LIGHTS:

THE MESSA JOURNAL

Spring 2014
Volume 3, Issue 2
The Middle Eastern Studies Students’ Association’s Subcommittee of Publications at The University of Chicago Spring 2014 Staff

Executive board:

Adam Zeidan - Editor-in-Chief

Michael Peddycoart - Managing Editor

Hannah Ridge - Submissions Editor

Rachiny Samek - Digital Editor

Sarah Furger - Design Editor

Kyle Clark - Review Editor

Brian Watts - Review Editor

Line Editors:

Adam Zeidan

Armaan Siddiqi

Alex Taylor

David Ridge

Teagan Wolter
Peer Reviewers:

Kyle Clark
Carol Rong Fan
Golriz Farshi
Sarah Furger
Areeba Hasan
Hannah Ridge
Jose Revuelta
Mohammad Sagha
Samee Sulaiman
Michael Payne
Michael Peddycoart
Elizabeth Pinto
Andrew Ver Steegh
Adam Zeidan
Patrick Zemanek

Faculty Advisors:
Dr. Fred M. Donner and Dr. John E. Woods
Table of Contents

Reconstructing the Past for the Present and Future: Michel 'Aflaq and Sayyid Qutb in Dialogue
Joshua Donovan ................................................................. 1
    Joshua Donovan is a Master's candidate in the University Of Chicago's Master's of Arts in Program in Social Sciences. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from Georgetown University in History and Government, with a minor in Arabic. His research interests include Christian-Muslim relations, post-colonial nationalism, American Cold War policy in the Middle East, and the construction of human rights norms.

Anointing an Empire: The North African Aristocracy’s Exploitation of the Imperial Roman Economy
Nshan Kesecker ................................................................. 14
    Nshan Kesecker is a first year Master of Arts candidate at the University of Chicago’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies. He received his Bachelor of Arts in European History at the University of San Francisco in 2013. His current research focuses on the transitional period between Early Dynastic and Sargonic Mesopotamia, particularly during the reign of Lugalzagesi (r. ca. 2375-2350 BCE). He is currently studying Akkadian, Pahlavi (Middle Persian) and Old Persian. His other interests include Armenian history and linguistics.

The Ottoman Empire’s Use of Women’s Education in Support of Ottomanism and Industrialization during the Tanzimat and Hamidian Eras
Kyle Clark ................................................................. 24
    Kyle Clark is a Master of Arts candidate in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in History at the University of Arizona in 2013, minorring in Near Eastern Studies and Turkish. He studies Ottoman history with a focus on the evolution of Ottoman diplomacy in the nineteenth century.

Photo Submission
Somayeh Chitchian ................................................................. 32
Headscarves, Nationalism, and Education in Turkey and France
Hannah Ridge .......................................................... 33

Hannah Ridge is a Master's candidate at the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Chicago where she majored in Political Science and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Her research interests include law and society, religion in politics, and nationalism.

Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm and the Production of Supranational Literature
Sheena M. Steckl ........................................................ 45

Sheena Steckl is a PhD student of Arabic and Hebrew languages and literatures in the Comparative Literary at Cultural Studies program at the University of Utah. Her dissertation examines uses of humor as a coping mechanism in the wartime cultural productions of Israel and Palestine since 1948. While her research primality focuses on wars, disputes, and uprisings, other research interests include linguistic manipulation as a means of identity formation and the role of translation in sharing ideas and experiences.

Past in Present: Animation, Comics, and the Representation of Historical Memory in Footnotes in Gaza and Waltz with Bashir
Elizabeth Cordelia Smith .............................................. 63

Elizabeth Smith received her dual master's degree in international & world history from Columbia University and the London School of Economics in Summer 2013, and her bachelor's degree in government and art history from Smith College in 2010. She is currently working as a program developer for BronxWorks' homelessness and eviction prevention department. Her research interests postcolonial studies, critical gender and race theory, and immigration and diaspora.
Reconstructing the Past for the Present and Future: Michel 'Aflaq and Sayyid Qutb in Dialogue

Introduction

“Salafism” (from the Arabic word “salaf” meaning “predecessors” or “ancestors”) is generally associated with Islamic Fundamentalists such as Sayyid Qutb, and characterized as an extremist Sunni ideology which posits that the modern world has been corrupted by modern influences, and that the only way to move forward is to return to the kind of piety observed by Muslims during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Asef Bayat writes that Salafis are those who “…projected the Islam of the early sahaba (Prophet’s companions) as simultaneously the ‘religion, the state, the prayer, and hukm,’ to fight innovation, historicism, and pluralism.” Thus, in the traditional sense, Salafism is a comprehensive belief system with boundaries constructed both positively—that is to say, what Salafism is—and negatively—or what it is not, or what it is necessarily opposed to. These boundaries are set by a literalist interpretation of the past which views the time of the Prophet as a “golden age” that the faithful should replicate in the present as closely as possible in order to return to the glorious days of the past. Traditional Salafists, however, are not the only people who tie their political beliefs to their construction of history. This paper seeks to examine the paradigmatic tool of historical reinterpretation that has been employed in the construction of a variety of modern ideologies. Because these ideologies are ultimately based not on history, per se, but rather on subjectively constructed interpretations of history, I argue that this tactic of relying on the history of the Prophet can be used to justify vastly different proposals.

For this paper, I will examine the writings of Sayyid Qutb (who, in many ways, represents the traditional conception of “Salafism”) and Michel ‘Aflaq (the philosophical founder of the secular, socialist, and pan-Arab Ba’ath Party). I selected these thinkers for two primary reasons: First, they both hearkened back to the same temporal era, namely the time of the prophet which they sought to return to in some capacity. They each sought to legitimize their proposed changes to society through their interpretations of the history of the early Islamic period. However, both Qutb and ‘Aflaq have reconstructed this same past in markedly different ways, and have thus come to markedly different conclusions as to what a “return to the past” would look like. Further, both thinkers viewed their interpretations as “authentic.” According to both leaders, adherence to their respective worldviews does not require the adoption of a new social order, but rather to a replacement of the tainted present model by reclaiming the past.

Analyzing these two individuals side-by-side will allow for a reflection on the power of historical reconstruction. Second, the ideologies constructed by both of them have had a very profound impact on the contemporary Middle East. While their respective ideologies cannot be said to encompass all of Middle Eastern thought in the twentieth-century, the selection of a Christian secularist and a Sunni Islamist enables me to explore the differences between two of the region’s most influential ideological trends of the twentieth-century, particularly through a lens of political secularism versus political Islam.

Despite the ultimately irreconcilable differences in the worldviews articulated by both philosophers, I argue that in drawing from the same historical moment, the viewpoints of Qutb and ‘Aflaq share several common themes. In a general sense, these include: a glorification for the past, a strong call for social justice, and a desire to transcend the Cold War binary. The glorification of the (reconstructed) past was a necessary part of their constructed historical narratives, as the honorific language they

---


2 While the term “Islamist” can, admittedly, be problematic, I use it here in the way Bayat defines it: “Those ideologies and movements that strive to establish some kind of an ‘Islamic order’—a religious state, Shari’a law, and moral codes in Muslim societies and communities,” Asef Bayat, “Post-Islamism at Large,” in Ibid., 4.
employed explains the reasons why a return to the past (as each author interpreted it) is desirable. Their visions of the past became their aspirations for the future. Strong commitments to social justice not only echo many passages in the Qurʾān and several hadith, but can also be politically useful in galvanizing poor and marginalized populations—particularly against contemporary elites. Finally, by reconstructing a glorified past, ʿAflaq and Qutb were both able to argue that their models are superior to the two sides of the Cold War (namely, Communism and Capitalism) which many felt were the only two options to choose from. If an ideology could be based on a “golden age” that would already resonate with many in the Middle East, perhaps it could be worthy of being viewed as an alternative.

As for their major differences in political visions, I argue that these largely stem from the differences in their interpretations of early Islamic history, and how they believe that history should be applied to the present. While they draw on the same history, Qutb advocates a more literal adoption of early Muslim practices. ʿAflaq, in contrast, imagined a “spirit” of the age which he argues both undergirded the glory of the past and is the precise prescription to the problems of his day. His solution to the modern malaise is to harness this “spirit” which was present in the past, in order to revive the Arab soul in the twentieth century. It is difficult to know whether ʿAflaq and Qutb’s respective reinterpretations of history preceded the development of their proposed solutions to what they perceived to be present issues, or whether these constructions were ex post facto justifications. Or perhaps their constructivist projects occurred simultaneously and are mutually reinforcing. While I will not attempt to solve this problem of endogeneity, I will demonstrate that there is a strong tie between defining social problems and corresponding solutions on the one hand, and the construction of an imagined past. Understanding the differences in one is crucial to understanding the differences in the other.

**The allure of the past**

Before explaining the manner in which the philosophers reconstructed early Islamic history, I want to briefly explore the reasons I believe that historical reimagining, broadly speaking, became such a palatable modus operandi. In her work on the construction of European taxonomies of religion, Tomoko Masuzawa argues that Europeans used “history” as an Orientalist category of difference between “East” and “West.” The former was seen as “preserving” history (or living in the past) whereas the “West” was seen as “creating” history (or progressively forging onward into modernity). The “East” had to shed itself of its past and to free itself from the “grip of religion” and, like the West, construct its society “in accordance with rational principles and…on the basis of the rule of law…” In her study on Zoroastrian religious reform, Monica Ringer similarly argues that “Religion was a central battleground for the western creation and claim to modernity, and conversely, in its assignation of backwardness to the Middle East and India.”

Given this, it appears that the Middle East was given two choices: either accommodate Western modernity and shed the vestiges of “anti-modern” Islam, or continue to be left behind on the emerging global stage. Indeed, scholars such as Gabriel Piterberg, Ussama Makdisi, and Timothy Mitchell have argued that in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire internalized feelings of inferiority and

---

5 Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 16.
inadequacy vis-à-vis the West which spurred a series of “modernizing” (arguably Westernizing) reforms known as the “Tanzimat.” On the intellectual front, some nineteenth century Islamic movements, including the Wahhabis, rejected any accommodation with modernization as a perversion of Islam. Other thinkers such as Jamal al-Afghani argued that Islam need not be seen as incompatible with modernity—particularly scientific methodologies. Religion did not need to be discarded, but rather reformed.  

