of this article, but see, for example, Messaoudi 2015.

4 Mairs 2024 "Arabic Dialogues".

5 Hebrew is included because this, along with Yiddish, was the language of a number of Arabic phrasebooks for European Jewish immigrants to Palestine in the period before the Second World War. Urdu phrasebooks catered to Indian soldiers in the British armed forces, or Muslim pilgrims from British India.

6 For a modern perspective on the teaching of pronunciation in foreign language acquisition, see Kennedy and Trofimovich 2017, and for a comparative case study on the historical teaching

the book to successfully explain how the user can actually produce these sounds for themselves. As well as this, I am interested in the extent to which language book authors (most of whom were not Arabs) realized or admitted the need for native-speaker input beyond the book. Given the colonial context of most individual and institutional European engagement with the Arab world in this period, the question of the role of native speakers of Arabic, and the recognition or otherwise accorded this role, has wider implications. The 'othering' of Arabic as a language, through an emphasis on the incompatibility of the 'difficult' consonants with European languages and their incongruity in European mouths, naturally also fits into broader Orientalist rhetoric of the time. In the second half of this article, I examine how native speakers of Arabic regarded attempts by foreigners to pronounce their language in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As with the history of the teaching and learning of Arabic pronunciation by foreigners, this is an under-researched topic. Arab impressions of European pronunciation of Arabic provide a necessary counterpoint to Europeans' own impressions of how Arabic sounded and how they might best reproduce it.

## 'Difficult' consonants in the corpus: *ṣād*, *khā'*, and *'ayn*

Studies indicate that English speakers perceive the emphatic consonants *ṣād*, *ḍād*, and *ẓā'* and the voiceless pharyngeal fricative *ḥā'* to be especially difficult both to tell apart from near homophones and to reproduce, with *'ayn*, *qāf*, and *ghayn* also regarded as challenging.[7] One of the phonemes perhaps regarded as most characteristic of Arabic by non-native speakers, *khā'*, is perceived as tricky by a smaller, but still significant, percentage of learners.[8] Figure 13 represents how many of my corpus of Arabic phrasebooks supply any guide at all to the pronunciation of three letters I have taken, on the basis of the scholarly literature on the perception of Arabic consonants by speakers of European languages, as diagnostic: the emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative *ṣād*; the voiced pharyngeal fricative *'ayn*; and the voiceless velar or uvular fricative *khā'*. In all cases, the books present Arabic in Latin (or Hebrew) script, instead of or in addition to the Arabic script. This is because learners were typically eased into Arabic with transliterated text first, and also because many learners never intended to learn to read

of English pronunciation, Murphy and Baker 2015.

7 Shehata 2015, 31–32.

8 Just over 20 per cent of the respondents in Shehata 2015's survey.

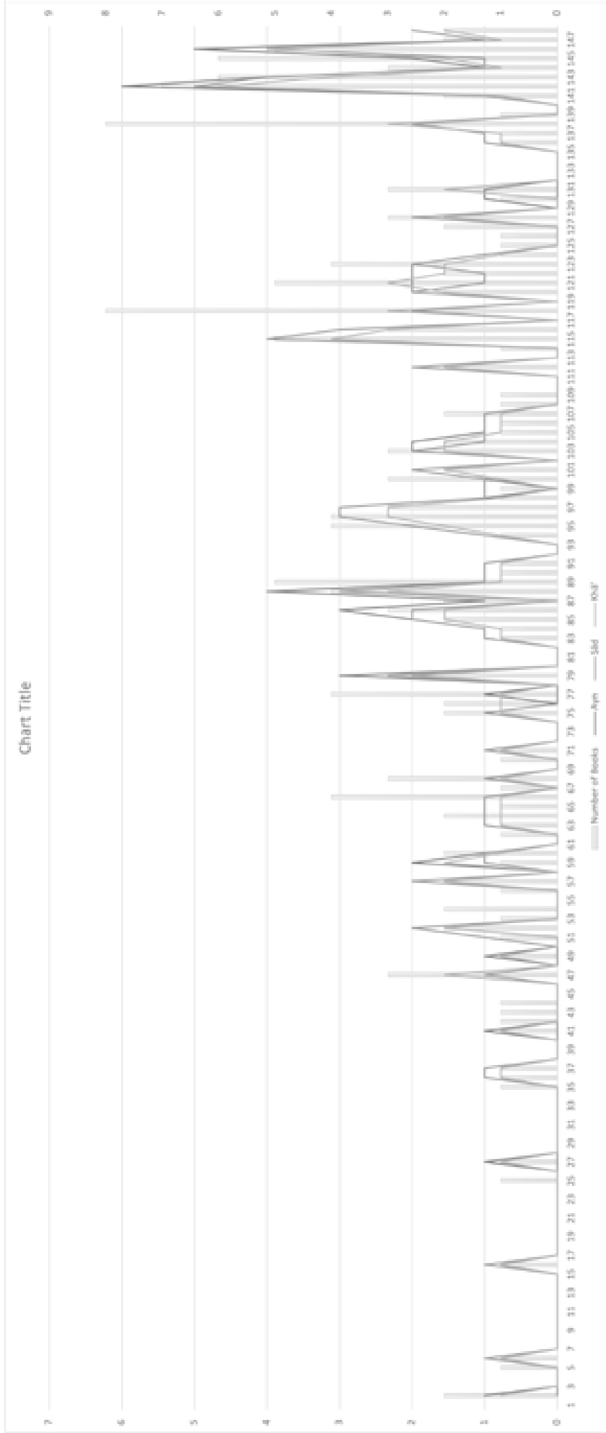


Fig. 13. Arabic phrasebooks supplying pronunciation guide (R. Mairs).

and write Arabic at all. The bars on the graph indicate the total number of phrasebooks published in a given year. Against this can be seen the number of these books that contain any attempt whatsoever at describing each of the three consonants.

A remarkable 75 of these books – well over a third of the total – contain no description of, or guide to producing, any of the 'difficult' Arabic consonants at all. It should be reiterated that these are not academic grammars, but phrasebooks designed to equip users to speak and understand the language. In all these cases, the user is left to pronounce the transliterated Arabic according to the pronunciation and orthography of their own language, with no explanation of the author's methodology and rationale for rendering the original Arabic sounds in a foreign script. Some of these transliterations are much more intuitive than others. 'Min fad-lak hat kobbayet beerah',[9] for example, gives a native speaker of English a fair chance of saying something that will get them a glass of beer in a bar in Cairo. 'Sahalkaire',[10] on the other hand, was never going to help a learner pronounce *ṣabāḥ al-khayr* ('Good morning') correctly. One author of a phrasebook for Sudanese Arabic warned of his book that: 'Only the sounds of the English language are used. Arabic has sounds not occurring in English, but they have been replaced with the nearest English equivalent (which is sometimes not very near)'.[11]

## *Ṣād as in 'saw'*

Ninety-six books (46 per cent) out of 205 in the corpus describe the emphatic 's' *ṣād* in some way, usually very briefly. Most books treat it as a near equivalent of European 's' sounds, sometimes describing it as 'hard' or 'harsh', without much further qualification. A few such descriptions are confusing or simply bizarre:

> Les lettres ou caractères *italiques* [the emphatic consonants] s'articulent fortement et avec une sorte d'affectation.[12]
> Like hard *s*, pronounced within the teeth.[13]
> Ssad lautet wie ein doppeltes س.[14]

9 Zaki 1915, 9.
10 Rifaud 1830.
11 Sandison 1944, 3.
12 Nuñez de Taboada 1833.
13 Kayat 1844.
14 Hassan 1854.

> A very strong sibilant pronounced well back in the mouth. The tongue should be held tight, so to speak, and the tip pressed against the lower front teeth.[15]
> Like *s* with a rounding of the lips and somewhat greater stress. It is also sometimes pronounced like *s*.[16]
> An s simultaneous with a u. Try to pronounce s and whistle at the same time.[17]

Among these less than helpful descriptions, however, there are a few moments of linguistic insight. Adolf Wahrmund, for example, in his *Vulgärarabische Gespräche und Sammlung der nöthigsten Wörter: zum Gebrauche für Reisende im Orient*, noted, correctly, that the emphatic consonants can affect the neighbouring vowels.[18] In the late nineteenth century, these more linguistic descriptions also begin to include instructions on how to articulate consonants within the mouth, in pace with developments in the sciences of phonology and physiology, even if these are not always accurate or intuitively described:

> nearly as *s*, but should be 'palatal,' i.e. with the tip of the tongue against the palate to give a more hissing sound.[19]
> un *s* enfatico, che s'ottiene appoggiano la punta della lingua sul palato.[20]
> Tongue-point as in [s]; velarised. Lips nearly *conceal* teeth. Hiss duller than that of [s].[21]

Very occasionally, a description by a native speaker of Arabic suggests how Arabic-speakers perceived the consonants of European languages, and their allophones, in comparison to their own, such as Abraham Arbeely's contention that *ṣād* 'sounds nearly as ṡ, in saw'.[22]

For the most part, however, the authors of phrasebooks and informal instruction books did not really consider recognizing and correctly pronouncing *ṣād* to be important for learners. Reginald Marriott and Negib Hindié, for example, advise that:

15 Willmore 1901.
16 Spiro 1912.
17 Nahmad and Rabin 1940.
18 Wahrmund 1861, also noted by Driver 1925; on this phenomenon, see Hayes-Harb and Durham 2016.
19 Plunkett 1886.
20 Nallino 1900.
21 Gairdner and Sallām 1917; 1926 (revised and mostly rewritten edition).
22 Arbeely 1896.

> The subtler distinctions made between the two kinds of *s*, *d*, *t* and *z* are not very important to a beginner, but as the student advances he will have to make the distinctions, especially when he comes to writing. It may be said that the difference consists in pronouncing the ص, ض,ط and ظ as *s*, *d*, *t* and *z* far back in the throat, ending the sound by the tongue approaching the palate instead of the front teeth.[23]

## *Khā' as in 'loch'* (*or spitting*)

In contrast to *ṣād*, *khā'*, and *'ayn* are more frequently described in some way, however inadequate, by phrasebook authors. *'Ayn* is noted in 113 books (55 per cent of the corpus) and *khā'* in 114 (there is not a complete overlap: some books describe one but not the other). Sounds similar to *khā'*, unlike *ṣād* and *'ayn*, do commonly occur in European languages. Authors frequently compare *khā'* to the German 'ch', Spanish 'j', or Greek χ, but by far the most common comparison in English-language works is with the Scottish word 'loch'. These sounds are typically realized in the relevant languages as the voiceless velar fricative (/x/), which does indeed conform to how the Arabic *khā'* is pronounced in most dialects.

Out of a total of 98 English language phrasebooks in my corpus, fifty use the 'ch as in loch' description for *khā'*. The first to do so is Assaad Kayat in 1844, followed by Binning and Hayes in 1849.[24] By the 1880s, the description becomes ubiquitous, and by the first half of the twentieth century, almost all English-language phrasebooks for Arabic that describe *khā'* at all make the comparison with 'loch'. The authors of these phrasebooks did not arrive at the description independently. Plagiarism between Arabic phrasebooks in this period was very common, and the most frequently copied portion was the section on pronunciation. Many authors who had never been to Scotland or heard the word 'loch' spoken by a Scot copied the description from a previous book, probably without verifying for themselves whether it was accurate. This is a curious phenomenon, which has persisted into the present day (current Lonely Planet Arabic phrasebooks, for example, still use the 'loch' analogy for *khā'*), so it is worth delving into its history. How such did a specific description become commonplace, and why has it persisted, even though it may not offer an appropriate guide to many learners?

23 Marriott and Hindié 1921.

24 Kayat 1844; Binning and Hayes 1849.

Kayat (As'ad Ya'qūb al-Khayyāṭ, 1811–1865) was born in Beirut and learnt several languages as a child.[25] He lived in England for a few years in the 1830s and 1840s, and was later British consul in Jaffa. As far as I can discover, he is the first person to make the analogy with Scottish 'loch' in an Arabic grammar or phrasebook. Kayat describes *khā'* as:

> like the German *ch* in *nacht*. But to avoid mistake I shall represent this letter by *kh*, not *ch*; still, when it is written as *kh*, it must be pronounced as the German *ch* in *nacht*, or *ch* in *loch*, in *Scotch*; very like *h* in the Spanish *mohero*.[26]

Although he spells it in English with a 'K', his own surname Khayyāṭ ('tailor') begins with *khā'*, and he must have been used to explaining its correct pronunciation to the many foreigners with whom he lived and worked over the years. It may be that a Scot told him that the same sound existed in their dialect of English. This cannot be verified. But there is a slightly more convoluted explanation that, I think, makes a great deal of sense.

In 1785, William Kirkpatrick (1754–1812), an officer in the East India Company, published a *Vocabulary Persian, Arabic and English*, principally concerned with loanwords from these languages in Hindustani. He explains the correct pronunciation of the letter he transliterates as 'kh' as follows:

> In Persian or Arabic words the guttural sound of *ch* in the Scotch word *loch*; but in Hindvi words, instead of this guttural sound, it must be pronounced something like *ch* in *chaos*, the *kh* of the Hindvi being compounded of *k* and an aspirate both of which must be sounded distinctly.[27]

In a 1799 version of the same work, published in Calcutta and containing additional material on the Devanāgarī script, Kirkpatrick returns to the 'ch in Scotch loch' analogy for the letter *khā'* in Persian. He also explains that the Hindustani letter usually transliterated as 'kh' is (to use modern linguistic terminology) an aspirated stop, not a fricative, and thus:

> must be sounded distinctly, and not coalesce with the *k*, as in *khan* … where the sound is guttural, like the *ch* of the Erse and Irish in *loch*.[28]

25 al-Khayyāṭ 1847, 22.
26 Kayat 1844.
27 Kirkpatrick 1785, v.
28 Kirkpatrick 1799, 11.

This is where Kirkpatrick's own background becomes relevant. He was born in Ireland, to a father who had in turn been born in South Carolina to a family from Dumfriesshire. At the age of seventeen, he took up a position with the East India Company in Madras.[29] Kirkpatrick's references to Scottish, Scots Gaelic (Erse) and Irish speech therefore come from personal experience: he recognized the sound he heard from Indian scholars of Persian and Arabic as something with which he was familiar, even if East India Company officers of English origin were not.

Another Scot in India turned to similar analogies to inform his descriptions of Persian and Arabic. Matthew Lumsden (1777–1835) was born in Aberdeenshire and taught at Fort William College in Calcutta during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. He published grammars of both Persian (1810) and Arabic (1813). Like Kirkpatrick, he seems to have had no personal experience of travel in the Arabic-speaking world, nor of extensive interaction with speakers of Arabic, and treated it primarily as a scholarly language, of particular interest for its contribution to Persian and to Indian languages. Lumsden finds both *khā'* and *ghayn* comparable to Scots sounds:

> These two letters are formed at the upper extremity of the throat, the first being a little lower down than the second [...] The guttural sound of خا is familiar to Scotchmen in the word FOUGHT, (pronounced Fokht;) Daughter (pronounced DOKHTER); &c. The sound of GHAÏN is unknown to our language, but may be easily recognised by Scotchmen, as a hard and harsh guttural, having a good deal more of the letter G than the Scotch guttural GH, in the word DAUGHTER, pronounced DOKHTER; &c.[30]

In at least two cases, then, we find Scots (or people of Scottish heritage) in India reflecting on the phonology of their own dialect of English, as a means of understanding and explaining new languages that they encountered there. Over the following decades, more Britons resident in India used 'ch in loch' to describe sounds in Indian languages: Alexander Kinloch Forbes for Gujarati;[31] Robert Leach for Pashto;[32] and William Carmichael-Smyth and Francis Gladwin for Persian.[33] The description thus seems to have

29 Dalrymple 2002, 62–63.
30 Lumsden 1813, 21.
31 Forbes 1829; he was a Scot.
32 Leach 1839.
33 Smyth and Gladwin 1822; Carmichael-Smyth's father was a Scot.

become engrained, and even those who were not familiar with Scottish speech found 'ch as in loch' convenient to represent a phoneme that does not occur in southern English.

Assaad Kayat studied Persian when he accompanied a delegation of Persian princes to England in the mid 1830s,[34] and it is, I think, probable that he encountered the 'ch in loch' description for *khā'* in a British-Indian work on Persian. If this argument holds up, then one of the direct ancestors of the pronunciation guide in modern Arabic phrasebooks is an eighteenth-century Scotsman's observation on familiar sounds he heard, unexpectedly, in India.

The 'ch in loch' description does not occur in Arabic phrasebooks in any language other than English. German and Spanish works each compare *khā'* to sounds in their own languages, sometimes to specific dialects.[35] In French phrasebooks, the same comparisons to German and Spanish words are made. In Russian – which has its own letter for the 'kh' sound – *khā'* is treated as requiring no special explanation.

A smaller number of phrasebook descriptions of *khā'* resort to comparing the phoneme to non-speech sounds, something that is much more common for *'ayn*, as we shall see below. The earliest print phrasebook of colloquial Arabic, Jean-Joseph Marcel's *Vocabulaire français-arabe*,[36] printed on the Expédition d'Égypte for the use of the French army of occupation under Napoleon, compares the sound to spitting. *Khā'*:

> doit être rendue par une articulation qui a quelque analogie avec la précédente [*ghayn*], mais qui est beaucoup plus dure, et ressemble au son ranque qui se fait entendre dans le gosier, lorsque l'on veut cracher.
> Should be rendered by an articulation that has some similarity to the preceding one [*ghayn*] but which is much harder, and resembles the rancid sound which is made in the throat when you want to spit.

This example was followed by Armand Pierre Caussin de Perceval – who, like Marcel, had experience of both European Orientalist scholarship on Arabic and the living language in the Middle East. Caussin de Perceval described *khā'* as 'une articulation semblable au raclement produit dans la partie supérieure du gosier par l'effort qu'on fait pour cracher'.[37] Despite the

34 Najaf Ḳulī Mīrzā, trans. Kayat 1839.

35 Wolff 1857, Dirr 1893, and Harder 1898 all think it sounds characteristically Swiss; Anton Hassan, a native speaker of Arabic, found the closest approximation in the Austrian Tyrol, as did Friedrich Probst: [Hassan 1854, Probst 1892.

36 Marcel 1799.

37 Caussin de Perceval 1824.

earthy tone of these spitting analogies, they are often found in otherwise serious-minded academic works, almost exclusively in French and Italian. Some descriptions were plagiarized verbatim from Caussin de Perceval.[38]

Spitting analogies go out of fashion in French-Arabic phrasebooks in the mid-nineteenth century, in favour of comparisons to sounds in German and Spanish. Two Italian phrasebooks of the second half of the century compare *khā'* to the sound made when gathering saliva in the mouth,[39] or trying to dislodge an object from them throat, as if choking.[40] Bodily analogies for *khā'* recur much later in Elias 1935 (who compares it to snoring) and in a series of phrasebooks produced for the United States armed forces preparing to invade North Africa and the Middle East toward the end of the Second World War. These instruct learners that 'kh is pronounced as when clearing your throat when you have to spit' and advise them to: 'Listen carefully for it on the records'.[41] As this indicates, in the 1940s sound recordings were beginning to become available to learners of Arabic, making written descriptions of phonemes less crucial.

## *'Ayn as in 'Māā!'*

*Ṣād* and *khā'*, to European ears, at least sounded like something recognizable, whether that was a phoneme in their own languages, or a noise made when spitting, choking, or snoring. The latter descriptors, as well as being graphic, engaging, and, in some cases, even accurate, 'other' Arabic as a language very different to those of Europe, in line with contemporary constructions of the Arab world itself as barbaric and out of step with European civilization and modernity. *'Ayn* was altogether more problematic. There were no close analogies in the phonemic inventory of any European languages, and many learners seem to have had trouble hearing the sound *'ayn* in Arabic speech at all, never mind articulating it. If *ṣād* was most likely to be converted into a European sibilant, and *khā'* to be drowned in phlegm, then *'ayn* was most likely to be dropped entirely. All of these, as we shall see in the following section, were observations actually made by native speakers of Arabic about foreigners speaking their language in the nineteenth century.

38 Zenker 1854 and, in English, Bryon 1856, who could have been copying either from Caussin de Perceval directly or from Zenker; Soussa 1865, inaccurately, changes Caussin de Perceval's 'cracher' to 'tousser'.

39 Di Matelica 1868.

40 Sterlich and Dib Khaddag 1888.

41 e.g. War and Navy Departments, 1943.

Marcel, as with *khā'*, set the tone for many subsequent descriptions of *'ayn*. He did not indicate *'ayn* with a separate letter in transliteration, but as a circumflex on a vowel. This, he explained, should be pronounced 'du gosier et d'une maniere brève'.[42] Others continued to indicate the presence of *'ayn* with a circumflex accent on a vowel,[43] or with an apostrophe.[44] Marcel's (accurate though concise) description of *'ayn* being pronounced 'from the throat' also recurs frequently in my corpus, as does the term 'guttural' without much, if any, further explanation.[45]

Although European languages may not have *'ayn*, some phrasebooks compared the Arabic *'ayn* to the Hebrew *'ayin*.[46] Phrasebooks in Yiddish and in Hebrew itself made this comparison as a matter of course, even though the Semitic *'ayn* was not pronounced in Yiddish, and was often dropped by European speakers of Hebrew.[47] A very few authors claimed to find approximations in German, such as Wolff – who claimed the Swiss were best at it – and Dirr, who thought it was like 'wenn man das deutsche ach! recht unwillig ausspricht', presumably out of alarm or pain.[48]

Kayat – again, as with *khā'* – gave an influential description of *'ayn*:

> This letter I shall designate thus, āā. It sounds very like the bleating of a goat or a kid, *māā! māā!* An acute ear will catch it.[49]

This description was plagiarized verbatim by a number of phrasebooks.[50] The authors, interestingly, are fairly evenly split between native speakers of Arabic and Europeans: it was not just the Europeans who resorted to animal noises to describe Arabic. Others made 'bleating' analogies without use of Kayat's exact words.[51] As with 'ch in loch' for *khā'*, some users will have found this description helpful: depending, of course, on their familiarity with the sound of a sheep bleating, and whether they perceive this sound as anything like a voiced pharyngeal fricative. Some authors, may, likewise,

42 Marcel 1799.

43 e.g. Hofstetter, 1846.

44 e.g. Sanua, 1876.

45 e.g. Seifarth, 1849, Shidiac, 1856, Sanua, 1876.

46 e.g. Hassan, 1854, Winckler, 1862, Lammeyer, 1913, Stephan, 1935.

47 e.g. Shirizli, 1915, Trivaks, 1920, Elmaleh, 1928.

48 Wolff, 1857, Dirr, 1893.

49 Kayat, 1844.

50 e.g. Sacroug, 1874, Hassam, 1883, Thimm, 1897, Odeh, 1939.

51 For example, Meakin, 1891: 'long "â," far back in the mouth, as in "baa"'; Nallino, 1900: 'somiglia alquanto all tinale del belato b e e e delle pecore'; Gabriel, 1938: 'sounds like the bleating of a lamb'.

have considered the description accurate, while others (such as Thimm, who 'wrote' his book without any actual knowledge of Arabic) blindly copied it.

*'Ayn* provoked a greater variety of responses from phrasebook authors than either *ṣād* or *khā'*. Bodily analogies were common, as for *khā'*, and tended to be still more graphic: gargling,[52] choking,[53] vomiting,[54] and strangulation.[55] Gairdner and Sallām make the – on the face of it, bizarre – suggestion that the learner attempt 'to sing a note below one's lowest compass'.[56] Nahmad and Rabin later (perhaps inspired by Gairdner and Sallām) instructed the learner to 'sing down the scale on ah until you reach your lowest note; then sing one note lower, and you have ع'.[57] This method actually works: try it.

In the 1880s and 1890s, a series of German phrasebooks – influenced by developments in the academic field of linguistics – adopted a more scientific approach to explaining how to pronounce *'ayn*, describing the position of the larynx (raised), glottis (narrowed), and throat muscles (contracted).[58] This type of detailed physiological explanation did not become common in works in other European languages until the mid-twentieth century, when descriptions like the following could be found, in A. S. Tritton's *Teach Yourself Arabic*:

> ع is the voiced correlative of ħ pronounced with more tightening of the throat and forcing up of the larynx. The feeling in the throat is suggestive of slight retching. If you pronounce English vowels with a tightened throat and squeezed larynx, producing a metallic, rather low-pitched voice, they will be near to Arabic vowels in the neighbourhood of this consonant.[59]

I will return to Tritton's book in my conclusion. Also in the 1940s, we begin to find diagrams being used to indicate the correct position of the tongue and other parts of the mouth and throat.[60]

Marcel's treatment of *'ayn* as an ill-defined 'guttural', subordinate to surrounding vowel sounds is, however, that which prevails over the century

52 Baldwin, 1893.
53 Dirr, 1904, Van Ess, 1917.
54 Bahoshy, 1918.
55 Elias, 1935.
56 Gairdner, 1917; 1926 (revised and mostly rewritten edition).
57 Nahmad, 1940.
58 Spitta, 1880, Hartmann, 1881, Wied, 1887, Probst, 1892, Seidel, 1894.
59 Tritton, 1943.
60 e.g. Garbel, 1945, who do not, however, include a diagram for *'ayn*, since they take it as the equivalent of the Hebrew *'ayin*.

and a half of my study period. Savary even considered it a vowel,[61] and Herbin a mere 'accent'.[62] Alongside such vague and inaccurate descriptions, however, there are frequent exhortations to learners to seek out a native speaker of Arabic in order to hear it pronounced correctly, and to learn to emulate them. Herbin qualifies his description of *'ayn* as an 'accent' with the advice that 'en l'entendent prononcer une fois, on apprendra mieux sa vraie prononciation, que nous ne le pourrions faire par écrit' (once you have heard it pronounced once, you will a better grasp of its true pronunciation than we can give in writing).[63] Many other authors similarly advised that *'ayn* could not be adequately described in writing, and that the learner needed to hear it.[64]

This was all excellent advice, but what of learners who did not have the opportunity to consult a native speaker, or would not be able to do so until some time later in their Arabic-learning journey? These were compelled – or actively advised – to simply drop *'ayn*. Duncan Forbes recommends that 'the student who has not the advantage of a competent teacher, may treat the ع as he does the ا, until he has the opportunity of learning its true sound by the ear, from the mouth of a native'.[65] George Tindall Plunkett wrote that it 'may be omitted and a slight pause made in place of it'.[66] Marriott and Hindié give an explanation so discouraging that the learner has little option but to give up:

> It can be attained by practice, and is a vowel-sound produced far back and down in the throat. Special throat-muscles must be developed to produce it, so that a European can never imitate the sound at first attempt.[67]

In the face of complicated or confusing explanations of its pronunciation, it seems probable that the majority of armchair learners ignored *'ayn* in any case. Authors like Forbes, Plunkett, Marriott and Hindié validated their choice to do so. But consonants like *ṣād*, *khā'*, and *'ayn* were part of the core phonetic inventory of Arabic. What did native speakers of Arabic make of foreigners' seeming inability to understand or reproduce them?

61 Savary, 1813; composed in 1785.
62 Herbin, 1803.
63 Ibid.
64 e.g. Caussin de Perceval, 1824, Nuñez de Taboada, 1833, Binning, 1849, Hug, 1928.
65 Forbes, 1863.
66 Plunkett, 1886 .
67 Marriott, 1921.

## Native-speaker perceptions of 'foreigners' Arabic'

Despite the assurances of many nineteenth-century language book authors that pronouncing *'ayn* correctly was not really important, contemporary accounts of 'foreigners' Arabic' by native speakers indicate, on the contrary, that good or bad pronunciation made a huge difference to how the speaker was perceived. It was not so much a matter of basic comprehension, but of good linguistic manners. Poor pronunciation could make a person seem arrogant or foolish, often both.

By the early nineteenth century, European 'armchair Orientalists' already had a reputation among Middle Eastern and South Asian observers for being unable to correctly pronounce the languages they read and studied. The best-known example is Isaac-Antoine Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838). Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī (1801–1873), who knew him in Paris in the late 1820s, respected his scholarship, but noted of Sacy – who had never had the opportunity to travel in Arabic-speaking countries – that 'when he reads, he has a foreign accent and he cannot speak Arabic unless he has a book in his hands. If he wants to explain an expression, he uses strange words, which he is unable to pronounce properly'.[68] The Indian traveller Mirza Abu Taleb Khan (1752–1806), who had met Silvestre de Sacy in 1802, also found his spoken Persian weak.[69] A similar situation prevailed in London. Abu Taleb complained that his students in London who had studied from one of John Richardson's (1740/1741–1795) works on Persian required complete retraining: 'I found it much more difficult to correct the bad pronunciation he had acquired, and the errors he had adopted, than it was to instruct a person who had never before seen the Persian alphabet'.[70] Turkish intellectual Namık Kemal (1840–1888) likewise observed that:

> Some Europeans who are interested in Islamic languages but haven't been able to learn them from the standard grammar manuals are putting together their own grammar rulebooks to more easily instruct others in these languages. Some people actually believe they have learned these languages by reading such manuals. The things being learned and taught are so strange that, when I was in Paris and found myself attending a Turkish lesson open to the public, I could not understand a single word of the teacher's recitation. Had I not heard a few Turkish prepositions

68 al-Ṭahṭāwī, 1834, Vol. III. 2, trans. Newman.

69 Abu Taleb Khan, 1810, Vol. II, 144.

70 Ibid., 42.

> here and there, I would have thought the language being taught was one about which I knew nothing.[71]

This problem of book-taught Western Orientalists having weak pronunciation continued well into the twentieth century, as Thomas Naff's fascinating collection of memoirs by scholars of the Middle East reveals. Charles Issawi (1916–2000) recalled of studying with the Oxford Orientalist David Margoliouth (1858–1940) that 'his erudition was fantastic, but I had never heard anything resembling the sounds that issued from his throat when he spoke Arabic – which means that I had never met an Orientalist'.[72]

All this was in intellectual circles, where the implied contrast was always between a person's excellent, scholarly command of the written language, in its Classical form, and their inability to speak a colloquial register of the language with good pronunciation. In contexts where the learner's goal was to communicate effectively in spoken Arabic – the goal of most users of the phrasebooks for colloquial Arabic in my corpus – the problem of pronunciation was still more acute. Satirical writings, although of course exaggerated for comic effect, offer a useful insight into how native speakers of Arabic perceived the Arabic spoken by foreign learners in the Middle East.

In Fāris al-Shidyāq's (1805/1806–1887) semi-autobiographical novel *al-Sāq 'ala al-sāq* ('Leg Over Leg') he recalls his first voyage from Alexandria to Malta in 1827. Al-Shidyāq was a young man, not yet fluent in English, and his fellow passengers unkindly made fun of him for being unable to say the English 'th', and pronouncing the English word 'health' when drinking a toast as 'hell'. Al-Shidyāq, who knew many American and British Protestant missionaries, was livid at the hypocrisy of it. 'God destroy these louts! They live in our country for years and still can't pronounce our language properly. They pronounce *s* with a vowel before it as *z*, and the letters pronounced in the throat and others are a lost cause for them, despite which we don't laugh at them'.[73] Al-Shidyāq uses the term *ḥurūf al-ḥalq* – literally 'letters of the throat' – which in the Classical Arabic grammatical works with which he was well familiar designates the letters *hamza*, *hā'*, *'ayn*, *ḥā'*, *ghayn*, and *khā'*. In modern linguistic terminology, we would say that al-Shidyāq identifies the uvular, velar and pharyngeal fricatives, as well as glottal consonants, as especially difficult for Europeans – or perhaps as the consonants with which Europeans made least effort.

71 *Renan Müdâfaanâmesi*, trans. Aron Aji and Micah A. Hughes in Çelik, 2021, 76.

72 Issawi in Naff, 1993, 144.

73 *al-Sāq* 2.3.2, trans. adapted from Davies.

As literary payback, al-Shidyāq then tells the story of a foreign Christian minister who had lived in the Middle East for years but could still not deliver a sermon in decent Arabic. Although the sermon is fictionalized and intended to be humorous, and for al-Shidyāq to show off his gift for wordplay, it incorporates real features of 'foreigner talk', which must have come from his own observations. In addition to the problematic consonants already mentioned, al-Shidyāq's minister routinely replaces the emphatic consonants with their non-emphatic equivalents (*sīn* for *ṣād*, *dāl* for *ḍād*). He replaces Arabic phonemes that do not occur or are uncommon in English with the nearest English approximation, such as *kāf* for *qāf*, *hā'* for *ḥā'*, and so forth.[74] Naturally, al-Shidyāq is able to use this to great comic effect, since Arabic has some crucial minimal pairs that demand that the speaker pronounce these consonants correctly (e.g. *qalb* 'heart' vs *kalb* 'dog').

In al-Shidyāq's view, European missionaries in the Middle East did not put in the effort to learn to speak the language well. Overall, he characterizes foreigners as 'weakening' their consonants. Another comic foreigner sketched by an Arabic litterateur a few decades later goes too far in the other direction.

The journalist and playwright James Sanua (Yaʿqūb b. Rafāʾīl Ṣanūʿ or Ṣannūʿ, 1839–1912) chose to render the *'ayn* in the Arabic version of his own name as something more familiar to foreigners. When not using his *nom de plume* Abū Naẓẓāra or Abou Naddara, he always called himself 'James Sanua', even in Arabic, where this is rendered as 'Jims Sānuwā'.[75] Sanua was a polyglot and 'linguistic portrayals of the "other"'[76] are a hallmark of his work, both his plays and his journalism. He has an ear for the distinctive markers of a second-language speaker. The non-Egyptian characters – Nubians, Greeks, Syrians, Turks, Europeans – in his early plays before his exile from Egypt in 1878 are broad caricatures, stereotypes played for laughs, but some aspects of their portrayal are well observed. In Sanua's plays, such foreigners are contrasted with the 'salt of the earth' *ibn* or *bint al-balad*, who speaks colloquial Cairene Arabic.[77] Characters who speak *fuṣḥā* – or give themselves airs by trying to speak it – are outsiders as much as the foreigners. *Fuṣḥā*, the formal language, closer to the Classical standard that was used in religious texts and in scholarship, is depicted as disconnected from the everyday realities of Sanua's characters. Morally, the characters

74 Discussed by Davies in al-Shidyāq, 2015 [1855], n. 438.

75 Mestyán, 2014, 123-125

76 Fahmy, 2011, 46.

77 Ibid., 46, 71, 126.

who speak it are also presented as self-important, as authority figures who need to be taken down a peg or two.

Sanua's European characters mispronounce Arabic in two ways. First, they struggle with consonants that do not exist in their own languages, and either omit them or exaggerate them. *'Ayn* is routinely dropped, whereas *ḥā'* consistently becomes *khā'*.[78] Second, even when they are trying to speak colloquial Egyptian, they retain pronunciations from *fuṣḥā*, such as pronouncing *qāf* (the voiceless uvular plosive) rather than replacing it with a glottal stop. Their grammatical mistakes are of a similar nature: both learners' errors (showing ignorance of the language), and inappropriate use of *fuṣḥā* structures in colloquial speech.