Qutb and ’Aflaq both offered an interpretation of Islam that differs from that of their contemporaries. However, they both claimed that their ideas of religion were not a departure from tradition, but rather a return to a past version of Islam that they believed had the optimal solutions all along. Contemporary practitioners and leaders had deviated from this purer form of Islam rendering the application of their version of Islam incapable of solving the problems of the present. As ’Aflaq concisely put it: “Our era is the least dynamic and the least productive of all…The present reality before us is a discontinuity, or even a contrast between our glorious past and our defective present.” This constructed binary of a “glorious” past and “defective” present reinforced the potency of ’Aflaq and Qutb’s reliance on the Qur’anic generation. It allowed them to reject contemporary interpretations of Islam, and offer reforms to contemporary interpretations of religion and society while being able to claim that their proposed changes were not just mere modern innovations, but rather a return to the true origins of Islam.

Aside from following in the tradition of Islamic modernists who pointed to Islam in order to create a more modern future for the Middle East, why did Qutb and ’Aflaq point specifically to the time of the Prophet? Part of this is undoubtedly for the sense of legitimacy that can be claimed in the Islamic world by asserting that one’s ideology is rooted in the life and beliefs of Muhammad and his followers. Indeed, the entire project of Hadith studies and Qur’anic exegesis rests on the premise that the example set by the Prophet Muhammad and his early followers, along with the precedents that they established, should be followed. For Qutb, the kind of individual piety he demanded from Muslims could only possibly be rooted in the Islamic tradition.

’Aflaq arguably had an even greater problem of legitimacy. Aside from being a religious minority, he was advocating a form of nationalism and socialism—both of which were almost inescapably tied to Western conceptions of nationalism and self-determination, on the one hand, and Marxism and Leninism, on the other. In a candid reflection on Arab Nationalism in 1940, he lamented “…Our nationalism” also comes to us from abroad, rather than being emitted from our depths. The tree that is separated from the ground—whatever size—will not delay in drying out and will not be afraid to dissipate in the wind…” Clearly his nationalism had to be rooted in something more closely resembling the “depths” of the Arab World. Similarly, with regards to Arab Socialism, ’Aflaq wrote as early as 1936, “If I was asked to define socialism, I would not seek its definition in the books of Marx and Lenin, but I would answer: It is the religion of life, and victory of life over death.” Thus, Islam—and more specifically early Islamic history—provided ‘Aflaq with a sort of legitimacy that was resilient to attacks by critics of the Ba’ath who might argue that his views were alien to the Middle East.


9 Michel ’Aflaq, “Dhakara Al-Rasul al-’Arabî,” [Remembrance of the Arab Prophet], in Fi Sabîl al-Ba’ith, [In the Way of the Resurrection] ed., S’dun Hamadi, (Beirut: Dar al-Talî’î a [House of the Vanguard], 1959), 42, the quote is my own translation; an anonymous French translation rendered from a version of the text published by an Iraqi press is also available in the following and was helpful in my translation of the text into English: Michel ’Aflaq, Le Ba’ath et le Patrimoine [The Ba’ath and Heritage] (Baghdad: Dar al-Ma’mun, 1982), 9-10.

10 Michel ’Aflaq, “Fi-I Qumiyya al-’Arabiyya,” [Arab Nationalism], in Fi Sabîl al-Ba’ith, 25. (My translation).

There is one additional reason beyond personal piety (in Qutb’s case) and a quest for legitimacy (in Aflaq’s) for emulating the early Islamic age. Namely, the social benefit they each believed that such an emulation could bring. They both interpreted the advent of Islam as a revolutionary moment that drew the Arab world out of its morass. In a contemporary context, they believed that seizing this historical moment might enable the Middle East to pull itself out of its economic stagnation, eradicate the political corruption of many of its leaders, and cure the lingering problems associated with nearly two centuries of colonial interference.

This reasoning is perhaps best embodied by Qutb’s idea of “Jāhilīyya”—that is, essentially, an age of ignorance of divine law and of rebellion against the sovereignty of God. However, Qutb argued that the advent of Islam offered a way of salvation:

When a person embraced Islam during the time of the Prophet (Peace be on him), he would straightaway cut himself off from Jāhilīyya. When he stepped into the circle of Islam, he would start a new life, separating himself off completely from his past life…He would look upon the deeds of his life of ignorance with mistrust and fear with a feeling that these were impure and could not be countenanced…

Aflaq also viewed the advent of Islam as a redemptive moment in history, suggesting that all progress made in the Islamic world stemmed from “seeds in the first twenty years of its mission.” In strikingly Qutbian language, Aflaq compared contemporary problems with those facing the Arab world during the time of Muhammad, suggesting that “pain is returning to our land with an intensity and a fullness not seen by Arabs since the Jāhilīyya.” Thus, for both Aflaq and Qutb, couching their proposed solutions to twentieth-century issues in the days of Muhammad was not only legitimizing but also aspirational. If Islam had helped Muhammad and his followers to escape from their state of Jāhilīyya in the seventh century, and created the foundations upon which future Arab successes were built, then perhaps by returning to some model of the Prophet and his early followers, the Arab world could be lifted out of its current economic, political, and spiritual crises. For both Qutb and Aflaq, what would begin as an internal and individual spiritual regeneration would translate into broader social change.

**Applying history in the present**

Aflaq and Qutb believed that the necessary social changes had to begin at the individual level. In a way, Qutb aptly sums up both of their missions: “Our aim is first to change ourselves so that we may later change the society.” Similarly, Aflaq insists that: “Previously Muhammad personified all Arabs; therefore today all Arabs must embody Muhammad.” The goal was for every individual in the Middle East to emulate Muhammad and his early followers—to recreate or relive that history as the two authors defined it. Social progress could only come as a result of individual progress. Consequently, both asserted the need for a vanguard which could help guide society in the proper path (not unlike the early caliphate) which could not only enforce Qutb and Aflaq’s interpretation of Islam and the proper social

---

12 For Qutb, personal Islamic piety was important. Aflaq, however, seemed only concerned with whether or not a person held a belief in God. As a Christian, he had little interest in cultivating Islamic piety.
14 Aflaq, “Dhakara Al-Rasul al-‘Arabi,” 51, and Le Ba’ath et le Patrimoine, 28. It is interesting to note here that this speech was given in 1943—several years before Qutb began to employ the term Jāhilīyya in his own writings.
15 Qutb, Milestones, 16.
17 For a similar emphasis on the importance of individual piety to social progress, see Monica Ringer’s case study on Zoroastrian reform in Iran in: Monica M. Ringer, Pious Citizens, 196-201.
order, but would foster the development of individual acceptance of these ideas vis-à-vis education.\textsuperscript{18} Similarities aside, it is important, to stress the differences in what this embodiment looked like for Qutb and ‘Aflaq.

Qutb’s view of history was that Muhammad pulled his followers out of a state of Jāhiliyya through a fixed set of economic and political practices based on Islam, which could be studied and replicated in the twentieth-century (with minor changes to account for the structural changes that had occurred over time). More importantly, Qutb believed that it was the Islamic character of the generation that pulled society out of Jāhiliyya.\textsuperscript{19} This interpretation of history led Qutb to reject any system that fell short of a strict adherence to Shari’ā law.\textsuperscript{20} In fact, Qutb wrote that “a society that does not translate into practice this faith and its corollaries, is not Islamic” (emphasis added) and would therefore be unable to rescue the Arab world from its present Jāhiliyya.\textsuperscript{21}

Given his extensive knowledge of the Qur’ān and Islamic jurisprudence, Qutb naturally felt able to articulate what many of these foundational economic and political principles were. In fact, in his seminal work, Social Justice in Islam, he enumerates many of them, including prohibitions against usury, gambling, prostitution, and alcohol. He conceded that future legislation would be necessary in order to respond to changing circumstances, but maintained that Divine Law should be the reference point.\textsuperscript{22} Denouncing all societies that failed to live up to the “true” beliefs and precepts of Islam as “jahili” Qutb not only set himself in opposition to the East and West, but in his Egyptian context, his worldview was developed in stark contrast to the more secular policies of Egyptian President Gamal ‘Abdel Nasser and other Middle Eastern leaders who he perceived to be corrupt and having deviated from the true precepts of Islam. In fact, his interpretation of Islam, if properly followed, is narrow to the point of excluding every society of the world including those he derides as “so-called ‘Muslim societies.”\textsuperscript{23}

Because his goals were markedly different than Qutb’s, ‘Aflaq took a more metaphysical approach to the history of the Qur’ānic generation. As he, himself, was not a Muslim, he did not look to the example of Muhammad’s generation as a generation that had closely followed Divine Law. He venerated the early Islamic community for adhering to Islamic tenets, however obedience to Islamic law was not the ultimate end for ‘Aflaq, but rather a means to achieve the ultimate end of reviving the Arab soul. Perhaps the most fascinating part of ‘Aflaq’s project is that he reconceptualized what is arguably one of the most particularistic aspects of Islam—that is the history of the Prophet Muhammad—into a more universal essence that could encapsulate all Arabs, regardless of their sectarian affiliation. The adherence to specifically Islamic tenets in the past (and now the present) were important only insofar as they allowed Arab society to flourish:

Before conquering the earth, Arabs conquered their souls, explored their depths and studied their intrinsic nature; and before governing the nations, they governed themselves, dominated their passions and mastered their will. If they instituted sciences, excelled in the arts, and erected a civilization, it was only the materialization—partial and

\textsuperscript{18} On Qutb, see Sayyid Qutb, Social Justice in Islam, [Al-‘Adalat al-Ijtima‘iyya fi-l-Islam], trans. by Hamid Algar, (Oneonta, NY: Islamic Publications International, 2000), 123-26, 285-95; and on ‘Aflaq, see, “The Party of the Arab Ba’ath: Constitution,’” quoted in: Sylvia G. Haim, Arab Nationalism: An Anthology, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), trans. by Sylvia Haim, 241. This kind of ideologically prescribed political orders obviously raise interesting questions about the necessary limits of pure democracy and pluralism in both a Qubian and Ba’athist political framework. However, further exploration of this tension is beyond the scope of this paper.

\textsuperscript{19} Qutb, Milestones, 11-17.

\textsuperscript{20} Specifically, Qutb adhered to the Shaﬁ‘i school of Islamic jurisprudence.

\textsuperscript{21} Qutb, Milestones, 63.

\textsuperscript{22} For a fuller list, see Sayyid Qutb, Social Justice in Islam, 303-13. For now, I focused on political restrictions. Later in the paper, I discuss his economic platform in more detail.

\textsuperscript{23} Qutb, Milestones, 65-9.
minor—of a powerful and total dream that lived in those years [of the Prophet] in all of their beings.\(^24\)

Like Qutb, ‘Aflaq saw Muhammad’s community as exemplar, but for a different reason. In ‘Aflaq’s view, the Qur’ānic generation was not laudable for its ability to follow Divine Law. Islamic tenets guided Arabs to a better society, but Muhammad’s Islam benefitted Arab society because he was able to tap into a fundamental and transcendent truth of the universe that actually had little to do with particular religious beliefs. For Qutb, this universal truth stopped at Islamic law. He posited, “Islam represents the eternal system for the world throughout the future of the human race…”\(^25\) Islam, for Qutb, was the only truth, and thus understanding that truth is predicated solely on being a pious Muslim. ‘Aflaq believed in a transcendent universal truth, but suggested that there were many ways one could reach that truth. In explaining his vision of humanism, ‘Aflaq wrote:

All the nations are grand; all are deeply linked to the immutable notions of the universe, and they aspire by their nature to eternal and universal values. Islam, which reflects the best quest for eternity and universality of our nation, is in fact Arab and humanist in aspiration. Its mission is none other than the creation of an Arab humanism.\(^27\)

In other words, Islam was simply the means by which the Arab soul was revivified. In a way, under ‘Aflaq’s Arab humanism, even a non-Muslim could claim fealty to the Shahada: “La ilā illsAllah wa Muhammad rasul Allāh,” because the message that Muhammad brought was not one of a fixed set of religious beliefs to be literally obeyed, but was rather a universal essence whose final end is the resurrection the Arab soul.\(^28\) Thus, the Qur’ānic generation’s political and economic systems should be replicated insofar as they help to reinvigorate the Arab soul. I will now turn briefly to two contemporary issues about which ‘Aflaq and Qutb reached similar conclusions (with some important distinctions) in very different ways to further elucidate the differences in their historical reinterpretations, and the implications of those differences.

**Social Justice as a Case Study**

Despite their philosophical differences, Qutb and ‘Aflaq generally agreed on social justice issues and offered similar economic proposals. This is perhaps unsurprising given that they both look to the same Islamic past as the paragon of Arab progress. As explained above, Qutb saw this past as a clear roadmap upon which his modern economic proposals would be based. He explains that Islam has a comprehensive view of social justice that undergirds each of its regulations and proscriptions. Specifically, Qutb said that Islam is concerned with freedom of conscience (that is a freedom from servility to all things except Allah), complete equality for all men (that is a view that no man is superior to another, and an opposition to racial discrimination), and mutual responsibility in society (that is a demand

---

26 He explicitly uses the Arabic word “Insaniyya” or “humanism.” One could likely make some comparisons to ideas of Western conceptions of Renaissance-era Humanism. It is not my goal, however, to do that here. I chose to use the term simply because ‘Aflaq does. Further, it is important to note that there are major differences between Western conceptions of “Humanism” and ‘Aflaq’s view including, for instance, ‘Aflaq’s insistence on individual piety. Religion didn’t matter to ‘Aflaq, per se, but a belief in the Divine did.
27 ‘Aflaq, Fi Sabīl al-Ba’ath, 47; Le Ba’ath et le Patrimoine, 19.
28 Ibid., 43-44; 12-14 (respectively).
that individuals must act in the public good). These foundational principles, laid down by Muhammad, “explain all the regulations prescribed by Islam for individuals, societies, nations, and generations.” Included in this are prohibitions against greed and luxury, promises to combat poverty, and guarantees of social security, and free medical care and education provided equally to every individual in the country.

Similarly, ‘Aflaq believed that a strong commitment to equality and social justice was necessary in order for the Arab nation to flourish. Thus in the Ba’ath Party Constitution, he also called for a redistribution of wealth, guaranteed employment, social security, and universal access to free health care and education. However, there are notable differences in how they each reach these proposals.

Because Qutb’s worldview involved a literal application of these principles and practices in the modern world, they also form the basis of his justifications for each of his socio-economic proposals. To get a better understanding of how Islam and Islamic history is applied in Qutb’s formulation, I will focus on two examples. First, Qutb calls for a compulsory graduated tax system whereby virtually everyone pays at least a small tax. This is explicitly in keeping with the compulsory zakat (or almsgiving) in Islam. Due to the substantial economic changes that have happened in the thirteen hundred years between the time of Muhammad and Qutb, some of Qutb’s economic proposals are based on less-direct Islamic principles. One example is his call for the state to nationalize public resources. Qutb begins by establishing his opposition to capitalist monopolies on a statement made by the Prophet against monopolies on essential goods (e.g. food) on the grounds that they were exploitative and contrary to the common good. He then argues that in order to enforce this economic model, “Islam has always asserted the communal ownership of water, pasture, and fire as being the primary needs of life.” However, he immediately follows this point by arguing that “the needs of life are not unchangeable” and that today they include a number of additional industries including oil wells, mines, electricity, and the means of public transportation. Thus, Qutb argues that Muslim leaders must nationalize these industries, as part of enforcing sharī’ā law. Times may be different, but armed with extensive knowledge of the practices and laws set down by Muhammad and practiced by the Rashidun, Qutb rooted each of his economic proposals explicitly in Islamic principles.

By contrast, knowledge, for ‘Aflaq, had its limits: “The life of the prophet, which embodies the Arab soul in its absolute truth, cannot be grasped by intellect. On the contrary, it must be a living experience.” In a direct denouncement of Qutb’s position, ‘Aflaq argued that such a literal application of Islamic history into a comprehensive set of doctrines actually violates the true spirit of Islam:

I ask myself if all the zealots who want to make Islam a neat bag to contain everything...realize that rather than confirming the force of Islam and preserving its notion of contingent change, they destroy its soul and personality, stripping it of its living characteristics and its independence.

Rather than being a religious code, ‘Aflaq saw Islam as a movement that helped Arabs in the past connect with the “authentic orientation” of their souls and achieve their true potential as Arabs. In ‘Aflaq’s mind, the Arabs could renew this movement in the twentieth century. However, the point of lauding Islamic history was not to try to renew Islam in the exact form it took in the Qur’ānic generation,

29 For a more detailed account of these foundational principles, see: Sayyid Qutb, Social Justice in Islam, 52-92.
30 Sayyid Qutb, Social Justice in Islam, 52.
31 Ibid., 307-8.
33 Sayyid Qutb, Social Justice in Islam, 303-5.
34 Ibid., 306-7.
35 Michel ‘Aflaq, Fi Sabiḥ al-Ba’ath, 44; Le Ba’ath et le Patrimoine, 14.
36 Ibid., 47; 20 (respectively).
but rather to renew the metaphysical essence of Islam. For ʿAflaq, Islam is not a legal code derived from the past, but an “experience” and a “constant predisposition” that can be exemplified from the past.\(^{37}\)

How, then, does ʿAflaq justify the comprehensive political and economic system he creates? He begins by establishing the true purpose of Islam and the real significance of Muhammad’s historic moment as he interprets it, which was to orient all efforts to “reinforcing the resurrection of the Arabs and to concentrate on Arab nation [ʿumma].”\(^{38}\) In keeping with this goal, ʿAflaq defended his party’s socialism, arguing that it “emanates from the depth of Arab nationalism itself [and] constitutes…the ideal social order which will allow the Arab people to realize its possibilities and…enable its genius to flourish, and which will ensure for the nation constant progress in its material and moral output.”

To make a more direct comparison to Qutb’s methodology, I will briefly examine ʿAflaq’s similar call to nationalize public utilities in the context of his broader philosophy. Islamic principles are not mentioned in the 1947 Baʿath Party Constitution. However, ʿAflaq determined that a socialist system, whereby the state controls the economic wealth, was the optimum system that will allow the Arab nation to reach its true potential on order to guarantee a more egalitarian economic system. Accordingly: “Public utilities, extensive natural resources, big industry, and the means of transport are the property of the nation. The state will manage them directly and will abolish private companies and foreign concessions.”\(^{40}\) It is important to note that the constitution includes foreign concessions here. Western powers had long owned significant stakes in Middle Eastern resources (especially oil) through a series of Ottoman-era concessions. However, just as Iranian Prime Minister Muhammad Musadeq would later nationalize Iranian oil, and Nasser would later nationalize the Suez Canal, ʿAflaq declared in 1947 that Western powers should no longer be able to exploit Middle Eastern resources. To justify this stance, ʿAflaq did not draw direct parallels to Muhammad, searching for an example of when the Prophet may have seized control of production from external powers. Rather, ʿAflaq drew on the “spirit” of Islam, positing that just as Muhammad had resurrected the Arab soul in his day, so too could the Baʿath Party in the twentieth century, if the Arab state could wrest control of its resources from wealthy businessmen and colonial powers who were not acting in the best interests of Arabs.

Transcendent Islam in a Cold War binary

My second example deals with foreign policy. Qutb and ʿAflaq both wrote and lived in the early days of Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Conceived of as being part of the “third world,” the Middle East was caught in between the Communist and Capitalist poles, with both superpowers vying for influence in the region. Despite their different perspectives, both Qutb and ʿAflaq were critical of both Communism and Capitalism, arguing that a third option—rooted in principles that ultimately transcended Cold War paradigms—was the only guarantee of human freedom. While they both drew on the same Islamic tradition, their views differed in important ways.

In what came to be a popular phrase among the leaders of many post-colonial countries during the Cold War, Michel ʿAflaq referred to his position on geopolitics as a “Positive Neutrality.” ʿAflaq found flaws with both camps. He sees the Capitalist bloc as being inextricably tied to colonialism, which had long plagued the Arab World. Accordingly, driving away, or working to defeat the Eastern bloc would mean “…increasing [colonialism’s] exploitative clout on our resources and its degradation of our sovereignty.” He is quick to note, however, that siding with the Soviet bloc and driving away the West is

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 43; 12 (respectively).
\(^{38}\) Ibid., 48; 21 (respectively). Here it is interesting to note that the Arabic word he chose to use for nation here has an explicitly Islamic context, as opposed to more secular options such as waṭan (or “homeland”).
\(^{40}\) Ibid.
equally troubling because, “a defeat of the Capitalist camp means that the Communist idea will sweep throughout the world including its denial of nationalism and freedom.”

At the same time, ʿAflaq also believed that each camp has something positive to contribute in terms of guaranteeing full freedom to all people. The West brought with it “a deep and comprehensive sense of democracy” which was aligned with the platform established in the Baʿath Party constitution:

The Party of the Arab Baʿath…believes that sovereignty is the property of the people, who alone [are] the source of all authority. It believes that the value of the state is the outcome of the will of the masses…and that this value is sacred only to the extent that the masses have exercised their choice freely.