The short play *al-Sawwāḥ wa al-Ḥammār* demonstrates the frustration an *ibn al-balad* experiences listening to a foreigner mangle his language. The text is less than two pages long in Najm's edition.[79] It is uncertain whether it was ever actually performed, and like most of Sanua's other dramatic works, was not published during his lifetime. Given the style and subject matter, it seems likely that it dates to around the same time as his other comedies, circa 1871–1872. There has been little scholarly discussion of this play, with most attention being given to the question of whether it contributed to the end of Sanua's short career as theatre impresario.

The plot of *al-Sawwāḥ wa al-Ḥammār* is simple. 'John Bull', walking through Cairo, calls out to a donkey driver and tries to negotiate with him to be taken to the citadel. He mixes English words and phrases with bad Arabic, and the donkey-man struggles to understand him, all the while making comic asides to the audience. A sample from the opening of the dialogue gives a sense of how Sanua communicates 'foreigner speech'. Given that this is deliberately faulty Arabic, my transcription and translation are imprecise. English in Arabic script is given in italics:

> *Awl rāyt, 'a 2*. Balad Qāhira *virī gūd.*[80] Ikhnā *Inglīsh mān* yuḥibbūn kitīr miṣr wa yuḥibbūn al-miṣrīyūn wa al-wālī bitā' al-miṣrīyūn kulluhu nās *virī gūd*. Dī bīlād muḥtawiyūn 'ala kitīr antīqāt harāmāt wa abū al-hūlāt 'ajāyib kitīr ikhnā al-yawm yurīdūn yarkibūn 'ala *dūnkī* wa yatfasakhūn. Yā *dūnkī buwī* ya ḥammār.[81]

78 Zack, 2014, 470–472; Fahmy, 2011, 126.

79 Najm, 1961, 75–76; the dialogue is discussed briefly by Moosa, 1974, 407, Badawi, 1985, 138, and Sadgrove, 1996, 110.

80 This is written with the letter *jīm*, which is pronounced in Egypt like the English 'g'.

81 Text from Najm, 1961, 75.

> Tourist: (walking) *All right, eh eh*. Country Cairo *very good*, we *English man* they love very much Egypt, and they love the Egyptians and the governor belonging to the Egyptians. All of him people *very good*. This cooontries contents a lot antikitties, pyramidses, and sphinxeses, many wonners. We today they want they ride on a *donkey* and disintegrate. Oh *donkey boy*! Oh donkey-driver!

John Bull mixes in English words and phrases, even in cases where he knows the Arabic (*donkey boy/ḥammār*). He substitutes *khā'* for *ḥā'* in *iḥnā* (colloquial Egypt 'we') and to comic effect in *yatfasaḥūn* 'they go for a stroll', which becomes *yatfasakhūn* 'they disintegrate'. He always uses the third person plural indicative verb ending with *nūn*, even when he needs another form or person of the verb. We should imagine him pronouncing *qāf* strongly. The word *bilād* 'countries' is mispronounced with a long *ī* in the first syllable; in *'ajā'ib* 'wonders', the glottal stop is also replaced with an *yā'*, although the initial *'ayn* is written and may therefore have been pronounced correctly by the actor. The vocabulary and grammar is mostly Classical, not colloquial, but there are a few Egyptian words (*iḥna* 'we' instead of *naḥnu*; *kitīr*; *bitā'* to mark possession; the demonstrative *dī*). He misuses broken plurals, referring to the pyramids as *harāmāt* rather than *al-ahrām*. Verbs do not agree with their subject. Syntax is poor. He shows his complete ignorance of Egypt by referring to the Sphinx at Giza, Abū al-Hūl, in the feminine plural.

The streetwise donkey man, an *ibn al-balad* figure, speaks colloquial Egyptian. He also uses English words, but with correct Arabic grammar and syntax (*al-donkey al-very good*). As the conversation progresses, he grows increasingly frustrated with John Bull's tortuous and barely comprehensible Arabic. He makes asides to himself, or to the audience, commenting on the tourist's language. Although he tries to get John Bull to speak English, so they can understand one another, the tourist insists on speaking his version of Arabic. The scene concludes in media res.

A few years after he wrote *al-Sawwāḥ wa al-Ḥammār*, Sanua produced a short French-Arabic phrasebook with the title *Petit souvenir de James Sanua aux voyageurs Européens en Égypte*.[82] Ironically, it contains only a very short guide to pronunciation, typical of works in the genre: *ṣād* is omitted; *khā'* compared to the German 'ch' in 'machen' and 'nacht'; and *'ayn* marked with an apostrophe and described as having a 'son tout-à-fait guttural' that 'n'existe pas dans les langues Européennes'. Sanua is not, however, as

82 Sanua, 1876.

hypocritical as he first appears: the purpose of the phrasebook, which is only fourteen pages long, was to advertize his services as an Arabic teacher.

In terms of pronunciation, Sanua's comic foreigner tends to 'over-egg the pudding', in contrast to al-Shidyāq's phonetically lazier missionary. Both tendencies, as I shall discuss below, have continued to be stereotypes of second-language speakers of Arabic in different contexts. Another satirical writer who found good material in foreigners' Arabic was the Egyptian journalist Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī (1858–1930), writing in the late 1890s. In *Ḥadīth ʿĪsā bin Hishām*,[83] al-Muwayliḥī describes a foreign judge in Egypt as speaking with a non-Arab accent. He uses the adjective *aʿjamī*, which can be a fairly neutral way of referring to something 'foreign', 'non-Arab', or else have connotations of barbarism and linguistic incorrectness, as it probably does here. Specifically, the judge does not articulate his consonants properly.[84] Later in the same work, al-Muwayliḥī describes a visit to a hotel in Cairo frequented by fashionable young Egyptians who have adopted foreign ways. They avoid speaking Arabic, except for the names of racehorses, 'in which case the *kāf* sound was used instead of *qāf* and *hā'* instead of *ḥā'*'.[85] The implication is that these young Egyptians are mimicking the way a foreigner would pronounce their language. Like al-Shidyāq's missionary, they 'weaken' Arabic consonants that do not occur in European languages to the closest equivalent.

Anecdotally (I have been unable to find any academic studies on the topic[86]), native speakers in the present day share some of the same perceptions of foreigners' Arabic as al-Shidyāq, Sanua, and al-Muwayliḥī. There seems to be a widespread recognition that some sounds in Arabic are especially difficult for foreigners to pronounce correctly. On the whole, the viewpoints I have gathered align well with the nineteenth-century satirical depictions of foreigners as either over- or under-articulating Arabic consonants. Over-enthusiastic fricatives, in particular, are seen as characteristic of foreigners' speech (e.g. *hā'* and *ḥā'* becoming *khā'*). The sounds that foreign speakers

83 al-Muwayliḥī, 2018.

84 Ibid., 7.6, 81.

85 Ibid., 9.8, 97; the sections cited here were originally serialized in *Miṣbāḥ al-sharq* 41, 26 January 1899, and 43, 9 February 1899.

86 I have asked Arabic-speaking friends and colleagues for their opinions, observed how foreign characters are depicted in Arabic films and television shows, and consulted online discussion forums, including Quora (https://www.quora.com/To-Arabs-what-do-native-English-speakers-sound-like-when-they-speak-Arabic, thread from 2020) and WordReference (https://forum.wordreference.com/threads/how-do-native-speakers-of-arabic-feel-about-foreign-accents-in-arabic.364427/, thread from 2007).

Fig. 14. Comic strip, *Egypt’s Dispersed Heritage* by Heba Abd el-Gawad and Nasser Junior.

are said to drop or weaken most frequently are the emphatic consonants, and of course *‘ayn*. I am often told either that foreigners do not treat *‘ayn* as a letter, or that they pronounce is as the vowel ‘a’.

A modern echo of Sanua’s *al-Sawwāḥ wa al-Ḥammār* can be found in the comic strips produced for the project *Egypt’s Dispersed Heritage* by Egyptologist Heba Abd el-Gawad and artist Nasser Junior.[87] The project explores the colonial history of Egyptian archaeological collections worldwide, and its comics often show characters from the past – especially European archaeologists – in dialogue with Egyptians from all phases of the country’s history. In one comic (Figure 14), a colonial-era European and an Egyptian are shown talking about a new find; the Egyptian is subsequently erased from the history of the discovery by being hidden behind a curtain in the official photograph. In the Arabic-script captions, the European speaks a total of three words, two of which (‘yes’ and ‘photograph’) are English. In

87 Abd el-Gawad, 2021.

the third, *khabībī*, he substitutes *khā'* for *ḥā'*: a joke that would have worked as well in the nineteenth century as today.[88] The Egyptian *ibn al-balad*, meanwhile, like Sanua's donkey-driver, speaks colloquial, salt-of-the-earth Egyptian *'āmmiyya*.

## Conclusion

From the 1940s, Arabic learning materials for speakers of European languages began to improve rapidly. The Second World War acted as an important catalyst, with the production of teaching materials for Allied troops occupying North African. Closer commercial and diplomatic contacts with the Arab world also led to greater investment in the production of teaching materials. More accurate descriptions of the 'difficult' consonants, diagrams of the mouth, and of course accompanying audio recordings, meant that someone seeking to learn colloquial Arabic from a book was much better served in the 1940s than in the 1840s. But good pronunciation, as many of the phrasebook authors I have discussed here were well aware, could not be learnt from a book. Even a clear, accurate and intuitive description of *ṣād*, *khā'* or *'ayn* could not teach someone to pronounce it like a native speaker.

Satirical depictions of Europeans' bad Arabic by al-Shidyāq, Sanua and al-Muwayliḥī ring true because they represent precisely the results one would expect from a European using one of the phrasebooks in my corpus. Descriptions of spitting, choking or even vomiting encourage learners to go in too hard on fricatives like *khā'* and *ḥā'*, which sound much gentler than phrasebook descriptions suggest. The emphatic consonants like *ṣād* are toned down, and *'ayn* is ignored; again, just as phrasebook descriptions recommend. Arab observers could see that these sounds were challenging to Europeans, and infer that they were not being taught them properly, whether by books or by Orientalist scholars. Occasionally, we find hints that the authors of Arabic phrasebooks were also well aware of this.

A. S. Tritton (1881–1973) was the author of the first book for Arabic in the *Teach Yourself* series, a work that British diplomat and Arabist Sir James Craig (1924–2017) thought 'deserves prosecution under the Trades Description Act'.[89] Tritton's description of *'ayn* was quoted above. Pierre Cachia had the experience of advising a would-be learner of Arabic who had tried using Tritton's book:

88 Also discussed in Mairs, 2020.

89 Craig, 1998, 59.

> The prevalent standard is well illustrated by an incident involving Professor A. S. Tritton – an amiable and lively eccentric who worked assiduously in the British Museum Library long after he had retired and who was invariably kind to me whenever chance took me to the same shelves. Britain still had some toeholds in the Middle East at the time, and a subaltern in Inverness who was being posted to Libya was enterprising enough to buy Tritton's Teach Yourself Arabic; but he got as far as the Phonetic Introduction only to be nonplussed by the description of the sound of ayn, so he appealed for help from the author. Airily ignoring the title of his own book, Professor Tritton wrote back that one would have to be a genius to teach oneself Arabic, and he then added: "As for the sound of ayn, don't worry about it – it is no sound at all." The young officer then turned to me and I sent him a tape explaining and illustrating the distinctive Arabic phonemes, but it is surely revealing that a senior Arabist of the day could have completed a long and not undistinguished teaching career without so integral an item in the alphabet having as much as registered in his ear.[90]

In some respects, the subaltern from Inverness would have been well served by Tritton's book: Tritton describes *khā'* as 'like the 'ch in the Scottish "loch"', although he then recommends that the learner 'pronounce "loch" and then try to pronounce it backwards".[91]

Confusing or inadequate descriptions of Arabic consonants in phrasebooks were bad for learners' morale, or else – like Sanua's 'John Bull' – made them over-confident. A charitable interpretation would be that, faced with an impossible task, Tritton and his many predecessors made the best of it and drove book learners into the more capable hands of live, native-speaker teachers. But the advice to consult a native speaker would have been, for most of the period of this study, useless to learners outside major cities like London or Paris, who could not themselves travel in the Middle East. The overall impression gained from surveying the guides to pronunciation in my corpus of Arabic phrasebooks is that a learner would have been best advised not to focus too much on the explanation of Arabic sounds, and instead to move on to speaking whole words and phrases aloud. This, if the transliteration system was intuitive, gave them the best chance of producing something an Arabic speaker might recognize.

90 Cachia in Naff, 1993, 14.
91 Tritton, 1943, 16.

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# 6. *The Manual of Palestinean* [sic] *Arabic*: Politics in a late-Ottoman language textbook[1]

*Sarah Irving*

**Abstract:** In 1909, Elias Nasrallah Haddad and Hans Henry Spoer published *The Manual of Palestinean Arabic*, a substantial textbook designed for self-taught students of Arabic. This chapter examines the vocabulary, exemplars of phrases and sentences, and stories chosen by Haddad and Spoer, arguing that these are indicative of the image the authors wished to convey of Palestinian society and culture. In particular, it considers the presence of highly political statements in the Manual, and what this suggests about the purpose of language learning in the eyes of Haddad and Spoer.

**Keywords:** Arabic, colloquial, Ottomans, Palestine, self-study, textbooks, Young Turks

In a November 2022 article commenting on the declining sales of phrasebooks in the contemporary world, the business and current affairs magazine *The Economist* observed that the contents of many examples of this genre revealed more about the preconceptions of their authors than about the cultures on which they purported to open a window. To 'sift through old phrasebooks is to study an unparalleled source on the assumptions made by Britons abroad', wrote *The Economist*'s columnist. Amongst the samples offered, many of them bizarre and some disturbingly racist and violent, were several somewhat mysterious utterances attributed to a '1909 Manual of

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Palestinian Arabic': 'We reached the precipice and saw him fall down', 'He died before we found him'; and the gnomic 'Gargle twice daily'.[2]

In fact, the contents of *The Manual of Palestinean* [sic] *Arabic* may well reveal more about how the British abroad were viewed by the peoples whose lands they visited, rather than the assumptions of Britons themselves.[3] Neither of the *Manual*'s authors were, in fact, British. One, Elias Nasrallah Haddad (1878/1879–1959), was of Lebanese parentage but had been raised from an early age in a mainly German-speaking orphanage in Jerusalem, where he also spent most of his adult career teaching Arabic. The other was a budding orientalist scholar and Protestant clergyman, Hans Henry Spoer (1873–1951), born in Krefeld (at the time commonly spelt Crefeld), Prussia, who would go on to spend much of his adult life in the USA. The attitudes and assumptions which underlie the vocabulary, phrases, and cultural explications present in their book thus have rather different foundations and, when explored further, show instead something of the concerns and priorities of two inhabitants of Jerusalem at an important and turbulent moment in the history of the Ottoman Empire, namely, the Young Turk revolution and the varying responses it met in the empire's Levantine provinces.

Whilst *The Economist*'s columnist chose to focus on phrases that seem exotic or comic to a twenty-first century transatlantic readership, this chapter instead discusses the significance of the *Manual*'s political content. In amongst the information obviously intended for tourists, pilgrims, or other short-term travellers in Ottoman Palestine – with the standard vocabulary intended to navigate restaurants, hotels, and tour guides – the *Manual* contains a number of phrases that comment directly on the political events and atmosphere of the day. Other items in the lists of words and phrases for learners emphasize the rise of technological modernity and new professions in Palestinian society. I argue that the portrayal of Ottoman Palestine that emerges from this content is one that – probably consciously – presents the region not as the exotic wilderness of orientalist imagination, but as a modern location undergoing valuable political reforms. The Palestine that Haddad and Spoer seem to have wished their readers to encounter or imagine was not one of camels and brigands or Biblical remnants, as many Europeans and North Americans still saw the 'Holy Land', but as a place in which visitors would find trains and electricity, and where corrupt officials had been replaced by efficient bureaucrats.

2 *The Economist*, "How Long", 56.

3 This chapter is based on – but significantly revises, expands on, and updates – part of my 2017 PhD thesis at the University of Edinburgh; see bibliography for full details.

## Jerusalem, 1908–1909

The *Manual of Palestinean Arabic* was published in 1909, so, given the dates of their encounter and the scope for writing and publishing, we might reasonably assume that it was being prepared by its authors during the year or so beforehand.[4] Reviews of the book appeared in periodicals dated 1910,[5] which, allowing for the book itself to move around the world and for journals and magazines to be written and edited, also suggests that the textbook emerged early in 1909. The overthrow of Sultan Abdulhamid's autocratic rule in favour of constitutional monarchy by the Committee of Union and Progress (hereafter the CUP, or the 'Young Turks' as they are often known) took place in the summer of 1908, and elections to the new parliamentary bodies happened in November and December of the same year.[6] The tenor of the political comments in the *Manual* suggests that it was written during this period of radical change and, in some quarters, hopefulness, in the Ottoman Empire. The combination of this tone and of the dating of the review also suggests that the authors were not aware, when they were writing the *Manual*, of the attempted counter-revolution that happened in March 1909 and which heralded the shift of the CUP itself to more authoritarian policies and practices.

Having established with some level of specificity the dates of the writing and publication of the *Manual of Palestinean Arabic*, the remainder of this section sketches something of the political and intellectual environment of Palestine at this moment in time, and in particular the range of attitudes and opinions to the CUP's revolutionary moment that existed in this part of the Ottoman Empire. As well as the immediate political context of the Young Turk revolution, other forms of political debate and discourse were shifting within the empire, including the rise of cultural nationalist thought amongst groups such as Arabs, Armenians, and Jews.

In the Balkans, other, more militant, nationalisms (and interference by imperial powers including Britain and Russia) had broken away from Ottoman rule in a process that started with Greece almost a century before, but which steadily increased in the last third of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century, with the loss of Bulgaria, Serbia, and other territories. The breakaway of these largely Christian regions had shifted questions of identity and loyalty within the empire, combining with Sultan Abdulhamid

4 Spoer and Haddad, *Manual of Palestinean Arabic*.

5 *The Nation*, 61; Max Löhr, "Review of Manual", 54.

6 See Yazbak, "Elections", for more on the elections that followed the Young Turk revolution.

II's own personal faith to bring Islam into a more prominent place in defining who was truly 'Ottoman'.[7] The machinations of European powers such as France and Britain, and their manipulation of the fears and desires of Christian and Jewish communities under Ottoman rule, further provoked both imperial suspicion and Turkic and/or Islamist nationalisms.[8] And within different faith and ethnic communities, such as Armenians and Jews, debates about identities and nationalisms (including Armenian and Arab nationalisms and Zionism) and their compatibility (or lack thereof) with Ottoman citizenship and loyalties had been live from the late nineteenth century and into the first decades of the twentieth.[9]

As well as the political, imperial, and identitarian trends at play within the Ottoman Empire, other social and cultural changes were also influencing both opinions on the ground and the manner in which these could be conveyed and discussed. Haddad and Spoer's *Manual* highlights the technological aspect of these when Spoer notes in the introduction that:

> I and my collaborator have to thank Director Pastor Schneller and the Printing-master of the Syrisches Waisenhaus for undertaking the printing of this work under considerable mechanical difficulty, as well as that of the fact that the young printers know nothing of the English language.[10]

The popularization of print technologies throughout the Middle East in the nineteenth century, and the perfection of new typefaces that could cope with, for instance, the ligatures in Arabic script, made printing books like the *Manual* possible.[11] At the same time, the growth of steam shipping facilitated the physical export of books and the communications that allowed them to be reviewed and marketed, as well as creating a rapidly rising demand for travel and tourism from Europe and North America to the Middle East, and thus the market for books such as the *Manual*.[12] Finally, it was the growth of a new educated, professional middle class in the Levant,[13] of which Elias Haddad can be classed as a member on the basis of his education and employment, which gave rise to the authors and teachers who had the skills and knowledge to produce this and similar books.

7 Ginio, *Culture of Defeat*, 8.
8 Ibid., 6–8.
9 Campos, "Beloved Ottomania", 461–462.
10 Spoer and Haddad, *Manual of Palestinean Arabic*, v.
11 See e.g. Roper, 'Beginnings of Arabic Printing'; Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution*.
12 See e.g. Mairs and Muratov, *Archaeologists, Tourists*.
13 Watenpaugh, *Being Modern*; Seikaly, *Men of Capital*.

As I discuss below, Haddad and Spoer's comments within the text of the *Manual* suggest a positive outlook on the re-introduction of constitutional government in the Ottoman Empire in 1908, a view shared by many of the inhabitants of Palestine, where cheering crowds of Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike were reported to have met the news in Jaffa and Jerusalem.[14] Michelle Campos argues that the new regime not only attracted support, but it also helped to solidify a stronger Ottoman identity with its declarations that its predecessors' promises of political reforms, ethnic and religious equality, and modernization would now be met, and that many in the empire, especially minorities, saw an Ottoman civic nationalism as something to which they could wholeheartedly adhere.[15] For Sephardi Jews in the empire, this 'easily translated into enthusiastic support' for the CUP, as 'Sephardi and Maghribi Jews celebrated in the initial public fêtes alongside elements of the Muslim and Christian Arab communities'.[16] A range of individuals and interests, including several Palestinian Christians, reacted to the 'unprecedented freedom of expression' under the new political system with a burst of new newspapers, journals, and other publications,[17] while, for some groups, the new political environment was expected to change the stakes in more local controversies, such as the struggle between Greek and Arab constituencies within the Orthodox Church, which, since the nineteenth century, had pitted the Greek hierarchy against Arabic-speaking congregations who wanted greater representation in terms of both the personnel and the language used in services and church affairs.[18]

However, the euphoria of the early days of the CUP was short-lived and probably somewhat superficial in the extent to which it penetrated society and represented strong and well-informed views; it was mainly confined to urban middle- and upper-classes,[19] and limited in the extent to which most political changes were translated into genuinely new dynamics on the ground.[20] Some of the problems that emerged were structural; despite the declaration of genuine equality between Ottoman citizens, for example, communal means of organizing, and thus competition and conflict between

14 Fishman, *Jews and Palestinians*, 6.

15 Campos, 'Beloved Ottomania', 463; Fishman, *Jews and Palestinians*, 6.

16 Campos, 'Beloved Ottomania', 463

17 Beška, "Arabic Translations", 154; Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams*, 23–47; also Ginio, *Culture of Defeat*, 9–10.

18 Papastathis and Kark, "Orthodox Communal Politics", 124.

19 Although see Ben-Bassat, "Rural Reactions", for an example of villagers near Gaza deploying the language of the new regime's promises in a petition over land ownership (357, 359).

20 Fishman, *Jews and Palestinians*, 10.

*millets*, entrenched itself in the new system, particularly in Palestine, where Zionism was an additional complicating factor.[21] Indeed, the newly open environment for the press and public debate could be seen as exacerbating and hastening tensions between religious and ethnic groups.[22] The attempted counter-coup of 1909, after which Sultan Abdulhamid II was deposed in favour of a more compliant half-brother, began a slide into a chaotic and violent period of internecine fighting at the head of government. On a grander scale, the empire and its populations also witnessed the first and second Balkan Wars, the Armenian Genocide, the First World War, and, finally, the demise of the Ottoman Empire itself.[23] Nevertheless, the initial responses to the defeat of Abdulhamid's bid for power can be read as affirming, at least at the elite level, the popularity of the changes begun the previous year; public opinion seems to have been firmly on the side of the new regime, or at least against a return to the old one.[24]

## Elias Nasrallah Haddad and Hans Henry Spoer

Who, then, were the two authors of the *Manual*, writing in this very particular moment in Palestinian and Ottoman history? The frontispiece to the book, typically for the time, describes them in a manner intended to convince and reassure the prospective reader. Spoer is listed as 'MA, PhD (NY Univ), BD (Rutgers College), Sometime Fellow of The American School of Archaeology and Oriental Research in Jerusalem', thus reinforcing his Anglophone American academic qualifications alongside a connection to Jerusalem. His self-positioning places him simultaneously as an Orientalist scholar and as a cleric; indeed, these two interests converged in scholarly works that he had already published on subjects such as thirteenth-century Syriac manuscripts.[25] Tracing his academic pedigree also gives us a sense of the environment in which he and Elias Haddad probably met, associated with English- and German-speaking Protestants linked to the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in the Old City's Muristan district, and to the Syrian Orphanage where Haddad taught. Some residents at the American School of Archaeology and Oriental Research in Jerusalem (perhaps including Spoer?)

21 Campos, "Beloved Ottomania", 467, 475, 477.

22 Ben-Bassat and Ginio, *Late Ottoman Palestine*, 3, 10; Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 13.

23 Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams*, 149–170.

24 Fishman, *Jews and Palestinians*, 7.

25 Barton and Spoer, "Traces of the Diatessaron".

were taught Arabic by Farhud Kurban,[26] an ordained Lutheran cleric who served at the Church of the Redeemer alongside Theodor Schneller,[27] the latter one of the founding dynasty at the orphanage. Both of these men were therefore part of the same small social and religious community as Elias Haddad. Henry Spoer thus typifies a kind of cleric-scholar commonly encountered in Jerusalem in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, combining ministry with research into the history of early Christians in the Holy Land.[28]

Elias Haddad, meanwhile, is identified on the title page of the *Manual* as 'Teacher of Arabic at the Teachers' Seminary of the Syrisches Waisenhaus in Jerusalem'. The 'Syrisches Waisenhaus' is the Syrian Orphanage mentioned above. Although not orphaned – Haddad was born in Lebanon to a family that had already converted to Protestantism – he was raised and educated at the Waisenhaus from an early age, spending almost his entire working life there as a teacher of Arabic. Indeed, he ended his career as head of the school and was involved in transferring the institution and its pupils from Palestine to Lebanon in the wake of the establishment of the State of Israel.[29] Where Spoer's presence as an author of the *Manual* thus foregrounds to potential readers the presence of a scholar with prestigious academic qualifications, Haddad's self-description highlights the authenticity and intimate knowledge of a native speaker, combined with hands-on experience of teaching Arabic in the classroom – not just to ordinary pupils, but to those preparing for careers as teachers. In terms of the political and social views expressed in the book, Elias Haddad – an educated Christian with a middle-class job but no inherited wealth or status – might also be identified as precisely the kind of resident of Palestine likely to critique the Hamidian regime and to welcome and support the reforms that seemed possible in the early months of the Young Turk revolution. Indeed, Michelle Campos notes that the most enthusiastic supporters of the CUP in the early days of its rule were a:

> Palestinian Ottoman modernizing class [that] came not only from the notables but also from the white-collar-middle to lower-middle classes,

26 Robinson, "Report of the Director, 1913–14", 35–36, 38.

27 Löffler, "Aggravating Circumstances", 105.

28 Other examples include the missionaries who founded the Syrian Protestant College (later the American University of Beirut), the Dominicans who established the École Biblique in Jerusalem, and figures such as William John Phythian-Adams (1888–1967) who was associated with the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and the Department of Antiquities in the early days of British mandatory rule in Palestine but who then followed a religious vocation.

29 Irving, "Elias Nasrallah Haddad".

> who had received liberal educations and belonged to the free professions, were attuned to the advances of the West, and were determined to advance the interests of their homeland.[30]

This passage could be taken as a direct description of Elias Haddad and his personal trajectory.

## *The Manual of Palestinean Arabic for Self-Instruction*: Ottoman politics in an Arabic language textbook

*The Manual of Palestinean Arabic* was published at the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem in 1909 and in Germany by the Reichsdruckerei in 1910.[31] Like most language phrasebooks and self-teaching textbooks, much of its contents are aimed at travellers and short-term residents, and reveal much about the assumed needs of middle-class European or North American visitors to Palestine. The title's claim to be suitable for 'self-instruction' highlighted the fact that this book could be used by those without the time or resources to access university classes or pay for a personal teacher, and perhaps suggested that its transliterations might replace the need for a teacher to convey pronunciation. The vocabulary of interaction with servants, tourism service providers, and guides is common, as are questions about how to find more information or how to reach destinations; the presence of domestic words perhaps even suggests a partial female readership from amongst the dependents of foreign officials or missionaries, who were less likely to have received formal educations.

Not all of the contents are, however, so banal, and a number of examples say much both about the opinions of the writers of the *Manual* and about their desire to convey these ideas to foreign audiences. Although it is clear that a Palestinian national identity had coalesced by this time,[32] it is probably too early in the development of Palestinian nationalist politics to view the choice of Palestine in the title as a specifically anti-Zionist statement. However, the designation of this form of colloquial Arabic as 'Palestinean' does imply an underlying perception of the language as linked to a certain group of people and geographical setting under this name, rather than

30 Campos, "Beloved Ottomania", 464.

31 Haddad and Spoer, *Manual of Palestinean Arabic*.

32 Fishman, "1911 Haram al-Sharif", 7, 12–15, 19; Gelvin, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 23–33; Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 63–87; Gribetz, *Defining Neighbors*, 35, 92.

options such as South Syrian or Levantine. Both Spoer and Haddad were in a position to have been influenced by the language and ideas of Biblical scholars and their use of the name Palestine for religious reasons; attempts to trace the genealogies of colloquial Arabics were popular amongst Orientalist scholars in this period, as well as a fascination with Palestine for its Biblical connections.[33] Indeed, there could even be a hint of canny marketing in the title, ensuring that it would appeal to such markets. But Spoer and Haddad also included folktales, songs, proverbs, and 'National Dishes' in the book, designating all of them as Palestinian, and thus presenting an image of a coherent cultural whole, with Palestinian *ʿammiyya* at its heart.[34] Furthermore, unlike many of the Anglophone writers producing material on Palestine in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Spoer and Haddad's work is remarkably free from Biblical resonances. In fact, among the few sample sentences with religious content are Islamic examples such as 'The pilgrims who departed for Mekka are mostly from this country' and the statement that 'It was the same year in which Muhammed fled to Medina'.[35] Although both authors were Protestant Christians, the only significant item in the book with any great degree of Christian inflection is the story entitled 'Saint Anthony and the son of the King',[36] found amongst the folktales at the end of the book and actually more redolent of the popular culture of the day than of Protestant ideology. Overall, the sense is of a work in which ideas about Palestinian society are uppermost in the minds of the authors, reflecting the kind of nativist perspective found in Spoer and Haddad's ethnographic publications, rather than religious perspectives. As well as locating these in their wishes regarding the presentation of Palestine and its people, I also speculate that they might have been aware of the broader appeal that a less religiously specific contents might have in different markets across the Anglophone world.

Another divergence from the preponderantly Christian content of nineteenth-century writings in English on Palestine is the focus to be found in the *Manual* on 'modern' technologies, as if Haddad and Spoer were consciously endeavouring to project an image of Palestine that was neither Biblical nor folkloric.[37] Amongst its example sentences, the *Manual* presents normal life in Palestine as including railways, cars, and other

33 Miller, "Arabic Urban Vernaculars", 984–985.

34 The links between *ʿammiyya* and authenticity (and the role of class and anti-elite feeling) are discussed by Haeri, *Sacred Language*, 37–42.

35 Spoer and Haddad, *Manual of Palestinean Arabic*, 104, 106.

36 Ibid., 166.

37 See Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land*, 106–162; Davis, *Shifting Sands*, 6 et passim.

markers of technological modernity. One of the stories at the end of the book, apparently included as cultural education, is entitled 'The King and the Photographer',[38] and a list of vocabulary relating to professions lists words such as teacher, judge, professor, inventor, and physician as examples, all urban, bureaucratic, or scientific activities a far cry from the common (and, it must be noted, statistically correct) image of Palestinians as mainly farming or pursuing more technologically simple crafts.[39] Granted, Spoer and Haddad's portrait of Palestine did occasionally include camels, peasants, and locusts, but in a down-to-earth, unromantic fashion that largely defies contemporary Orientalist and Biblical stereotypes.

More clearly articulated than the authors' views on Palestinian national identity were those on the political environment of 1908–1909 – that is, the forcing of constitutional government on Sultan Abdulhamid by the Committee of Union and Progress. The learner is offered sentences to learn including 'The liberty which the Sultan gave to the people is a blessing', 'This is the second time a Constitution has been granted to the people of Turkey', and 'The newspapers have announced the Osmanli Constitution', all very obviously aligning the *Manual* with the new regime immediately following the revolution.[40] The constitution itself is established as a historical fact in Ottoman life, appearing both in the past and at the moment of the *Manual*'s writing, and it is directly linked to freedom and labelled a blessing. These sentences, with their exuberant praise for both the constitution and the Sultan, were also clearly written before Abdulhamid's attempted counter-coup in 1909, when the CUP's rule rapidly took a less rosy turn. Furthermore, that Anglophone learners are also being encouraged to learn how to say such phrases suggests that Spoer and Haddad believed that it would be acceptable and, indeed, pleasing to Palestinians to hear such sentiments from foreign visitors – assuming that neither man wanted his readers to get into trouble.

As well as expressing their approval of the CUP revolution, Spoer and Haddad also gave their readers a glimpse of the reasons that political change had been welcomed by many in Ottoman society. Sample statements include: 'Conditions would change if the Pasha would go from here!'[41] and 'He bribed him, but the officials discovered it'.[42] This pair of sentences on the one hand identify problems with the Pashas, namely, the elite Turkish figures

38 Spoer and Haddad, *Manual of Palestinean Arabic*, 109, 129–134, 166.

39 Ibid., 92.

40 Ibid., 104, 111, 122.

41 Ibid., 80.

42 Ibid., 101.

ruling Palestine, and on the other suggest that new officials might be part of solving the problem by stamping out corruption. Western travellers are implicitly told that, contrary to stereotypes of 'the East' of which Haddad and Spoer were no doubt aware, they could expect to find the rule of law at work. As well as informing learners of Arabic about changes in the Ottoman Empire, these examples also assert an image of a reforming, modern state where Europeans and North Americans could not only find the hotels, guides, fixers, and the other paraphernalia of comfortable tourism, but also conditions that differed greatly from the banditry and bribery portrayed in many Western writings on the Levant.

That a language textbook might be used to educate its users about social and political issues is not unusual for the time; the contents of Egyptian Arabic language books for use in schools (with which Haddad may have been acquainted) often featured 'lessons of social and national importance'.[43] However, the examples in the *Manual* are distinctive for the specificity of their content, their very particular timing in relation to the events of 1908–1909, and thus the window they offer into the viewpoints of a pair of men not directly involved in the politics of the time but nonetheless interested enough to want to highlight them to an international readership. As there is no evidence that the book was linked to an institution, it indeed seems that the decisions made reflect what Spoer and Haddad wanted to convey.