On the other hand, the East brought with it a sense of social justice that comported with the Socialist mission of the Party. ʿAflaq was clear to distinguish his economic vision from that of the Soviet Union’s, but nevertheless strove for a more egalitarian economy:

As for Socialism in the Arab Baʿath, it is limited in its meaning to an economic system which seeks to reconsider the distribution of wealth in the Arab homeland [waṭan] and to place the foundations and regulations [necessary] for the economy to include economic equality and justice among citizens.

Essentially, the West worked to guarantee political rights, while the East worked to guarantee economic rights. Consequently, ʿAflaq sought to use the best parts of both the East and the West.

ʿAflaq argued that the only way for each of the camps to “correct” themselves was in the presence of the opposing camp. Should one camp be destroyed, it would destroy the other camp’s only guarantee at self-correction. ʿAflaq hoped that Positive Neutrality could provide space for the two camps to work together peacefully, ridding themselves of the flawed aspects of their respective ideologies which restricted individual freedom. Thus, not only would Positive Neutrality benefit the Arab nation in a domestic context by not dividing Arabs into Pro-East and Pro-West camps, threatening Arab Unity with the possibility of civil war; but ʿAflaq also saw Positive Neutrality as a way to foster peace between the two camps. Similar to the way in which ʿAflaq’s position allowed humanism to be universally attainable (that is, outside a strictly Islamic and Arab context), he suggested that Positive Neutrality can eliminate walls of distinction and push all people toward universal peace:

Indeed, [Positive Neutrality] aims to secure not only the interests of the peoples who adhere to [its] politics, but also to reach out and secure the interests of the peoples of the rival camps… On the one hand, it allows the governments of the Eastern camp a place to correct their position [and] move their people in a direction of greater freedom, and on the other hand, it works…with the interests of the Western peoples…in order to push them gradually to Socialism, to get rid of colonialism, and to recognize the rights of the peoples and their sovereignty.

Of course, this was anathema to Qutb’s brand of Salafism. Muhammad and his early followers did not rely on an amalgamation of a market-based democratic system and an authoritarian command

---

42 Ibid., 219.
44 Michel ʿAflaq, “Baṭna Iṣḥāraqiyatina wa al-Shuyʿaʾiyya wa al-Iṣḥāraqiyat al-Waṭaniyya,” [Between Our Socialism, Communism, and National Socialism], in Fi Sabīl al-Baʿath, 97. (My translation).
economy. Unsurprisingly, Qutb’s view of Islamic History as a system that could be literally adopted to fix present concerns found no reason to combine East and West:

Islam altogether presents to mankind an example of a complete political system, the like of which has never been found in any of the other systems known to the world…Islam does not seek, and never has sought, to imitate any other system, or to find connections or similarities between itself and others.  

Unlike ‘Aflaq, Qutb saw absolutely no reason to borrow the good parts of the Western and the Eastern blocs. In terms of helping the blocs help each other, as far as Qutb was concerned, Islam was the ultimate panacea or “complete cure,” (to use his words). If either bloc wanted to solve its problems, they needed only to submit themselves to Islam.

Qutb’s unwillingness to seriously consider virtues in the Western and Eastern blocs speaks to his interpretation of Islamic history. In Qutb’s mind, Communism may have claimed to advance economic equality though he quickly pointed out that “Communism has found itself unable to achieve this equality.” In contrast, he believed that the Islamic model put forth by Muhammad guaranteed not only equality of economic opportunity, but offered a vision of justice that far exceeded mere economic justice. As for the West, his two year stay in the United States disabused him of any affinity for Western values. In Milestones he denounced the monopolies and usury present in Western Capitalism, condemned the “vulgarity” of Western sexual practices (including “free mixing of the sexes”), accused the West of “fanatical racial discrimination,” and argued that the West—like the East—is also materialistic. In a concise response to the kind of Positive Neutrality that ‘Aflaq was hoping to cultivate, Qutb said the following:

There are people—exponents of Islam—who are defeated before this filth in which Jähiliyya is steeped, even to the extent that they search for resemblances to Islam among this rubbish heap of the West, and also among the evil and dirty materialism of the East.

Conclusion

In reflecting upon the use of history in contemporary politics, and the project of constructing—and reconstructing—the past, I confessed early that there is an unresolved and difficult question of endogeneity. Specifically, did ‘Aflaq and Qutb construct their respective ideologies based on their interpretations of Islamic history, or did they construct their views on the past to suit their respective ideological, and ultimately political, projects? This question is beyond the scope of this paper, but regardless of whether the reconstruction of the past preceded the formulation of ‘Aflaq and Qutb’s contemporary solutions, or whether it they reimagined Islamic history for the purposes of ex post facto legitimization, it is clear that a relationship does exist. One goal of this paper was to shed light on the large and diverse body of historical scholarship dealing with the inherent power held by one constructing an historical narrative. ‘Aflaq and Qutb’s respective philosophies remind the astute observer that history is more than mere recollection. The retelling of the past is an active and intentional project that carries with it immense political and social implications.

47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., 47.
50 Sayyid Qutb, Social Justice in Islam, 120.
Whether out of sincere motives, or shrewd pragmatism, both Ḥaḍīth Qudsi and Qutb highly value the time of the Prophet and the so-called Qurʾānic generation. In placing value on the same set of known historical facts, both Qutb and Ḥaḍīth Qudsi deal with similar themes in their writings, particularly regarding social and economic justice, and an insistence that Arabs and Muslims could articulate a comprehensive set of beliefs in the emerging bipolar Cold War world, rather than just following one side or the other. Despite the enormous gulf between Qutb’s puritanical pan-Islamism and Ḥaḍīth Qudsi’s secular pan-Arabism, the men come to conclusions that may be more similar to one another than either would have cared to admit. Still, there are subtle, yet crucial differences in the way each writer conceived of Islamic history, and understanding those differences provides a more comprehensive understanding of their divergent worldviews.

Finally, comparing Qutb and Ḥaḍīth Qudsi can, in some ways, complicate the overly simplified binary of “secular” and “religious.” On an initial reading of Ḥaḍīth Qudsi’s reinterpretation of early Islamic history, it is easy to dismiss his project as an insincere and pragmatic reconfiguration done to advance an agenda. Two ideas challenge this, however. First is Ḥaḍīth Qudsi’s insistence on the importance of individual piety, even if it is not one that Qutb would recognize. Second, and perhaps more importantly, is that Qutb’s “religious” model relies just as heavily on a particular reimagining of history as Ḥaḍīth Qudsi does. Moving past these categories forces one to consider the importance of religion and, specifically, individual piety to both Qutb and Ḥaḍīth Qudsi. Their manifestos do more than simply propose a new social order to cure the ills of Middle Eastern society. They also reimagine religion and history in order to preserve the aspects they each feel are important, and to make the case for their relevance in the rapidly changing modern world.
Bibliography


Anointing an Empire: The North African Aristocracy’s Exploitation of the Imperial Roman Economy

The recent political upheaval in Libya brought the attention of the world to bear on this large North African nation. Calls for foreign intervention in Libya in order to aid the various anti-Gaddafi factions resonated throughout the NATO nations, facilitating the success of the revolution. Whether or not this revolution will change Libya for the better is yet-to-be determined, but the calls for foreign intervention in an African conflict were not surprising considering the lingering Western attitudes toward intervention and control in the continent. In contrast, a similar situation in Syria is not necessitating NATO intervention, due to the fact that the situation is “far more complicated than was the case in Libya.” In truth, the conflict in Libya was and is not simpler, despite what mainstream Western media states. Western colonial attitudes towards North Africa have been so pervasive that they have even infiltrated the study of the region’s agricultural history in the Roman period.

In the present day, the Maghreb is not popularly regarded as an economic and agricultural powerhouse. This was certainly not the case in antiquity, from the apex of Carthaginian hegemony to the twilight of Justinian’s vision of a revitalized Roman Empire, when North Africa was regarded as the “granary” of Rome. The city of Rome itself relied heavily on North African provinces for grain and olive oil critical not only for practical needs, but also for daily cultural rituals with regard to the latter commodity. The agricultural wealth of North Africa, from Tripolitania to Mauretania, was a significant economic force prior to Roman control and endured through the Vandal conquest. The classical writers Pliny and Juvenal deplore the quality of African olive oil in their works and many classicists focusing on literary evidence took these statements to heart as mainstream Roman views on the quality and importance of olive oil from African provinces. However, as stated by archaeologist and historian D. J. Mattingly, Juvenal’s statement in particular is likely indicative of how common and widespread olive oil from Africa had become during the first century CE.

Rome built upon the existing agricultural foundations of its Punic and African predecessors in North Africa. Early historical analyses of Roman North Africa were written by historians and archaeologists under the influence of colonialist ideologies and sought to justify European imperialism in North Africa and were not based on any significant material evidence. These studies assumed that the Roman ruins on the North African *limes*, or the literal limits of Roman political hegemony, alongside extensive irrigation of otherwise inhospitable regions, indicated that Rome had been forcibly conferring “civilization” on its colonial subjects. However, the theory of African resistance to Roman culture is not entirely true either. Due to the lucrative nature of olive oil cultivation in the Roman world, African aristocrats cooperated with the Roman military in order to expand their irrigation system and refine dry-farming techniques. The archaeological and epigraphical record in the pre-desert region of Tripolitania and the Sub-Saharan of Algeria (Roman *Mauretania Caesariensis*) best exemplify the exploitation of indigenous and Punic groups for the purpose of olive oil exportation.

As illustrated by a bevy of historical and archaeological sources, Roman Africa was critical for the Roman olive supply and heavily influenced Roman political activities and infrastructure projects from the inception of Roman forays into the African continent until its loss to the Vandals in the fifth century.

---

4. Ibid.
CE. Historians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed that the Romans, with their supposedly unsurpassed agricultural ingenuity, had colonized North Africa and Romanized its people, explaining the expansive ruins in areas of the Maghreb now unexploited and largely uninhabited. However, more recent studies of epigraphical, literary, and archaeological sources now reveal that the process of altering the landscape of the Maghreb interior in the Roman period was not purely a Roman venture, but a combined effort of Roman colonists, Libyphoenicians, and indigenous groups for the purpose of exploiting the semi-arid landscape for olive cultivation and export. The focus of this study will be on the province of Tripolitania, which exported the most olive oil of all Roman provinces.5

The Debate Over the Nature of Roman Africa

“In North Africa, archaeology was a new scientific technology imported in modern times by colonial powers, and its political position only tended to accentuate trends already in force in Europe itself.” – Brent Shaw, historian of Roman material culture6

The historiography of North African agriculture has shifted significantly over time since the first serious studies of the history of the region were mounted in the late nineteenth century. These shifts were largely not due to dramatic changes in the available historical and archaeological information, but to changes in the socio-political and philosophical outlooks of those taking part in the study and analysis of the different regions of the Maghreb and their respective history in regards to Romanization or lack thereof.

Initially, those who led archaeological expeditions into the Maghreb did so under the banner of colonialism. The powers colonizing the Maghreb, France especially, encouraged studies to determine how the Romans had been able to incorporate North African peoples into their structures in an effort to better shape their own colonial ambitions in the region.7 With this outlook, historians paid little attention to non-Roman ruins and focused on those that appeared to be of Roman origin. The next category of historians was the resistance group that appeared in the post-colonial period (1960s-1970s). These scholars attempted to use what evidence was available to them to show how North African peoples resisted Romanization in North Africa.

The main evidence utilized by all these scholars, who dominated the field until the mid-1970s, was epigraphical rather than archaeological. In 1929, Thomas Broughton published The Romanization of Africa Proconsularis, which favored the use of literature and epigraphy to support the idea of the dominance of Romanization in the titular province.8 Analyses done in the vein of Romanization studies were structured similarly, even with vastly differing theses, did not utilize a significant amount of archaeological evidence in their work, though they begin to make reference to Roman frontier buildings.9

The problem with these attempts to illuminate the sometimes enigmatic history of Roman involvement in North Africa is that they tend to ignore or gloss over the non-Roman North African populations. Agriculture during the Carthaginian period was already advanced in terms of grain, olive, cereal, and wine production. Due to the colonialist mindset, historians into the latter half of the twentieth century expected to find evidence supporting the view that Romans had brought better techniques to their North African provinces, and interpreted literary sources for this purpose.

7 Shaw, “Archaeology and Knowledge,” 32.
8 Ibid., 33.
9 Ibid.
Geographic Overview

The Roman province of *Africa Proconsularis* was one of the wealthiest regions in the Roman Empire. Due to less production and a harsh environment in recent years, it has been hypothesized that this region, especially Tripolitania, has undergone significant climate change since the Roman period, and that this change accounts for the recent inability to exploit the land as had been done in Roman times. However, the physical data suggests that the entire Maghreb has not undergone much change at all when compared to the environment during the Carthaginian and Roman eras.

*Africa Proconsularis* can be divided into two distinct regions, namely Byzacena and Zeugitana in modern Tunisia, and Tripolitania in modern northwestern Libya, which were officially created out of *Africa Proconsularis* by Diocletian’s administrative reforms in the late third century CE. Mauretania was divided into *Mauretania Tingitana* in modern Morocco and *Caesariensis* in Algeria. The province of Numidia lay between Mauretania and *Africa Proconsularis*, with its capital at Cirta.

Zeugitana and Byzacena correspond to the modern country of Tunisia. This region was very fertile and was notable for not only olive oil production but also significant amounts of grains and cereals (largely sorghum). Grains were the most significant food source of the antique Mediterranean world and the word *annona*, the Roman equivalent of a tax-in-kind, sometimes referred specifically to bread even though it technically applied to a broad range of goods.

Tripolitania is located largely in the northwest corner of modern Libya. Its main settlements were the coastal towns of Oea (modern Tripoli) and Lepcis Magna, the birthplace of Emperor Septimius Severus (r. 193-211). Lepcis Magna was the most significant town in Tripolitania and was not the stereotypical thriving town of Mediterranean antiquity. It was located in a fairly harsh environment that required significant knowledge and persistence to tame. The city would grow to become one of the most prosperous towns in the Roman Empire, especially during the reign of the Lepctician emperor, Severus.

The region that best illustrates the cooperation between non-Romans and Romans is the pre-desert, or pre-Saharan. The pre-desert of the Maghreb is the land between the 400 mm and 100 mm isohyets. The *limes* of the Roman Empire lay along the 100 mm band, from Tripolitania to Mauretania. Due to the increase of lucrative agriculture in this region during the Roman period, later Arabian polities moved their capitals further inland, which affected Carthage and other coastal towns negatively.

From Carthage to Rome

In approximately the year 1000 BCE, according to legend, seafaring Phoenicians led by the legendary Queen Dido founded a city in Tunisia called *Qart-hadašt*: Carthage. This momentous event was the inception of a powerful mercantile oligarchy that held sway over trade in the Mediterranean for centuries. Some of the world’s most accomplished navigators and generals, most notably Hanno the Navigator and Hannibal Barca, respectively, operated on behalf of the ancient super-city. Not much is known about the pre-Carthaginian period and it is difficult to piece together history from a Carthaginian...

11 Ibid., 1.
standpoint given Rome’s seizure of their territory and the destruction of their capital in the Third Punic War (149-146 BCE).

Politically and economically, Carthage relied on merchants and trade. At their height, the Carthaginians held sway over the North African coast to Tingis, the southern coast of Spain, Corsica, Sardinia, and significant portions of Sicily. The Romans were well aware of Carthage’s naval and mercantile prowess, which they had inherited from their ancestors back in the Levant. In terms of citizenry, it was no contest between Rome and Carthage. Compared to the citizen army of the Roman Republic, Carthaginian citizenry were far outnumbered and their commanders relied heavily on Numidian, Libyan, Iberian, and Celtic mercenaries.  

The undisputed military power of the Mediterranean World from the second century BCE to the third century CE, the Roman military machine throttled its opponents one by one, from Lusitania to Syria. At the center of the Mediterranean, Rome had several avenues of expansion open to it in the early years of the Republican era (approximately 500-300 BCE). Despite powerful foes and trouble with tribes on the Italian peninsula such as the Samnites, Rome was able to overcome its obstacles and establish itself as a force to be reckoned with. Roman philosophy, tradition and morality were intertwined with their dining habits and food preferences, making food a critical part of Roman social life — at least for those with the luxury of having time for *otium*.  

Olive cultivation had been a major foundation of North African agricultural development even prior to Punic influence and Rome eyed those farmlands lustily. Some of Rome’s fiercest and most organized early enemies were located in these very fertile regions of North Africa. Carthage, at its peak in the fourth century BCE, had the richest agricultural economy in the entire Mediterranean thanks to the fertility of regions such as the environs of Tabarka and the olive groves and fisheries of Sfax. Despite anti-Carthaginian propaganda, there were elements of Roman society that admired the prowess of Carthaginian agriculture. This can be illustrated in the works of Mago the Carthaginian agronomist and how pervasive his writings were in Roman agricultural literature and even in Roman society. Unfortunately, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what these influences were due to the destruction of the city of Carthage in the Third Punic War.

Carthage and the Ptolemaic Empire did not make significant inroads into the interior of Tripolitania and, despite their close proximity to one another, enjoyed strong diplomatic relations. Carthage relied on the loyalty of Numidian and Iberian vassal kings and mercenaries and the Ptolemaic emperors felt their conflicts with the Seleucid Empire of the Near East to be of greater importance than securing outposts deeper into the Tripolitanian interior and past Cyrenaica. Tripolitania was fertile along the coastline, but the vast majority of the province consisted of an arid pre-desert climate unsuitable for anything more than dromedary grazing. Even the Romans, for the first three centuries of their conquest of Tripolitania, believed this idea.

The agricultural prowess of Carthage, evident in the splendor of the city’s economy and the vibrancy of North Africa’s trade at the time, was not lost following the Roman conquest. Their methods and philosophy regarding agriculture were well noted in the Roman world thanks to Mago’s works, which had some strangely Roman themes, at least in those pieces that were preserved by the Romans. Carthaginian aristocrats, much like their Roman counterparts, pondered the differences between urban

---

areas and the society of the countryside.\(^{21}\) This idea, of Hellenistic origin, seems to have been transmitted to Carthage via trade with the Hellenistic empires of Seleucia in the Near East and Ptolemaic Egypt, as well as the quasi-independent trading hub of Cyrene. The original homeland of the seafaring Carthaginians, Phoenicia, lay in the heart of the Seleucid Empire after the violent division of Alexander’s Empire by the Diadochi, and transformation of Phoenicia’s socio-political situation accelerated the influx of Hellenistic culture into the lands of their Carthaginian cousins in the fourth and third centuries BCE.

The agricultural output of the Italian peninsula was not adequate to feed a city to the capacity Rome was able to grow following the Republic’s conquests. Certain regions of Roman Africa were able to produce large amounts of grain. These regions, largely corresponding to modern Tunisia, were to be the main suppliers of grain to the city of Rome itself, allowing it to grow to an immense size for the time. When the Vandals gained control of Tunisia from Rome in the fifth century CE, the Roman Empire, which had never even considered dealing diplomatically with the Vandals prior to their capture of the so-called “granary of Rome,” suddenly relented and worked out a trade treaty with King Geiseric to keep supplies flowing to the port of Ostia.\(^{22}\) As previously stated, one of the most critical goods coming into Ostia from North Africa was olive oil.

**The Pre-Desert Frontier**

The Romans constructed their North African *limes* in the pre-desert where dry-farming cultivation was possible following significant alterations to the environment utilizing unique irrigation techniques that were distinct from those used in Italy.\(^{23}\) The *annona* generally referred to the Roman government’s method of feeding Rome through a system of acquisition and allocation beginning in the second century CE.\(^{24}\) Though a variety of goods were involved in this tax-in-kind system, the *annona* largely referred to grain and olive oil supplies. Rome became dependent on North African goods by the first century CE when Tunisian regions became the most critical exporters of grains and Tripolitanian olive oil exports also increased significantly.