## Teaching colloquial Arabic: Language and politics

Haddad and Spoer's decision to write a manual of colloquial Palestinian Arabic may not itself seem connected to the politics of the Young Turk revolution and wider ideological and intellectual debates of the time, but, in this section, I argue that these two trends are in fact connected. The ferment of cultural, social, and political ideas throughout the Middle East that helped to propel the Young Turks to power also included, in Arabic-speaking circles, debates over the value and validity of colloquial (*'ammiyya*) versus formal written (*fus-ha*) Arabic. Indeed, this subject was one of the key cultural disputes for those thinkers who drove the Nahda, or 'Arabic Renaissance', in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[44] For some

43 Yousef, *Composing Egypt*, 96.

44 Chejne, *The Arabic Language*, 151–168; Haeri, *Sacred Language*, 11, 76; Zack, "Key to Mass Literacy", 3–13; Shrivtiel, "Question of Romanisation", 187-190; Versteegh, *Arabic Language*, 175–178.

writers, colloquial forms of Arabic, differing widely between regions, were symbolic of the fragmentation of the Arab peoples by Turkish and European colonialisms. *ʿAmmiyya* was viewed, from this perspective, as a degraded form of the language, rendered impure by loanwords, which should be eradicated by improved educational standards.[45] For others, colloquial forms of Arabic were seen as a potential answer to the idea that the language, and Middle Eastern or Arabophone culture more broadly, had stagnated in recent centuries and needed to be invigorated, including by simplifying linguistic rules and removing unnecessarily complex and ornate grammatical and stylistic traditions.[46] Instead of associating *ʿammiyya* with tradition and folklore, therefore, it was by some linked to modernity and the idea of creating more practical, usable forms of language.[47]

Much literature on the Nahda focuses on major cultural centres such as Cairo, Alexandria, and Beirut. Scholars and thinkers in Palestinian cities such as Jaffa, Haifa, and Jerusalem also made their contributions, however. Examples of these include Khalil Baydas's translations of Russian literature into Arabic,[48] Ruhi al-Khalidi's writings on both European and Arab history and culture,[49] Najib Nassar's journalistic and publishing efforts in the face of Ottoman opposition,[50] and Khalil Sakakini's blend of literary and cultural activisms.[51]

Elias Haddad, at least at this point in his career, was by no means approaching the stature of a newspaper editor such as Nassar or a deputy in the Ottoman parliament such as Ruhi al-Khalidi, but he may well have been a more junior figure in the kinds of social milieu from which Baydas and Sakakini emerged. As a teacher at the Syrian Orphanage, he was part of the nascent middle class in late Ottoman Palestine, and part of an institution that also included one of the largest and most advanced printing presses in the city – at which the *Manual* was also produced. He also, via his upbringing and employment at the orphanage, had access to the Anglophone and Germanophone social circles that brought together expatriate residents of Jerusalem and the growing section of the city's population who were interested in literature, culture, politics, and broader conversations about

45 Haeri, *Sacred Language*, 10–12, 63–64, 76; Chejne, *Arabic Language*, 151–168; Alansari, *Anthology of Arabic Poetry*, 244.

46 Haeri, *Sacred Language*, 11–12, 46; Shrivtiel, "Question of Romanisation".

47 Haeri, *Sacred Language*.

48 Scoville, "Reconsidering Nahdawi Translation", 223–236.

49 Gribetz, *Defining Neighbors*.

50 Shehadeh, *Rift in Time*.

51 Tamari, *Mountain Against the Sea*.

the nature and identity of Ottoman and Arab society. Indeed, Haddad's later works, which included the translation of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Enlightenment classic of interfaith tolerance, *Nathan the Wise*,[52] were very much in keeping with the Nahda ideas and cultural practices.

Elias Haddad would have thus been abundantly aware (even if Henry Spoer was not) that teaching foreigners to speak Palestinian colloquial Arabic rather than *fus-ha* was tantamount to taking a public position in a live intellectual debate. It was a position that Haddad stuck with for almost half a century, with his heyday in the first half of the Mandate period in Palestine, before his close ties with the German community became a subject of suspicion by the British authorities. He was responsible for teaching Arabic to several High Commissioners and other senior British officials, and for guiding researchers such as ethnographer Hilma Granqvist through the complexities of local dialects and meanings.[53] He also published several more language textbooks and manuals, in English and in German (but with Arabic script instead of transliteration – perhaps a lesson learnt from his experiences with the *Manual*). The first of these was with the famed American Biblical archaeologist William Foxwell Albright,[54] who seems to have had a much more symbolic role than Spoer (his name is absent from the cover of the German edition of the same book, and the acknowledgements page in the latter focuses on Haddad's German contacts rather than any co-operation with Albright[55]). When, after the Nakba, Albright aligned himself clearly with the new State of Israel and brushed off his former friend and colleague, Haddad looked closer to home, publishing a new edition with Jalil Irany, another former educator, originally from Tulkarm but who moved to Bethlehem and under the Mandate administration headed the Boys' Reformatory School there. Following the political tide of the times, this volume identified itself as of particular use to visitors to the newly independent Kingdom of Jordan.[56]

The few reviews of the *Manual of Palestinean Arabic* also locate its publication within the colonial politics of knowledge and authenticity, frames that

52 Irving, "Reappropriation".

53 Irving, "Elias Nasrallah Haddad", 11; See also e.g. Crowfoot and Baldensperger, *From Cedar to Hyssop*, vi; Sirignano, "Mother and Child", 159–181; PEF archives, Granqvist files – notes to books *Birth and Childhood* and *Child Problems*. I am indebted to Rosanna Sirignano of the University of Heidelberg for our discussions of Haddad's work with Hilma Granqvist and Louise Baldensperger in Artas.

54 Haddad and Albright, *Spoken Arabic of Palestine*.

55 Haddad, *Arabisch, wie es in Palästina gesprochen wird*.

56 Haddad and Irany, *Standard Colloquial Arabic*.

Spoer and Haddad themselves deployed to increase their book's appeal to potential users. Henry Spoer's introduction to the book emphasizes Elias Haddad's expert grasp of the nuances of accent and dialect in Shami Arabic:

> Though it has been my privilege to associate freely with Arabs of all classes in town and country, I should have felt less hope as to the usefulness of the result, without the final assistance of my friend Elias Nasrallah Haddad, teacher of Arabic in the Teachers' Seminary of the Syrisches Waisenhaus, Jerusalem, whose knowledge of the classical language has enabled him to appreciate changes and distinctions which might have escaped even an Arab whose scholarship was less, while his intimacy with Palestinean and Libanese [sic] Arabic, in various dialects, has given him an insight into his own language, practically unattainable by a European however long his residence, or however profound his observation.[57]

Backing for Spoer's claims also comes from a review in the liberal US magazine *The Nation*, founded in the US in 1865 by campaigners for the abolition of slavery,[58] which stated that the book was 'strictly a practical manual, but one of singular richness in construction, idiom, and vocabulary. It endeavors to state the facts of a standard educated dialect – that of the Muslim better classes of Jerusalem – and avoids confusing the beginner with local details'.[59] According to this, Haddad and Spoer had produced a language manual with contents that were sufficiently distinctive to be identified with a particular elite subgroup in Palestinian society, but general enough to be useful across a broader region. This seems to agree with my own assessment of some of the colloquial language presented, including using both *hŏom* or *hŏon* (human plurals in standard Arabic) for non-human plural nouns.[60] This suggests that the authors view Palestinian Arabic as falling at a midpoint between users of *-m* as an ending (found in southern Palestine) and *-n* (a remnant of Aramaic, found in the Galilee, Lebanon, and Syria).[61] Another characteristic of colloquial Levantine, the assimilation of the letter *jeem* into

57 Spoer and Haddad, *Manual of Palestinean Arabic*, v.

58 *The Nation*, 61. Whilst *The Nation*' fortunes in 1910 may have been on the downturn – with circulation down to around 8,000 from a height of 12,000 – it was still a respected publication, and one that had established itself amongst the most important publishers of book reviews in the American marketplace. See Guttenplan, *The Nation*, 75–77, 80, 99.

59 *The Nation*, 61.

60 Ibid., 5, 143.

61 My thanks are due to Uri Horesh and Jona Fras for their enlightening discussion of Palestinian and broader Levantine dialects.

the definite article, is given in the transliterated phrases – such as *j-jmâl* for camels and *j-jabr* for algebra.[62] On the other hand, the examples also suggest some origins amongst the cosmopolitan middle- or upper class or those in regular contact with tourist and other visitors, as there are loanwords from European languages, such *lokanda* for hotel (often found in Egypt) instead of the Arabic term *funduq*.[63] Finally, the *Manual* includes, alongside the tables of grammar and vocabulary, a number of folktales and notes on food and other aspects of local culture, implying a desire to present not just the Palestinian Arabic language to foreigners, but also elements of the daily life, culture, and thought of the area's inhabitants.

These details, however, were insufficient to satisfy the German Bible scholar and Orientalist Max Löhr (1864–1931), whose review in the journal *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* rejected the idea of an elite style of speaking with a reach across the whole of Ottoman Palestine. Instead, he claimed that mutually incomprehensible dialects existed not just between large regions of the Arabic-speaking world, but even 'between individual neighbourhoods in a place like Bethlehem'.[64] Indeed, Löhr deploys minute details to reinforce the authenticity of his own expertise, asserting that: 'During a single ride on the road from Jerusalem to Hebron, one can make extensive dialectal observations when talking to the charcoal burners coming up from the southwest'.[65] He lists examples in which he considers that the pronunciations in the Manual are unrepresentative of those to be found in the south and centre of Palestine, including Jerusalem itself. He concludes, on the basis of these, that the Arabic of the Manual is 'more Syrian than Palestinian' and that its use in Palestine would be greeted with 'astonished and bewildered faces'.[66] Against the claims of a native speaker, Löhr appropriates the voices – literally – of the nameless Bethlehemites and charcoal-burners 'up from the southwest' in order to bolster the idea of his own expertise and the superiority of European scholarship over indigenous knowledge.

An extensive search of Arabic newspapers yielded no reviews or comment on the publication of the *Manual*; this is not necessarily surprising, since those with native or advanced Arabic were not the target readership for the book, and textbooks of colloquial Arabics written for speakers of

62 Spoer and Haddad, *Manual of Palestinean Arabic*, 77, 95.

63 Ibid., 134–137.

64 Löhr, "Review of Manual", 54.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., 55.

European languages were not, in themselves, unusual. Implicitly, though, his involvement with this book positioned Elias Haddad within Nahda debates on the merits of classical versus colloquial, and this would no doubt have been something observed amongst teachers of Arabic and others with an interest in questions of how it was presented and conveyed to foreigners.

## Conclusion

Language textbooks and manuals have an inbuilt ability to shape how their users encounter a new country and culture. The choice of vocabulary within them can affect what associations the language learner builds up, and influences the selection of words and phrases with which they will start to communicate in a new tongue. While some texts for learning Arabic – even into the twenty-first century – linked life in Palestine with rural simplicity, donkeys, and camels,[67] over a hundred years earlier, Elias Haddad and Henry Spoer wanted to connect it instead with cars, electricity, railways, political reform, and the rule of law. They articulated strong ideas about what constituted Palestine and Palestinian culture, and in doing so acted as mediators between Palestinian Arab society and colonial learners. The kind of close reading of the *Manual of Palestinean Arabic for Self-Instruction* presented here thus offers a number of lessons about life and thought in Palestine in the era of the Young Turk revolution. Firstly, it is a clear indication of two identifiable individuals' opinions on the politics of the day, and whilst just a drop in the evidential ocean, it is valuable as an example of how political events in Istanbul and across the Ottoman Empire were being viewed from Jerusalem. Secondly, it highlights a specific type of consciousness within Palestinian society; that Haddad and Spoer could combine their life experiences and knowledge to understand how foreigners saw Palestine, and to consider that a language manual was a place from which they could convey new images and, they presumably hoped, to shift perceptions of the land and its people. The *Manual* thus offers the historian today an opportunity to witness how a local resident of Jerusalem and his scholarly friend both viewed the Palestinian of the day and, perhaps more importantly, how they wanted others to see it.

67 An example being Haywood and Nahmad's *New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*, which was still being published and recommended for use in at least one British university in the 2010s, and still in print and available for purchase in 2023.

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## About the author

Sarah Irving is Lecturer at Staffordshire University, PI of a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship on the 1927 Palestine earthquake, and editor-in-chief of *Contemporary Levant* (Taylor & Francis). Her PhD, at the University of Edinburgh, focused on knowledge creation amongst a small group of Palestinian Christians during the Mandate period, and her subsequent research has also concerned the role of local labourers, especially women, in archaeology in Late Ottoman Palestine. She has taught at King's College London and Edge Hill University and was a member of *CrossRoads* (Leiden University). She is the author of a number of scholarly articles on the uses and operation of history and archaeology in Late Ottoman and Mandate Palestine and on contemporary Arabic literature.

# 7. “Send my regards to those working on the al-Balādhurī manuscript”: The study of Arabic and Islam in interwar Jerusalem as intellectual common ground

*Amit Levy*

**Abstract:** Founded in 1926 by a group of Jewish scholars with German Orientalist training, the Hebrew University’s School of Oriental Studies in Jerusalem was the first university institute in Palestine to offer Arabic studies. However, these European Arabists’ experience with teaching and learning Arabic was limited to their own classical training, without sufficient knowledge of modern and colloquial Arabic or contemporary literature – a flaw acknowledged by them and attacked by their local Jewish and non-Jewish critics. This chapter offers an evidence-based inquiry into the development of Arabic studies at the Hebrew University as migrating knowledge, exploring the steps taken (and not taken) by university leadership and experts to improve the teaching of Arabic – first and foremost, an attempt to hire a native speaker of Arabic as a teacher. This attempt, which was also meant to serve a Zionist political agenda of Arab-Jewish ‘rapprochement’, proved difficult because of the Jewish scholars’ inflexible commitment to their German philologically oriented legacy; combined with the deteriorating political circumstances in Palestine, it ended with the hiring of an Aleppo-born Jew, whose hybrid Arab-Jewish identity was meant to bridge the political-cultural gap.

**Keywords:** Oriental Studies, ethnography, migrating knowledge, German Orientalism, Arab–Jewish relations, Zionism, Hebrew University

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'Between the walls of this institution, all political quarrels will cease, and all disputes will abate', declared Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann at the iconic opening ceremony of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, held on Mount Scopus on 1 April 1925. 'Our university', he emphasized, 'cannot be true to itself and to the spirit of the Jewish tradition if it does not become a hall of learning for all nations, and in particular for all the races populating the Land of Israel'.[1]

In the audience listening to Weizmann as he presented his universal vision was the rector of the Egyptian University (later to be renamed Cairo University), Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed (1872–1963), who had been asked by the Egyptian government to represent the government of Egypt at the ceremony, in response to an invitation extended by the Hebrew University.[2] The participation of an Arab representative of such high public and official status enraged both the Arab-Palestinian and the Egyptian publics. On the day before the ceremony, when the Hebrew University publicized the scholar's arrival, an unsigned editorial in the Jaffa newspaper *Falastin* attacked Lutfi el-Sayed, claiming that by agreeing to participate in an event intended solely as 'political propaganda, since contemporary science does not use the dead Hebrew language [...] Professor Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed has squandered the scientific prestige he previously enjoyed among his Palestinian brethren'.[3] Lambasted in the Egyptian press as well, upon his return to Egypt a clarification was published on the Egyptian scholar's behalf in the newspaper Kawkab al-Sharq, explaining that he and the Egyptian government believed the invitation was sent by a scientific institution with no political affiliation, and that only after he had arrived in Jerusalem did he realize that the event was, in fact, a cover for Zionist propaganda, and that the university's language of instruction was to be Hebrew.[4]

A forgettable incident from a successful event in the eyes of its organizers and Jewish communities in Palestine and abroad, the Lutfi el-Sayed affair nevertheless accentuated the built-in paradox in the Hebrew University's very existence: a national cultural project, established in an imperial setting, that championed – rhetorically, at least – universalism and inclusiveness.[5]

1 "The Speech of Dr. Chaim Weizmann", 321. I would like to thank Anat Schultz for her translations from Hebrew throughout this chapter.

2 On Lutfi el-Sayed, his political thought, and cultural activities, see Gershoni, "Luṭfī Al-Sayyid, Aḥmad".

3 "Opening of the Jewish University", *Falastin*, 31 March 1925, 2.

4 Awad, *And Peace Be upon You Too*, 82 (cited in Shamir, "Cultural and Educational Links", 97).

5 Livny, "The Hebrew University in Mandatory Palestine", 1.

Some of the participants in the festive April celebration, however, were already aware of this inherent contradiction. One of them was the Frankfurt-based professor of Semitic philology Josef Horovitz (1874–1931), who had expressed this concern before the official inauguration. Having made a short stop in Cairo on his way from Frankfurt to Jerusalem, he reported to the Hebrew University chancellor, Judah Leon Magnes (1877–1948), that Egyptian scholars were 'definitely hostile' towards the idea of opening a Hebrew university, seeing it as a Zionist political move.[6]

Upon his return to Frankfurt a few weeks later, Horovitz shared his concerns with the readers of the local newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He argued that inviting Lord Balfour to the inauguration ceremony was a grave mistake that would identify the university with the British government and make it difficult to forge ties with the Arab world. He hoped, though, that this mistake would be mitigated by the establishment of an institute for Oriental Studies at the Hebrew University.[7] The work done here, he hoped sometime later, would indicate a 'ground of intellectual interests common to Jewish and Arabic [sic] scholars', therefore helping 'to promote the good feeling between these two communities'.[8] Perhaps surprisingly, Horovitz's hopes were somewhat fulfilled through the institute he founded a year later in Jerusalem, the Hebrew University's School of Oriental Studies.

Opened in 1926, a year after the university's inauguration events, the School, which in its first years was mainly a research institute for advanced students, was heavily influenced by German academic tradition: its administrative structure was similar to that prevalent in German universities; its entire faculty (except for one member) was trained in the universities of Berlin, Frankfurt or Vienna, and, to most of them, German was the language of scholarship. Its major research projects also conformed with the textual-philological tradition typical of many German scholars of *Orientalistik*, Oriental Studies, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[9]

6 Diary entry from 22 March 1925 appears in Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, 231.

7 Josef Horovitz, "Die Universität Jerusalem", *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 16 August 1925. On this article and its context see Johnston-Bloom, "'Dieses wirklich westöstlichen Mannes'", 177–178.

8 Unaddressed letter by Josef Horovitz, 28 March 1928, Central Archives of the Hebrew University (hereafter CAHU), 91\I:1928.

9 For a survey of the School of Oriental Studies' early years, see Milson, "The Beginnings of Arabic and Islamic studies"; on the place of German tradition in it, see Katz, "The Scion and Its Tree", 117–121; and also the personal account in Lazarus-Yafeh, "The Transplantation of Islamic Studies".

Emphasized by Edward Said in his 1978 *Orientalism*, the inclination towards textual-philological research of classical texts, especially among German Arabists, has been addressed by several historians in recent decades who offered different cultural and institutional analyses to it. See

In what follows, I seek to trace the utilization of knowledge production, as an act, to promote this political goal of betterment in Arab-Jewish relations through research and teaching. Drawing on previously unpublished archival sources, as well as newspaper reports from the interwar period, I will explore two academic realms – textual/literary work and ethnography – as locations of scholarly contact between Jews and Arabs. This contact, I argue, was built among other things upon shared appreciation of the German Orientalist heritage on the one hand, and an aspiration to reform Judaism and Islam on the other, while being limited at the same time by the challenges presented by the escalating political conflict in Palestine.

## Scholarly contact

In sociological analysis of academic life and the production of knowledge, the fabric of relations between scholars is sometimes referred to as an 'invisible college': a group of scholars with shared research interests, the members of which conduct formal relationships (shared scientific publications) and informal ones (correspondence, meetings) in order to advance shared professional goals, even when the institutions to which they belong (if at all) are not geographically close.[10] Within the Middle Eastern imperial expanse the geographical dimension was relatively negligible; the more challenging question is that of the nature of the ties and their degree of formality, which will be considered more closely below; within the 'invisible college', the lack of formal relationships undermines its stability, making it short-lived and more difficult to preserve.[11]

Regarding ties between scholars from the School of Oriental Studies and their colleagues in the Middle Eastern region and beyond, we should note the unique conditions under which this invisible college operated from the 1920s. It developed in the presence of a gradually expanding Jewish settler-colonial community (consisting mostly of immigrants) under the protection of an imperial power, which was seen by the local Arab population as a growing political, economic, social, and cultural menace;

e.g. Wokoeck, *German Orientalism*, 211. See also Mangold, *Eine "weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft"*; Marchand, *German Orientalism*.

10 On this concept, its history, and the ways in which it may be used as a category of sociological analysis, see Zuccala, "Modeling the Invisible College". The term has its roots in seventeenth-century British academic circles. The general definition presented above is proposed by Zuccala, based on definitions common in the past (155).

11 Ibid., 155.

the Hebrew University constituted another aspect of this menace, being an intellectual Zionist project unprecedented in its scope and implications in Palestine. Nevertheless, archival documents and press excerpts reflect a wide-ranging network of connections during the Mandate period. This network can be divided into two major circles: a literary-textual circle, and an ethnographic-archaeological circle. These circles were formed on the basis of shared spheres of interest and research, and gave rise to different initiatives. Yet, due to the political, cultural, and institutional circumstances of the Hebrew University's presence in the midst of the Jewish-Arab conflict, the scholarly ties remained informal, and thus difficult to preserve.

## Text and context: Muslim and Jewish literary scholars in search of reform

The widest network of ties with Arab and Muslim scholars arguably represented what Horovitz and Magnes, who shared Horovitz's vision, had hoped for when choosing the institute's staff and defining its academic mission.[12] The focus on textual research encouraged the growth of a common language with scholars from Jerusalem, Cairo and Damascus, among other Middle Eastern cities, who were themselves scholars of Arabic literature and Islam.

Possibly the most important and influential scholar with whom ties were forged in this field was the writer and literary critic Taha Hussein (1889–1973), one of the most prominent Egyptian intellectuals of the twentieth century. The effort to establish contact with him was natural: Hussein had been the first dean of the Faculty of Arts at Alexandria University and later its rector, as well as the director of the Academy of the Arabic Language in Cairo, and had published academic papers on Arabic culture and on Islam, as well as prose works.[13]

Hussein's ties with scholars at the Hebrew University are attested by direct and indirect accounts. He was familiar to some degree with activities at the Hebrew University: although no correspondence between him and scholars from the School of Oriental Studies is preserved in the university's archive, the connection is revealed in a publication – a rare instance of formal acknowledgments. In 1947, the literary journal founded and edited

12 On the views promoted by Magnes as Chancellor of the Hebrew University, see Ben-Israel, "Bi-Nationalism versus Nationalism".

13 A lot has been written on Hussein, his cultural work, and political importance in twentieth-century Egypt. For a recent account, see Ahmed, *The Last Nahdawi*.

by Hussein, *al-Katib al-Misri* (The Egyptian Writer), published an essay by the School's Bavarian-born Shelomo Dov Goitein (1900–1985) on the life and work of Hungarian-Jewish Orientalist Ignác Goldziher, considered the father of Islamic studies in the nineteenth century.[14] The essay opens with a note stating that Goitein wrote it in Arabic especially for the monthly.[15] The unusual publication – openly Zionist scholars publishing in Egyptian journals in the late 1940s was not a common sight – matched Hussein's intention to use the *Egyptian Writer* as a mediator between Egyptian literature and culture and Western culture. Contributing to this consideration was the fact that the journal was funded by the Jewish Harari family of Cairo.[16]

Arab intellectual circles, particularly those involved in Islamic studies, were not unaware of Goldziher: on his trips to the Middle East he had befriended various scholars, particularly during his long visit in the years 1873–1874. Although Goldziher's travels were funded by the Hungarian Ministry of Culture, which sent him on a mission motivated by colonialist ambitions – to study the vernacular, become familiar with Arab bureaucracy, and locate manuscripts – Goldziher preferred to socialize with scholars and reformist clerics, with whom he cultivated warm ties and with whose help he deepened his knowledge of Islam. He also took the then-rare opportunity to visit al-Azhar University, despite the fact that he was not a Muslim.[17]

Another testimony to the direct relationship between the institute's members and Taha Hussein (as well as with another Arab intellectual) surfaced, years after Hussein's death, in the introduction to an interview held with Palestinian author Ishaq Musa al-Husayni. Al-Husayni had completed a PhD in Semitic Languages at the University of London, and later, in the 1930s and '40s, taught at the Arab College in Jerusalem – a teachers' seminary that was the only institution of higher learning for Arab men in the city.[18] In the early 1940s, he composed a critical allegory titled *Memoirs of a Hen*, which he sent to Taha Hussein in the hope that the latter would publish it at the publishing house he managed. Initially declined by Hussein, who claimed that the book was of a political nature, Husayni sent the text to the School of Oriental Studies' Arabic language and literature expert David

14 Goitein, "Goldziher, Father of Islamic Studies". On Goldziher's long-lasting influence on Zionist Oriental Studies, see Levy, "Rediscovering the Goldziher legacy". On Goitein, who would later emigrate to the United States and compose seminal works on the Mediterranean society in the Middle Ages based on the Cairo *Genizah*, see Harif, "A Bridge or a Fortress?"

15 Goitein, "Goldziher, Father of Islamic Studies", 85n.

16 El-Bendary, *The Egyptian Press*, 3.

17 Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 325–326; Conrad, "The Dervish's Disciple", 240–243.

18 On the Arab College, see Furas, *Educating Palestine*, especially 110–123.

Hartwig Baneth (1893–1973), who perused the manuscript and attested in a letter that the book contained no political insinuations or connections to the Jewish people (that is, any analogy to the Jewish-Arab conflict, as Hussein may have supposed). The letter was passed on to Hussein and, upon receiving it, he agreed to publish the book and even added a preface, in which Baneth's name went unmentioned.[19]

Professors at the School of Oriental Studies were well aware of Hussein's cultural and political status and of the value of corresponding with him; after all, his name was mentioned as early as May 1925 by Horovitz as a possible Arab professor who should be offered a position at the institute.[20] In August–October 1942, Hussein visited Jerusalem instead of vacationing in war-torn Europe. During his relatively long stay he worked on one of his books.[21] In addition, he delivered a series of radio lectures on Egypt and its culture, aired by the British radio station *Sharq al-Adna* (The Near East), which broadcast in Arabic from Jaffa.[22] Officials at the Jewish Agency's Political Department (the Zionist pre-state equivalent of a Foreign Ministry) learned of the visit, on which Hussein was joined by a number of other writers – Egyptian, Syrian, and Lebanese – whose names are not known. Eliyahu Sasson (1902–1978), head of the Arab Bureau at the department, reported: 'Following my request, Professors [Leo Ary] Mayer and [Isaac] Shamosh went to see the group. Four of the writers visited the university, accompanied by Mayer and Shamosh. I suggested that Shamosh take them on a tour of a number of Jewish institutions – industrial, medical, and more. They readily agreed'.[23]

There are no traces in the Hebrew University archive of the Arab writers' visit to Mount Scopus. However, in a speech delivered in 1965 at the Convention of Arabic Language Academies held in Cairo (during his term

19 Abulafia, "A Peace-Seeking Palestinian Author". On *Memoirs of a Hen* and its different interpretations, see Kanazi, "Ishaq Musa al-Husayni and His *Memoirs of a Hen*".

20 Hussein was one of the names mentioned as a possible Arab scholar 'considered for the professorship to be filled by an Arab [für die mit einem Araber zu besetzende Professur in Betracht kommen]' by Horovitz in his 1925 founding memorandum for the School of Oriental Studies ("Vorschläge für die Errichtung eines Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Jerusalem", 14 May 1925, CAHU, 91:1925–1927). On this memorandum, see Mangold-Will, "Josef Horovitz"; Levy, "Conflicting German Orientalism".

21 Koplewitz, *Taha Hussein and the Revival of Egypt*, 104n.

22 Hussein delivered his first lecture in the series on 28 September, on the subject of "Egypt and Arabic Literature" (*al-Difaa*, 29 September 1942, 2). For more information on the station, which was founded in 1941, was supported by the British government, and broadcast pro-British programmes, see Boyd, "Sharq al-Adna"; Bostock, "Arab Palestinian Listenership", 18.

23 E.S. [Eliyahu Sasson] to M.S. [Moshe Shertok], 24 September 1942, Central Zionist Archives (hereafter CZA), S25/3102. On Mayer, see below; on Shamosh, see Levy, "Conflicting German Orientalism".

as president of the Academy of the Arabic Language in Egypt), Hussein hinted that it had indeed taken place:

> At one foreign university, the name of which I do not want to mention since you all find it repugnant [...] I saw preparations for a historical dictionary, with many – perhaps thousands – of cards inscribed with words and quotations in Arabic throughout the language's different periods. It is unseemly that the Arabs should be preceded in this achievement.[24]

Hussein meant the Hebrew University; the cards he mentioned were almost certainly the cards of the Concordance of Classical Arabic poetry, even if he did not describe precisely the nature of the endeavour. This concordance, one of two major research projects to which the School's faculty dedicated much of their time, was a pioneering philological project promoted by Horovitz: the Jerusalem scholars prepared hundreds of thousands of word cards, aiming to create a comparative corpus that would allow researchers to better understand classical texts in Arabic and other Semitic languages.[25] Although Hussein's words do not refer explicitly to the quality of the work done at the Hebrew University, they do reflect his appreciation. It was no coincidence that one of the highlights of the visit was the concordance room – this research project, as mentioned above, was founded, among other things, on the wish to engage with the Arab intellectual world.[26]

Another member of the textual circle – also an intellectual of high cultural and political status in the local arena and beyond – was Syrian scholar Muhammad Kurd Ali (1876–1953), a close colleague of Taha Hussein (the two delivered a series of lectures together in Cairo in the 1930s).[27] Similar to his Cairo counterpart, Kurd Ali had for many years headed the Academy of the Arabic Language in Damascus – an institution that he had himself founded in 1918, in the city where he was born and lived most of his life.[28]

24 Cited in Shraybom-Shivtiel, "Revivers of the Arabic Language", 190.

25 Lazarus-Yafeh, "The Transplantation of Islamic Studies", 252; Levy, "German Heritage in Word Cards".

26 While attending the 1928 International Congress of Orientalists in Oxford, School members also suggested, albeit noncommittally, that the Egyptian government would use the concordance research materials for the compilation of an Arabic dictionary (Levi Billig to Judah Magnes, 3 December 1928, CAHU, 91a:1928). The initiative did not bear fruit, for reasons which remained unknown to the Hebrew University (Magnes to Mahmoud Fawzi, 17 August 1941, CAHU, 226:1941).

27 Hermann, *Kulturkrise und konservative Erneuerung*, 65.

28 On the founding of the various Arabic language academies, and the rivalry between them regarding questions of nationality and pan-Arabism, see Lian, *Language, Ideology and Sociopolitical*.

In addition to his activities for the promotion of the Arabic language, Kurd Ali published studies on the history of the region and on Islamic history, and was also involved in political activity and in editing and writing newspapers and magazines, primarily the newspaper he had founded, *al-Muqtabas*.[29] Kurd Ali had visited Palestine a number of times; in his case as well, evidence of his ties with the School of Oriental Studies and its scholars is to be found mostly in archival records.

In 1930, Jewish journalist Tuvia Ashkenazi (1904–1970), who also did research work for Zionist institutions, met Kurd Ali in Damascus, later reporting to the Jewish Agency that the Syrian intellectual had expressed interest in promoting scientific collaboration between the Hebrew University and the Academy of the Arabic Language of Damascus.[30] The report was relayed to the Hebrew University, which replied that 'His Excellency Kurd Ali is well known to us, since he has visited here [in Jerusalem] and is a close friend of Professor Horovitz'.[31] The letter also noted that Horovitz himself was a member of the academy in Damascus – information that can be found to this day on the academy's website.[32]

29 On Kurd Ali's life and political thought, see Hermann, *Kulturkriseund konservative Erneuerung*. Kurd Ali, like Hussein in Egypt, had served as the Syrian Minister of Education (he held this position for two terms during the period of French rule in Syria). On his politically formative years as the editor of *al-Muqtabas* and their wider context, see Ezzerelli, "The Publicist and his Newspaper".

30 Frederick Kisch to the Chief Secretary of the Hebrew University, 27 August 1930, CZA, S25\6727. Born in Bessarabia and immigrating to Palestine at the age of three, Ashkenazi became a reporter for Zionist newspapers and simultaneously worked in composing intelligence reports for the Haganah, Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund on the Arab population in Palestine and neighbouring countries; he was also responsible for forging Zionist alliances with local Druze and Bedouin families. Ashkenazi later earned a PhD from the Sorbonne and wrote pioneering works on the Bedouins of Palestine. However, he remained an independent scholar and also continued working for Zionist institutions and the American government. On his life and work, see Sharon, "Introduction". For examples of his intelligence and diplomatic activities, see Gelber, "Antecedents of the Jewish-Druze Alliance", 352; Suwaed, "Cooperation between the Galilee Bedouins and the Yishuv", 214.

31 Moshe Ben David to Kisch, 4 September 1930, CZA, S25\6727. Horovitz is known to have visited the Middle East in 1905–1906, including Egypt and Syria, on a research mission for the Italian Orientalist and politician Leone Caetani (Goitein, "Josef Horovitz", 124). Contact between Horovitz and Kurd Ali may have been established at that time; some years later Kurd Ali travelled to Rome to work at Caetani's library (Kurd Ali, *Memoir*, 188).

32 The academy's list of members, appearing on its website, includes Horovitz's name under the category "Corresponding Members" – that is, scholars from various countries who were members of the academy without regularly participating in its activities. Other German members included in this list are, for example, Edward Sachau, Eugen Mittwoch, Carl Brockelmann, and Hellmut Ritter. For the complete list, see http://www.arabacademy.gov.sy/ar/page16278/الأعضاء-المراسلون.

Kurd Ali maintained a complex relationship with European Orientalism in general, and with German Orientalism in particular: on the one hand, he criticized the European approach to Islam, to the Arabs, and to Arabic culture as reflected in certain Western studies, and even voiced his criticism at the International Congress of Orientalists, held in Leiden in 1931; on the other, he had friendly relations with a number of European Orientalists and expressed appreciation for their work.[33] One of the most prominent Orientalists in contact with Kurd Ali was Ignaz Goldziher, regarding whom Kurd Ali was quoted as saying: 'There were none like him before, and none after'.[34] The two met in Budapest in 1914: Goldziher consulted with Kurd Ali regarding professional issues, showed him his vast library, and even invited him to dine at his home. Kurd Ali was amused by the fact that 'a Jew is teaching a group of Christians about a Muslim book'.[35]

Kurd Ali also maintained friendly relations with scholars trained in the German Orientalist tradition working in Jerusalem: in 1936 or 1937, a member of the Jewish Agency's Political Department reported on his meeting with Kurd Ali in Damascus.[36] The meeting was a typical example for a prominent strategy of the department, which sought to forge ties with Arabs in neighbouring states in the hope of convincing them of the legitimacy of Zionism – an effort that was, at the same time, an attempt to drive a wedge between different Arab states or individuals by presenting one or another of them as a supporter of Zionism.[37] According to the report, Kurd Ali 'inquired as to the welfare of the Orientalists at the Hebrew University, and heaped praise on [the School of Oriental Studies'] Professor [Leo Ary] Mayer who would visit him regularly, "although apparently", he added, "the professor has come under a bad influence, since he has not visited me for the past two years"'.[38] Kurd Ali took this opportunity to praise the research done at the School of Oriental Studies: 'You have done great and wonderful things, continue and do not fear [...] if it had not been for you, who knows what would have been the fate of the wonderful manuscript by al-Balādhurī'.[39]

33 Escovitz, "Orientalists and Orientalism", 95–96.

34 S[haul] Hareli, "Visit to Lebanon and Syria", [1936 or 1937], CZA, S25\5570, 15.

35 Kurd Ali, *The Contemporaries*, 134. Following Goldziher's death in 1921, the Jewish National and University Library purchased his library, which was transferred to Jerusalem and became the foundation of its Oriental Department. On the Goldziher's intellectual and material legacy in Jerusalem see Levy, "Rediscovering the Goldziher Legacy in Jerusalem".