The population of Tripolitania was diverse prior to Roman annexation. The people who inhabited the coastal areas in and around the major cities of Oea and Lepcis Magna were the Libyphoenicians. Following initial Phoenician colonization of these territories, Libyan groups intermarried with Phoenicians and created this population, sometimes termed Neo-Punic.\(^{25}\) The term Libyphoenician is of Greek origin and is undoubtedly a generalization of a more complex situation that lacks significant documentation.\(^{26}\) Sallust mentions the language now denoted as “Libyan” when he states, “it was only the language of this community (Lepcis Magna) that was altered by intermarriage with the Numidians; laws and customs were largely Sidonian,” with Sidonian of course referring to the Phoenician town of Sidon in the Levant.\(^{27}\) During the hegemony of Carthage over the various Punic communities in Tripolitania, intermarriage was encouraged between Libyan and Punic families in order to improve exploitation of the land and possibly gain access to the more locally suitable farming techniques of the Libyans.\(^{28}\) The Libyphoenicians spoke Punic and maintained a strong Punic culture well into the first millennium CE. The Roman state did not forcibly oust the Libyphoenician aristocracy, which explains their prosperity into the Roman period. The incorporation of various Libyan tribes into the Libyphoenician sphere continued

\(^{21}\) Purcell, “The Way We Used to Eat,” 25.
\(^{22}\) Sirks, *Food for Rome*, 180.
\(^{25}\) Harden, *The Phoenicians*, 75.
unabated in the Roman period, as evidenced by the spread of Punic architecture and culture during this period. Tribes located further inland, such as the Gaetuli and the Macae, show significant evidence of the expansion of Libyphoenician communities into their territory. The gradual shift in the culture of these tribes reveals how Rome itself did not exert significant force in the transformation of these Tripolitanian communities, but rather it was Libyphoenician aristocrats. These quasi-independent communities even fought amongst themselves, as evidenced by the violent conflict for pre-desert hinterlands between Oea and Lepcis Magna in 69 CE. In the first century CE, Roman colonists arrived in some number into Tripolitania. However, the massive buildings of this period were funded by Libyphoenicians and are a testament to the wealth and power of this neo-Punic population’s aristocratic elements well after the final defeat of Carthage. Given Carthaginian skills in agriculture, especially in terms of olive cultivation, Libyphoenician influence in the construction of the massive irrigation systems in the pre-desert region is not unlikely, given the lucrative nature of the market. Olive presses from the Roman period can be found in abundance in the Gebel Tarhuna on villa lands that were not typically Roman in construction, possibly indicating Libyphoenician origins.

The Garamantes have been the only other Tripolitanian group studied in a significant fashion. The results of these archaeological expeditions have been striking and show how the Garamantes were not nomadic pastoralists like other tribes nearby, but were settled agriculturalists. The geographer Ptolemy (c. 90 - 180 CE) placed the territory of the Garamantes approximately in modern Fezzan, with Cydamus (modern Ghadames) as one of their centers. Excavation of Garamantian sites has been done in Fezzan and has revealed significant irrigation structures. Garamantian settlements dating to the ninth century BCE have been excavated around the Wadi el Agial between the Ubari and Murzuch sand seas. In this inhospitable region, Garamantian agriculture was able to sustain a population of over 10,000 for many centuries. That this population, formerly identified as a troglodytic people who required “civilization” by Romans, was able to sustain a population of over 10,000 in their capital in an area as inhospitable as the Tripolitanian pre-desert is notable and damaging to the colonial narrative of Roman North Africa.

Unlike the other provinces of the Maghreb, Tripolitania’s aristocracy remained untouched by the Romans. Even during Vandal rule, it was made a priority by different governments to grant quasi-independence to the inhabitants of the pre-desert. Comparatively, Carthaginian aristocrats in Tunisia had been ousted with extreme prejudice. This gave Tripolitania, with its harsher environment for agriculture, an economic head start following its incorporation into the Roman world. Cereals were the main agricultural product of Tunisia, which had come to dominate that market by the first century CE with the settlement and expansion of imperial Roman estates. By contrast, the entirety of Tripolitania was not a part of the 400mm isohyet necessary for such cultivation, necessitating a specialization in olive cultivation throughout the province. Tunisian olive cultivation did not reach its peak until the third century CE, while Tripolitania had been producing significant quantities even prior to the Roman period.

The Tell is the northernmost part of Algeria and extends to the 400mm isohyet, the traditional limit for the cultivation of cereals. The pre-Saharan (pre-desert) region extends down to the 100 mm isohyet, where the Sahara officially begins. The mountainous regions of Algeria were significantly more

29 Harden, *The Phoenicians*, 75.
30 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 33.
33 Ibid., 34.
34 Rushworth, “State Formation and Regional Identity in the Pre-Saharan Zone,” 77.
35 Mattingly, *Tripolitania*, 139.
forested in antiquity, and deforestation during the Roman period was a noted problem.\textsuperscript{37} The 100 mm isohyet corresponded to the extensive ruins of the \textit{Fossatum Africæ}, a series of border fortifications on the Algerian frontier. The Roman fortifications were initially thought to have been for military purposes, but in reality would not have been effective for such a purpose. The fortifications are not contiguous, have various holes in them, and were built for the purpose of taxing farmers in the pre-desert more efficiently. Though crop yields in Algeria were not as significant as in Libya, the nature of the frontier was essentially the same.

The Maghreb continued to be a major source of agricultural production in the post-Roman period, but went into serious decline during the second millennium CE. Settlements in the interior were abandoned and lands that had been used extensively became uninhabited areas. The pre-desert of Tripolitania was particularly affected in these upheavals.

\textbf{The Lucrative Olive Oil Trade}

Many scholars disagree over the nature of the ancient Roman economy, with some wholeheartedly supporting the existence of a free market during the Roman period, others grudgingly admitting to some free market elements involved in the creation of crop specialization for export profits.\textsuperscript{38} In the Roman Empire, “olive oil was a basic food source, the prime lighting fuel and the essential base for numerous medicaments, soaps, skin oils, perfumes, and cosmetics.”\textsuperscript{39} It is quite possible that olive oil consumption in the Roman Empire was on average twenty liters per capita.\textsuperscript{40} This would signify that to satisfy the needs of the Mediterranean population of 25-50 million, there needed to have been over 500,000,000 liters of olive oil produced every year.\textsuperscript{41} This figure, which could reach over half of modern day olive oil production in the Mediterranean, reveals how critical olive oil was for the economy of the Empire as well as for the provinces that produced the necessary olive oil. The most critical provinces were Tripolitania, Baetica in Spain, and Tunisia. Tripolitania was a unique case that reveals the extent to which Romans were willing to go to produce surplus olive oil to send to Ostia and Rome.

Of all the towns in Roman North Africa, Lepcis Magna was by far the city with the richest aristocracy. On the estates of Lepititan aristocrats, archaeologists (and late nineteenth century explorers) have located and recorded hundreds of olive presses in the Tripolitanian hinterland controlled by Lepcis Magna alone. There may have been more than 1,500 of these orthostat presses.\textsuperscript{42} Each large olive press could produce five to ten thousand liters of oil per year, meaning that the Libyphoenician aristocracy of Lepcis Magna alone could have had up to fifteen million liters produced in their lands every year.\textsuperscript{43} Along with the production in other Tripolitanian lands, the entire province figures to have had twenty million liters of excess olive oil.\textsuperscript{44} During the height of Tripolitanian production, huge fleets of ships must have been utilized to transport these cargoes that enriched Libyphoenician and African aristocrats in the region.

While the olive oil trade enriched some indigenous aristocrats, the vast majority of Tripolitanians were utilized as virtually free or cheap labor on a \textit{villa rustica} estate in the pre-desert. These villas were not built for comfort, but contained significant numbers of olive trees and presses in their lands,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[38] Sirks, \textit{Food for Rome}, 6.
\item[40] Mattingly, “The Olive Boom,” 22.
\item[41] Ibid.
\item[43] Ibid.
\item[44] Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
suggesting that workers lived there to tend the trees for aristocrats who lived in coastal cities.\textsuperscript{45} However, while it may have been these aristocrats making most of the profits, according to the archaeological record there were also smaller single olive press farms in existence at the time, indicating smaller operations for profit by an emerging lower middle class.\textsuperscript{46}

Tripolitanian aristocrats made significant gains in the first, second, and third centuries CE. Like Spanish politicians who hailed from olive oil (and metal) producing regions, Tunisian and Tripolitanian aristocrats were able to rise through the Roman political system utilizing their newfound influence. By the early third century CE, the influence of these olive oil-exporting nobles was at its peak, when the Lepcitian Septimius Severus ascended the throne.\textsuperscript{47} Septimius Severus saw to it that Lepcis Magna be enriched and expanded architecturally during his reign, and his massive expense in these projects is still apparent today in the city’s magnificent ruins. The aristocrats had spared no expense in their cultivation of the pre-desert, and the creation of these farms required very significant investments. There also had to have been the promise of a benefit to those working on the estates, but there is little to no evidence of the nature of this relationship. It is possible that some nomadic tribesmen were hired seasonally to work during the labor-intensive harvest time.\textsuperscript{48}

**The Myth of North African Economic Collapse**

Some scholars have hypothesized that the collapse of the Western Roman Empire caused the collapse of the North African economy. Olive oil remained a critical commodity for those who continued to embrace Roman culture throughout the Mediterranean. The continued lucrative nature of olive oil trade can be clearly seen in the fact that the trade outlasted the Western Roman Empire. Since the retreat of the Roman military along the limes of the Maghreb did not cause any decline in production whatsoever, it can be inferred that it was almost completely an indigenous initiative to exploit the Mediterranean economy’s demand for surplus oil rather than a Roman colonial initiative.

The Vandal conquest of North Africa did not interrupt trade between North African aristocrats and Rome, and lines of trade were kept open. There were also several Moorish successor kingdoms that emerged alongside the Vandal kingdom in Carthage.\textsuperscript{49} These small polities’ economic success is evidenced by their extensive and elaborate mausolea along trade routes that continued to operate during the centuries following the Roman collapse. The historian Alan Rushworth posits that the success of these kingdoms parallels the success of Manchurian chiefdoms in Manchuria on the borders of the Chinese Empire during the decline of the Ming dynasty, allowing them greater freedom of administration and economic exploitation.\textsuperscript{50}

The Rustamid dynasty (776-909 CE) based in Algeria also ruled over significant pre-desert areas from the old Fossatum into Tripolitania. These pre-desert communities offered no resistance to Rustamid rule. This indicates that the coastal Rustamids offered a strong avenue of trade into the Mediterranean that continued to be lucrative. The Rustamid imams ruled the pre-desert even more loosely than their Roman and Vandal predecessors, and the prosperity of Tripolitania reached a Renaissance even after the complete abandonment of Lepcis Magna and its supplanting by Oea (modern Tripoli) from the third to sixth centuries.\textsuperscript{51} The Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt would destroy the Rustamids in 909 CE and the prosperity of the region went along with them.

\textsuperscript{45} Mattingly, “Oil for Export,” 37.
\textsuperscript{46} Mattingly, “The Olive Boom,” 29.
\textsuperscript{47} Mattingly, “Oil for Export,” 51.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 52.
\textsuperscript{49} Rushworth, “State Formation and Regional Identity in the Pre-Saharan Zone,” 80.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 86.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 90.
The continued success of pre-desert agriculture following the collapse of Roman authority indicated that these communities enjoyed freedom from Roman influence in their lucrative affairs. The successor polities did not miss a beat, making arrangements with the aristocrats for mutually beneficial trade agreements, and cementing the wealth and power of both the pre-desert communities and the coastal polities. The Libyphoenician identity continued to exist through the aftermath of the fall of Rome, but declined and disappeared due to the abandonment of urban areas such as Lepcis Magna along the coast. This suggests that Libyan tribes were able to supplant the authority wielded by Libyphoenician aristocrats and the agriculture of the pre-desert continued unabated. As long as the olive oil trade routes to the Mediterranean were open and profitable, the pre-desert remained cultivated by Libyan groups and were not dependent on Roman colonial structures.  