36 Hareli, "Visit to Lebanon and Syria".

37 Yegar, *The History of the Political Department*, 306–307. For a detailed account of the Political Department's activities in Syria in the 1930s, see Muhareb, *The Jewish Agency and Syria*.

38 Ibid., 14.

39 Ibid.

By that, Kurd Ali was referring to the other major research project the School had undertaken, alongside the Concordance: the publication of a critical edition of the ninth-century Arabic work *ʾAnsāb al-ʾAshrāf* (Genealogies of the Nobles) by the historian ʾAḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī. Work on this manuscript had begun in Germany but was halted during the First World War; after the School of Oriental Studies was established, copies of the manuscript were sent from Berlin to Jerusalem.[40] Kurd Ali was so impressed at the work done on this manuscript that, as he said goodbye to his interlocutor, he once again mentioned it: '[D]o not forget to tell Dr. [sic] Mayer that I am still alive and expecting his visit. Send my regards to those working on the al-Balādhurī manuscript'.[41]

In spite of Kurd Ali's perhaps somewhat playful expressions of disappointment, his friendship with Mayer survived the Palestinian Arab Revolt in the second half of the 1930s. In September 1941, during the Ramadan fast, Kurd Ali came to Jerusalem to deliver a series of lectures on the Jerusalem Calling radio station (called in Arabic *Iza'at al-Quds* or *Radio al-Quds*), the official trilingual radio station of the British Mandate.[42] Together with Goitein, Mayer arrived at a reception for Kurd Ali held in the city.[43] There is no evidence that Kurd Ali visited the Hebrew University campus, but it is certain he perused at least one of the products of research undertaken at the School of Oriental Studies: in March of that year Kurd Ali sent a letter of gratitude to Goitein, thanking him for sending to the Syrian scholar the fifth volume of *ʾAnsāb al-ʾAshrāf*, published by the school as part of its academic endeavours.[44] The two met, at the latest, in 1932, when Goitein travelled to Damascus to work at the Zahiriyya Library, under the auspices of the Arab Academy. There he met Kurd Ali, who welcomed him, as he put it, "very hospitably.[45] About a decade later, when Kurd Ali received Goitein's book, he praised the quality of the scholar's work, requested that the school send

40 On the history of Orientalist work on this manuscript, see Mangold-Will, "Photo-Kopieren als wissenschaftliche Praxis?"

41 Hareli, "Visit to Lebanon and Syria", 16.

42 "The Third Lecture by Professor Muhammad Kurd Ali", *al-Difaa*, 30 September 1941, 1. Kurd Ali arrived in Jerusalem again in 1943 to broadcast lectures for Ramadan (Kurd Ali, *Memoir*, 474). On this trilingual radio station that aired programs for Jewish, Arab, and British listeners, see Bostock, "Arab Palestinian Listenership to the Radio in Mandate Palestine" 14–17. See also Bostock, "Radio Listenership".

43 Entry from the diary of S.D. Goitein, 27 September 1941, Archives of the National Library of Israel (hereafter ANLI), Arc. 4°1911/02/9.

44 Muhammad Kurd Ali to Goitein, 23 March 1941, ANLI, Arc. 4°1911/03/332.

45 Goitein to Billig, 26 October 1932, ANLI, Arc. 4°1911/03/14.

the Arab Academy copies of every future publication to appear in Arabic, and offered, in return, to send the Arab Academy's publications to Jerusalem.[46]

The 1941 reception for Kurd Ali (attended, as mentioned above, by Mayer and Goitein) was held in the home of his Jerusalem host – the Palestinian writer, poet and scholar of literature and philosophy Issaf Nashashibi (1882–1948).[47] Nashashibi – who had served for a decade as Inspector of Arabic Studies in local Arabic schools on behalf of the Mandate government – was a well-known figure in the Arab cultural world in Jerusalem and beyond: his sumptuous home in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood served as a library and a meeting place for social gatherings.[48] Nashashibi's importance for scholars at the School of Oriental Studies is perhaps attested by the very short obituary published in *Davar* in 1948 – at the height of the civil war in Palestine – which included the fact that 'he had maintained cultural ties with Jewish scholars of Oriental Studies'.[49]

As mentioned above, Nashashibi, the scion of a large, well-connected, and influential Jerusalem family, held gatherings at his spacious family home, where he may have become acquainted with Jewish scholars and intellectuals, as noted in *Davar*. A main archival testimony of this connection is found in a draft copy of a letter in Arabic D.H. Baneth intended to send to Nashashibi, after the latter sent him his work *The Eternal Hero Saladin and the Eternal Poet Ahmed Shawki*, published in 1932.[50] In the letter, Baneth refers to Nashashibi's discussion of the subject of genius, in light of Max Nordau's writings regarding this concept.[51] Baneth disputes Nashashibi's claim that there were no geniuses among Jewish poets or intellectuals, citing examples of Hebrew texts from all periods, which must be read in the Hebrew original in order to realize their genius.[52] The draft, which is filled with deletions, additions, and corrections, shows that Baneth put much thought in its formulation so as to accurately express his protest without offending Nashashibi.

Hussein, Kurd Ali, and Nashashibi – three prominent figures in the textual circle of connections with scholars at the School for Oriental studies

46 Goitein to Kurd Ali, undated, ANLI, Arc. 4°1911/03/332.

47 "A Syrian Scholar in Jerusalem", *HaBoker*, 25 September 1941, 3.

48 For Nashashibi's biography, see Salih, *Muhammad Issaf Nashashibi*. In 1947, as the battles in Jerusalem intensified, he left the city for Cairo, where he died the next year. According to his nephew, Nashashibi's copious library was pillaged in 1948 by Jews and Palestinians, and books it contained were appropriated by the National Library of Israel (Amit, "Salvage or Plunder?" 16–17).

49 "Issaf Nashashibi is Dead", *Davar*, 23 January 1948, 10.

50 Nashashibi, *The Eternal Hero Saladin and the Eternal Poet Ahmed Shawki*.

51 In his work, Nashashibi cites (ibid., 50–51) claims from Nordau's work regarding the psychophysiology of genius and talent, which appear in Nordau, *Parodoxe*, but refers to its French translation.

52 [Baneth] to Issaf Nashashibi, [first half of the 1930s], ANLI, Arc. 4°1559/03/17.

– contributed essays to the weekly *al-Risala*, published in Egypt in the 1930s (at the outset Hussein even served as its deputy editor). According to Israel Gershoni, *al-Risala* sought to cultivate an Arab-Islamic identity and a unified Arab culture, often engaging with Islamic studies and ancient Islamic history; however, these subjects were discussed in the spirit of modernist and reformist approaches to Islam and a rejection of orthodoxy, as well as support for liberal democracy, since the weekly was 'oriented toward the West'. *Al-Risala* represented a general intellectual movement in Egypt in the 1930s that sought to integrate Islam and liberalism.[53]

This clarifies why scholars from the School of Oriental Studies found much in common with the Arab intellectuals involved with the weekly. Their approach to Islam was not at odds with the German Orientalist tradition. On the contrary: Ignác Goldziher, for example, considered Islamic studies (*Islamwissenschaft*) a vehicle for bringing about an historicist reform in religion (particularly with regard to Muslim law).[54] This view is reminiscent of the emergence of Jewish studies (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*) in nineteenth-century Germany: at that time, Jewish scholars attempted to assimilate the scientific outlook, and to cast Judaism in the moulds of modern research. At the same time, they emphasized the need for scientific objectivity and discipline-based research methods, which could lend Judaism validity and legitimacy as a field of knowledge and as a cultural and historical phenomenon.[55] Jewish and Muslim scholars alike, it seems, could find intellectual common ground also in their past and present searches for reform.

## Entangling ethnography: Past, present and the national cause in Palestine

As I have shown thus far, the literary-textual circle of scholarly contacts, based primarily on European philological traditions, ventured far beyond

53 Gershoni, "Egyptian Liberalism in an Age of 'Crisis of Orientation'", 555. Nashashibi is not mentioned in Gershoni's essay as a contributor to the weekly, yet an examination of its contents reveals that in 1937–1948 it published nearly 160 texts written by him. See also Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 222–244, 324–340.

54 Regarding Goldziher's reformist approach to Islam, as reflected in the establishment of the field of Islamic studies, see Moshfegh, *Ignaz Goldziher*. On his methodology, see also Fraisse, "From Geiger to Goldziher".

55 Ismar Schorsch finds a 'striking similarity' between the historicization of Judaism and of Islam in nineteenth-century Germany (Schorsch, "Converging Cognates", 4). See also Schmidtke, "From *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to *Wissenschaft des Islams*".

the borders of Mandatory Palestine. Another network operating in parallel, though firmly rooted in the local Palestinian arena, was nevertheless transnational in nature: this was the ethnographic-archaeological circle. Whereas the textual circle was based on the intellectual activities of all the scholars at the School of Oriental Studies, the connections constituting the ethnographic circle stemmed mostly from the research interests of the Galician-born Jewish scholar of Islamic art and archaeology Leo Ary Mayer (1895–1959). An Islamic art and archaeology professor at the Hebrew University, one of the founders of the School of Oriental Studies, whose research was uncharacteristic not only to the Classical Islam-oriented institute – he was interested in the Mamluk and even early-Ottoman periods – but also to Zionist archaeology, which was primarily committed to excavating the Jewish past, thus configuring Jewish settlement as national return.[56] Growing up in Galicia and studying in Vienna, Mayer's professional development was influenced by his upbringing and Orientalist training in the liminal and multiethnic setting of the Habsburg Empire. His publications on material archaeological finds from the Islamic period in Palestine and its surroundings met with a positive response and were publicized in Arab countries, particularly in Egypt, not least because they reinforced the historical dimension of those countries' national narratives, which at the time were in their formative stages.[57]

Furthermore, since Mayer's arrival in Palestine in 1921 and until he was appointed professor at the university in 1933, he worked at the British Mandate's Department of Antiquities. The department was founded in Palestine immediately after the transition to British civilian rule in 1920, and its role was to operate, document, and preserve the local archaeological sites, and to coordinate research activities by the various archaeological societies that sought to perform excavations in Palestine. The department was run mostly by British officials, though Jews and Arabs also reached senior positions there.[58] Through his work at the department for over a decade Mayer was able to enter intellectual and cultural circles in Jerusalem that had a British orientation, where he became acquainted with many

56 Abu El-Haj, "Producing (Arti) Facts", 35.

57 Regarding Mayer's uniqueness and the reception of his studies among scholars in Arab countries, see Hussein, "Scholarship on Islamic Archaeology".

58 On the history of the British Mandate's Department of Antiquities, and its Arab-Palestinian employees, see Irving, "Palestinian Christians", 164–169. Mayer collaborated with another employee of the department, Stephan Hanna Stephan, in publishing a translation of passages from Evliya Çelebi's *Book of Travels* that described seventeenth-century Palestine. See Irving, "Stephan Hanna Stephan".

Palestinians. After his death he was eulogized as 'having the best ties with Arab society'.[59] Mayer was the only scholar from the School of Oriental Studies to be invited to speak at the Arab College in Jerusalem, the city's only Palestinian institution of higher learning, and was even invited to publish in the college's periodical.[60]

Mayer's acquaintance, and the Palestinian who, to a large extent, stood at the centre of the ethnographic circle, was physician Tawfik Canaan (1882–1964). Canaan, son of the founder of the Lutheran Church in Beit Jala, took an interest in Palestinian archaeology and ethnography and published many studies in this field. The Jerusalem public was familiar with Canaan mostly through his work at the Leprosarium Jesus Hilfe, the home for those suffering from Hansen's disease, in Talbiyeh, which he joined after specializing in dermatology. In addition to his prominent activities in the Arab national movement in Jerusalem, Canaan was closely connected to the German-speaking world – both due to his Lutheran family's history, and to his marriage with Margot Eilender, a Jaffa-born German.[61]

The connection between Mayer and Canaan should be seen in the context of a wider circle of scholars – Christians, Muslims, and Jews from Palestine and elsewhere who were active in the Palestine Oriental Society.[62] The society was founded in 1920 by the American Assyriologist Albert Clay (1866–1925) during his visit to Palestine. The driving force behind it was American archaeologist William Albright (1891–1971), who directed the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem in the 1920s and 1930s and was active in the local archaeological arena for many years to come. Led by Albright, the society

59 Gavriel Stern, "On Passover Eve – Around the Walls", *'Al Hamishmar*, 22 April 1959, 12.

60 Hussein, "Scholarship on Islamic Archaeology", 197–198. Mayer's two lectures at the institution, in 1928 and in 1935, addressed Arabic architecture. After the first lecture was published in the institution's periodical, Mayer sent it to the administration of the Hebrew University. In internal correspondence, Magnes, who had recognized the publication's singularity, added in handwriting: "This should be used for America" (note regarding a letter from Mayer to the Chief Secretary of the Hebrew University, 1 March 1928, CAHU, personal file – Leo Ary Mayer, 1926–1948).

61 For Canaan's biography, see Nashef, "Tawfik Canaan". After leaving his home in Musrara in May 1948 together with his family, Canaan's large library was apparently looted. During the first truce in the war, D.H. Baneth visited Canaan's deserted home together with Shlomo Shunami, coordinator for the collection of books from abandoned properties, who attested that Canaan's collection of folklore books could not be found (Amit, "Salvage or Plunder?" 16). Canaan, who was a staunch opponent of the Zionist Movement and of British rule (and was even jailed by the authorities), lived thereafter in East Jerusalem.

62 Most of the information on the history of the Palestine Oriental Society is from Ben-Arieh, "Non-Jewish Institutions", particularly 131–137. See also Sigalas, "Between Diplomacy and Science", 199–202.

published, until 1948, the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* (JPOS), in which a large percentage of the papers – devoted to the archaeological, folkloric, geographical, and philological research of Palestine – were written by local Jews (27 per cent) and Arabs (15 per cent).[63] From among the seven Palestinians involved in the society's activities and in the publication of its journal (including Khalil Totah, Elias Haddad, Omar Saleh al-Barghouti, and Stephan Hanna Stephan), Canaan was particularly prominent, serving as the society's secretary for many years and finally replacing Albright as its president.[64] In general, the papers submitted by Palestinian scholars to the JPOS focused on ethnography – culture, tradition, and folklore. By contrast, the papers by Jewish scholars addressed Biblical texts and the topography they describe. Exceptional in this respect were the essays by Mayer, which reflected his deep interest in Muslim archaeology and art.[65]

Thus, when Mayer was invited to speak at the Jerusalem YMCA on Muslim dress in medieval Palestine, Egypt, and Syria, Canaan – who was a member of the YMCA board of directors – introduced him to the public as 'the greatest European authority on this subject in the East'.[66] The words chosen for this description are striking: Mayer, who immigrated to Palestine with his parents in 1921, motivated by Zionist ideology, was not introduced as a Jew or as a native of Palestine, but rather as a 'European authority'. Perhaps the attribution of a foreign European identity to Mayer – described in a memorial essay as 'having perhaps absorbed something from the manners of the English' – assisted Canaan, the stark opponent of the Zionist Movement, in maintaining warm relations with his Jewish colleague, with whom he even collaborated in the initiative to found a museum of Palestinian folklore – the Palestine Folk Museum.

Opened in 1936, this was a joint Arab-British-Jewish initiative, aimed at preserving the local material culture and folklore of *fellaheen* and Bedouins in rapidly modernizing Palestine; Canaan believed they represented the living heritage of all the cultures the land had known.[67] The museum's

63 Glock, 'Archaeology as Cultural Survival', 75–76. Mayer was involved in the society's organizational aspects, serving as its president for one year.

64 On the circle of Palestinian ethnographers involved with JPOS, led by Canaan, see Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*, 93–112.

65 Glock, "Archaeology as Cultural Survival", 76.

66 "Call to Establish a Museum for Palestinian Dress", *Palestine Bulletin*, 26 July 1931, 3. A newspaper clipping with this report on Mayer's lecture is kept in Mayer's personal file in the Hebrew University archive, attesting to the importance attached to the lecture and its enthusiastic reception.

67 Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*, 97–98. See also Mershen and Hübner, "Tawfiq Canaan".

exhibitions included traditional costumes, domestic and religious utensils, musical instruments, weapons, and farming tools. Constantly struggling financially, and facing escalating violence in Jerusalem, the museum closed in early 1948 and its items were boxed and stored in East Jerusalem.[68] Canaan died in East Jerusalem a few years later; in his recently published autobiography, there is no mention of Mayer.[69]

Another ethnographer who had ties with the School of Oriental Studies, particularly with Mayer, was Aref al-Aref (1891–1973) – an activist, journalist and historian, later the mayor of East Jerusalem. Al-Aref was a politically controversial figure, which is apparent in his unique biography: as a youth he was already politically active, publishing an article in which he condemned the Zionist Movement; he then became editor of the first Arab-nationalist newspaper in Jerusalem, *Suria al-Janubiyya* (Southern Syria).[70] However, in the late 1910s and early 1920s, al-Aref took part in joint Jewish-Palestinian evening courses teaching Arabic to Jews and Hebrew to Palestinians.[71] These lessons came to an end when in 1920 al-Aref was accused by the British of publishing incendiary statements in his newspaper, and of yelling them out while riding his horse before the public at Jaffa Gate, thereby fanning the flames of violence in the 1920 riots.[72] Consequently, he fled Palestine but later returned and was offered a position in the British Mandate administration, which he accepted, serving as District Officer in various cities in Palestine and gradually becoming less openly hostile to Zionism; in the 1940s, he participated in a public gathering of Jewish and Arab journalists, where he called for mutual understanding.[73]

68 Ari, "Cultural Mandates, Artistic Missions", 217.

69 Raheb, *Tawfiq Canaan*.

70 A number of articles and autobiographical essays were published about Aref al-Aref, and he himself wrote a diary which has been preserved. A summary of these materials, as well as references to him by figures in the Zionist Movement, appear in Wasserstein, "'Clipping the Claws of the Colonisers'", 180–182. On al-Aref's early years and the impact of his experiences in the First World War on his political outlook, see Tamari, *Year of the Locust*, 63–85. Tamari notes that al-Aref was a member, alongside Issaf Nashashibi, of a nationalist political organization that aimed to unite Syria with its southern part (i.e. Palestine) and to wage war against Zionism (77–78).

71 Elhanani, "Bearing the Message of His Brethren", 10. The Arabic teacher in this group was the leading Palestinian educator Khalil Sakakini.

72 Wasserstein, "'Clipping the Claws of the Colonisers'", 180. Citing Palestinian, British, and Jewish sources from the period, as well as an interview he conducted with al-Aref himself, Wasserstein argues that when seated on his horse before the crowd al-Aref was collaborating with the British government in order to restore peace rather than incite violence. Nevertheless, he was later portrayed both by the British government and by the Zionists as one of the event's leading provocateurs.

73 "Meeting of Hebrew and Arab Journalists", *HaTsofeh*, 23 February 1941, 1.

In addition to his work and political activism, al-Aref was a historian and an ethnographer. He was known to the Jewish public in Palestine as the author of two books on the history of the Bedouin, based mostly on materials he had collected during his years as Beersheba District Officer, which were translated to Hebrew in the mid-1930s.

Al-Aref's expertise in Bedouin history resulted in the only documented event in which an Arab scholar delivered a lecture at the Hebrew University during the Mandate years: in late 1940, the university published a programme of lectures on the subject of 'The Arab Orient', intended for the general public. Alongside lectures by professors from the School of Oriental Studies, the first lecture in the series is remarkable – a talk by Aref al-Aref on the 'Life of the Bedouin'.[74] And, indeed, in May 1941, al-Aref spoke at the Hebrew University, before a large audience, about Bedouin customs; he delivered his lecture in Hebrew.[75] He began by explaining that his friend L.A. Mayer had invited him, on behalf of the school, to deliver the lecture, but that 'at first I hesitated, since I unfortunately am not blessed with the knowledge and wisdom appropriate to this dignified audience that has gathered here under the auspices of the Hebrew University, which is justly considered the pinnacle of Jewish culture and science in the East'.[76] Before embarking on the lecture, al-Aref apologized that his knowledge of Hebrew sufficed only for informal conversation, and that therefore he would read from his notes.

The Hebrew University archive contains no further documentation of the preparations for this event, but the very fact of its occurrence attests, once again, to the strength of the intellectual ties maintained by the university's Orientalists within a wide-ranging, cross-national network of scholars. In Mayer's case, these connections were forged not only through his activities at the School, but also thanks to his other engagements and official connections. The same goes for Goitein: his work at the Education Department of the Mandate government occasioned meetings with many Palestinians, some of whom were his colleagues. Informal meetings with them and with other Palestinians, whom he met through mutual acquaintances in Jerusalem and are recorded in his diary, were regular occurrences.[77] The ability to

74 David Werner Senator to Shertok, 8 December 1940, CZA, S25/6724.

75 "Aref al-Aref, Guest of the Hebrew University," *HaBoker*, 9 May 1941, 8.

76 "Desert Customs – A Lecture by the Arab Scholar Aref al-Aref on behalf of the Hebrew University's School of Oriental Studies", *Ha'Olam*, 21 August 1941, 4–6. *Ha'Olam*, the official newspaper of the World Zionist Organization, printed the lecture in full.

77 For example, an incidental remark in Goitein's diary records a meeting with the former mayor of Jerusalem Raghib Nashashibi, on 8 February 1944 (ANLI, Arc. 4°1911/2/12). Menachem Klein cites the testimony of scholar and publicist Ghada Karmi, according to which her father, Hasan

meet often in Mandatory Jerusalem – at times owing to the fact of simple neighbourly relations – also contributed to the strength of these ties.[78]

## Invisible, indeed: The problem of the non-formal

The literary and ethnographic circles depicted in this chapter reveal a network of intellectual ties that developed, with time, into warm personal friendships. Classical literary topics helped the Orientalist 'invisible college' reach beyond the borders of Mount Scopus and Jerusalem, while the inclusion of L.A. Mayer and his interest in Islamic art and archaeology helped strengthen contacts with scholars of Arab-Palestinian material culture and folklore. Yet, the trait common to the circles of connections between scholars is that other than a few exceptional cases, they remained non-formal. These 'invisible' ties of appreciation and friendship, developing in the shadow of the Jewish-Arab conflict, were, by dint of that very conflict, unlikely to become formal, long-term relationships.

By 1942, the year of Taha Hussein's visit to Mount Scopus, Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed's controversial participation in the Hebrew University's opening ceremony – including the scathing criticism it aroused and the public apology that followed – had become a distant, if gloomy memory. Yet, this stormy precedent was probably one of the factors that led Mahmoud Fawzi, the Egyptian consul-general in Jerusalem in the early 1940s, to request that Taha Hussein refrain from notifying the Arabic press of his visit.[79] The visit, and Fawzi's request, were confirmed publicly only decades later, after the signing of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty.[80] At the time of the visit, Taha Hussein was already under fire in Egypt and other Arab countries for his liberal position, with critics often accusing him of collaborating with the Zionist Movement.[81] The Egyptian consul therefore preferred that the visit remain unpublicized, though himself seeing it in a positive light.

Karmi, who worked at the Department of Education alongside S.D. Goitein, was invited by the latter to take part in a meeting of the leftist *Brit Shalom* association, from which he returned somewhat disappointed: Klein, *Lives in Common*, 78–79.

78 Klein, *Lives in Common*, 93.

79 At the time of Lutfi el-Sayed's participation in the ceremony in 1925, Taha Hussein served as the Dean of Humanities at Cairo University, of which Lutfi was the rector. Lutfi el-Sayed is considered to be Hussein's mentor (Ahmed, *The Last Nahdawi*, 201).

80 "Dr. Hussein Fawzi Delivers Speech in Israel", *October* 157, 28 October 1979, 3.

81 For a discussion of the accusations against Taha Hussein, see Shalash, "Taha Hussein and the Suspicion-Casting Questions".

In a private conversation reported to the Jewish Agency's Political Department, Fawzi regretted that:

> despite [Taha Hussein's] progressive views and belief in the benefits of Jewish-Arab cooperation, he had no choice but to avoid addressing this issue, due to the pressure exerted on him by local Arab activists [...] whatever the private opinion of a representative of Egypt or any other Arab country in Palestine may be regarding contact with the [Zionist] Hebrew community, he must consider the position of the Palestinian Arabs, who will view any serious attempt by such a representative to bring down the wall separating Jews from Arabs in Palestine as an act of solidarity with Zionism.[82]

The Political Department was familiar with this Egyptian position regarding the Hebrew University. The department and the university had previously collaborated in an attempt to invite Egyptian and Lebanese delegates to the tenth-anniversary celebrations of the university's opening, held in 1935, with the university suggesting that Hussein be invited to visit and deliver a lecture. The Friends of the Hebrew University in Cairo responded that 'it is currently impossible to invite Arab scholars from Egypt to deliver lectures in Jerusalem. We are concerned that the Palestinian Arabs' influence on these scholars may be detrimental'.[83]

The School's members, in any case, were very apprehensive regarding the immediate political repercussions of the publication of contacts between Jewish and Arab scholars in the local Palestinian press.[84] In fact, it was the awareness of the broad context of these repercussions that undermined an initial attempt to realize the political vision informing its academic activities: the effort to recruit an Arab professor to the School's staff. Declared in Horovitz's plans for the School and inner correspondence, the hope to locate an Arab professor such as Hussein, Kurd Ali or Nashashibi – who were all mentioned by Horovitz as possible candidates – was never realized during the British Mandate years.[85] As I have shown elsewhere, this was a result of the inherent contradictions in its existence: an institute whose members were inflexibly committed to the German Orientalist legacy of

82 Eliahu Epstein to Bernard [Dov] Yosef, 13 December 1942, CZA, S25/7516.

83 Ernst Simon to Dr. [Isaac] Levi, 8 March 1935; Ernst Simon to Epstein, 26 March 1935, CZA, S25/6721.

84 See, for example, Mayer to the university management, 28 March 1934, CAHU, (personal file – Leo Ary Mayer, 1926–1945).

85 Mangold-Will, "Josef Horovitz", 29–30.

Fig. 15. The Concordance of Classical Arabic Poetry room, Hebrew University, Mt. Scopus, early to mid-1930s. Goldberg / Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

a philological discipline now transplanted into the living Orient; and an aspired intellectual bridge between Jews and Arabs, built within a Zionist framework limiting its ability to attract local non-Jewish scholars and *de facto* excluding them.[86]

The 1948 war and its traumatic aftermath put an official end to the mostly non-official contacts between Arab and Jewish scholars in Palestine. The establishment of Israel marked a new era of Zionist Oriental Studies, now more committed than ever to the national cause, while most Arab scholars, if not considered enemies, were behind enemy lines. The invisible college, already fragile due to its non-formality, could not continue to exist. Nevertheless, in the early interwar period, the study of Arabic language and culture did bring together Arab and Jewish researchers who shared and exchanged their ideas, knowledge, and scholarly passion. For what some may retrospectively regard as a brief or naïve moment, they found intellectual common ground.

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## About the author

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# 8. “Our Greek dignity and our educational autonomy”: Arabic language teaching in Greek schools, 1950s to 1970s

*Eftychia Mylona*

**Abstract:** In 1955, Gamal Abdul Nasser’s government launched a new educational policy aimed at promoting the Arabic language in Egyptian schools and boosting technological and industrial skills across the population. This paper traces the responses of the Egyptiot – Egyptian Greek – community to the new policies, especially the communities’ reactions to the demand to increase teaching of Arabic in their schools and their negotiations with the Egyptian state over levels and styles of language teaching.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Greek community, Egypt, foreign schools, education reform, Arabic education, transnational Greece

This chapter discusses the role of the *Ellēnikē Koinotēta Alexandrias* (EKA, Greek Community Organization of Alexandria, established 1843), as both a local and diasporic institution, in matters concerning Arabic education. In particular, it focuses on the group’s changing attitude towards teaching the Arabic language during the periods of rule by Egyptian presidents Gamal Abdel Nasser (1954–1970) and Anwar Sadat (1970–1981). As I discuss below, Nasser’s and Sadat’s policies were quite antithetical with regards to Arabic teaching in foreign schools. Until the 1950s, foreign schools enjoyed a great deal of autonomy in designing their own curriculum. However, Nasser’s policies on Arabic education, which aligned with his Egyptian nationalist policies and anti-colonial discourse, emphasized the teaching of the Arabic

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language and impacted both the curricula of foreign schools and their autonomy in designing them. Sadat's policies were much less focused on Arabic education. Instead, they favoured foreign influence in education (and elsewhere), and hence, they gave back to foreign schools the power that had been taken by Nasser.

In examining the EKA's concerns, actions, and policies around this topic, this chapter argues that the shift from Nasser's strict educational policies to Sadat's more lenient ones reaffirmed the EKA's privileged position, allowed it to negotiate its position on education, and maintained its right to imagine and fashion the community's identifications and belonging. In addition, this paper demonstrates the many layers of autonomy within the Greek community, by showing the EKA's role and decisions in relation to education vis-à-vis the Egyptian government. As such, this case study highlights the significance of Arabic language pedagogy for different interests in the Greek communities of Egypt from the 1950s to the 1970s, considering how Arabic was viewed by a segment of the *mutamassirun* (Egyptianized foreigner) population after the Free Officers' coup (1952),[1] and how such communities might interact with state language and education policies in such an environment, interlaced with debates over Arab and Egyptian nationalism, citizenship, and discourses of belonging.

This chapter is based primarily on the archives of the Greek community's institutions, the scrutiny of which reveals new elements of the understudied topic of Arabic education in the Greek community's schools. Indeed, the fact of very limited, if not impossible, access to the Egyptian National Archives in Cairo for a researcher who investigates Egyptian history after the 1960s makes the community's archives even more important, as they provide a rich documentation of Greek educational activities from the 1950s to 1970s. Specifically, I examine archival records from the primary and secondary schools of the Greek *koinotēta* in Alexandria, namely, the Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios, the Aristofroneios and the Averofeio-Familiadeios primary schools, and the Averofeio gymnasium and Salvageios Commercial school. The school records I discuss include letters and reports written by the school board and teachers, and their correspondence with the EKA's board. In addition, I look at the meeting minutes and correspondence between the EKA's board members and members of the Greek community. All these records are housed at the archive of the Greek *koinotēta* in Alexandria in

1 On 23 July 1952, Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Free Officers carried out a military coup d'état, which dethroned King Faruq (1936–1952). Muhammad Naguib became Egypt's first President and Gamal Abdel Nasser its Deputy Prime Minister.

el-Shatby. Moreover, I use in my analysis the EKA's annual reports from 1962 to 1976, and articles of association, found at the Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive (ELIA) in Athens.

## Greek schools and Egyptian educational policy until the 1950s

Greeks, like other Europeans, started to settle in Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They came from different parts of Greece and the Ottoman Empire, and their reasons for migration varied, depending on the place of origin. By the end of the nineteenth century, Greek Cypriots and Greek Islanders, especially from the Dodecanese islands of Symi, Kastellorizo and Kasos, among others, formed the majority of the foreigners in Egypt. The main attractions of Egypt for Greeks were economic and social, including the favourable policies of Muhammad 'Ali (r. 1805–1848) and the Capitulations system,[2] the opening of the Suez Canal in 1858, and the cotton boom in the 1860s. Greeks settled throughout Egypt; in Cairo and Alexandria, around the Nile Delta, including cities such as Tanta and Mansoura, in the Suez Canal region and in Upper Egypt. The number of Greeks reached its peak at the beginning of the twentieth century, after the Balkan Wars and the First World War . In 1917, for example, there were 56,731 Greeks living in Egypt, and their number increased to 76,264 in 1927.[3] However, the population started to decrease from the 1930s onwards. Several influential socioeconomic and political events, such as the abolition of the Capitulations (1937) due to Egypt's decolonization, the Second World War and the post-war economic stagnancy, and new laws that protected the position of Egyptian nationals in the labour market, such as the Company Law 138/1947, among others, decreased the presence of Greeks and other foreigners in Egypt from the 1930s. By 1947, the community's numbers had fallen back to 57,500 and in the 1960s only 17,000 Greeks remained in Egypt.[4]

In order to organize their lives, Greeks established *koinotētes* (community institutions). This was a common practice among Greeks in diaspora and represented a way to organize their educational, social, religious and cultural activities. The *koinotētes* were established with donations from the wealthiest members of the community, and they claimed to represent the

2 The Capitulations were bilateral agreements between the Ottoman Empire and European states, which granted jurisdictional and economic privileges to nationals of those states.

3 Dalachanis, *Greek Exodus*, 3.

4 *Apodēmoi Ellēnes*, 70.

whole Greek community. This practice was not found amongst the other *mutamassirun* communities, for example the Italians, who did not have a single representative body like the EKA, but a number of associations and clubs.[5] The *koinotētes* were legal entities under Greek private law (*Idryma Ellēnikou Dikaiou*), and after 1949 fell under the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs as a charitable institution. As the main representative body for Greeks in Egypt, *koinotētes* were very much invested in education and healthcare. Thus, the first institutions that Greeks established in Egypt were schools and hospitals.[6]

Education for the children of Greeks living in Egypt was broadly accepted as being an internal matter for the communities themselves, and was mainly provided by the *koinotētes*. For example, in 1955, the Greek *koinotētes* had under their control 57 out of 83 Greek schools.[7] The EKA's schools were divided into four categories: nursery schools (the Averofeio and Aristofroneios), primary schools (the Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios, Aristofroneios, and Averofeio-Familiadeios), schools for technical education (the school of fashion design, *Scholē Amfieseōs*, the day and night vocational schools, and the evening language tutorials) and secondary schools (the Averofeio gymnasium, Salvageios Commercial school, and Averofeio girls' school, *Anōtero Parthenagōgeio*). In this paper, I discuss Greek education through the EKA's primary and secondary schools. Like the community overall, the number of students dropped in the 1960s, due to the increasing departures. For example, in the academic year 1961–1962, the number of students across all EKA's schools was 2,836, which fell to 1,985, in 1963–1964.[8] In that year, the largest number of students, 642 in number, attended the humanities-based Averofeio Gymnasium. Another 589 students attended the primary schools of Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios and Aristofroneios, and 531 students attended technical education/vocational schools (including the Evening Language Tutorials). Lastly, 163 students attended the Salvageios Commercial school and sixty children the nursery schools.

From their establishment, the *koinotētes'* schools enjoyed autonomy due to the Capitulations, and this continued after the latter's abolition, as the Egyptian state did not intervene in the curriculum or other educational

5 Gorman, "The Italians of Egypt: Return to Diaspora", 143.

6 Souloyannis, *Ē Ellēnikē koinotēta Alexandreias*, 17.

7 Markantonatos, *Ta en Aigypto ellēnika ekpaideutēria*, 16. Even though the *koinotētes* were mostly responsible for Greek education, it was not uncommon for Greeks to study in Egyptian or western (British, French, etc.) schools, either due to mixed marriages or in order to excel in certain foreign languages, among other reasons. Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 197–198.

8 Logodosia Etous 1963, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive, 29.

matters. The schools followed the educational curriculum of Greece, which focused on classical studies, Greece's ancient past and the Greek Orthodox faith.[9] The same applied to the Italian schools in Egypt, which mostly followed the curriculum of Italy, focusing on classical studies.[10] Indeed, only in 1926 did the *koinotētes'* schools introduce the Arabic language into their curriculum. Law 40/1935 made it obligatory for the students at foreign schools to learn Arabic and take national exams in the language.[11] However, the focus on Arabic remained much less than subjects such as modern and ancient Greek language. Consequently, until the late 1950s, the *koinotētes'* schools neglected Arabic language and culture, as well as technical training, by concentrating on classical or commercial studies.

Greek education was tied more to the Greek state's reality and needs than to those of the Egyptian state. The emphasis on Greek national education was further emphasized in the post-Second World War period due to the perceived threat of communism in Greece. Through its schools, the Greek government strove to protect the students, and the Greek community at large, so they would not fall victim to the ‘communist threat’. They did this through the preservation of the Greek national character of the students. Another goal for the *koinotētes* was to serve the needs of the Greek labour market within Egyptian society. To a large extent, Greeks worked for their fellow Greeks. Especially in the period prior to the 1960s, when important Greek capital was still present in Egyptian cities, the community's elite was the main employer for Greeks, as well as playing a leading role in the *koinotēta's* affairs. Therefore, for decades, the school curriculum served the needs of a kind of ‘internal’ market that mainly benefited Greek elites and employers.[12]

However, new socioeconomic realities in the 1950s and 1960s, for example Gamal Abdel Nasser's focus on industrial development, for which more technical personnel were needed, and on the Arabic language, brought to the fore discussions on Arabic language education for Greeks and their future in the labour market, leading to reforms in the *koinotētes*' education and curriculum. For example, in 1957, Dimitris Lambros, the Greek ambassador to Egypt, reported to the Greek Foreign Office after a community meeting at the Greek embassy in Cairo that Greek residency in Egypt could be secured on the basis of community members, especially the youth, learning Arabic,

9 Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 187.

10 Viscomi and Turiano, “From Immigrants to Emigrants”, 9.

11 Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 209.

12 Ibid., 188, 201.

and reorienting their schools towards more technical education.[13] These debates on Arabic and technical education did not suddenly appear with the decrease of the Greeks in the 1960s. Rather, they had been present since the interwar period, and especially once concerns about the abolition of the Capitulations intensified.[14] The increase in vocational schools throughout Egypt, and the focus on technical training, were illustrations of the emphasis Gamal Abdel Nasser's government put on this type of education. According to Mahmud Faksh, in the period 1965–1966, vocational secondary schools increased fourfold compared to 1953–1954.[15] Consequently, in order to secure the Greek presence in Egypt, the *koinotētes* had to prioritize the technical orientation and command of Arabic that could better serve the needs of the Egyptian labour market.

## The Arabic language in Greek Schools in the 1960s

The education system of the Greek and other foreign schools officially changed in 1955 (Law 583/1955), when the Egyptian government introduced its new curriculum, emphasising Arabic and technical education.[16] During his presidency, Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956–1970) built on the goals of the 1955 law, under which education became a tool to 'modernise and industrialise Egypt' and to support the interests of the lower and middle classes.[17] Thus, the education sector expanded and provided access and opportunities to all Egyptians, regardless of their ethnic or religious background. In addition, and along the lines of his Egyptian nationalist policies, Arabic became the second major focus of the foreign schools, some of which were nationalized by Nasser's government.

As part of the new curriculum, Arabic language and Egyptian education (*Aigyptiakē Morfōsē*)[18] were introduced as major courses in Greek schools, alongside the subjects previously taught, such as modern and ancient Greek,

13 Chryssostomidis, "The Left", 157.

14 Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 177. Moreover, those concerns and strategies were not exclusive to the Greek community. For example, the Italian community found vocational training to be one of the few solutions to secure Italians' presence there. Viscomi and Turiano underline in their work that in the late 1930s the consular authorities emphasized that vocational schools were the only solution to guarantee young Italians in Egypt. Viscomi and Turiano, "From Immigrants to Emigrants", 9.

15 Faksh, "The Consequences", 45.

16 For more details, see: Browne, "Education reform in Egypt", 123–124.

17 Mirshak, "Authoritarianism", 42.

18 There were no references in the archival material I examined as to what this course entailed.

geography, and history. Consequently, Greek students had to graduate with both Greek and Arabic qualifications, and excel in both languages when they finished primary school in order to continue their education.[19] In addition, the Egyptian Ministry of Education appointed Arabic instructors – Egyptian native speakers – to all foreign schools, and introduced language inspections to ensure that the schools complied with the new laws.[20]

The new curriculum was more demanding for students and increased their study time. They had to learn Arabic starting in the first grade of primary school, instead of the sixth, as in the past. Throughout the 1960s, and especially in the first five years of its implementation, the directors of the Alexandrian *koinotētas'* schools expressed their concern regarding the difficulties of this new system, and the confusion it caused for students, to the head of the school board and the president of the EKA. The EKA was used to negotiating its educational matters autonomously: indeed, the Greek government provided financial and moral support to the EKA, especially for its schools, to keep the community's 'Greekness' and educate the nation, something that granted power to the EKA. Thus, as I explore below, these concerns expressed often seemed to be less about the pedagogical aspects of the new curriculum, and more about the loss of control and autonomy over their curriculum and execution. This demonstrated how the EKA negotiated its space and agency in educational matters, and how education was a national issue, one of the EKA's ways of defining its place as both a local and diasporic institution.

By way of example, some of these concerns were raised in 1964 in a letter addressed to the head of the school board, Ioannis Oikonomou, by the director of the Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios primary school, Vasilis Galanis.[21] Galanis noted the difficulty the first-grade students experienced in studying both Greek and Arabic at such a young age. He complained that students confused the two languages, writing Greek from right to left instead of left to right. According to him, this new system had led to student fatigue, as they were overloaded by the two curricula.[22] Hence, their performance was noticeably lower than previous years, which Galanis foresaw would

19 Galanis to Theodorakis, 29 January 1963, protocol no: 289, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 1–2.

20 Abecassis, "L'enseignement étranger", 741.

21 Galanis to Oikonomou, 17 June 1964, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

22 Even though only two new courses were added to the new curriculum, Arabic language and Egyptian education, the EKA's board members in their correspondence referred to these two courses as an additional curriculum, the Arabic curriculum (*Arabiko programma*). See e.g.

happen amongst future cohorts too.[23] Galanis's letter highlighted his need to justify to Oikonomou the students' weak performance, pointing to supposed structural problems rather than the teachers' performance and school efforts. In another letter, dated the year before, Galanis had expressed similar concerns regarding the confusion of the curricula to Anastasios Theodorakis, president of the EKA at the time, and asked Theodorakis for solutions.[24]

Galanis was not the only one to communicate his concerns to the head of the school board. Similar issues regarding the overloaded curriculum and the students' linguistic poverty, as well as their overall low results, were expressed by the director of the Aristofroneios primary school, Georgios Tzamtzis, in his report to Oikonomou.[25] Tzamtzis, like Galanis, complained about the poor results and the difficulty of the dual curriculum. The situation was different for the Salvageios Commercial school, demonstrating the variety in results amongst the EKA's schools. There, the foreign language level of the graduates was always very high due to the many hours of class time and resources dedicated to them. A report to Theodorakis sent by the director of the school, S. Symeonidis, communicated the good outcomes of the school exams, the visit of the Arabic language inspectors, and the students' results.[26]

Even though Galanis showed that he understood the needs of the new curriculum, he seemed to be more concerned about the "gradual erosion of our [the Greeks'] educational system," and how this could be avoided, rather than how students would successfully excel as much in Arabic as in Greek.[27] The old structure of the EKA's schools and the autonomy they enjoyed in the past, and the fact they were gradually losing it, were among the main issues

*Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 28 June 1972, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970–1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 9–10.

23 Galanis to Oikonomou, 17 June 1964, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

24 Galanis to Theodorakis, 29 January 1963, protocol no: 289, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 1–2.

25 *Ekthesis Aristofroneios Dēmotikē Scholē*, Tzamtzis to Oikonomou, 18 June 1964, protocol no: 29, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

26 *Ekthesis Pepragmenōn, May 1964,* S. Symeonidis to Theodorakis, 10 June 1964, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

The successful outcomes at the Salvageios school, which were always much higher compared to the outcomes of the other EKA schools, were stated throughout the 1960s in the EKA's annual reports. See e.g. the EKA annual reports for 1964 and 1965. *Logodosia Etous 1964*; *Logodosia Etous 1965,* Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive.

27 Galanis to Theodorakis, 29 January 1963, protocol no: 289, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 1–2.

for the school representatives in the 1960s. Moreover, the frequent onsite inspections by Egyptian language inspectors added more pressure on the EKA's schools to perform well, inspiring fear of the Egyptian authorities.

Indeed, part of the educational system reforms was the frequent unprecedented inspections by governmental authorities, specifically the Egyptian language inspectors. In their visits to the EKA's schools, the inspectors evaluated the application of the new educational system, and the performance of the students. For example, in one of the Egyptian government's onsite inspections of the Averofeio-Familiadeio and Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios primary schools, the Egyptian language inspectors found the students' results very low.[28] Following the report of Mohammad Fahmy al-Karaksy, one of the language inspectors, the school directors sent letters to the EKA president, Theodorakis, to explain and justify the low results. In order to improve student performance, the school board suggested that evening Arabic tutorials should take place for two months, three times a week.[29] The school's initiative was intensive, demonstrating its willingness, but also its concerns to improve the students' progress.

In the EKA's annual reports there was no reference to what would happen if the schools did not pass their inspections. Nevertheless, when performance was satisfactory, it was always mentioned in the reports, in order to highlight that they were working in the right direction. In addition, the correspondences between the school boards demonstrated that there was pressure on the schools to perform well in the Arabic-based curriculum, indicating that it mattered to the Egyptian authorities that foreign schools comply with the new curriculum. Hence, both the school boards correspondence and the references to school performance in the EKA reports indicate that the Greek schools aspired to satisfy the demands made by the Egyptian government. These inspections, and the government's new educational policy, highlight the attention the Egyptian government paid to the alignment of foreign schools with its Egyptian curriculum. The autonomy of the Greek and other foreign schools diminished, as they felt compelled to comply with the rules determined by the Egyptian government.[30]

28 The report was discussed in the last school board meeting (14 January 1963), which the directors of all the *koinotētas*' schools attended. *Ekthesis Scholeiōn*, Mohammad Fahmy al-Karaksy to *Eforeia Scholeiōn*, 10 January 1963, protocol no: 331, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

29 Galanis to Theodorakis, 16 February 1963, protocol number: 306, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

30 Angelos Dalachanis underlines that during the 1950s the Egyptian government made limited interventions in the curriculum of foreign schools. Dalachanis, *Akyvernētē Paroikia*, 185. As

The noticeably low results in the September Arabic language re-sit exam in the Tositsaia-Zervoudakeios primary school generated discussion among the director of the school, the head of the school board, and the parents. Sixty per cent of the students in this cohort failed the Arabic course. The director of the school, Galanis, wrote a letter to the head of the school board, Oikonomou, to explain the situation, give him insights and justify the low results of the students in Arabic. Galanis tried to defend his students, and his role as principal of the school, making excuses for their failure and even going so far as to justify empty papers. He openly criticized the structure of the examination to Oikonomou, blaming the Egyptian examiners for not giving clear guidelines on how students should engage with the exercises or enough time for students to complete the exam. Moreover, he stressed the disappointment of students and their parents at receiving such results, especially for those students who were used to scoring highly in exams. He concluded his letter by pointing out that such practices would only lead to the faster dissolution of the community.[31]

As mentioned above, Greeks, like other foreigners, had started to depart from Egypt since the 1930s, due to socioeconomic and political changes in Egyptian society. However, between 1960 and 1962, their departures reached a peak. Some of the pressures that drove Greeks to seek futures outside Egypt included the Egyptianization laws of 1957, the socialist laws at the beginning of 1959 and the Nationalization laws of 1961. Even though many of the community members were not affected directly by these laws, the declining numbers of Greeks and other foreigners worried some of the community's members. Galanis used the departures of Greeks to pressure Oikonomou to take action and solve the issue of the exams. According to Galanis, the structure of the examination, as part of the new educational system, would disappoint the Greeks of Alexandria, and might force them to leave the country. Such threats or pressures for action were not isolated phenomena. Since the community had started to decrease, a common practice for some Greek officials to attract attention and push matters in the direction they wanted was to warn of more departures and the faster dissolution of the community.[32]

Mahmud A. Faksh notes, this changed after the 1956 Suez crisis, when the foreign schools went under strict control. Faksh, "The Consequences" 47.

31 Galanis to Oikonomou, 16 June 1964, protocol number: 669, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

32 See e.g. the letter that Giagkos Chrysovergis and Alexander Kazoullis addressed to Dimitris Lambros. Chrysovergis and Kazoulis to Lambris, 17 October 1960, protocol no: 150/60, Chambre de Commerce Hellenique D'Alexandrie, Archeio Emporikou Epimelētēriou Alexandreias.

A fierce response to Oikonomou and Theodorakis's management of the exams issue came from Ntinos Koutsoumis.[33] Koutsoumis, a well-known journalist and editor of the Greek newspaper *Tachydromos*, published in Alexandria, was also the parent of one of the students who failed the course. Koutsoumis first blamed Oikonomou for negligence over the failure of the majority of the student body. He then blamed the Egyptian examiners for indifference and lack of organisation. Koutsoumis had visited Oikonomou in his office the day before, but having not received the attention he wanted, he wrote his letter to push forward the discussion. According to Koutsoumis, Oikonomou's unwillingness to take this issue to the Egyptian authorities was either due to Oikonomou's fear of exposing the Egyptian examiners, or his lack of care of the students. In either case, Koutsoumis expressed his strong disappointment as a parent and a journalist of the community.[34] Oikonomou responded to Koutsoumis, in person, that he would avoid such situations in the future, by changing the structure of the exam. Nevertheless, Koutsoumis was disappointed with this offer, as it did not change the results of the past exams.

Koutsoumis raised the issue of the exam results in a separate letter to Theodorakis, too, but with a different tone, as Theodorakis was not directly involved in the exam procedures. Koutsoumis claimed that the students had been led to 'slaughter' (*eis sfageion*), having been abandoned by the school board, which accepted without any complaints the insulting behaviour of the Egyptian examiners towards the school's teachers. He thus asked Theodorakis what his intentions were on the matter, and what kind of measures he would take.[35]

Koutsoumis, while raising the issue of the Greek students' examination with Theodorakis, found the opportunity to complain about the new educational system and the control the EKA and its schools were losing as a result. In his letter to Theodorakis, Koutsoumis emphasised that the latter belonged to the 'old guard' (*palaian froura*) of the EKA board, meaning he

33 Koutsoumis to Theodorakis, 18 June 1964; Koutsoumis to Oikonomou, 18 June 1964, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias. Both letters were also sent to the General Consulate of Greece in Alexandria and the Greek Ministry of Education in Athens.

34 Koutsoumis to Oikonomou, 18 June 1964, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

35 Koutsoumis referred to the fact that the examiners neglected the role of the school teachers, who complained about the structure of the examination, so students would not submit empty papers. The examiners did not allow any teachers to interfere in their examination. Koutsoumis to Theodorakis, 18 June 1964, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

was one of the oldest board members, and hence, he had a moral obligation not to accept this new system of Egyptian control, which, as Koutsoumis stated: 'severely affected our Greek dignity and our educational autonomy (*ekpaideutikēn mas autoteleian*)'. Koutsoumis's references to the past, when the Greek community was more in control of its educational system, implied that the EKA should not accept the new conditions that Nasser had introduced, but instead should preserve its former structure, with its autonomy and power. In addition, his letter made it clear that he had discussed this issue with other parents, as well as the directors of the schools, and that there was a common feeling that the Greek schools were losing their 'dignity and autonomy'.[36]

The EKA was financially supported by the Greek government so it could continue teaching Greek language and culture to a sufficient level. In addition, the EKA's activities that kept the community's 'Greekness' alive had in the past been compared favourably by both the EKA and Greek government representatives with other *koinotētes* of the Greek diaspora; these had failed to maintain such programs, as they did not receive similar levels of financial support.[37] Indeed, the EKA, as both a local and a diasporic institution, was tasked by the Greek government with maintaining the nation in Egypt. The EKA, through its communal elites, nurtured the community's identifications as imagined by the EKA's board, by preserving its cultural capital.[38] In doing so, the EKA embodied certain ideas in the eyes of the Greek community, among them dignity and autonomy, and was deemed responsible for their fashioning. Hence, Koutsoumis's letter stressed all these aspects that were seen as being taken away from the Greek schools (and the EKA) when they were placed under Egyptian control.

Nevertheless, among the EKA board members, there were always dissonant voices (a minority, in most cases) advocating positions that the rest of the board did not agree with. Some of the issues raised were question of whether education in the EKA's schools should be free or not, and the merging of the EKA's technical/vocational schools with those of the Cairo *koinotēta*.[39] I have not found any such dissonant voices advocating the

36 Ibid.

37 *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 7 December 1973, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

38 Tölölyan, "Elites and Institutions," 110.

39 *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 4 September 1973, File*: Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970–1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 13; *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 30 November 1973, File*: Praktika Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 1970–1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 5–6.

prioritisation of Arabic in the EKA's schools. However, I assume they existed. Many members of the Greek community in Alexandria with whom I had conversations and who had elected to remain in Egypt, found learning Arabic necessary to continue living there after the 1960s. On an institutional level, though, so far, these voices did not appear in my archival research. Many of the EKA board members found teaching Arabic important, but not to the same degree as Greek. Indeed, after the departures in the early 1960s and the decrease in community members, Greeks attempted to preserve a certain 'Greekness' through their school curriculum and educational institutions, in order to respond to the increasing 'Egyptianness' and fears of assimilation.[40] This 'Greekness' entailed the preservation of the Greek language and culture, which reinforced loyalty and feelings of belonging to the Greek nation.[41]

## The new educational reality in the 1970s

The orientation of the new government of Anwar Sadat was markedly different to that of Nasser with regards to national education and its relationship to the foreign schools. Sadat's orientation towards the West appeared not only in the form of economic liberalisation (*infitāh*), but also in the educational and cultural spheres, where foreign schools regained their power. The growth of the private sector was also translated into more available jobs for the graduates of foreign schools, a factor that impacted students from public schools, since they now faced disadvantages in the employment market.[42] Thus, from the discourse of foreign cultural invasion and resentment at foreign influence that prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s, the government's policies changed in the 1970s and 1980s to favour foreign investment, privatization, and foreign influence in education. Accordingly, since Greek education was seen as foreign, and in line with Sadat's foreign influence, the situation for the EKA schools started to change in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, as is visible in changes to examinations and a decreasing focus on the Arabic language and Egyptian education courses. As I demonstrate below, the Greek community and its leadership took advantage of the reduced supervision

40 Souyioultzoglou, "Apo tin Istoria sti Mnimi".

41 On the preservation of 'Greekness' among the EKA's philanthropic institutions, see Mylona, "Philanthropy in Maintenance".

42 Browne, "Education reform in Egypt", 130. See also chapter five in Cochran, *Education in Egypt*.

and more lenient rules under Sadat to adjust their educational provision to their own needs and regain their autonomy.

Already in 1965, the Egyptian government had decided to reorganise the final examination by allowing students to take the exams in their own schools, integrating school teachers into the form and execution of the exams. The EKA's representatives perceived this change as very positive, as stated in their annual report:

> With great joy and relief, we welcomed the cancelation of the official exams in Arabic language and Egyptian education (*Aigyptiakē Morfōsē*). The students of the 6th grade of the Tositsaia primary school took the exams at their school and in their classrooms, where the environment is familiar to them. The exams took place in the presence of one inspector, while the exam questions were formed together by the inspector and our coordinator, Mohammad Hussein. The results were satisfactory.[43]

The positive changes related to the fact that the exams took place at the community's schools, allowing the coordinator of the school's Arabic program, Hussein, to formulate the exam questions. This granted more control to the EKA, compared to previous years. On the one hand, this change concerned the EKA's prestige, or in Koutsoumis's words it returned 'dignity and autonomy'[44] to the institution; on the other hand, practical matters were solved, as the schools regained control over the exam's content and level of difficulty, and students did better in a more familiar environment answering questions of the kind they were used to. Even though no written response from Oikonomou or Theodorakis was found, and as such, one cannot be sure to what extent the complaints mentioned above impacted the structure of the examination, the fact that the examination system changed one year after the incident (1964) may demonstrate the agency of the EKA and its schools to negotiate in areas important to them.

The Arabic language and Egyptian education courses also decreased in hours in the late 1960s.[45] The reduced hours spent on Egyptian culture was announced in one of the EKA's meeting in November 1970, one month after Sadat was sworn into office as the new president of Egypt, following

43 *Logodosia Etous 1965*, Ellēnikē en Alexandreias Koinotēs, ELIA Archive, 45.

44 Koutsoumis to Theodorakis, 18 June 1964, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias.

45 *Logodosia Averofeiou Scholeiou 1966–1967*, Koutsoukos to Theodorakis, 5 July 1967, protocol number: 180/104 File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1963–1977, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 3.

the death of Nasser in September 1970, indicating the orientation of the new government.[46] Egyptian education was removed completely from the curriculum across all EKA's schools in 1973. From that year onwards, students were only taught Arabic, with fewer hours.[47]

As shown in the EKA minutes of June 1972, there was a mutual understanding and 'silent agreement' between Sadat's new government and the Alexandrian Greek schools concerning the use of Arabic in schools, and its benefits (or not) to students, the general orientation schools should have, and their autonomy. Since there was no longer a requirement by the Egyptian government for the Greek students to reach the same level of Arabic as Egyptian students, the EKA's board members took the opportunity to introduce their own educational initiatives. In a meeting in 1972, Nikos Perakis, the school commissioner, after explaining the situation concerning Arabic and the low level of the EKA's students to the board members, had used the words of the Egyptian government to push for the independence of the Greek schools. Rather than calling for measures that would raise all students' level in Arabic to meet the Egyptian government's and schools' standards, instead Perakis proposed reforms that emphasized the EKA's right to decide on a curriculum that best served its student population.[48]

Perakis stated the students' general poor results, with an average pass rate of 30 per cent for the gymnasium classes, and 40 per cent for the lyceum classes. He highlighted that a large percentage of the successful results were those of students who were taking extra Arabic classes at home and, therefore, had extra support.[49] Referring to the unsuccessful teaching of Arabic at the EKA's schools, he stressed that the Arabic course needed to be taught in accordance with today's reality, so students would benefit from systematic and pragmatic learning of the language. Finally, he stressed that the grades given to students did not correspond to their actual level and, thus, to their actual acquisition of the Arabic language. After stating the schools'

46 *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 23 November 1970, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970–1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 3.

47 It was not stated in the minutes whether the removal of the course was made at the request of the Egyptian government. *Praktika Synedrias Averofeiou Scholeiou*, 2 October 1973, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970–1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 4.

48 *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 28 June 1972, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970–1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 9–10.

49 The phenomenon of private lessons appeared during the 1970s. Browne, "Education reform in Egypt", 132.

limitations in teaching Arabic, and in order to press even further his claim that the current style of Arabic teaching was of little use to EKA students, Perakis presented five points that the Egyptian government recognised in relation to the EKA's schools, in order to show how the organisation might regain its autonomy concerning its educational curriculum. These points were:

1. Our schools are entirely Greek.
2. The teaching material is provided by the Greek Ministry of Education, and it is in accordance with its curriculum.
3. The exams of the schools are in accordance with the curriculum of the Greek Ministry of Education.
4. The admission of our graduates to Egyptian Universities is based on their performance tested by the Greek examination committee, regardless of their grades in the Arabic courses during the gymnasium classes.[50]
5. The learning of Arabic by our students is difficult.[51]

After mentioning the points that Sadat's government recognised in relation to the Greek schools, Perakis made three proposals: 1) the separation of the Greek and Arabic curricula, since students' graduation from school did not require them to pass Arabic; 2) students from the 3rd grade of primary school until the sixth grade of the gymnasium should be taught the material of Egyptian primary schools, but with less focus on grammar; and 3), the EKA should introduce specialized tutorials, three hours a week, for students of the last three grades of the gymnasium (the lyceum) who wished to continue their studies in Egyptian universities.

After Perakis's suggestions, the board decided to form a small committee consisting of EKA board members to consider how they should proceed. A little over a year later, in October 1973, the EKA board decided to approve some of the suggestions made by Perakis in June 1972. After having agreed to the decrease in teaching hours in Arabic, as stated above, the board also approved the second proposal.[52] Hence, the EKA board members took advantage of the opportunities created by Sadat's government, of lenient policies and

50 Gymnasium here is considered to contain six grades, as Gymnasium and Lyceum together.

51 *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 28 June 1972, File*: Eiserchomenē Allēlografia* (Incoming Correspondence), 1970–1973, Archeio Ellēnikēs *Koinotētas* Alexandreias, 10.

52 The second proposal was linked to point 5. Since students found the Arabic course difficult, Perakis's proposal was to keep teaching the Arabic language, but in a 'lighter' version. The third proposal was linked to point 4. It was a service to students who would like to continue to Egyptian universities; by offering some extra hours of Arabic at school, it was hoped they would perform better at university. *Praktika Synedrias Koinotikēs Epitropēs*, 28 June 1972, File*:*

less supervision of their schools, to implement their own measures. Indeed, the Sadat government left the Greek institutions with a great deal of power to decide their education system, when necessary. The EKA schools could thus maintain their autonomy, since there was no real reinforcement by the Ministry of Education of their compliance with the rules.

## Conclusion

During Gamal Abdel Nasser's rule, when Arab and Egyptian nationalism were major forces in state policy, the pressure to meet the demands of new educational policies weighed heavily on the *mutamassirun* communities and their institutions, and caused concern for those looking to the future lives of their younger generations. In this article, I discussed particularly the institution of the Greek community in Alexandria, EKA, and the actions and policies it employed towards Arabic education for the members of the Greek community. For some, resistance to the pressure for even younger students in the Greek system to study formal written and spoken Arabic was an ideological matter, representing the communities' right to determine their own educational priorities and procedures. For others, it was a more practical matter, related to the lack of suitable teachers and examiners both within the communities and on the part of the rapidly-changing Egyptian state. For some, it was a relief when policies relaxed under Anwar Sadat's rule in the 1970s, although while the demands of state policy may have receded, those of the local labour market and institutions of further and higher education did not necessarily follow suit. The shift from the strict policies of Gamal Abdel Nasser on education, towards Sadat's more lenient regulations, left the institution with a great deal of power to negotiate matters independently. Hence, even though in the 1960s the principal goal for the Greek community's schools was to strengthen Arabic teaching, once the revocation of these policies took place in the 1970s, the EKA took the opportunity to implement measures that best served its interests and allowed it to decide its own positions. Therefore, and despite the community's shrinkage, the EKA maintained its right to imagine and fashion autonomously the community's identifications and belonging.

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# 9. Arabic language teaching as a battleground: Colonial and nationalist myths and discourses on Arabic in Morocco[1]

*Kaoutar Ghilani*

**Abstract:** Post-independence scholarship has pictured colonial education in Morocco as an enterprise of assimilation and erasure of the national personality, especially through contempt for the Arabic language. This discourse, a key driver of Moroccan nationalism, is in reality a nationalist re-writing of colonial history. Arabic language teaching in Morocco under the French protectorate (1912–1956) was much more complex than what became the doxa after independence. The teaching of Standard Arabic was in reality mythologized during the French Protectorate by both colonial and Moroccan nationalist voices. This chapter is a history of Arabic language teaching as a discursive object in colonial Morocco. It investigates how discourses carrying misconceptions and misinformation about Arabic language teaching were circulated by both colonial officials and Moroccan nationalists to construct narratives that would win people over.

**Keywords:** Morocco; Arabic language; discourse production; discourse circulation; myths; colonialism; nationalism

More widespread than Arabic language instruction as a practice are the stories and beliefs about Arabic and its teaching.[2] This is all the more so when Arabic language education was a key component of a successful

1 All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated.

2 In this chapter, 'Arabic' is used to refer to Standard Arabic, also called *fuṣḥā* Arabic. Any other use will be made explicit.

Sarah Irving, Karène Sanchez Summerer, Rachel Mairs, and Lucia Admiraal (eds), *Colonial Vocabularies. Teaching and Learning Arabic, 1870-1970*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025
DOI: 10.5117/9789048560394_CH09

ideology. Morocco is a case in point. If you were to ask random people in a Moroccan street how Arabic was taught before and during the French Protectorate, you would probably be surprised by the extent of confident knowledge regarding, *in fine*, a technical historical question. It is commonly believed that, in pre-colonial Morocco, education was exclusively 'Islamic' and 'traditional', with Standard Arabic as the only language of tuition. The common narrative maintains that, as the colonizer aimed to erase the national personality, the teaching of Standard Arabic was then excessively limited, if not abandoned, during the French Protectorate (1912–1956), making Moroccan nationalists not only demand better and stronger Arabic language instruction, but also develop a private modern education system relying on Standard Arabic as the language of tuition. These schools, referred to as *al-madāris al-ḥurrah* (free schools), became important centres of nationalist promotion. This comprehensive narrative about Standard Arabic teaching in Morocco is not only popular among the general public, but it is also broadly circulated in academic circles in Morocco[3] and beyond.[4]

This narrative, key in post-colonial Moroccan nation-building, is unsurprisingly the result of multiple discourses, governed by various social, political, and economic interests, and combining historical facts with invented ones. Rather than a history of Arabic language teaching as a practice during the colonial period in Morocco, this chapter writes the history of narratives about Arabic language teaching. It uncovers the various discourses regarding Arabic language instruction in colonial Morocco as produced and circulated by, on the one hand, French colonial authorities, and on the other hand, Moroccan nationalists. It aims to highlight myths about the Arabic language and its teaching, contextualize the narratives carrying those myths, identify their producers and the conditions of their circulation, and, finally, reflect on the various functions of narratives about Arabic language teaching. It connects three types of academic literature dealing with the Arabic language and its teaching during the Protectorate that have generally been studied separately. These are the literature on the

3 See e.g. Al-Fassi, *Al-naqd al-dhātī* [Self-Critique], 335; Al-Jabri, *Aḍwāʾ ʿalā mushkil al-taʿlīm bi-l-maghrib* [Lights on the Problem of Education in Morocco], 19; Ennaji, *Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Education in Morocco*, 97; Idem, "Conquest and Contact in North African Languages", 124.

4 See e.g. Halstead, *Rebirth of A Nation. The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912–1944*, 100–101, 114; Grandguillaume, *Arabisation et politique linguistique au Maghreb*, 12; De Poli, "Francisation et arabisation au Maroc: l'identité linguistique entre enjeux symboliques et idéologiques", 4; Twohig, *Contesting the Classroom: Reimagining Education in Moroccan and Algerian Literatures*, 6.

'Berber policy' adopted by the French Protectorate regime,[5] educational history under the French protectorate,[6] and knowledge production about Moroccan society before and during colonization.[7] The chapter is composed of two sections, each investigating myths and narratives about the Arabic language and its teaching. The first section focuses on discourses relating to race while the second investigates those associated to the 'tradition/modernity' binary.

## 1. On Arabic language teaching and race

Maurice Le Glay, a French career soldier who was sent to Morocco in 1908 to investigate the possibilities of French 'penetration', and later studied Berber tribes, formulated a piece of advice to French politicians: 'Teach everything to the Berbers except Arabic and Islam'.[8] Le Glay's remark ensued from the establishment of a 'Berber race' and an 'Arab race' in French colonial knowledge about Morocco. Before the protectorate, Moroccans spoke various regional varieties of Arabic and Amazigh. The categorization of language as a racial difference, that is, with '"[l]egitimate" categories of social classification',[9] was developed in colonial scholarship and policy and was mostly concerned with the categorization of Arabs and Berbers as two distinct races. While *race* and *ethnie* (ethnic group) were used interchangeably by French scholars and policymakers in Morocco (and more generally in North and West Africa),[10] biological characterization was common in

5 See e.g. Ageron, "La politique berbère du protectorat marocain de 1913 à 1934"; Lafuente, "Dossier marocain sur le dahir berbère de 1930"; Idem, *La Politique berbère de la France et le nationalisme marocain*; Wyrtzen, *Making Morocco: Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity*.

6 See e.g. Al-Jabri, *Aḍwāʾ ʿalā mushkil al-taʿlīm bi-l-maghrib* [Lights on the Problem of Education in Morocco]; Damis, "The Origins and Significance of the Free School Movement, 1919–1931"; Knibiehler, "L'enseignement au Maroc pendant le protectorat (1912–1956). Les 'fils de notables'"; Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul: French Education, Colonial Ethnology, and Muslim Resistance, 1912–1956*; Vermeren, *École, élite et pouvoir au Maroc et en Tunisie au XXe siècle*.

7 Edmund Burke has written extensively about this topic. See e.g. Burke III, "The Image of the Moroccan State in French Ethnological Literature: A New Look at the Origin of Lyautey's Berber Policy" 181–182; Idem, *Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco: Precolonial Protest and Resistance 1860–1912*; Idem, "The Creation of the Moroccan Colonial Archive, 1880–1930", 4; Idem, *The Ethnographic State: France and the Invention of Moroccan Islam*. On knowledge production at the same period beyond the case of Morocco, see Messaoudi, *Les arabisants et la France coloniale, 1780–1930*.

8 Ben Mlih, *Structures politiques du Maroc colonial*, 240.

9 McDougall, "Colonial Words: Nationalism, Islam, and Languages of History in Algeria", 39.

10 Hoffman, "Purity and Contamination: Language Ideologies in French Colonial Native Policy in Morocco", 731–732.

both cases. Social attributes such as religion, kinship, or language, usually referring to ethnicity, were used in conjunction with an epidemiological vocabulary usually reserved for the spread of diseases. 'Contamination' was, in this regard, a key concept. How did the category 'language', here representing Arabic and Amazigh, become equivalent to 'race' and how did Arabic language teaching represent a racial 'contamination'?

### *A history of the 'Moroccan Vulgate'*

The binary Berber/Arab is at the heart of 'the Moroccan Vulgate', that is, a series of colonial stereotypes about the Moroccan state and society, established by colonial scholarship and utilized by colonial power to rule over Morocco.[11] Historian Edmund Burke III summarizes the 'Moroccan Vulgate' in the following terms:

> In general, this view of Morocco and the Moroccan past has emphasized the division of the realm into two zones, one where the central government (the *makhzan*) was supreme, taxes were collected, governors governed, and laws were respected, and the other where the central government was impotent, and unruly tribes devoted their time to feuding and banditry. Under the rubric of *Bled el-makhzan* and *Bled es-siba*, the portrait of a regime divided between contradictory tendencies toward autocratic order and anarchy, in which neither was able to gain the upper hand has gained widespread acceptance. Closely interwoven with this image has been a second one, a view of a profound ethnic split in Moroccan society between Arabs and Berbers. The course of Moroccan history before the protectorate was seen as the efforts of the Arab government forces to impose themselves upon the Berber dissidents.[12]

The history of the 'Moroccan Vulgate' is telling on the composition of a rigid political and racial dichotomy between an Arab *Blad el-makhzan* and a Berber *Blad es-siba* and on the establishment and circulation of a discourse on Arabic language instruction as racial contamination among colonial circles.

Before 1904, French scholarship on Morocco was 'remarkably undogmatic, tentative, and flexible'.[13] France's knowledge of Morocco at the time was

11 Edmond Burke III derived the concept from Charles-Robert Ageron's 'Algerian Vulgate'. See Ageron, "La France a-t-elle eu une politique Kabyle?"; Burke III, "The Image of the Moroccan State", 177.