Conclusion

Through the ingenuity of African populations such as the Garamantes and the economic ambitions of Libyphoenician aristocrats, the troublesome pre-desert environment of the Tripolitanian interior was transformed into a bastion of olive cultivation. The Roman limes in Tripolitania were constructed not for defensive purposes, but with the intention of exploiting the incredibly productive land even further with more efficient taxation. The case of the Algerian interior is comparable to Tripolitania, and the massive and extensive ruins of the Fossatum Africæ reveal the economic rather than militaristic intent of the Romans on the North African frontier. Even following the decline of Roman power in North Africa during the Crisis of the Third Century that culminated in the Vandal conquest of the region, the trade and agriculture of the Maghreb remained robust and maintained more economic ties to Rome than any other politically lost Roman province due to the significance of Libyphoenician and African aristocrats and farmers in pre-desert olive cultivation.  

While the Roman Maghreb was a significant exporter of agricultural goods across the Mediterranean, credit for the agricultural innovation and prosperity throughout these provinces cannot be given to the Romans alone. This is most clearly demonstrated in the province of Tripolitania, where the Romans essentially left the Libyphoenician aristocracy to their own devices after defeating Carthage. Pre-Punic African agriculture of groups such as the Garamantes reveals highly sophisticated sedentary wadi agriculture in use by as early as the ninth century BCE. Colonial powers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries preferred the historical narrative of a highly involved colonialist Roman Empire that brought “civilized” agriculture to North Africa, but the archaeological and literary evidence shows that, in fact, Africans and Libyphoenicians had undertaken these ambitious agricultural endeavors under the watchful but passive eye of their Roman overlords. The frontiers of the Maghreb were not much different from many of the outlying client states of the Roman Empire that maintained their socio-economic and cultural distinctiveness, while benefiting from incorporation into the Roman economic and political sphere. These North Africans continued to maintain significant autonomy following the fall of the Western Roman Empire, showing that the Romans in North Africa needed them more than they needed the Romans in order to maintain economic and political success.

52 Rushworth, “State Formation and Regional Identity in the Pre-Saharan Zone,” 98.
Bibliography


The Ottoman Empire’s Use of Women’s Education in Support of Ottomanism and Industrialization during the Tanzimat and Hamidian Eras

As a part of the nineteenth-century reforms the Ottoman Empire instituted during the Tanzimat, the Porte established state schools throughout its territories. The primary goal of the Tanzimat was to instill a sense of Ottomanism within both its Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, thereby impeding the spread of nationalist sentiments in its Balkan provinces. By establishing state schools, the Porte provided an alternative to the foreign-funded schools within its borders; furthermore, it hoped to use state schools to foster loyalty to the sultan through careful selection of curricula and teachers. For these reasons the Porte also emphasized women’s education, recognizing the influence women could wield with their husbands and children. The Tanzimat failed to curb nationalist movements, however, and the Ottoman Empire continued to lose European territory. As this contraction of its borders also resulted in a loss of manpower, the Ottoman Empire began viewing women as a potential supplement to its diminishing workforce. Consequently, during the Hamidian era, the Porte placed an even greater emphasis on women’s education since they were now critical components of both the Ottoman Empire’s citizenship and industry building goals.

Women’s education contributed to fulfilling these objectives, as demonstrated through analysis of the preexisting educational opportunities for women in the Ottoman Empire, the development of Ottoman state schools, how these schools resembled or differed from educational systems already operating within its borders, and finally, the socioeconomic and religious composition of the student body in Ottoman women’s schools. Exploration of these facets of Ottoman women’s education during the Tanzimat and Hamidian eras, exhibits that the Ottoman Empire had two primary reasons for developing and supporting women’s education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century: turning Ottoman women into loyal citizens, who in turn would positively influence their families to this same effect, and augmenting the Ottoman Empire’s workforce and industrialization efforts.

Preexisting forms of women’s education in the Ottoman Empire

Although the Porte did not emphasize women’s education before the Tanzimat, there were educational options for women within the Ottoman Empire before the newly established state schools. Elite Muslim women received their education within the harem, from older harem women as well as visiting male tutors. Harem educators stressed the importance of religion, respect, and honor, in part to uphold the age hierarchy in which the older harem women had a vested interest in maintaining. Harem teachers instructed their students in the Koran, sewing, embroidery, music and how to behave during ceremonies. From these subjects, it is clear that elite Muslim families sought to educate their daughters to run their own harem rather than prepare for outside employment.

Just as elite Muslim households in the Ottoman Empire recreated the imperial household on a smaller scale with their own harems, harem education imitated palace education. High-ranking women within the imperial harem instructed younger women in music, sewing, and proper behavior, but they also taught their students Islamic law and how to speak properly. Palace-educated women were therefore educated to be entertaining wives and competent household managers, and also to uphold the accepted gender and age hierarchies within Ottoman society.

---

1 Elif Ekin Aksit, “Girls’ Education and the Paradoxes of Modernity and Nationalism in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic” (PhD diss., Binghamton University State University of New York, 2004), 90.
3 Ibid., 302.
4 Aksit, “Girls’ Education,” 89.
Even after the Porte established state schools for women, some elite families continued to educate their daughters in the harem. Halide Edib Adıvar, a Turkish novelist born in 1886 to an upper class Ottoman family, actually married one of her private tutors. Her book The Clown and His Daughter was likely a semi-autobiographical account; the protagonist Rabia also marries one of her tutors. While Rabia was not born into an elite family, a local paşa offers to educate her because he is impressed with her Koran chanting. Rabia receives music and Persian lessons in addition to a classical education in his harem. When she turns 15 years old, Rabia stops all of her lessons save for music. Like real Ottoman harem education, Rabia’s education focused on creating a respectable upper class Muslim woman, even though she was from a middle class family, rather than preparing her to enter the workforce. Her education began with reading, learning the Koran – and thus some Arabic – and culminated in music lessons and Persian, the language of culture and class for elite Ottoman Turks.

Before the Ottoman Empire established state schools for women, one option for middle or lower class women to attain education was at Koran schools. These schools were usually funded by pious endowments. Unlike harem education, Koran schools educated boys and girls together. Koran schools focused solely on teaching religious precepts, not domestic responsibilities. Consequently, the highest academic achievement a boy or girl could achieve at a Koran school was memorizing the Koran. While studying the Koran would certainly have included learning to read, a Koran school’s education was even more limited than a harem education. However, the goal of women’s educators before the establishment of state schools was to support the existing social hierarchies, not to create ideal Ottoman citizens or workers.

Some millets in the Ottoman Empire established and ran their own schools for women. Because these schools were not supported financially by the Ottoman government, they usually required tuition and thus served primarily upper class women. They also benefitted the interests of the millet, which were often contradictory to the Porte’s. After the Enlightenment reached Greece in the late 18th century, Greek intellectuals began calling for better women’s education as a means of furthering their nationalist goals. They believed that women, as mothers, could best revive Greece, and therefore must be taught Greek culture and tradition. Originally, Greek women’s education included advanced subjects such as physics, algebra, and geometry, but these were later removed. Instead, like their harem-educated Muslim counterparts, their education focused on religion, ethics, and feminine virtues. Greek women were thus educated to instill proper Greek values and pride in their children; like harem-educated Ottoman Muslim women, their education was designed to teach them to excel in domestic roles, not to develop skills to enable them to join the labor force.

Before Ottoman state schools were widespread throughout the Empire, women in communities which had not started their own schools often were left with no alternative to foreign missionary schools.

5 Akşit, “Harem Education and Heterotopic Imagination,” 304-305.
7 Ibid., 53, 91.
8 Ibid., 117.
12 Ibid., 653.
13 Ibid., 655.
14 Ibid., 654-56.
Although these schools were open to Muslim and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, Muslim families typically did not send their children to missionary schools due to their Christian (typically Protestant) curriculum. In Eski Zağra, Bulgaria, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) founded a school for Bulgarian girls in 1863. Theodore and Margaret Byington ran the school, and hoped to instigate a Protestant Reformation in Bulgaria through education.

While the Byingtons, like harem and millet educators, viewed religious indoctrination as a critical component of women’s education, they also prepared women for non-domestic roles: teaching them algebra, philosophy, astronomy, physiology, and history in addition to writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, music, and needlework. The ABCFM educated not only upper class women, but also lower class, perhaps necessitating preparing their students for careers. The Byingtons were outsiders hoping to convert the residents of Eski Zağra to a new religion. Consequently, they had little incentive to maintain the established social norms, and may have viewed Protestant-educated Bulgarian women working in public spaces as a positive outcome.

Development of Ottoman public schools

The Porte founded men’s rüşdiyes (secondary schools) in 1838, but it was not until 1850 that the Ottoman Empire began its public women’s secondary education programs. (primary schools) had been providing boys and girls a religious education since the sixteenth-century, but they were funded through pious foundations and concerned solely with teaching Islam. In 1858 the Porte founded its first women’s rüşdiye. That same year, the Ottoman Ministry of Education sent a letter to the palace informing the latter of the Ministry’s desire to change women’s education to prepare them for industry, thereby enabling the Empire’s economic progression. It was not until seven years later, when Midhat Paşa established the first Girls’ Industrial School (GIS), that the Ministry realized this goal. Located in Rusçuk, the school’s purpose was to educate women and train them to sew uniforms for the Ottoman armies. Although this GIS closed shortly after it was opened, the Porte founded another GIS in Yedikule in 1869. Fifty women registered for this school, which like its predecessor in Rusçuk, provided its students with an education in exchange for sewing uniforms for Ottoman armies. By 1894, GIS were educating approximately three times as many women as rüşdiyes.

GIS were the most visible change to Ottoman women’s education, but they were only a part of the Porte’s reforms. Rüşdiyes did not enroll as many women as GIS, but by 1883 there were ten schools within Istanbul and six in other parts of the Empire. The Porte established its first ibtidai (public primary school) in 1863, and by 1883 there were nine ibtidai schools just for girls in Istanbul alone.