12 Burke III, "The Image of the Moroccan State", 175.

13 Ibid., 178.

very limited, not driven by a clear ideology, and relied on the accounts of its ambassadors stationed there, but who rarely travelled, and of some rare explorers who ventured in what was renowned as a dangerous country.[14] *Reconnaissance au Maroc* (1888), written by the explorer Charles de Foucauld, was the main published work on Morocco before 1900 and was therefore a must-read for all French scholars and military officers.[15] This book has been largely misread and misquoted as the establishment of a rigid dichotomy between an Arab *blad al-makhzen*[16] and a Berber *blad al-sība*.[17] In his book, written to assist in the colonial conquest,[18] Foucauld established that Morocco was divided into two parts 'one submitted to the Sultan in an effective manner (*blad al-makhzen*), where Europeans circulate openly and in complete safety; [and] the other, four or five times larger, populated by insubordinate or independent tribes (*blad al-sība*)'.[19] However, he nuanced the systematizing character of his observation, noting examples of insecurity in *blad al-makhzen* and putting forward the fact that only a small minority of places in *blad al-sība* did not maintain any contact with the *makhzen*. Also, he differentiated between Arabs and Berbers linguistically – not ethnically or racially.[20]

While French knowledge of Morocco, up to that point, was fragmented and produced by single explorers, the international struggle over it at the beginning of the twentieth century, also called the 'Moroccan question',[21] attracted 'specialists' with a more 'scientific approach' (i.e. sociologists, geographers, linguists).[22] Edmond Doutté was the first French scholar to receive official assistance to explore Morocco. Funded by the *Comité de l'Afrique Française*, he carried out three missions between 1900 and 1904. Doutté's reports, published in the journal *L'Afrique française*, constituted the most detailed description of Moroccan society available until 1904.[23] Regarding the nature of the distinction between Arabs and Berbers, Doutté writes in 1901:

14 Burke III, "The Image of the Moroccan State", 175.

15 Burke III, *The Ethnographic State*, 36.

16 The *makhzen* refers here to the pre-colonial central political authority centred around the Sultan in Morocco.

17 For an analysis of the myth around Charles De Foucauld and the posterity of his work, see Dusserre, "Pratique de l'espace et invention du territoire".

18 Ibid., 37.

19 De Foucauld, *Reconnaissance au Maroc: 1883–1884* (Paris: Challamel, 1888), xv.

20 Rivet, *Lyautey et l'institution du protectorat français au Maroc, 1912–1925*, 29; Burke III, *The Ethnographic State*, 37.

21 Burke III, *The Ethnographic State*, 4.

22 Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 42.

23 Ibid., 45; Burke III, "The Image of the Moroccan State", 179.

> In both Morocco and Algeria, the ethnic distinction of the natives into Arabs and Berbers is a vain distinction, because no criterion can be invoked as a basis for this division. It is more than doubtful that there was a Berber race.[24]

However, as the distinction between Arabs and Berbers remained very common, Doutté endeavours to distinguish between the two:

> If we take a closer look, we find that the name 'Berbers' is mainly used for populations that have kept customs, usages, and ante-Islamic appearances, while the name 'Arabs' is reserved for groups that are better Islamized.[25]

Doutté is not convinced of this distinction, which he finds highly random because 'the word "Berber" has a precise meaning only in linguistics, where it designates a set of dialects closely united by common characters'.[26] He also cites counter-examples to this distinction, such as the Goundafa tribe where the population speaks Berber but where Muslim law (*shra*ʿ) has completely supplanted the custom, *shra*ʿ being taught in the Berber dialect of the region.[27] Thus, the difference between Arabs and Berbers is blurred and represents at most a linguistic difference. He adds that a tribe where the population speaks Berber is Berber, a tribe where the population speaks Arabic is Arabized.[28]

Regarding the distinction between *blad al-makhzen* and *blad al-sība*, Doutté introduces nuance:

> In a sense, the expression '*blad al-makhzen*' as opposed to '*blad al-sība*' is not accurate, because the whole of Morocco, in different forms and to varying degrees, is subject to the action of the *makhzen*.[29]

He goes as far as to reject the idea that *blad al-sība* is the reign of anarchy, emphasizing that 'in this apparent chaos, all the living forces have finally found a balance', in both the tribes and cities.[30]

24 Doutté, *Renseignements coloniaux*, supp., *Bulletin du comité de l'Afrique française* (1901), 165, in Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 45.

25 Ibid.

26 Doutté, *Renseignements coloniaux*, 166–167, in Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 45.

27 Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 45–46.

28 Ibid., 47.

29 Doutté, *Renseignements coloniaux*, 171, in Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 46.

30 Ibid., 172.

In 1904, Doutté's two very nuanced distinctions between, on the one hand, Arabs and Berbers and, on the other, *blad al-makhzen* and *blad al-sība*, were linked by Eugène Aubin in his book *Le Maroc d'aujourd'hui*:[31]

> In reality, there is a wall between Berbers and Arabs. [...] Most of the Berber tribes in Morocco remain independent and form the *blad al-sība*. [...] Tax is hardly paid and the quota is irregularly supplied.[32]

Aubin equates Arab with *blad al-makhzen* and Berber with *blad al-sība*. However, he insists on the porosity of the borders between these two spaces, writing that 'even in the most remote parts of the *blad al-sība*, there is no tribe that is not related to the *makhzen*'.[33]

The year 1904 marked a turning point in French scholarly discourse on Morocco. France achieved a dominant position in Moroccan affairs through the *entente cordiale* in 1904[34] and, through a loan agreement, saw its interests align with those of the Moroccan state.[35] As a consequence, France opted for the '*makhzen* policy', associating itself with the *makhzen* elite.[36] This political decision had a significant impact on the scholarship produced about Morocco. Highlighting a strong dichotomy between *blad al-sība* and *blad al-makhzen* became advantageous to France. Indeed, '[b]y substituting itself for the *makhzan*', Burke argues, 'France put itself in a position where it could dismiss any resistance on the part of the tribes as the traditional dissidence of *bled el-siba*, rather than as a politically significant response'.[37] The most telling example is that of Michaux-Bellaire. In 1908, every nuance disappeared in his writings. For him, Morocco was now clearly divided into two irreconcilable 'organisms': the '*makhzen* organism' and the 'Berber organism'.[38] Michaux-Bellaire articulated a simplistic, binary idea, popular at the time but not formalized by serious scholarship, between, on the one hand, Arab *makhzen* forces, and on the other, Berber *sība* dissidents. This view became a main component of the 'Moroccan Vulgate'.

31 Aubin, *Le Maroc d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1904).

32 Ibid., 52–53.

33 Ibid., 241.

34 The *entente-cordiale* refers to the agreements signed by France and Britain in 1904 giving a free hand to France in Morocco in exchange for leaving Egypt to Britain.

35 Burke III, "The Image of the Moroccan State", 181.

36 Burke III, *The Ethnographic State*, 77.

37 Ibid., 77.

38 Michaux-Bellaire, "L'organisme marocain", *Revue du monde musulman* 9 (1908), 1–33, in Burke III, *The Ethnographic State*, 79.

***Defining 'the Berber race' and 'the Arab race'***

The essentialization of 'the Berber' in French scholarship on Morocco only started after 1912. The 1913–14 uprisings in the Middle Atlas took the French by surprise and led them to realise how little they knew about this population.[39] The difficulties faced by the protectorate to impose domination propelled the production of knowledge about Berbers, especially those of the Middle Atlas, to the head of the native policy agenda.[40] The *Résidence* responded to this power-knowledge crisis with the creation of a Berber Studies Committee in 1915, which set itself the objective of 'providing useful information on the social institutions that are to be safeguarded or amended in the best interests of our domination'.[41] This Committee's publication, *Les Archives berbères*, became the discursive space for the production of knowledge about the Berbers and a base for what would be known as the 'Berber policy', the rationale for which was made explicit by Gaudefroy-Demombynes:

> It would be dangerous to allow a compact bloc of natives to form, whose language and institutions would be common. We must take up the formula formerly used by the *makhzen*: 'divide and rule.' [...] [The] existence of the Berber element is a useful counterweight to the Arab element, which we can use against the *makhzen*.[42]

The most dominant discourse on racial difference in colonial Morocco was the one promoted by the *Archives berbères*, published from 1915 to 1920, which was then included in *Hespris*, the journal of the *Institut des Hautes Études Marocaines*. *Les Archives berbères*, the entirety of which I have analyzed, aimed to capture 'the Berber' as an essence, and more precisely as a 'race'.[43] The 'Berbers' were indeed presented as a distinct 'race' from the very first

39 Burke III, "The Creation of the Moroccan Colonial Archive", 6.

40 Ibid.

41 Laoust, "Le Mariage chez les Berbères du Maroc," *Les Archives Berbères*, vol. I, fasc. 1 (1915–1916): 76.

42 Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *L'œuvre française en matière d'enseignement au Maroc*, 119.

43 While the discourse on the 'Berber' and 'Arab' races was dominant among colonial scholars and administrators in Morocco, notably thanks to the *Archives berbères* and later *Hespéris*, it was not the only discourse on the racial nature of Moroccans available in the public sphere. A marginal discourse viewing all Moroccans as *one* people, racially Berber, also existed. Its advocates included Captain Victor Piquet and Director of Public Instruction Georges Hardy, the latter using the expression 'the Moroccan race'. See Piquet, *Le Peuple Marocain. Le Bloc Berbère*,119; Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 138; also see Hoffman, "Purity and Contamination", 743.

texts of the *Archives berbères*.[44] The phrase 'pure Berbers' was extensively used; sometimes scholars even opted for its more explicitly racialist version 'pure Berbers of white race'.[45]

Throughout the issues of the journal, a search for the most relevant criteria to define 'the Berber' took place. Language, as an element of identification of Berbers, was quickly abandoned as, since the first issue, it was established that there were 'pure Berbers' and 'Arabized Berbers'.[46] The members of this second group were very numerous, 'to such an extent that superficial observers may have believed for a long time that the Arab element dominated the population of the Maghreb. It is well established today that the opposite is true, and that the pure Arabs are rather sparse among the native Berbers'.[47] Thus, language was not more than a superficial manifestation, if not a bias, hindering colonial scholars in their quest for the determinants of the 'Berber essence'. The distinction between Arabs and Berbers based on religious grounds seemed as doubtful given that Berbers have been Muslim for several centuries (the *Archives* rarely mention Jewish Berbers[48]). Through detailed descriptions of the tribes, the colonial officials and scholars who contributed to the *Archives berbères* characterized what they believed constituted the heart of the 'Berber soul': custom. 'The Berber' was someone whose customs displayed pre-Islamic traditions, and, consequently, was a 'surface Muslim'[49] who 'has not lost any of [his] freedoms and has never sacrificed to Islam the customs and traditions of [his] ancestors'.[50] 'The Arab' was defined as

44 This was not specific to the *Archives berbères*. See e.g. Huguet, "Les races marocaines".

45 Bruno, "Introduction à l'étude du droit coutumier des berbères du Maroc central", 297–309; Ageron, "Politique berbère", 53.

46 Simon, "Les Études berbères au Maroc et leurs applications en matière de politique et d'administration", 3.

47 Ibid.

48 It is not clear why Berber-speaking Jews are rarely referenced in the *Archives berbères*. Yet, some studies focusing on Jewish populations in North Africa were published in the *Archives marocaines*, notably studies by Nahum Slouschz in 1905. A possible reason for the relative absence of Jewishness in the *Archives berbères* could relate to a common ideological approach in which Jews were viewed as a distinct population. In other words, Berber-speaking Jews were not perceived as Jewish Berbers, but rather as Jews who were Berberized. They were therefore necessarily closer to other Jews, notably Arabic-speaking Jews, than other Berbers. Following this logic, studying Berber-speaking Jews would not have helped colonial authorities in better understanding the 'Berber essence'. More research is nonetheless needed to explain this absence. For more on this topic, see Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc, 1859–1948. Contribution à l'histoire des relations inter-communautaires en terre d'Islam*; Abitbol, *Relations judéo-musulmanes au Maroc: Perceptions et réalités*; Cohen-Lacassagne, *Berbères juifs: L'émergence du monothéisme en Afrique du Nord*.

49 Laoust, "Mariage chez les Berbères", 75.

50 Bruno, "Introduction à l'étude du droit coutumier", 299.

the strict opposite, submitted to Islamic *shraʿ* and deeply Muslim. The first articles in *Les Archives berbères* reveal, however, serious counter-arguments to the characterizations subsequently adopted, notably highlighting the strong belief of Berber tribes in their own Muslim character, which led them to declare holy war against the invading Christian enemy as early as 1908.[51] Moreover, the distinction between customary law and *shraʿ* was not always as clear-cut as colonial scholars and administrators wanted it to appear, the oral precedent being 'infused' with local understandings of *shraʿ*.[52]

In this scholarship, which has drawn the interest of several scholars,[53] the 'Berber race' had distinctive features: 'frankness, loyalty, sense of economic interest, [and] absence of aggressive fanaticism'.[54] Berbers were also independent, courageous, democratic, and individualistic.[55] *Les Archives berbères* was full of compliments about Berbers who were 'characterized by superior physical characteristics',[56] 'tall and slender, and very white, lean with conical chests whose features are those of our Auvergnats'.[57] Their often blond or red-haired phenotype was repeatedly highlighted to imply a genetical closeness to Europeans and more specifically to French peasants: '"[t]he Berber soul" must therefore have been what "the old soul of our French peasants" was'.[58] The way Moroccan Berbers were pictured in colonial scholarship would come as no surprise to specialists of Algeria as the Kabyle Myth, differentiating Kabyle Berbers from the rest of the Algerian population on the basis of distinct qualities of their 'race', was a major source of inspiration for the construction of a distinction between Berbers and Arabs in Morocco. While the Kabyle myth stayed in academia, its equivalent in Morocco would find an application in the colonial 'Berber policy'.[59]

The delineation of the 'Berber race' did not go without characterizing what 'the Berbers' were not – Arabs. The main defining feature of the 'Arab race'

51 Biarnay, "Notes sur les chants populaires du Rif".

52 Guerin, "Racial Myth, Colonial Reform, and the Invention of Customary Law in Morocco, 1912–1930".

53 The works of Charles-Robert Ageron and Gilles Lafuente are certainly among the most important on this topic. See Ageron, "La politique berbère du protectorat marocain de 1913 à 1934"; Lafuente, *La Politique berbère de la France et le nationalisme marocain*.

54 Doutté, *En Tribu*, 337.

55 Piquet, *Le Peuple Marocain*, 119; Biarnay, "Notes sur les chants populaires", 23.

56 Hector, *Essai de monographie psychologique berbère* (Casablanca: 1935), in Ageron, "Politique berbère", 53.

57 Le Glay, *Renseignements coloniaux*, supp., *Bulletin du comité de l'Afrique française* (1901), in Ageron, "Politique berbère", 53.

58 Ageron, "Politique berbère", 53.

59 Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Race in Colonial* Algeria, 228–231.

was its religiosity. Hoffman pointed out that '[m]entions of Arabic language in the colonial archive consistently characterize it as wedded to Islamic religion'.[60] Arabic and Islam were indeed made inherently indivisible by colonial scholars, centring 'orthodox Islam' as the core of 'Arabness'. While Arabs were religious to the point of becoming 'fanatics',[61] '[t]he pure Berbers [were] very poorly religious': 'they were not fanatics' and 'almost never prayed'.[62] 'Berber hostility to the Quranic *shra*'', Ageron notes, 'was, without nuance, asserted as a racial characteristic'.[63] The racialist lens of colonial scholarship refused to consider linguistic phenomena such as 'Arabic-Berber bilingualism and context-specific language shifting and mixing',[64] only considering 'pure Berbers', 'pure Arabs', and 'Arabized Berbers', the latter being 'contaminated' Berbers. By erasing bilingualism and code-switching, colonial scholars simplified reality to erect two 'races' – one against the other.

### *The Arabic language as racial contamination*

As the 'Arab race' was defined primarily by its religiosity, colonial scholarship raised Arabization and Islamization as equivalents. By 'Arabization', colonial scholars and officers meant more than simply the fact of speaking Arabic. As observed by Hoffman, 'Arabization [...] did not merely entail a linguistic shift. Instead, it was a transformative process that altered a Berber group's culture, religion, politics, legal system, and even morality', outcomes all undesired by the French authorities.[65] In the mouth of French scholars and administrators, 'Arabization' meant the 'contamination' of 'pure Berbers' by Arabic, and therefore by Islam. Journalist and French diplomat Robert de Caix de Saint-Aymour said it clearly: 'to Arabize is to Islamicize [...] It is [...] furthering the hold of a religion of holy war and spreading a language that can be the vehicle of hostile ideas'.[66] Le Glay re-emphasized this point: 'the Arabic language is the same as Islam, in the sense that the Qur'ān is the only book the masses can learn to read'.[67] Arabization and Islamization went hand in hand, Arabization being the exterior manifestation of

60 Hoffman, "Purity and Contamination", 725.

61 Doutté, *En Tribu*, 341.

62 Ageron, "Politique berbère", 52.

63 Ibid., 54.

64 Ibid., 731.

65 Hoffman, "Purity and Contamination", 733.

66 De Caix, "Le Maroc français et la question indigène", 820, in Bidwell, *Morocco under Colonial Rule: French Administration of Tribal Areas 1912–1956*, 55.

67 Le Glay, "Notes contributives à l'étude de la question berbère. No. 4: Comment administrer les Berbères ?" in *CADN Maroc Protectorat DAI* 59, in Hoffman, "Purity and Contamination," 736–737.

Islamization. The colonizer believed that the purity of the Berber race could be preserved by avoiding its 'contamination', in the epidemiological sense,[68] by the Arab race.

The fear of corruption of the 'Berber essence' by Islam through Arabic-led colonial administrators to adopt a system of linguistic segregation in schools. This 1914 statement from the *Résidence* is eloquent regarding this point:

> We must avoid Islamizing and Arabizing the Berbers. If it is necessary for them to evolve, we will direct their evolution towards a distinctly European and not purely Muslim culture. If it is recognized that their language, with its innumerable dialects, must be replaced by a single language, instead of teaching them Arabic, that is, the Qurʿān, with all that this book taught by narrow-minded teachers can entail in terms of fanaticism, superstition, and resistance to progress, we shall teach them French, the vehicle of all noble and clear thoughts, the expression of an ever-higher ideal.[69]

Similarly, Maurice Le Glay believed that teaching Arabic to Berbers would be:

> a dreadful error that would lead to the perfect, definitive Islamization of Berber, to the creation in Morocco and by our own care, which would be absurd, of a Muslim mass without counterweight. For, when one is a Muslim, one remains one and, despite all our respect for Islam, we should not become its distributors. […] The deep and legitimate concern for our cause demands that the evolution of the mountain people be done in French, the vehicle of our thought. The Berber population will learn French and be administered in French.[70]

In her analysis of a questionnaire circulated in 1914 and aimed at cataloguing Berber society, Katherine Hoffman highlights that, in the eyes of French authorities, more dangerous than illiterate Berbers who spoke vernacular Arabic were Berbers who could read and write *fuṣḥā* Arabic, who had therefore been in contact with a *fqīh* (Islamic clerk at the head of a mosque)[71] and with the Qur'ān.[72]

68 Hoffman, "Purity and Contamination", 731–732.

69 Résidence Générale, "Rapport général sur la situation du protectorat au Maroc au 31 Juillet 1914", in Lafuente, *Politique Berbère*, 62.

70 Taillard, *Le Nationalisme marocain*, 95.

71 The word *fqīh* in the Maghreb differs from its meaning in the Mashreq where it refers to an Islamic jurist. *Fqīh* in the Maghreb corresponds to *sheikh* in the Mashreq.

72 Hoffman, "Purity and Contamination", 738.

A form of linguistic apartheid was established at school, producing an education system combining class and ethnicity/race. The *écoles rurales en pays arabe* – rural schools on Arab land – were therefore distinguished from the *écoles rurales en pays berbère* – rural schools on Berber land.[73] In reality, however, the curriculum was almost identical in the two systems, as Arabic was not taught in rural schools. In the elite schools, however, the difference was substantial. The *écoles franco-berbères* – Franco-Berber schools – were created in 1923 in Berber-speaking regions with a curriculum excluding Arabic and religion courses.[74] The *collège berbère d'Azrou* was created as a Berber equivalent to the *collèges musulmans* in order to train the Berber elites – both civil and military.[75] The *collège berbère* and the *collège musulman* were the two indigenous versions of the elitist school, each one concerned with a particular 'race'. In the establishment of distinct institutions for Berbers and Arabs lay the forceful application of colonial knowledge. Instead of Arab *collèges* and Berber *collèges*, there were Muslim *collèges* and Berber *collèges*, the exclusion of the 'Berber' from the 'Muslim' *collèges* implied that Berbers did not fall into the category of 'Muslims.' Through this complex and compartmentalized education system, the protectorate *created* the natives it considered appropriate for its rule. To this end, Lyautey wrote to the heads of the regions:

> The schools aim to tame the indigenous and to maintain discreetly but as firmly as possible the linguistic, religious, and social differences that exist between the Islamicized and Arabized *bled al-makhzen* and the religious but pagan Berber Mountain that does not speak Arabic.[76]

## 2. On the Arabic language and the identity/modernity binary

Language is both an expression of identity and a tool for utility. It contributes to a speaker's sense of selfhood while serving as a tool of communication and social signalling, among others. Attributing a single function to a language, as either identity- or utility-focused, results from a language ideology, which

73 Ibid., 89.

74 Julien, *Le Maroc face aux impérialismes 1415–1956*, 100.

75 Benhlal, *Le collège d'Azrou: le formation d'une élite berbère civile et militaire au Maroc (1927–1959)*.

76 Julien, *Le Maroc face aux impérialismes*, 101.

is the association of languages and their speakers with specific sets of beliefs and representations, whether explicit or implicit.[77]

The overworked *tradition/modernity* binary, mirroring to a large extent the *identity/utility* one, was a lens through which languages were viewed and categorized in the colonial period.[78] In this context, *fuṣḥā* Arabic was, unsurprisingly, the language of tradition, its mastery giving access to the Qurʿānic text and contributing to the preservation of Arab-Muslim identity. French was, on the other hand, the language of utility allowing access to modernity.[79] While the *tradition/modernity* binary was extensively used as a category of knowledge to describe languages at school in Morocco, I show in this section that the binary was not a systematically accepted category of practice. The conception of the Arabic language and its role for individuals and society in the colonial education system varied significantly depending on the discourse producers and their interests during the period concerned. Relying on recent scholarship that has looked into the archives of the Directorate of Public Instruction (*Direction de l'Instruction Publique*), I specifically highlight histories of the Arabic language in colonial Morocco that challenge the dominant historiography.

### Lyautey's conservation doctrine and the push for Arabic language instruction

'Conservation' and 'association' were two driving principles established by Resident-General Lyautey and used to administer the French protectorate regime generally, and its education system specifically.[80] The very word 'protectorate' expressed a 'spirit of conservation' aiming to maintain Moroccan society as it was, only introducing the changes necessary to benefit French exploitation in its 'association' with the *makhzen* elite. Opposing the 'assimilationist' approach followed in neighbouring Algeria that claimed it would transform colonized people into Frenchmen, 'associationism' promoted the conservation of local social structures, and by doing so, offered France a 'new, better, and modern colonialism'.[81] Lyautey stated it clearly

77 Woolard, "Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry", in *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, 3.

78 See e.g. Grandguillaume, *Arabisation et politique linguistique au Maghreb*; Ennaji, *Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Education*, 2.

79 In some cases, French was conceived as the language of Christianity. This was notably the case in the discourse produced by members of the Franciscan Mission in Morocco. See Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 100–101, 108–111.

80 Ben Mlih, *Structures politiques du Maroc colonial*, 245.

81 Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul,* 9.

himself: 'I maintain with a growing conviction that our strength and future in Morocco lies in a conservative, traditional, [and] hierarchical policy'.[82] Gaston Loth, Director of Public Instruction from 1912 to 1919, reiterated the same idea for the education system:

> Let us state very clearly, our Moroccan school does not propose the assimilation pure and simple of the indigenous element and does not aim for European-style education. It knows [it must] consider heredity and the characteristics of race and the environment.[83]

Instruction was therefore to take place in *fuṣḥā* Arabic, the language of the *makhzen* and the Moroccan elite. Preserving social structures was so capital that Lyautey first attempted to reform the Qarawiyyīn university – the heart of training for *makhzen* officials, in order to train a new generation of *makhzen* leaders capable of understanding French administration and willing to collaborate with it. While some *makhzen* officials, such as Mohammed al-Hajoui, the first sharifian delegate for education in 1912, supported the reform, others like Justice Minister Bouchaib Doukali firmly opposed it. Wishing not to offend the *makhzen* whose collaboration they counted on, the French resolved to educate the next generation of *makhzen* officials in socially-segregated French schools where the elite was separated from the rest of the native population.[84] Needless to say, Europeans were taught separately from the native population, a common policy in the colonial context.

In the words of the *Direction des Affaires Chérifiennes*, elite Muslim schools aimed to provide their students with 'instruction and education which, without rendering them strangers to their traditions and the characteristics of their race, will prepare their intellects to open to all the modern conceptions compatible with the necessities of the evolution that their country is called to accomplish under the tutelage of France'.[85] Primary schools for the elite, called *écoles de fils de notables*, led to the *collèges musulmans*, from which would graduate 'pashas, khalifas, indigenous financial agents [...] judges, etc.'[86] The *collèges musulmans* aimed to give the elite an education that was 'Moroccan and Muslim, and not a European culture that neither

82 Guy Delanoë, *Fin d'un Protectorat*, vol. 1, *Lyautey, Juin, Mohamed V*, 25.
83 Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 33.
84 Ibid., 37–39.
85 Direction des affaires chérifiennes, "Les bases politiques", 28 October 1915, in Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 39.
86 Ibid.

their instincts nor their traditions prepared them to really understand or assimilate to'.[87] Arabic was the main language of instruction and the manuals used to teach it were the same as those used at the Qarawiyyīn.[88] Both 'Sciences' and 'Letters' were taught in Arabic; this included mathematics, physics, chemistry, natural history, and geography as well as 'Quranic studies, Islamic theology, Arabic grammar and syntax, logic, Arabic literature, rhetoric, and Islamic law'.[89] While students at the *collèges musulmans* spent six hours per day in classes taught in Arabic, they spent only one hour per day learning French, the latter being a second language that students should utilize as an 'instrument' to acquire 'exact and complete notions of European civilization'.[90] As highlighted by Spencer Segalla, Gaston Loth focused on developing a curriculum immersed in Arabophone Muslim culture, providing practical skills for Muslim students with a 'rudimentary French education'.[91]

### *The* **Makhzen's** *refusal of Arabic and requirement for French language teaching*

This 'tradition'-driven curriculum, an ideal application of Lyautey's doctrine of conservation, was nonetheless challenged and soon subverted by the *makhzen* elite and *collège* students. The *makhzen* saw in the pseudo-traditional education offered by the *collèges musulmans* a refusal of the French to equip the next generation of the Moroccan elite with the tools to access employment in the French administration and the liberal sector. Consequently, it demanded a solid teaching of French, key to preserving its social and political advantage in the new colonial context.[92] Mohammed al-Hajoui, a reformist-Salafist and the first sharifian delegate for education at the head of the Ministry of Education and Sciences (*wizārat al-maʿārif wa-l-ʿulūm*) after its creation in 1912, declared a year later: 'It is knowledge of the French language that will allow you to preserve your prosperity

87 Direction des affaires chérifiennes, "Les bases politiques", 40.

88 These were replaced in 1920 by a new manual requested by Joseph Nigel, Director of the *collège musulman* in Rabat, and elaborated by Muḥammad b. 'Abd as-Salām aṣ-Ṣā'iḥ ar-Ribāṭī, a Moroccan *ʿālim* (Islamic scholar) teaching Arabic literature at the same *collège*. This new manual focused on the works of Andalusian and Moroccan *ʿulamāʾ* (plural of *ʿālim*) and poets, distinguishing the Moroccan-Andalusian space from the Arab Orient.
Ben-Srhir, "Étude comparative des manuels d'arabe en usage dans le Maroc sous protectorat français (1912–1956)", in *Manuels d'arabe d'hier et d'aujourd'hui.*

89 Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 41.

90 Direction des affaires chérifiennes, "Les bases politiques", 40.

91 Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul,* 36.

92 Ibid., 41–42.

and wealth, in contrast to what happened to your brothers in Algeria. It is also by this knowledge that you will defend your rights'.[93] The contention between the *makhzen* demanding more French in the *collèges musulmans* curriculum and the French officials pushing for an Arabic intensive course was at the heart of a power struggle. The French wished to infiltrate the Qarawiyyīn university by controlling the training of its future graduates in the *collèges musulmans*, while *makhzen* officials wanted access to the French administration and liberal professions, notably by demanding conformity to metropolitan curricula and diploma equivalency to allow *collège* students to access French higher education.[94]

Opposition to a 'traditional' curriculum with Arabic as the main language not only came from the top of the Moroccan state, but also from students. *Collège* students expressed their desire for the French language and Western knowledge by neglecting their Arabic classes. After consultations with students, Gaston Loth reported that the 'great majority' of them aspired to 'a sufficient Muslim education but, at the same time, to acquire a French education developed enough to permit them access to lucrative employment in the [French] administration and industry'.[95]

The struggle around Arabic language teaching in the first years of the French Protectorate highlights the various language ideologies at play. While Lyautey approached Moroccans through a solely identity-driven perspective, seeking to convince them of the validity of the associationist project through the preservation of Islam and Arabic through an Arabic-language instruction, the Moroccan elite responded with a utilitarian logic, looking first into the preservation of its social and political advantage. In other words, the French administration conceived of the Moroccan population as exclusively driven by identity considerations, neglecting the utility aspect of languages and the fact that the Moroccan society was, as any other society, driven by social, economic, and political interests.

Moreover, the interests of *collège* students and their parents, as competitors in the job market, did not perfectly match those of the *makhzen*, an institution striving to keep its advantage in the religious domain. Responding to the demands of parents and students, Gaston Loth and his administration suggested in 1917 the creation of two branches within secondary education, one in Arabic and one in French. The parents agreed and proposed to add a

93 Ibid., 33.

94 Ibid., 44.

95 Commission des collèges musulmans, "Note", 17 September 1917, in Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 43.

commerce branch. When this proposed division – French language, Muslim law, and commerce – in the final two years of the *collège musulman* was presented to the *makhzen*, the latter accepted all but Muslim law. In this context, Grand Vizier El Mokri urged for Islamic education to be the exclusive prerogative of the mosques and the *ulema*.[96] Hoping for the collaboration of the *makhzen*, the French made concessions by removing Islamic law and theology from the programme, as well as abandoning distinct Arabic and French-language sections in the *collèges*. One general section was adopted in which history, mathematics, and geography were to be taught in French, alongside French and literature, while a third of the instruction would be in Arabic.[97] By opposing French provision of a 'traditional' education, the *makhzen* simultaneously protected its privilege in the production of the Moroccan elite while ensuring its social reproduction within the new system of power that was the French protectorate regime.

### *Minimalist French and Arabic education*

The replacement of Gaston Loth by Georges Hardy in 1919 as Director of Public Instruction announced a new turn in colonial educational policy and the establishment of what is recalled as 'the' colonial education system in the French Protectorate in Morocco. Dedicated to anti-assimilationism and a racial/ethnic distinction, Hardy did not return to Lyautey's initial plan of a mainly Arabic-medium programme for Muslim students.[98] However, while maintaining a mostly French-based curriculum, Hardy did not conceive of French language teaching as a response to the demands of Moroccan parents and the *makhzen*, but rather as a mere tool for modernization. Therefore, in order not to alienate the native culture of Muslim students, Hardy promoted a minimalist education in French in Morocco, removing literary compositions, minimizing history, geography, and natural sciences in the curricula, and putting an emphasis on everyday French.[99] In this way, his pedagogical approach very adequately answered Lyautey's conception of education as the pursuit of practical understanding rather than intellectual endeavours that would invite critical thinking and subsequently threaten the colonial project.

Also in line with Lyautey's doctrine, Hardy established the teaching of Arabic and Islamic culture in the 1920 curricula, hoping to give an edge

96 Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 44.

97 Ibid., 45.

98 Hardy, "Plan d'études et programmes de l'enseignement des indigènes," *Bulletin de l'Enseignement Public du Maroc* (*BEPM*), no. 24 (1920): 398–399, 406–411, in Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 102.

99 Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 103.

to the French in shaping how Muslim students viewed their own identity. The French were torn between their intention to legitimize the education system they provided Muslims by including religious instruction alongside Arabic, and the demand by Muslim students for French-taught classes to be secular.[100] As parents would not allow Islam to be taught by non-Muslims, the protectorate administration had to rely on the local *fqīh* to provide religious education after school hours or even in the *msīd* (Qurʿānic school).[101] As it was for French, Arabic teaching was meant to be basic.[102] The teaching of Arabic was even more restrained in the *écoles urbaines* than it was in the *écoles de fils de notables*, the aim of Arabic instruction being to ensure students were able to read, in other words, to just take them beyond a state of illiteracy.[103] No *fuṣḥā* Arabic was taught in the *écoles rurales*, not just in Berber-speaking regions, but also in Arabic-speaking ones.

***Arabic, a 'normal' language? On Arabic language pedagogy***

The triadic relationship between Arabic, tradition, and identity, generally taken for granted, is based on the idea that identity, of which language is an expression, necessarily resides within tradition. The approach to Arabic language pedagogy adopted by the Directorate of Public Instruction challenged this idea, locating tradition at the level of pedagogy rather than the language itself. The Directorate of Public Instruction pushed for modernizing Arabic language pedagogy. It defined 'tradition' within the frame of the 'Islamic' teaching approach which relied on memorization and was used in the *msīd*. Paul Marty, director of the *collège musulman* in Fez, commented on this topic: 'The pedagogical methods of Qaraouiyine are deplorable. […] [Students'] memory is appealed to, not their intelligence. The intellectual capacity (*acquit*) of a student is proportional to his labours and not to the methods of his masters'.[104] As such, French educational authorities considered that there was a traditional Arabic language pedagogy and a modern one. The first was decadent, the second valuable. The very approach to Arabic language teaching was indeed different between the two.

As explained by Kristin Gee Hickman, in 'traditional' Moroccan education, Arabic was not only *a* language but the only way to knowledge. As such,

100 Ibid., 106.
101 Ibid.
102 Hardy, "Plan d'études et programmes", 398–399, 406–411.
103 Ibid.
104 Marty, "L'Université de Qaraouiyne", 1925, 1MA/200/643, CADN, in Hickman, "From ʾAlfiyya to Berlitz: Modernising Arabic Language Pedagogy in Protectorate-Era Morocco", 8. doi: 10.1080/13629387.2022.2088523.

it was *the* language.[105] In the *msīd* in cities, Moroccan boys first learnt to recite the Qur'ān before learning to read and write in Arabic.[106] Literacy was, therefore, the result of a long process of initiation. Consequently, students usually understood the content they memorized only later in their studies.[107] This linguistic immersion in *fuṣḥā* Arabic without reliance on translation between the known language(s) and the one in the process of being acquired resonates with what Alasdair MacIntyre described as 'second first language' learning where the learner '[becomes] a child all over again'.[108]

The French educational authorities, on the other hand, viewed Arabic as a language like any other. This position resulted in two opposite manifestations. On the level of pedagogy, Arabic was not essentialized or exoticized.[109] President of the Sub-Committee on Islamic Countries at the French parliament Étienne Flandin stated that the teaching of Arabic should rely on 'the living and practical methods used for several years in our schools to teach English and German (wall charts – good little practical manuals)'.[110] Following this view, Arabic and French were to be taught using the same approach, which made Moroccan students, in terms of pedagogy, learn *fuṣḥā* Arabic as a foreign language.[111]

Yet, the colonial hierarchy between the colonizer and the colonized was to be demonstrated by the superiority of the colonizer's language pedagogy compared to the colonized one. In this sense, the Directorate of Public Instruction claimed to understand the 'universal rules of language pedagogy' and aimed to show it by offering a more efficient Arabic language teaching.

105 Hickman, "From 'Alfiyya to Berlitz", 9.

106 Abdallah Laroui, *Les origines sociales et culturelles du nationalisme marocain (1830–1912)*, 193. The situation was different, however, in rural areas where the majority of the population was Amazigh-speaking. There, students first learnt reading and writing in Arabic, explained to them in their local mother tongue, before gaining access to the Qur'ānic text and copying it on their wooden tablets. See El Khatir, "Nationalisme et construction culturelle de la nation au Maroc: Processus et reactions", 95.

107 Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and Its Social Reproduction", 495.

108 MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 374, in Hickman, "From 'Alfiyya to Berlitz", 9.

109 This sounds surprising considering the French scholarly production on Berbers in Morocco and their association of Arabic with Islam and fanaticism. The French protectorate was not, in reality, a space governed by a unique vision, but a multitude of institutions and administrators with their various doctrines and discourses. It remains, nonetheless, that some discourses took precedence over others in specific sub-fields of the social world.

110 Lemaire, "Observations suggérées par la letter addressée par M. Flandrin, Président de la Sous-Commission de pays islamiques du Comité parlementaire d'action à l'étranger, au Ministre des Affaires étrangères" 25 April 1918, 1MA/ 300/109, CADN, in Hickman, "From 'Alfiyya to Berlitz", 14.

111 Hickman, "From 'Alfiyya to Berlitz", 14–15.

They aspired to achieve the same standard as 'traditional' education but faster.[112] In this regard, Hickman reports that 'French administrators displayed an intense preoccupation with identifying, correcting, and often firing Arabic teachers who they considered to be bad pedagogues overly influenced by the "decadent" pedagogy of al-Qarawiyyīn and unwilling to adopt new methods'.[113] The Direction of Public Instruction attached particular attention to modernizing Arabic language pedagogy, standardizing it, and organizing its courses following the same outline as other languages. To achieve these goals, they introduced Egyptian textbooks produced by Christian missionaries on which Arabic teachers in Morocco had to rely.[114]

### *Moroccan nationalists and the accusation of assimilationist French education*

The 'Berber Dahir' in 1930 is commonly identified as the catalyst for Moroccan nationalism.[115] This *dahir* (decree) differentiated between Arabs and Berbers in jurisdictions, subtracting Berbers from Islamic *shrāʿ*. While Arabs were to be judged by Islamic law, customary law was to be followed for tribes recognized as 'Berber', customary law itself being placed under French jurisdiction. Nationalists responded to the *dahir* with vehemence, their demands including 'a unified judiciary that would apply Islamic law to all Moroccans […], a unified educational system that would teach Arabic and Islam in both urban and rural areas, the adoption of Arabic as the protectorate's official language, and a prohibition against any official use of Berber "dialects" or their transcription into Latin characters'.[116] The Arabic language and its teaching were at the heart of nationalist demands.

The discourse developed by Moroccan nationalists in the early 1930s, which would become dominant after independence, accused the French protectorate of assimilationism, especially in schools. In the 1934 *Plan de réformes marocaines*, Moroccan nationalists described colonial policy as follows: 'IT IS ASSIMILATIONIST: it is inspired by direct rule and translates into an organized struggle, albeit sometimes camouflaged, against our

112 Ibid., 3.
113 Ibid., 11.
114 Ibid., 12.
115 Brown, "The Impact of the *Dahir berbère* in Salé", in Gellner and Micaud (eds.), *Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa*, 201; Burke, *The Ethnographic State*, 145; Hart, "The Berber Dahir of 1930 in Colonial Morocco: Then and Now (1930–1996)", *The Journal of North African Studies* 2, no. 2 (1997): 12; Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 13; Luccioni, "L'élaboration du dahir berbère du 16 mai 1930", 75; Susan Gilson Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco*.
116 Wyrtzen, *Making Morocco*, 3.

institutions, our Arab culture, and our traditions'.[117] In the same document, nationalists praised Lyautey's 'conservation' doctrine and demanded that the Treaty of Fes be respected. In 1932, the nationalist magazine *Maghreb* blamed the protectorate for attempting to turn Morocco into a 'province of France'. Even though Moroccans had accepted French 'tutelage', the author of the article argued, 'we are equally attached to our past, to our traditions; and if modernization should cost the sacrifice of our own personality, it is natural that we would not want it. In short, we are committed to modernize, even while remaining ourselves'.[118]

Arabic language teaching was one of the domains in which nationalists most strongly voiced their rejection of assimilation. They criticized the French for providing an assimilatory education in which the Arabic language and Islam were denigrated. In 1934, they demanded the instruction of all Moroccan Muslims in Standard Arabic. French was to become a second language in school.[119] Even though assimilationism was forcefully rejected by the Directorate of Public Instruction (except for Berbers in the *collèges franco-berbères*), Moroccan nationalists accused this administration of wanting to erase the Moroccan personality. Whereas the Moroccan elite refused an Arabic-intensive education at the beginning of the protectorate and demanded, for the sake of equal access to the job market, to have an emphasis on French in the curricula, the nationalists, mostly members of the elite and educated in the *collèges musulmans*, decried the protectorate regime's education system for not teaching enough Arabic and Islamic studies. The change in Lyautey's original plan of 'traditional' education to please the Moroccan elite was silenced by nationalists. Moreover, the protectorate was fearful of the propagation of pan-Islamism, pan-Arabism, and socialism, and therefore insisted on a Moroccan specificity in school content. In his in-depth study of the discourse of the Directorate of Public Instruction in French colonial Morocco, Spencer Segalla emphasized the discrepancy between the anti-assimilationist reality of colonial instruction for non-Berbers and the assimilationist accusation of Moroccan nationalists. While the demand for an increase in the number of hours of Arabic and Islamic education had been expressed by *collèges musulmans* alumni associations since the 1920s, the organization of a nationalist opposition propelled this linguistic demand to the front of the struggle against what

117 Comité d'Action Marocaine, *Plan de Réformes Marocaines*, x.

118 El Maghrebi, "Les aspirations du 'Maghreb'", *Maghreb*, 1932, 4, in Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 225.

119 Comité d'Action Marocaine, *Plan de Réformes Marocaines*, 83–86.

it presented as a symbol of colonial humiliation. In the 1920s, Arabic instruction was expanded in non-elite schools and introduced into some professional and rural schools, but these changes remained insufficient in the eyes of nationalists.[120]

Most importantly, the nationalist narrative of France's attempt to assimilate Moroccans into French culture and erase their personality succeeded in becoming mainstream history. Not only did it become part of the post-independence official history, but it was also adopted by foreign historians as historical truth. John Halstead for example, while he criticized the nationalist elitist approach,[121] still described colonial education as essentially assimilationist,[122] attesting to the success of nationalist re-writing of history, even in academia.

### *The* free schools

While nationalists rejected colonial education for its 'assimilatory tendencies,' they promoted *al-madāris al-ḥurrah* (free schools) – private teaching institutions 'free from government control'. Mostly providing elementary education, they offered teaching in Standard Arabic and became centres of nationalist mobilization in the mid-1930s. The first schools were created in 1919 in Tetuan, Rabat, and Fez. By 1931, thirty free schools had been opened in many cities.[123] Most free schools were put in place by Salafis dissatisfied with the educational offerings available to Muslim Moroccans. On the

120 Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 226.

121 Halstead indeed wrote: 'But on a closer inspection it will become clear that what the nationalists really wanted was *more* assimilation for themselves, in the form of an open door to the universities, and *less* for the lower classes, by the elimination of the French language from their schools. What concerned them most was the education of a Moroccan elite (themselves) in sufficient numbers to restore control of their country to native leadership (their own)' Halstead, *Rebirth of A Nation,* 114.

122 In this regard, Halstead stated: 'The French *licencié* is not only a professional person; he is to one degree or another an ordained nationalist and a priest of his national culture. Translated to the colonies, this commitment came out as the *mission civilisatrice* and *assimilation*, a peculiarly French compulsion to "educate natives to be Frenchmen" and then absorb them into a "Greater France". The French overseers have insisted, more than any other imperialists, on the use of their mother tongue as the language of instruction, whatever the racial origin of the students, and this was proclaimed official policy in Morocco in 1914 by Gaston Loth, then director of education. Loth's successor, Georges Hardy, who was already a convinced assimilationist when he arrived in Morocco in 1920, wrote that "[…] every native who speaks French is half won over to our cause by that fact alone […] The educational significance of our work pales before its importance in the penetration of native culture". Those Frenchmen who came to Morocco for something more than economic gain sought nothing less than a "conquête morale" of the country". Halstead, *Rebirth Of A Nation*, 100–101.

123 Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 126.

one hand, they viewed the *msīd* as an 'ill-kept and materially deficient' institution, 'for not dividing children by age and level of achievement, and for confining their instruction too strictly to the Koran'.[124] In this sense, they agreed with the French critique of 'traditional' pedagogy as lacking standardization and being too tailored to the pace of each student, taught one-on-one.[125] On the other hand, French modern education for Muslims represented, in the eyes of free schools' directors, a challenge to Arab-Islamic culture. They feared French education would uproot Moroccans. In addition, they rejected instruction in French and hoped that by creating the free schools, they would 'save the Arabic language'.[126] The founding fathers of the Ahliyya school in Tetuan and the Nasiriyya school in Fez also aimed to inculcate a 'national spirit' to their students, but these two institutions were exceptions to the more general rule of educating a future generation cherishing its Islamic values. Moreover, by charging a modest tuition fee, free schools were meant to compete against the *écoles de fils de notables*, therefore targeting an upper-class and bourgeois audience.

The educational content offered by the free schools has been mythologized by official Moroccan history. Mohammed Abed Al-Jabri defined 'free Arab schools' (*al-madāris al-ʿarabiyya al-ḥurra*) as 'the schools that the nationalist movement ensured to create in different parts of the country',[127] while the free schools only became nationalist centres after the 1930s thanks to the alliance of Salafi-reformism and nationalism in Morocco. Referred to as 'modern education institutions',[128] their curriculum was, in reality, closer to that of the *msīd* than to what was believed to constitute 'modern education,' that is the teaching of sciences. The subjects taught were 'Qurʾānic studies, [...] Arabic grammar, writing and logic, ethics and the life of the Prophet, Islamic history and geography, and arithmetic'.[129] Science education was limited, and French or Spanish languages, depending on the protectorate zone, were additional subjects in a limited number of schools. The label attributed to them by the French, that is '*msids rénovés*',

124 Damis, "Origins and Significance"', 80.

125 Hickman, "From ʾAlfiyya to Berlitz", 13.

126 Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 162; Damis, "Origins and Significance", 79.

127 Al-Jabri, *Aḍwāʾ ʿalā mushkil al-taʿlīm*, 40.

128 See e.g. Merrouni, *Al-iṣlāḥ al-taʿlīmī bi-l-maghrib, 1956–1994* [Educational Reform in Morocco 1956–1994], 21. My fieldwork interviews confirm the common view of free schools as modern teaching institutions.

129 Halstead, *Rebirth of A Nation*, 163.

was an accurate description of their educational offer.[130] They were without doubt a modernization of Qurʾānic education by the adoption of 'modern' teaching methods. Moreover, among the free schools that faced difficulties, those that did not close switched, (John Damis wrote 'declined'), to *msīds*.[131]

In the 1930s, free schools became centres of nationalist dissent. Free schools' creators initiated secret societies in the 1920s.[132] Up until 1925, free schools were not legally authorized but were tolerated. Paul Marty even saw in them an appropriate application of Lyautey's conservation doctrine.[133] In 1925, the French administration started undermining the action of the free schools by, among other tactics, recruiting their teachers in the *écoles franco-musulmanes*. The politicization of the free schools in the mid-1920s led to them being banned by the protectorate's administration. They were once again authorized in the late 1930s, accommodating one of the nationalists' demands expressed in the 1934 *Plan de réformes marocaines*.

## Conclusion

Discourses on Arabic language teaching were key to colonial domination and the anti-colonial struggle. As 'Berber' and 'Arab races' were established, Arabic teaching was compared to a disease that would prevent the French from winning over Berber populations. In cities, however, especially in elite schools, colonial authorities viewed Arabic instruction as the way to 'conserve' the structure of Moroccan society and install an efficient and 'modern' colonialism. Their superiority was to be demonstrated by their capacity to modernize Arabic pedagogy and to surpass 'traditional' education in its teaching of Arabic and Islam. The 'conservation' doctrine adopted by Lyautey, however, neglected the interests of the Moroccan urban elite in the colonial job market, leading the latter to refuse Arabic and request French instead. The Moroccan urban elite's refusal of Arabic instruction in the early years of the protectorate (mid- to late 1910s) contradicts the claims of Moroccan nationalists following the publication of the 'Berber Dahir' in 1930 accusing the protectorate regime of assimilationism and the dismissal of Islam and Arabic. The free schools, symbol of this struggle, were also mythologized. Moroccan nationalists adopted the codes of anti-colonial

130 Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 126.
131 Damis, "Origins and Significance", 92.
132 Lafuente, *Politique berbère*, 132.
133 Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, 190.

protest, sometimes altering historical realities so as to fit the more global anti-colonial discourse in which assimilationism occupied an important place. The circulation of this assimilationist discourse is worth investigating in light of the new scholarship on education in colonial times. Many avenues could be explored. On the one hand, the works of anti-colonial authors, at the head of whom Frantz Fanon, circulated among colonized elites and could have contributed to homogenizing anti-colonial discourse along the lines of the Algerian experience. On the other hand, nationalists circulated throughout colonized territories and their discourses have certainly transformed as a result of these new encounters. Allal Al-Fassi, 'the primary ideologist of Moroccan nationalism',[134] for example, was exiled in Gabon for nine years (1937–1946).[135] Considering the success of decolonial nationalism in Morocco, it is not surprising that narratives of this triumphant ideology have won the battle of memory and history writing. While scholars have contributed to a first wave of rewriting of colonial and postcolonial history by deconstructing myths around Amazigh culture and people in North Africa, especially tackling myths on the 'Berber policy',[136] the new literature on education during the colonial era is opening the way to a second wave of historical re-writing that stands against colonialism without taking the nationalist narrative for granted. This literature was, without a doubt, inaudible in the first decades of independence. Even challengers of the officially sanctioned national narrative, typically the Amazigh cultural movement, but also Darija (Moroccan Arabic vernacular) promoters, did not challenge the discourse on Arabic teaching during the French protectorate, this narrative being considered a historical truth. Beyond mobilizing concepts such as misrecognition, especially in the case of Amazigh cultural promotion, Tamazight and Darija advocates framed their cultural and linguistic advocacy as a diversification rather than an opposition to the nationalist narrative, contributing to redefine the Moroccan nation along the lines of diversity. This chapter, in line with this new scholarship, manifests the need to investigate nationalist discourses as historical products of their time so as to advance a properly decolonial history.

134 Brown, "The Impact of the *Dahir berbère*", 214.

135 El Guabli, "Racialization in Exile: Allal al-Fassi's Racial Positionalities in Gabon", https://www.soufflesmonde.com/_files/ugd/185522_36b2b1e82170499bb46ccbad1c813226.pdf.

136 See e.g. Mahé, "Considérations préliminaires – 'Le mythe' et 'la politique' kabyles de la France"; Mounib, *Al-Ẓahīr al-barbarī: akbar ukdhūba siyāsiyya fī al-maghrib al-muʿāṣir* [The Berber Dahir: the Greatest Hoax in Contemporary Morocco] (Yassin Temlali, "La politique berbère (kabyle) de la France en Algérie: mythes et réalités"; Tilmatine. "French and Spanish colonial policy in North Africa: Revisiting the Kabyle and Berber Myth".

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# 10. When Tamazight was part of the world

*Brahim El Guabli*

**Abstract:** Amazigh language has not always been marginalized as it had been between independence and the early 2000s. In fact, colonial scholarship infused it with new life, integrating it into larger networks of exchanges and knowledge communities since the nineteenth century. Hence, one should not be surprised to see that prominent scholars presented their findings about this language and the culture it vehicled at international gatherings of Orientalist societies and shared their questions with scholars who worked on adjacent fields in linguistics and other closely related fields. Specialists, like André Basset, an important Berberologist, turned Algiers and Rabat into sites for Amazigh pedagogy and scholarship. Although colonial scholarship was philosophical, documentation-oriented and information-gathering-focused for government purposes, it created opportunities for the teaching and learning of Tamazight alongside Arabic, allowing it to be a language of pedagogy and scholarly endeavours. Of course, this work should not be dissociated from the language's use to advance colonialism. However, coloniality and its obvious goals aside, French administration has bequeathed us with a rich archive that, if used critically, can help us shed a new light on the status of Tamazight, its pedagogy, and scholarly potential, beyond its limitations.

**Keywords:** Amazigh, Morocco, Algeria, Applegate, Education, Tamazgha, post-colonialism

Tamazight is now being taught in Algeria, Libya, and Morocco.[1] Not only has the language become part of these nation states' educational systems,

1 For an up-to-date survey of the teaching and sociolinguistic aspects of Tamazight, see Alalou, "The Sociolinguistic Situation in North Africa: Recognizing and Institutionalizing Tamazight and New Challenges".

Sarah Irving, Karène Sanchez Summerer, Rachel Mairs, and Lucia Admiraal (eds), *Colonial Vocabularies. Teaching and Learning Arabic, 1870-1970*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025
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albeit in variegated intensity, but it has also acquired an official status, particularly as a result of constitutional reforms in Morocco and Algeria in the midst of or immediately after the 'Arab revolts' in 2011. Concurrently, Tamazight has increasingly occupied a bigger role in the public sphere, including in the media, literature, cinema, and public signage.[2] Although it has not always been the case since the end of the 1950s, Tamazight's place in its homeland changed drastically between the early years of independence of these North African countries and 2023.[3] Proceeding comparatively, this chapter reads the history of the teaching of and research in Tamazight in Algeria and Morocco against the background of its marginalization after independence. Looking both inward and outward, the chapter reveals how the post-independence regression in the status of Tamazight in Tamazgha – the broader North Africa where varieties of Tamazight were or are still spoken – has had dire implications for its standing in Anglophone academic institutions where it has simply been absent since the 1990s.

## Amazigh revival in the post-colonial period

The mid-1990s marked the beginning of both governmental and political parties' openness to the Amazigh Cultural Movement's (ACM) cultural and linguistic demands.[4] More specifically, Morocco has undertaken a process of Tamazight's integration into the media and education since King Hassan II's historic speech on 20 August 1994.[5] That year witnessed the arrest and trial of seven Amazigh activists in the governorate of Errachidia. A widely covered media event, the arrest of these members of the Telelli Association was attributed to them writing a May Day banner in Tifinagh.[6] However,

2 El Guabli. *Moroccan Other-Archives: History and Citizenship after State Violence*, 27–62; Idem, "(Re)Invention of Tradition, Subversive Memory, and Morocco's Re-Amazighization: From Erasure of Imazighen to the Performance of Tifinagh in Public Life".

3 The protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia received their independence in 1956 while Algeria recovered its independence after a bloody war in 1962. Mauritania became a state in 1960 while Libya became fully independent in 1951 after a transitional period in which the country was run by France and Great Britain after the Second World War. This history is still playing out in the country, e.g. in the form of the Franco-British intervention in 2011 to change Qadhafi's regime.

4 This is particularly the case in Morocco. Brahim Akhiyyat's notes the solidarity of Moroccan human rights associations and political parties with the activist teachers arrested in Goulmima in 1994. This, in turn, had an effect on the authorities, which chose to decrease tensions. See Akhiyyat. *Al-Nahḍa al-amāzīghīyya: Kamā ʿishtu mīylādaha wa taṭawwuraha*, 219–220.

5 Akhiyyat, *Al-Nahḍa al-amāzīghīyya*, 226.

6 Ibid., 218–219; see also Ajaajaa "Durūs mina al-rāshīdiyya" 63–64.

recent testimony from one of the protagonists sheds new light on the event. According to Ali Harcherras, these seven activists were arrested because of a blank banner, which the authorities could not interpret.[7] Nonetheless, the seven ACM activists' arrest and trial spurred a global human rights outcry that cornered Moroccan authorities.[8] King Hassan II, who ordered their release, backtracked on the repressive measures taken against the seven youth in a year that saw a massive pardon of political prisoners of the 'Years of Lead'.[9] The Years of Lead refers to the period of state violence between Morocco's independence in 1956 and the passing of King Hassan II in 1999. Opposition leaders, Marxist–Leninist activists, trade union activists, Amazigh activists, Saharawi leaders, and Islamist activists all experienced state violence as a result of their political or cultural advocacy.[10]

Known for his unexpected decisions, Hassan II seized the 20 August national holiday to make public his dramatic gestures towards Tamazight in the media and education.[11] He announced the inclusion of what he called *al-lahjāt* (dialects) in the media and the start of the inclusion of Tamazight in school. For Hassan II, however, the dialects remained still subsumed under Arabic, which he referred to as the 'mother language' and 'the language of the Quran'.[12] Although the effective teaching of Tamazight in Moroccan schools only materialized in 2003, the engagement with the ACM's demands from Hassan II himself meant that Tamazight had become a statal issue that could no longer be ignored. Similarly, Algeria's 1980 *Tafsut Imazighen* (*le printemps berbère* or the Amazigh Spring), which was sparked by the Algerian authorities' cancellation of a lecture by anthropologist Mouloud Mammeri on 10 March at Hasnaoua University at Tizi-Ouzou University Center,[13] spurred a process that would culminate with the recognition of

7 See Facebook page "Ali Iken en photos et en souvenir". The article, entitled "Photo IX: Le 1er mai 1994 à Imdeghren (Errachidia)", was published on 30 April 2023.

8 Akhiyyat, *Al-Nahḍa al-amāzīghīyya*, 220.

9 See Lakmahri, "1994, le grand pardon", *Zamane* 75, https://zamane.ma/1994-le-grand-pardon/.

10 Readers can refer to the following works: Slyomovics, *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco*; Hachad, *Revisionary Narratives: Moroccan Women's Auto/Biographical and Testimonial Acts*; El Guabli, "Reading for Theory in the Moroccan Marxist–Leninist Testimonial Literature".

11 See King Hassan II's speech on 20 August 1994. Lmghribi "Hassan 2 et l'Amazigh", YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DQ191J3V8c. This day commemorates what is called 'the revolution of the king and the people', which marks the beginning of the revolt against French and Spanish colonizations after the exile of King Mohammed V in 1953.

12 See Lmghribi, "Hassan 2 et l'Amazigh".

13 The social cultural and economic ramifications of the 1980 events can be found in the Yakouren Seminar. See *Préparation du dossier culturel – séminaire de Yakouren* (du 1er au 31 aout 1980) (Paris: IMEDYAZEN-Ateliers Berbères de Production et de Diffusion, 1980).

Tamazight in 1995.[14] Although Algeria was going through the violent civil war that was ravaging the country during the bloody decade (1992–2000), President Liamine Zeroual established the Haut commissariat à l'amazighité (HAC) in 1995.[15] Placed under the purview of the president of the republic, the HAC is tasked with the 'rehabilitation and promotion of Amazighity as one of the foundations of the national identity [as well as] the introduction of Amazigh language in the education system and communication'.[16] The intervention of Hassan II and Zeroual in person indicates that Tamazight was too strategic to be left in the hands of their governments.

This incremental change in the situation of Tamazight would be crowned with the constitutionalization of the language in Morocco and Algeria. Article 5 of the Moroccan 2011 Constitution stipules that 'Arabic remains the official language of the state, and the state works to protect and develop it, and promote its use'. In the same article, Tamazight is introduced as 'also an official language because it is a shared heritage between all Moroccans with no exceptions'.[17] Algeria officialized Tamazight as a constitutional language in 2016. Unlike the Moroccan constitution, which placed both Arabic and Tamazight under the same article, Article 3 in the Algerian constitution is dedicated to Arabic while Article 4 is dedicated to Tamazight. Article 3 defines Arabic as the 'the national and official language' whereas Article 4 defines Tamazight as 'also a national and official language'. The difference between the two phrasings is stark and indicates that Arabic is 'the language' while Tamazight is 'a language'.[18] This might be due to the need to assuage different stakeholders' fears over the identity of the state, but it does clearly reveal the resistance that faces Tamazight in Algeria.

Libya is the other country that has a sizeable Amazigh-speaking population. Almost twenty per cent of Libyans are Imazighen, but they were the ones with the least media or cultural presence until 2011. Since the demise of Qadhafi's regime as a result of the NATO-backed uprising in the country in 2012, the situation of Tamazight in Libya has changed drastically. Known

14 See Zeroual, "Décret présidentiel n° 95–147 du 27 Dhou El Hidja 1415 correspondant au 27 mai 1995, portant création du Haut-commissariat chargé de la réhabilitation de l'amazighité et de la promotion de la langue amazighe", *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne* n°29 (28 May 1995).

15 Ibid.

16 Le HCA "Missions", *hcamazighite*, https://www.hcamazighite.dz/fr/page/le-hca-p7?tag=bloc_26.

17 "al-Maghrib 2011", *Constitute*, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011?lang=ar.

18 "Dustūr al-jamhūriyya al-jazā'iriyya al-dimuqrāṭiyya al-sha'biyya", *al-Jarīda al-rasmiyya li-al-jumhūriyya al-jazā'iriyya/al-'ada 82* (30 December 2020).

for his Arab-nationalist dreams, Qadhafi established an anti-Amazigh state in which all markers of Amazighity were suppressed until his violent death. The end of Qadhafi's regime paved the way for the country's Imazighen to reclaim more space for their language and culture in a manner that is not even possible in Morocco and Algeria. The Amazigh Supreme Council – Libya (ASC) has been very active in making Tamazight constitutional throughout the country.[19] Moreover, the Amazigh advocacy endeavors that in the past could only be made abroad are now being made from inside the country itself. Siham Bentaleb, a member of the ASC's board, declared that 'we are an Indigenous people, and we have the right to protect ourselves' in accordance with international law, 'adding that Libyan Imazighen would' not wait for expired legislative bodies to 'grant us permission to establish our rights'.[20] Bentaleb made this statement in the context of the ongoing constitutional stalemate in the country and its impact on whether Tamazight would be constitutionalized or not. Despite the complete anarchy it created in other aspects of people's daily lives, the dismemberment of the central state in Libya has allowed the country's Imazighen to exercise more decentered autonomy over the decisions related to the future of their language and culture in comparison to their neighbors.[21] In a move unimaginable before 2012, the ASC decided in 2017 to officialize Tamazight in 'Amazigh regions and cities in addition to teaching it and using it in transactions in governmental administrations'.[22] While the future of the Libyan state remains undecided, the future of Tamazight seems to have taken a positive course that asserts Libyan Imazighen's rights.

19 For instance, on 26 December 2022, the ASC announced the formation of a 'constitutional commission' to organize elections in their Amazigh province as a result of the government's failure to proceed with the elections. See the document in "al-A'lā li-amāzīgh lībiyā yushakkill hay'a dustūriyya li-al-iqlīm al-rābi' 'abra al-intikhāb al-mubāshir," *Eanlibya*, https://www.eanlibya.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%BA-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%8F%D8%B4%D9%83%D9%91-%D9%84-%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88/.

20 "al amāzīgh fī lībyā u 'ulinūna 'al-amāzīghiyya' lughatan rasmiyyatan," *Alhadath*, https://www.alhadath.net/maghreb/2017/02/21/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%BA-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-.

21 Zurutuza, "The Amazigh of Libya revive their previously banned language", *Middle East Eye*, https://www.middleeasteye.net/features/amazigh-libya-revive-their-previously-banned-language.

22 "al-majlis al-a'lā li-amāzīgh lībyā yu'lin al-lughata al-amāzīghiyya lughatan rasmiyyatan bi-jamī' al-mudun wa-al-manāṭiq al-lībiyya al-nāṭiqa bi-al-amāzīghiyya", Portail-Amazigh, https://www.portail-amazigh.com/2017/02/tamazight-liby.html.

These achievements, particularly the integration of Tamazight into the education systems, should not blind us to Tamazight's longer existence in education and scholarship before independence. While the emergence of the ACM in Morocco and Algeria was a post-independence phenomenon, specifically starting from 1966, pedagogical and scholarly interest in Tamazight pre-dated the ACM's contemporary consciousness of Amazigh issues. In fact, a distinction has to be made in the life of Tamazight between the pre-independence and post-independence periods in order to have a better grasp of the drastic changes that its status underwent in Morocco and Algeria. Influential French historian and religion scholar Louis Massignon had recorded in his 1925 *Annuaire du Monde Musulman* that 60 per cent of Morocco's population spoke Tamazight while only 40 per cent spoke Arabic.[23] He would later republish the book in 1954 without changing the statistic, which indicates that Tamazight was still predominant in the 1950s.[24] Sadly, the post-independence states did not heed the numbers nor the demographic constitution of their population. Morocco and Algeria, which recovered their independence respectively in 1956 and 1962, set out to strip Tamazight of the markers of its prestige as both a spoken and taught language. In addition to the fact that a sizable number of their populations still spoke Tamazight as their mother tongue, the French colonial administration had established spaces where Tamazight was taught. In Morocco, it was the École supérieure de langue arabe et de dialectes marocains and the College d'Azrou. In Algeria, Tamazight was taught in the Faculty of Algiers, the École pratiques d'études berbères, and the Ecole normale de Bouzaréah and the École nationale des langues orientales.[25] These institutions would be repurposed and renamed after independence. This situation is paradoxical because independence was supposed to bring liberty and freedom, but it brought Imazighen institutional disregard, exclusion, marginalization, and a new form of subjugation.[26]As a result of the independent states in Morocco and Algeria self-defining as

23 Massignon, *Annuaire du monde musulman*, 133.

24 In their article "Arabophones et berbérophones au Maroc", Augustin Bernard and Paul Moussard make a case that the number of Imazighen in Algeria in 1923 was 29 per cent whereas two thirds of the Moroccan land were occupied by an Amazigh population, which constituted 40 per cent of the population. These statistics aside, Imazighen represented and continue to represent an important portion of the populations of Morocco and Algeria. See Bernard and Moussard "Arabophones et berbérophones au Maroc", *Annales de Géographie 183* (*1924*), 268, 278.

25 Berdous and Cortier, "L'enseignement du kabyle durant la période coloniale et la méthode directe: l'exemple des manuels de Boulifa", 2.

26 Regarding the questions of exclusion and domination, see Mohamed Chafik, "Le manifeste berbère", https://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/berbere-manifeste-2000.htm; see also Bessaoud, *Des petites gens pour une grande cause: L'histoire de l'Académie berbère*.

Arabo-Islamic regimes, the Imazighen were left the option to Arabize only. Where France failed terribly to Gallicize Imazighen in the Franco-Berber schools,[27] despite the academic and pedagogical arsenal its put in place for this purpose, the post-independence states in Tamazgha – or the ancestral homeland of Imazighen which Amazigh activist envision as extending from the Canary islands to southwest Egypt – used the power of Islam and that of a unified school system to Arabize generations of Imazighen, threatening the very existence of Tamazight speakers in some areas.[28]

This historical context leads me to conclude that the situation of Tamazight has larger ramifications than the mere impact of state choices on a language and its culture after independence. In reality, Tamazight illustrates the limits of current conceptions of post-coloniality. Independence meant different things for cultural and linguistic rights of specific groups within the independent state. We now know much about the violence and infighting that took place in Morocco and Algeria immediately after independence, but the question whether Imazighen ever integrated the post-colonial period or should the status of their language and culture between independence and the mid-2000s be considered a continuation of coloniality in other means remains open. More specifically, Indigenous Imazighen are not a self-ruling people, which raises questions about their sovereignty over their resources, land, and future. Several members of the ACM have alluded to this post-coloniality or insinuated it in their writing,[29] but it has not been explicitly articulated. Even the ability to advocate for Tamazight was repressed in the post-colonial period. The members of the ACM have been and continue to be accused being pro-colonial or pro-Zionist.[30] Although these readymade accusations have lost much of their power nowadays, they resurface from

27 The idea of Gallicization touched different Tamazghan communities differently. For instance, Tamazghan Jews were incorporated into the French civilizing project through the schools of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, which over the course of two centuries, replaced Jewish local mother tongues with French. For Morocco's Imazighen, Gallicization was undertaken in the College of Azrou in the 1930s in the meantime as two important Arabic madrasas were created in Fes and Rabat. See: Laskier, *The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862–1962*; and Benhlal. *Le collège d'Azrou: Une élite berbère civile et militaire au Maroc, 1927–1959*, 332.

28 Ali Sadqi Azayku drew attention to this problem in his pioneering article "Fī sabīl mafhūm ḥaqīqī lithqāfatina al-waṭaniyya", *Amazigh: Revue marocaine d'histoire et de civilization* 1 (1981): 35–41. This article was the cause of Azayku's imprisonment for over a year. Amazigh activists and writer Mohammed Boudhan has also engaged with this issue in his book *Fī al-hiwiyya al-amāzīghiyya li-al-maghrib*, 153–157.

29 Chafik, "Le manifeste berbère". See also Mohand Aarav Bessaoud. *Heureux les martyrs qui n'ont rien vu.*

30 Aarav Bessaoud, *Des petites gens pour une grande cause*, 33.

time to time whenever the status quo is challenged.[31] While its adjudication is difficult, the question of whether Imazighen entered post coloniality is crucial to raise in light of the reactionary measures that nationalist governments in Morocco and Algeria implemented to purposefully marginalize their Indigenous language and culture in its own homeland.

Interestingly, the post-independence nationalists in Morocco and Algeria kept French alongside Arabic while they worked hard to eliminate Tamazight.[32] In contrast to the colonial period, Imazighen were aware that France's production of pedagogical and scholarly infrastructures for the teaching of Tamazight in Morocco and Algeria was not altruistic. However, Morocco's and Algeria's new rulers' decision to elevate the Arabic language and its culture over the Indigenous language of their people contradicted the logic of both history and demography. France placed learning and teaching the Indigenous language alongside Arabic at the heart of its colonial policy because an efficient rule over Tamazghan (from Tamazgha) colonies rested on the ability to speak their inhabitants' languages.[33] Hence, France trained colonial administrators and created institutions where they could learn both Tamazight and Arabic.[34] This governance aspect of knowledge of languages was simply ignored by the post-independence states. Arabization policies decreed Arabic, which the majority of Imazighen did not know, as a language of administration and politics.[35]

The dismantling of the scholarly and pedagogical institutional setup that pre-dated independence has ushered in a sort of institutional amnesia about what Tamazight lost with independence. The combination of curricular, lexicographical, and literary compilations produced during the colonial period created a niche space where Tamazight was alive, reflecting its vibrancy in both society and the academic arena. Between the nineteenth and the end of the 1950s Tamazight attracted a strong curricular and scholarly

31 These allegations have now subsided significantly but they continue to exist in social media. One of the reasons these allegations have been anchored is the fact that, as I argue elsewhere, France developed its 'Berber policy', which the nationalists in North Africa intentionally used to conflate Imazighen with France as though Imazighen were the ones who asked for this colonial policy.

32 Azayku, "Fī sabīl mafhūm ḥaqīqī lithqāfatina al-waṭaniyya"; Boudhan, *Fī al-hiwiyya al-amāzīghiyya*, 202.

33 For a deeper discussion of the issues related to Arabic, readers may refer to Messaoudi's book *Les arabisants et la France coloniale. 1780-1930: Savants, conseillers, médiateurs*, https://books.openedition.org/enseditions/3705.

34 As I will explain later, the colonial state put in place an important arsenal of schools to train this civilian and military personnel.

35 See Grandguillaume. *Arabisation et politique linguistique au Maghreb.*

interest, which abrupt post-independence policies terminated. In its wider impact, the disregard for Tamazight impacted Anglophone academia, which remains mostly oblivious to the phenomenal rise of Amazigh Studies and its transformation of the field that used to be known as Maghrebi/North African Studies. In fact, the current status of Tamazight in Anglophone academia mirrors the Tamazghan states' Arab nationalist policies in the period before the mid-1990s. Anglophone institutions of higher learning have not yet undertaken any programmatic or curricular initiatives that would normalize Tamazight and Amazigh Studies in the programmes that focus on the study of Tamazgha and the Middle East. This said, there was a period when Anglophone universities, such the University of California in Los Angeles, the School of Oriental and African Studies, and the University of Michigan, had Tamazight professorships. However, Tamazight's current absence from these universities' departmental offerings reveals how the influence of Arab nationalism in the 1960s and the shifting trends in academia to focus on Islam in the 1990s have had as a common result the continued erasure of Tamazight and Amazigh Studies, which are at pains to find their place in the relevant departments.

## Tamazight in the colonial era: Boundless resources to penetrate the Amazigh mind

Tamazight was part and parcel of its context, and scholars and teachers alike used and studied the language during the colonial period. Beyond the now well-known 'Berber myth' whereby the French colonial system sought to elevate what they considered civilizable and assimilable Imazighen over the Arabs (another way to say Muslims) who could not be incorporated into French civilization,[36] scholarly and pedagogical interest in Amazigh language and culture under French colonial rule produced a significant body of materials. Tamazight was important both as a language spoken by the people and a language needed by administrators to efficiently rule its speakers. Seen from today's perspective, this pedagogical and scholarly output evokes the existence of a community of learning that focused on Tamazight as a center of interest. Scholars, students, and administrators in Algiers,

36 Allāl al-Fāsī and Muḥammad al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī dedicated some of their works to this issues. They both emphasize the 'Berber policy' as being anti-Arabic and anti-Islam. See Allāl al-Fāsī. *Al-Harakāt al-istiqlāliyya fī al-maghrib al-'arabī*; Muḥammad al-Makkī al-Nāṣīrī. *Faransā wa siyyāsatuhā al-barbariyya fī al-maghrib al-aqṣā.*

Rabat, and Paris dedicated their time and energy to learning Tamazight and to using it to study all manners of Amazigh life. This very success would later be the reason governments in Morocco and Algeria sidelined Tamazight after independence. The Arabization agenda was not to be successful if it contended with the mother tongue of a significant portion of the population.

Even before the colonization of Morocco in 1912, Tamazight was a priority for the colonial scholarship. In one of its issues in 1868, the *Revue Orientale*: *Journal des Orientalistes*, which was an important space for updates about Orientalists' scholarly concerns, linked the teaching of certain languages to the colonial conquest. The unidentified author of the article highlights how the 'interests of our country required opening classes in Cochinchina, Berber, Siamese, and alternatively in the idioms of Bengal, Gujarati, Assam, Burmese, Afghan, [and] Korean'.[37] While some of these languages were spoken in places where France already had some colonial presence, others are languages spoken in places that were contiguous to this French colonial space. As a result of this colonial policy, Tamazight was offered at the École *nationale* des *langues* orientales *vivantes* as well as in the Faculty of Letters in Algiers. As other scholars have already pointed out, this meant that Tamazight's teaching and curricular development benefited from the prevalent approaches used to teach other languages then. Curricula were designed following the standards enforced in France at the time, and students of other languages, including Tamazight, were required to satisfy similar requirements to those required of their peers learning French. The methodologies themselves stayed abreast of the development of pedagogy in France, and, as Nadia Berdous and Claude Cortier show, the use of audiovisual methods in the 1960s in France transferred to Tamazight's pedagogy.[38]

Beyond their scholarly uses, languages were crucial for the colonial enterprise. More than just tools of communication, colonial administration considered local languages a gateway into the minds and the hearts of the colonized. In fact, influenced by the Orientalist persuasions of its Arabists, France gave even more importance to Arabic than it gave to Tamazight in the early years of colonization in Algeria.[39] Amazigh activists continue to blame France for Arabizing Tamazgha because of its institutionalization of Arabic.[40] This said, Tamazight also benefited from French interest in

37 1868 https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9680989b/f3.image.r=berbere (01/08/1868) https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9680989b/f3.image.r=berbere.

38 Berdous and Cortier, "L'enseignement du kabyle", 12.

39 See Messaoudi, *Les arabisants et la France coloniale. 1780–1930*.

40 Boudhan, "al-faransiyya kanāshira li-al-'urūba wa munāhaḍat al-amāzīghiyya" *Ahewar*, https://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=736753.

the teaching of languages. General Guillaume, a former resident general in Morocco, prefaced Colonel Aspinion's *Apprenons le berbère: Initiation aux dialectes chleuhs*, writing that speaking their language was important to gain the trust of the colonized populations.[41] Guillaume extols Aspinion's experience as someone who has been 'involved intimately in the lives of the inhabitants [and] has penetrated the mysteries of a captivating language'.[42] Guillaume goes a step further in stressing the fact that Aspinion's book would be 'a precious work instrument for the French who, conscious of their mission in this country, have understood that to gain the sympathy of the Indigenous populations, it is a must to speak their language first'.[43] Like his colleagues, who bridged the civilian and the military realms, Aspinion was an officer of the *Affaires militaires musulmanes*. Even Saïd Boulifa, an Algerian teacher who authored several manuals in Tamazight, reflected this colonial approach in his *Textes berbères en dialecte de l'Atlas marocain*.[44] Although he does not say much about his mission or who sent him, he writes that his linguistic work sought 'to penetrate the morals and customs of the Moroccan mountain dweller, and the main events of his family life [which] have particularly captured [his] attention'.[45] It is not clear whether Basset or any other of Boulifa's French superiors edited his text to include this colonial language. The clear thing, however, is that Tamazight curricular resources like the ones compiled and edited by Boulifa were designed to capture and efficiently use the Amazigh way of life for a better control of the population.[46]

All aspects of Amazigh language benefited enormously from this colonial investment in its teaching. The period between the nineteenth century and 1960 witnessed the production of several books that French authors designed for the teaching of Tamazight in Morocco and Algeria. Since French

41 Aspinion. *Apprenons le berbère: Initiation aux dialectes chleuhs*, n.p.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Boulifa. *Textes berbères en dialecte de l'Atlas marocains*, 1.

45 Ibid.

46 Colonialist assumptions of superiority and condescending comments about the language and its speakers abound, but the works they bequeathed us indicate that Tamazight was integrated into a larger system of knowledge production. Scholarship combined work on linguistics, literature, and 'mentalities'. Motivated by colonialist agendas, the studies produced during the colonial period sought to understand how Tamazight worked, and comparative linguistics was instrumental in this regard. However, literature also attracted the attention of colonial scholars. Religious affairs and juridical schools were the focus of some studies, which further show how Tamazight was integrated into the larger conversation. The Academy of Colonial Sciences in Algiers fully integrated Tamazight in its proceedings and knowledge production around.

colonialism encountered Tamazight in Algeria first, it was normal that the Algerian Amazigh infrastructure was much more developed than it was in Morocco. Sociologist Marena Lazreg has captured this reality, listing the financial incentives put in place for French civil servants who were willing to learn the Kabyle dialect in tandem with the establishment of a Berber Studies chair at the École des Lettres in Algiers in 1885.[47] Of all the people involved in creating Amazigh curricula during the colonial period, the aforementioned Boulifa (1865–8 June 1931) occupies a special place. He was a native Kabyle speaker, Indigenous, and educated in the French system. He was one of the school teachers linguist and literary historian Salem Chaker considers the pioneers of Tamazight's rehabilitation.[48] The INALCO's website describes him as a prolific and serious practitioner of pedagogy.[49] He is also credited with having 'developed a real (and complete) method for the teaching of Kabyle founded [...] on the principles of direct language pedagogy'.[50] His books *Une première année de langue Kabyle: Dialecte Zouaoua* and *Méthode de langue: Cours de deuxième année* are said to have changed the way Kabyle was taught by constructing a larger pedagogy that furnished students with a wider vocabulary and language usage that were not available in the previous curricula.[51] Communication was important to Boulifa, and he designed his manuals to help students 'strike a conversation with the autochthones'.[52] His examples were culled directly from life, giving a more concrete aspect to this direct pedagogy. *Méthode de langue* is divided into units dedicated to agriculture and seasons, industry and commerce, and family and its organization.[53] The texts themselves are long and put students in communication situations that they would encounter in real life in Kabylia.

There is no Moroccan equivalent of Boulifa. While Algeria had already been colonized for seventy years by the time Boulifa started teaching at the university of Algiers in 1901, Morocco would not be colonized until 1912. Several institutions in Algeria already granted degrees and

47 Lazreg, "The Reproduction of Colonial Ideology: The Case of the Kabyle Berbers", 388.

48 Chaker, "Documents sur les précurseurs. Deux instituteurs kabyles: A. S. Boulifa et M. S. Lechani".

49 "Boulifa Si Amar-ou-Saïd (1865–1931): Le grand précurseur berbérisant", https://www.centrederechercheberbere.fr/tl_files/doc-pdf/Boulifa.pdf.

50 Boulifa Si Amar-ou-Saïd (1865 – 1931).

51 Boulifa. *Méthode de la langue Kabyle: Cours de deuxième année*; Saïd Boulifa. *Une première année de langue Kabyle, dialecte Zouaoua.*

52 Ibid., n.p.

53 Ibid., x–xv.

certificates in Tamazight, such the Faculty of Algiers, the École Pratique d'Études Berbères and the École Normale de Bouzaréah.[54] Learning from its divisive experience, France did not establish in Morocco the same academic infrastructure it had put in place in Algeria. It did, however, create institutions that were tailored to serve its need to 'win the sympathy of autochthonous populations' in the Moroccan context.[55] For instance, Tamazight was fully integrated into the École Supérieure De Langue Arabe Et De Dialectes Berbères De Rabat. The first General Resident in Morocco, Marshal Lyautey (1912–1925), put in place the Comite d'études berbères de Rabat and its journal Les Archives Berbère in 1915. In 1921, the École supérieure was replaced by the Institut des Hautes Études Marocaines, which continued to grant language certificates and diplomas in addition to dispensing the bigger mission of conducting 'research on the country and its people'.[56] The teaching of Tamazight was not divorced from colonial research strategies, but it incidentally created an impressive accumulation of pedagogical materials that are today part of the Amazigh linguistic and cultural archive.

The multipronged work on pedagogy, research, and curricula was also happening in tandem with a clear investment in compiling dictionaries. Linguist Abdellah Bounfour and his co-authors have analysed the theoretical and lexicographic implications of colonial Amazigh dictionaries, developing the concept of 'utilitarian lexicography' whose origins they locate in the colonial war to conquer Algeria.[57] Accordingly, dictionaries were conceived to serve the colonial 'merchants, travelers, the army, and the administration established in Algeria after 1830'.[58] In these authors' analysis, this lexicography focused on the Kabyle variety, but it also extended beyond Algeria to Morocco. Additionally, the authors highlight these dictionaries' bilingual or even trilingual (Tamazight, Arabic, and French) nature while also underlining the limitations of this reductive lexicography, which was often simplistic and lacked details. The authors add two more distinctions to their category of a 'utilitarian lexicography'. First, a 'dialectal lexicography',

54 Chaker, "L'Algérie 1962–1974", 109; Idem, "Enseignement", in: *Encyclopédie berbère* 17, http://journals.openedition.org/encyclopedieberbere/2157; Berdous and Cortier, "L'enseignement du Kabyle", 12.

55 Aspinion, *Apprenons le berbère*, n.p.

56 Résidence Générale de la République Française au Maroc. *La renaissance du Maroc: Dix ans de protectorat au Maroc*, 206.

57 Bounfour et al., "*Dictionnaires berbères*", *Encyclopédie berbère* 15, http://journals.openedition.org/encyclopedieberbere/2255; doi: https://doi.org/10.4000/encyclopedieberbere.2255.

58 Ibid.

which they locate between 1918 and 1950. This lexicography is focused on the different dialects of Tamazight.[59] Second, a 'scientific lexicography', which they argue was a post-colonial phenomenon that built on the achievements of the colonial period to develop a system and scholarly approach to the study of Amazigh linguistics and literatures.[60] Much of the scholarly literature as well as the primary sources we have in the 'Amazigh Indigenous archive' today were created thanks to the interested compilation efforts of these colonial scholars.[61]

The Kabyle variety of Tamazight has the lion's share in this lexicography. As is clear from the list compiled by Bounfour and his co-authors, the production of some of these works is edifying. For instance, Venture de Paradis started his 1844 *Grammaire et dictionnaire abrégés de la langue berbère* in 1788 when he met in France two Moroccan citizens, who helped him to learn Tashlḥīt during a period of three months. De Paradis would later occupy other functions, including serving as an interpreter for Napoleon's mission to Egypt, but his dictionary, which combines both Tashlḥīt and Kabyle, would not be published until 1844 in the midst of France's colonization of Algeria. French official Charles Brosselard collaborated with Sidi Ahmed ben El Hadj Ali to publish their 1844 *Dictionnaire français-berbère*. The title of the dictionary explicitly states that it was ordered by the 'Ministry of War'. As is clear from these two examples, cooperation between local speakers of the language and French lexicographers was very common. The church was also very invested in creating Tamazight resources, and priests, Jean Baptiste Creusat and Charles de Foucauld, were among the compilers of Amazigh lexicons.[62] This lexicographic trend would continue until the independence of Morocco in 1956 and Algeria in 1962.[63]

These colonial compilation efforts have yielded a rich corpus of primary sources. Saïd Boulifa is again distinguished by his work on both Algeria and Morocco. His book *Textes berbères en dialecte de l'Atlas marocain* is the result of a research mission he was tasked with in the Moroccan

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 El Guabli, "The Amazigh Indigenous Library and the Future of Amazigh Studies", *The Middle East Librarians Association*, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k87Y-zqrCrw.

62 Creusat, *Essai de dictionnaire français-kabyle;* Charles de Foucauld's *Dictionnaire Touareg-Francais Dialecte de l'Ahaggar* was published in several volumes.

63 Other works the Bounfour and his co-authors include include Olivier Augustine's *Dictionnaire français-kabyle;* Gustave *Huyghe's Dictionnaire kabyle-français* as well as his *Dictionnaire chaouïa, arabe, kabyle et français.*

High Atlas in 1905. *Textes berbères* is a curious work that contains an impressive number of stories Boulifa culled from conversation with a local faqih in Demnat. Boulifa used a bilingual procedure to hear and record the stories in Tamazight then transcribe their translations into Arabic.[64] Once he returned to Algeria, he published the Amazigh texts alongside their French translations. Several decades after the publication of Boulifa's stories from the High Atlas, Arsène Roux would also publish *La vie berbère par les textes: Parlers du sud-ouest marocain* in 1955. In his preface to the book, Roux underlines the imbrication of the texts with 'the Berbers' material life in the Moroccan southwest'.[65] Stories and folktales were particularly targeted as a pathway towards penetrating the mentality of a people and their traditions in order to better colonize them. The announcement of the creation of the Comité d'études berbères de Rabat clearly elucidates why the "particular" knowledge of Amazigh society had to be mastered in order to 'help us [the Protectorate] decide the rules of political and administrative control to be established among the populations'.[66] Knowledge of the language and compilation of knowledge were both colonial tools, but they again inadvertently bequeathed us with an important corpus of literary works that have yet to be fully examined in light of new critical questions.

Lest it be misunderstood that only statal or official actors were involved in these pedagogical and scholarly initiatives, it is important to add that individuals and civil society also participated in this effort to make Amazigh materials available for various purposes. In this regard, the work of Charles de Foucauld on Tamashaq has yielded an impressive dictionary. In his introduction to the complete manuscript of the Toureg-Amazigh dictionary published in 1951 after the exhaustion of the abridged version, André Basset writes that 'this dictionary should be the tool for the ground work not only of those who are interested in the Touaregs of Ahaggar and those who are interested in any other Touareg dialects [...] but also of those who are interested in any Berber dialect'.[67] This said, the boundaries between church and state in the colonial world were porous, and both realms converged in their colonialist positions. As the case of de Foucauld shows, the church was part and parcel of the colonial enterprise.

64 Boulifa, *Textes berbères*, ii–iiii.

65 Roux, *La vie berbère par les textes: Parlers du sud-ouest marocain*, 1.

66 Comité d'études berbères, Archives Berbères 1(1)(1915), 9.

67 In the "Preface" to de Foucauld, *Dictionnaire touareg-français*, xii.

## Tamazight in Anglophone academia: A displaced language

Tamazight was not, however, only confined to its homeland of Tamazgha in the post-colonial period. After France's withdrawal from its former colonies in Tamazgha, the expertise built in the study of Tamazight and Amazigh issues (called Berber Studies then) was repatriated to the metropole. Scholars, archives, publications, and research questions moved back to France, where the discipline of Berber Studies has continued to exist at the Institut National pour les Langues et Cultures Orientales (INALCO), which replaced the Ecole des études orientales (Langues O, 1669–1971).[68] This prestigious institution, which continues to train specialists in North African and Asian languages, has, after the independence of Algeria in 1962, been the primary place for the study of Tamazight in Europe and the world. Although universities, like Aix-Marseille, Leiden, Utrecht, and Granada, offer Tamazight, INALCO remains the central institute in Europe. The university has had a chair in Berber Studies since 1913.[69] Teaching of Tamazight and its literature has been continuous at INALCO for many decades. When the creation of Amazigh units in Moroccan and Algerian universities in the 2000s, INALCO's illustrious professors, like Lionel Galand and Paulette Galand-Pernet, shaped the identity of Amazigh Studies. INALCO professors trained many Ph.D. students, including the ones who would later establish the discipline in the England and the United States.[70]

INALCO's philological approach to Tamazight prevailed for a long time. Much of the scholarship focused on very specific questions either related to linguistics or to cultural history and the conditions of production of texts between writing and orality. The goal, it seems to me, has been to accumulate as much knowledge as possible about a given text. What is around the text and what can be said about the text and the conditions of its production have been more important than engagement with Amazigh texts themselves. The fact that this scholarship has delt with Tamazight for the most part as an oral language may explain these approaches. Also, the fact that the *Études berbères* were result of the encounter between Imazighen and colonial scholarship in Tamazgha should not be disregard as a factor. As a result, there is ample room left for studies that can discern the significance of Amazigh thought and literature beyond the limitations of the philological approach. More specifically, this heritage can benefit

68 Chaker, "L'Algérie 1962–1974: Le refoulement des études berbères", 109, 110.

69 Ibid., 109.

70 Ibid., 114–115.

significantly from Anglophone comparative and postcolonial methodologies' critical and close reading strategies that would help model a different way of engaging with Amazigh cultural production.

The predominance of non-Anglophone, European institutions in Amazigh Studies does not mean that Anglophone academia has always turned a deaf ear to this field. In reality, British and American universities also offered courses in Tamazight. Although mostly spearheaded by linguists, there was an American and British iteration of Amazigh Studies that lasted until the middle of the 1990s. In the United States, Tamazight was taught at the University of Michigan and the University of California Los Angles. Until the 1990s, these universities taught 'Berber' studies, which was integrated under their Near Eastern and African Languages and Literatures departments. British and American intervention in Tamazgha during the Second World War brought them closer to the demographic and linguistic realities of the area, and the teaching of Tamazight was part of larger projects to study the region.[71] Linguists Joseph Applegate, Ernest Abdel-Massih, and Thomas G. Penchoen taught Tamazight at their institutions. Joseph Applegate was an African American scholar who first started his career at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1956-1960. From MIT, Applegate moved to UCLA before going to Howard University, where he became a dean until he retired in 2000.[72] Abdel-Massih taught at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor. In 1966–1968, he used a Ford Foundation grant to conduct research in Morocco in order to create a Tamazight curriculum and grammar for his university. Both the grammar and the textbook he authored are now crucial for the teaching of Tamazight.[73] The School of Oriental and African Studies in London had its own Amazigh professor in James Bynon, who joined the institution as lecturer in Arabic and Tamazight in 1962 and remained there until his retirement in 1985.[74] A student of Lionel Galand at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Marocaines and INALCO, Bynon went on to publish important studies in Tamazight.[75] Penchoen, another student of Galand at INALCO,

71 This is very clear in anthropologist Arlie William Schorger's foreword in which he states that 'a series of studies in anthropology, history, and political science are in preparation, as well as instructional materials on Moroccan Arabic'. See Ernest T. Abdel-Massih. *A Course in Spoken Tamazight Berber Sialects of Ayt Ayache and Ayt Seghrouchen*, https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/94555.

72 "Joseph Applegate, 1959", *Blackhistory*, https://www.blackhistory.mit.edu/archive/joseph-applegate-1959.

73 Abdel-Massih. *A Reference Grammar of Tamazight: A Comparative Study of the Berber Dialects of Ayt Ayache and Ayt Seghrouchen.*

74 Stroomer, "James Bynon (30/8/1925–23/7/2017)", 219–222.

75 Ibid.

was hired by UCLA in 1966 to teach Tamazight. Penchoen conducted his research in Tunisia and wrote his dissertation on the Shawiya dialect of Tamazight.[76] As is already clear from this short genealogy, these professors' paths crossed, and their community was solidified by the fact that they worked on Tamazight as an understudied language.

Unfortunately, a combination of retirements, budget cuts, and changes in academic interests led to the disappearance of Tamazight from Anglophone curricula. It could be said that the 1980s and the 1990s witnessed the relegation of Amazigh Studies to oblivion. While Margaret Thatcher's budget cuts were the main reason Tamazight was phased out in the School of Oriental and African Studies, the situation of Tamazight in the United States was probably more linked to the larger questions that faced area studies in the 1990s.[77] More specifically, universities in the United States needed to create space for Middle East Studies, Islam, and Arabic whose importance increased. The treatment of Tamazgha and the Middle East as Islamic spaces led to the conflation of two regions and lumping them under the political nomenclature of MENA. This acronym has erased regional diversity and wiped out cultural and linguistic differences within this vast area. In fact, the use of MENA continues to give the wrong impression that there is religious, cultural, and linguistic homogeneity in this region whereas the reality is much more complex than MENA indicates. Imazighen, Kurds, and Nubians, among others, find themselves monolithized under an umbrella concept that has further entrenched the marginal status that their languages and cultures have been forced to occupy vis-à-vis official expressions of nationhood.

The focus on Islam in post-1990s Anglophone academia further sidelined Tamazight. The situation changed even more drastically after 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. Indeed, the Quran is written in Arabic and most Islamic sources are in this language, but Arabic has never been the default language of Islam and Muslim societies. Yet, in this context, Arabic was made into the language required to engage with Muslim societies in Tamazgha and the Middle East. It is significant to watch that as Arabic language, culture, and literature gained more ground in departments and academic programmes, Tamazight lost the very small space it had acquired in post-Second World War in Anglophone universities. After the Second World War, Islam not was not an issue. It was rather Communism that presented a challenge to the West. However, Tamazight was taught because:

76 "News of the Mighty Class of 1952, Part V", https://deerfield.edu/alumni/class-notes/news-of-the-mighty-class-of-1952-part-vi-2/10207721.

77 Chaker, "Enseignement".

1) many veterans served in North Africa and encountered the language; and 2) the study of societies was valuable per se. It was the time when major anthropologists, like Ernest Gellner, Clifford Geertz, and others flocked to Amazigh communities to conduct their studies. This scholarly context was conducive to the inclusion of Tamazight in some universities.[78] However, the ascendance of Arabic to supersede North African languages in 1990s indicates, in its broader significance, that Islam was reduced to being an Arabic-speaking religion in Tamazgha and the Middle East. Indeed, apart from very few cases in European academia, Anglophone scholarship has not really engaged in any substantial study of Amazigh practices of Islam and the place of Amazigh language and culture in shaping its practice. Such a project would have entailed the systematic teaching and studying of Tamazight to engage Amazigh conceptions of Islam and in its practice in a different linguistic and social context. These critical questions do not, however, change the fact that Tamazight lost its place in academic programmes and departments as Tamazgha was annexed to the Middle East in academic discourses.

## Alternative existence: Tamazight in civil society and online venues

The reconstruction of European cities and economic sectors after the Second World War required the importation of manpower from neighboring countries. Tamazgha was mined for labor, and European recruits, like Felix Mora, scoured villages and remote areas looking for coarse-handed workers who could toil in mines and factories.[79] Lest it be understood that only recruited workers formed the immigrant manpower, it should be added that many Imazighen moved to Europe during the colonial time. This long history of Amazigh migration has resulted in the emergence of a strong Amazigh civil society in Western Europe. France, Spain, Holland, Germany, Belgium, and Italy have populations who identify as both European and Amazigh. Some of them still actively speak the language while others are only living it as a cultural heritage. However, this Amazigh heritage has become overtime an

78 Although these scholars did not speak Tamazight, their conducted their scholarly fieldwork among Imazighen.

79 For an introduction to Mora and his role in Amazigh immigration to Europe, see El Guabli and Alalou. *Lamalif: A Critical Anthology of Societal Debates in Morocco during the "Years of Lead" (1966–1988) Volume 2*, 10–11.

important source of activism for Amazigh cultural and linguistic rights.[80] These Euro-Amazigh citizens' gaining of consciousness of their linguistic and cultural rights has catalyzed their demands for the institutionalization of the language both in their diasporic countries and in the countries of origin. It is not surprising then that the first Amazigh cultural association, the Académie berbère, was created in Paris in 1966. The Académie berbère, like the rest of Amazigh society in Europe later, was invested in immigrant Imazighen and their families. In addition to offering literacy courses to parents, the Académie berbère offered extracurricular activities to children and provided spaces where they could entrench themselves in their Amazigh identity outside their parents' homeland.[81]

While the Amazigh presence in Europe is stronger, more organized, and more substantial, the number of Imazighen in the United States is small. The country is very wide, and the opportunities for connections between the different activists are slimmer than in Europe, where distances are shorter, and the public transportation system is very efficient. As a result of this situation, we have been witnessing a rise in *YouTube* channels for the teaching of Tamazight.[82] Imazighen worldwide have been using the space and the liberty it affords them by what I have defined in another context as the 'Amazigh You-Tubea' to create a parallel intellectual, artistic, and pedagogical scene to the developments on the ground.[83] Amazigh YouTubea is a reference to Amazigh utopia constructed on YouTube in the absence of the conditions to establish the ideal world in which Imazighen would have control over the media and the school systems in their homelands to fully rehabilitate their language and culture. Amazigh YouTubea has functioned as a replacement for the space that authoritarianism and Arab-Islamic regimes denied to Imazighen. As a result of their exclusion from state media and other avenues that should normally be available to Tamazight, Imazighen have found a space where to teach and disseminate Tamazight online.

English-speaking Amazigh youth have used the internet to offer free courses in Tamazight. These courses have created online pedagogical stars who compete to give Tamazight lessons in the best possible ways that

80 See also Chaker, "*La langue berbere en France: Situation actuelle et perspectives de développement*".

81 Aarav Bessaoud, *Des petites gens*.

82 See "All Things Amazigh", YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/@allthingsamazigh/about.

83 El Guabli, "Widening the Scope: Conceptualizing the Indigenous Media in the Amazigh-YouTubea," in: Laayouny and McNair (eds.), *Amazigh Cinema* (Regina, CA: University of Regina Press, forthcoming).

would help interested audiences – whether Amazigh or not – learn the language. In the absence of institutionalized curricular and programmatic offerings of the language, these online teachers have been creating the resources that curious people need to learn the language. Silya, a Moroccan medical doctor who lives in Virginia, has started a channel called "All Things Amazigh." Silya has been offering extremely meticulous and very popular Amazigh classes.[84] "Learn with Tayeb" is the other YouTube channel that has encountered a lot of success.[85] Unlike the traditional classrooms, the online Tamazight classes use a variety of methods, ranging from mere translation to actual innovative methods that combine communicative approaches with grammar explanation to give viewers a strong knowledge of Tamazight. An important and common trait of these classes, however, is the use of pictorials and a savvy navigation of online teaching technologies. Tayeb's background always displays what he is explaining or introducing in English as well as in Arabic and Latin alphabets to helps learners see and read how Amazigh words and phrases are pronounced.[86]

The YouTube videos I have been able to view indicate the unequal availability of the different Amazigh dialects online. In Morocco alone, Tamazight is composed of three varieties, which are called Tarifit spoken in the Rif, Tamazight spoken in the Middle Atlas, and Tashlḥīt spoken in the south, southeast, and southwest of the country. Tashlḥīt is predominant in the Anglophone Amazigh YouTubea, but this is not surprising. *Ishlhīyn* (Tashlḥīt speakers) have been the ACM's leaders in Morocco, and their work has inspired generations of Amazigh youth in Morocco and abroad. Some associations, like Tamaynut, have representatives abroad. This has allowed the circulation of Amazigh activist ideas beyond the borders of Tamazgha itself. The strength of Tashlḥīt activism lies in the production of a variety of written sources and literature that are not matched by any other Amazigh sphere. Moreover, Morocco's alignment with the Western bloc during the Cold War meant that more Moroccans moved to North America than Libyans and Algerians. Domestically, it also means that English was more available to Moroccans at least during the Cold War. These factors combined can be adduced to explain the predominance of Tashlḥīt on Amazigh YouTubea.

84 Silya's videos have been taken down since the second iteration of this chapter. As of 10 June 2023, the videos are no longer available in the channel.

85 See also "Learn with Tayeb" YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/@LearnwithTayeb/about.

86 "Learn with Tayeb: 'Learn Tamazight: Lesson 1: Start a Conversation'", YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94CxAJD5Be8&t=88s.

These online Tamazight teaching resources have garnered a significant viewership. Some of the language videos posted on YouTube have been viewed thousands of times, contributing to the dissemination of the larger Amazigh YouTubea. "Learn with Tayeb" has been viewed 1,005,077 times since it was created in 2011.[87] Interestingly, many of these resources are created by English speakers who specifically address Anglophone language learners. Although it has been hard for me to find information about their backgrounds and credentials, these teachers are now part of Amazigh pedagogical life online. In tandem with the teaching of the language, a parallel teaching of Amazigh history has also developed online. Armed with a strong consciousness of their Indigeneity and their historical marginalization, these youth explain the need to see Tamazgha's history differently, giving their audiences glimpses into the history that would have been possible if Amazigh Studies were available in Anglophone universities.

## Conclusion

I have shown that Tamazight used to be part of a larger academic world in both its homeland and beyond. This belonging to a wider academic arena that spanned Tamazgha, Europe and the United States spurred the creation of resources that ranged from grammars, dictionaries, curricula, and compilations of Amazigh knowledge and literary production. The colonial time particularly witnessed the creation of massive documentary holdings that, abstracting colonialism's own self-serving discourses about Imazighen's inferiority or conflictual relationship with Arabs, constitute now an important part of the Amazigh library and cultural archive. French colonialism created institutions, established journals and magazines, developed pedagogies and curricula, and trained teachers to teach Tamazight. Between the University of Algiers and the Institute of Moroccan Higher Studies, French colonial administrators put in place a network of institutions in which scholars and teachers of Tamazight found the support and the space they needed to implement the French policy. These institutions were instrumental in creating an Amazigh cultural scene in which Tamazight not only belonged but was part and parcel of its time and its educational and scholarly environment. Unlike the post-independence states that replaced

87 See these statistics on "Learn with Tayeb", YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/@LearnwithTayeb/about

them, the French colonial state was pragmatic and made every effort to reflect the demographic reality of the North African countries they colonized by teaching their local languages.

Tamazight has made huge strides since the 2000s. It has acquired constitutional status and been integrated into the educational and audiovisual systems in Algeria and Morocco. The situation of the language in Libya is stable but fragile in the absence of a constitutional text that sanctions Tamazight as an official language in the country. This new reality marks a significant shift from the period between independence and the early 1990s when Tamazghan self-declared Arab nationalist elites worked actively to eradicate the language and its culture These elites' decolonial convictions conceived of France's interest in Tamazight, which was also parallel to a strong institutionalization of Arabic, as Imazighen's alliance with France. This misconception replaced the French enemy with the Amazigh enemy, and many administrative measures were taken after independence – specifically in Morocco and Algeria – to dismantle Tamazight and its colonial-era legacy. This exclusive policy has been conducive for the emergence of the ACM whose work turned this marginalization into an opportunity to reconfigure Tamazgha and create spaces where Amazigh language and culture could be accounted for.

When Tamazight was part of the larger world, it had a pedagogical, scholarly, and institutional presence in both Tamazgha and outside. Today, Tamazight has been partially rehabilitated in its homeland, where it has reshaped the public sphere and marked a new understanding of Tamazghan peoples' identities and their relationships to the state. This local rehabilitation of Tamazight has not, however, restored to Tamazight its academic position in major American and British universities. When the language fell into academic obsolescence in Tamazghan states, universities phased it out as their faculty retired and new issues became more pressing for security concerns. This situation should be reversed. It is the only way to account for the revitalization of Amazigh language and culture occurring currently in Tamazgha. The reversal of the current situation is also crucial to best convey the reality of cultural production and societal awareness taking place in Tamazgha to the next generation of scholars and students. Tamazgha has several main languages, but Tamazight (the Indigenous one amongst them) has been missing from academic departments for decades now. It is high time this academic injustice had been addressed to put an end to a situation that today makes the colonial period look much better for Tamazight.

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Language teaching and learning were crucial to European colonial, national, and individual enterprises in the Levant, and 'Oriental language teachers' – as they were termed prior to the Second World War – were fundamental to these processes. European state nationalisms influenced and increasingly competed with one another by promoting their languages and cultures abroad, via both private and governmental actors. At the same time, though, learning Arabic became more prominent around the Mediterranean. The first half of the twentieth century corresponded with the emergence of new media, and language was thought of as a cultural product to be exported into new cultural spaces. However, many lacunae remain in the history of linguistic thought and practices, including the forgotten and neglected voices of those involved in learning and teaching Arabic. This volume aims to revisit aspects of this linguistic encounter, including its vision, profile, priorities, trajectories, and practices.

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