17 Ibid., 156.
18 Ibid., 152.
19 Ibid., 153.
23 Somel, 297-298.
24 Akşit, “Girls’ Education,” 86.
25 Ibid., 103. GIS taught approximately 1,500 women a year compared to only 500 at rüşdiyes.
26 Somel, 300.
28 Somel, 300.
During Abdülhamid II’s reign, the Porte opened approximately 104 rüşdiyes, 219 middle schools, 9,147 primary schools, and 18 professional schools. Because the Ministry of Education oversaw all public schools rather than a religious branch of the Ottoman government, the Porte offered public education to all of its subjects regardless of their religion. Most non-Muslims preferred their own millet’s primary schools, however. Before 1872 Ottoman primary schools were supported by pious foundations seeking to promote Islamic education; therefore, it is not surprising that non-Muslims continued to eschew the ibtidais, even though this new style of primary school used modern teaching methods and was open to the children of all millets.

**Ottoman state schools’ similarities to preexisting educational systems**

As industrial schools, GIS clearly had different priorities than harem education or Koran, millet, or foreign missionary schools. However, GIS did not represent a complete break from the already established education systems previously operating in the Ottoman Empire. Like the palace and other harems, GIS were segregated. Many of the courses GIS offered were also taught in harems: embroidery, music, Arabic and Persian, Koran study, and ethics. That the GIS and palace or harem education were similar is evident in that the former appropriated some of the duties of palace women – in 1887, for example, a GIS was responsible for crafting silk tasseled braids, silk tasseled rosy braids, and ribbons for Yıldız Palace.

Other public Ottoman schools also maintained aspects of harem education. Rüşdiyes, like GIS, were segregated. However, like harems, this segregation did not disqualify male teachers. Due to a shortage of qualified female teachers, especially shortly after the first women’s rüşdiyes were founded, men often taught female students. Additionally, similar to harems, rüşdiyes taught women Arabic, Persian, and sewing. Initially, the Porte, through the official Ottoman gazette, Takvim-i Vekayi, also espoused similar goals for educating women that harem educators did: to teach Ottoman women to become useful wives and mothers, thus keeping them firmly in the domestic sphere.

**Ottoman state schools’ differences from preexisting educational systems**

Though many of the subjects Ottoman secondary schools taught were similar to harem education, GIS and rüşdiyes introduced many new subjects and emphasized different aspects of education. In addition to religious, music, and language instruction, GIS educated women in mathematics, science, penmanship, health, geography, history, and drawing. Students also took lessons in handicrafts all seven years they attended the GIS, as one of the main purposes the Porte had for founding GIS was to incorporate Ottoman women in its industrialization efforts. The importance of industrialization to the

---

30 Ibid., 65.
31 Evered, 27.
32 Ibid., 26.
33 Akşit, “Girls’ Education,” 84.
34 Ibid., 84, 101-2.
35 Ibid., 105.
36 Ibid., 98.
37 Somel, 299-300.
38 Ibid., 298.
40 Ibid., 102; Akşit, “Harem Education and Heterotopic Imagination,” 304.
Ottoman Empire’s education reforms is also borne out by Abdülhamid’s aggressive establishment of new women’s schools in the Arab provinces after the Empire’s losses in the Balkans.41

Unlike harem education, Ottoman public schools for women sought to modernize and therefore change Ottoman social norms. Whereas harem education maintained a strict age hierarchy, GIS and rüşdiyes eliminated this practice.42 Because secondary schools for women were critical to the Porte’s efforts to instil Ottomanism in its subjects as well as to industrialize, it required a sufficient number of female teachers. Consequently, the Porte also established a Darülmualimat (teachers’ school for women).43 Most teachers in GIS were young, and maintaining the age hierarchy would have been untenable. This too demonstrates the differences between the old models of education in the Ottoman Empire and the new public schools: the state educated women not only to improve women’s abilities as wives and mothers, but also to take a more active role in the public sphere.

Despite the claim in Takvim-i Vekayi that the Porte sought solely to educate women to become better wives and mothers, the changes it instituted to Ottoman schooling reveal that its main goal was actually to teach women to become better Ottoman wives and mothers. After reviewing the Christian and Muslim schools in the Danubian province from 1865-67, Midhat Paşa proposed closing those schools and replacing them with state schools.44 In 1869, his plan was partially realized in the Ottoman Public Education Law, which incorporated his suggestion and required that after primary school, all teachers instruct their students in Turkish. The law also included provisions for educating women and training female teachers.45 The Porte was striving “to ‘create’ an idealized citizen who was loyal to the state”46 and viewed linguistic unity as central to this aim.47

The Porte did not try to use its public schools to convert non-Muslim students to Islam;48 rather, it attempted to use state schools to transform students, regardless of gender, religion, or ethnicity, into loyal Ottoman citizens. This change coincided with the Porte’s emphasis on educating women because they were central to its plans to create a generation of citizenry completely loyal to the state. In both cases, the Porte hoped to start transmitting its ideology directly to previously neglected groups within the Empire: non-Muslim communities and women. Therefore, Takvim-i Vekayi’s claim that the Porte only desired to create better wives and mothers is not dishonest; however, the state’s definition of better meant women who were loyal Ottoman subjects and influenced their families to feel the same. The Ladies’ Own Gazette, a women’s magazine that the sultan patronized, promoted women’s education primarily so that Ottoman women could instill ideas of Ottoman identity and citizenship in their children.49

**Socioeconomic and religious composition of the Ottoman schools’ student bodies**

Under Sultan Abdülhamid II, the Ottoman Empire continued to focus on providing public education for women, believing that it could foster loyalty to the sultan not only through carefully selected curriculum but also out of gratitude to the sultan for raising the educational level of its women.50 While a variety of public educational opportunities were available to upper class women, Abdülhamid was more concerned with providing them to poor women to gain their loyalty and gratitude.51 Because

---

41 Frierson, 76.
43 Ibid., 103.
44 Reeves-Ellington, 154-155.
45 Ibid., 163.
46 Evered, 22.
47 Ibid., 55.
48 Ibid., 89.
49 Frierson, 72.
50 Evered, 56.
51 Ibid., 45-46.
poor women would have had few, if any, educational opportunities after primary school without GIS or rüşdiyes, lower class women would have been more grateful for Ottoman public schools, and thus represented a better opportunity for the state to spread Ottomanism.

Due to the strength of the Ottoman Empire’s education system, however, upper, middle, and lower class women all attended public schools. In 1883, the Porte founded a GIS in Istanbul that offered free education and boarding. Demand for admittance into this school was so great that it had to open a second school that could hold more students. The Porte proposed requiring women from wealthier families pay tuition, while it granted orphans and women from lower class families free admission. After assessing the backgrounds of the students attending this GIS, the Porte concluded that the majority of students’ fathers could afford to pay tuition, so the Porte decided to establish yet another GIS on a new tuition model. This GIS would enroll up to 300 students, 200 of which would pay tuition while the remaining 100 students would receive free education.

Although the Porte strove to convince all religious and ethnic groups within the Empire to attend Ottoman public schools, it was primarily Muslim women that attended. Because the Ministry of Education controlled schools’ curriculum – which included teaching Ottoman approved culture and history and mandated instructing students in Ottoman Turkish – non-Muslims largely avoided state schools in favor of their own millet’s schools. Though legally all schools operating within the Ottoman Empire had to obtain a license from the Ministry of Education as well as follow all of the Ministry’s regulations, in 1894 there were approximately 35,000 schools operating outside of Istanbul and 95% of these schools did not have any such license. The Porte had successfully created a public schooling system for Muslim Ottoman women, but it failed to convince most of its non-Muslim subjects of the advantages of state schooling.

Conclusion

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Porte attempted to instill Ottomanism in its subjects by establishing schools for women. A secondary goal, though still of great importance to the Ottoman Empire, was employing women in its industrialization efforts, especially after the loss of most of its territories in the Balkans. Before the Porte established public schools, educational opportunities for Muslim women in the Ottoman Empire were limited to Koran schools or harem education. The former only provided a religious education, while the latter was only available to women from elite families. Furthermore, neither form of education prepared women for work in the public sphere. Some Greek Ottoman communities established their own schools for women, believing that educated women were essential to any advanced and prosperous nation. However, like Muslim women taught in the harem, the Christian women that attended these schools were inevitably from upper class families and were taught how to be suitable mothers to future Greek nationalists. They too, then, were expected to stay within the domestic sphere. Both Muslim and non-Muslim women throughout the Empire had the option to attend foreign missionary schools. These schools were mostly run by Protestants, however, and due to the religious curriculum, Muslim families rarely sent their daughters to foreign missionary schools. Because missionary schools challenged the existing social norms, these were the only preexisting schools for women that challenged them academically and prepared them to enter the workforce.

53 Somel, 298.
54 Ibid., 302.
55 Ibid., 303.
57 Evered, 23.
58 Ibid., 178-181.
During the Tanzimat, the Ottoman government established public schools for women throughout the Empire. The Porte did so primarily to instill them with a sense of loyalty to the sultan and the government, hoping that they would in turn raise children infused with a sense of Ottomanism. In many ways, Ottoman state schools for women continued the practices of previous forms of education; however, they also introduced new subjects, including science and math. Proponents of expanding education for Ottoman women claimed that their goal was still to train women to be good wives and mothers, but the Porte’s reforms demonstrate that their main goal was actually to create women loyal to the state. Finally, the Porte also hoped to utilize women in the Ottoman Empire’s industrialization efforts. Consequently, during the Tanzimat and Hamidian eras the Porte founded GIS and offered free tuition to lower class women. The Porte did so recognizing that lower class women could contribute to Ottoman industry and were more likely to be grateful to the sultan for providing them with new educational opportunities, thus satisfying the Porte’s desire to foster Ottomanism in Ottoman women.
### Bibliography


---. “Girls’ Education and the Paradoxes of Modernity and Nationalism in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic.” PhD dissertation, Binghamton University State University of New York, 2004.


**Headscarves, Nationalism, and Education in Turkey and France**

Despite their distinct cultural traditions and history, France and Turkey both accord national importance to *laïcité*, which is a type of separation of religion and the state in which members of the society may be personally religious but the state and its institutions are non-religious.¹ Both states seek to instill an understanding and acceptance of that legal separation of religion from the state and interactions with the state and community in their citizenry through the educational systems along with other national standards and nationalist principles. This practice has contributed to France and Turkey’s willingness to restrict religious garments in public schools. The French law, passed in 2004, forbade the wearing of any conspicuous religious symbols in public schools; however, because of the law’s impact on Muslim student’s headscarves, the law is colloquially referred to as *la loi sur le voile*. The Turkish law, which developed over decades and was repealed in 2013, barred the wearing of Islamic headscarves in schools and universities, among other state institutions. This paper will examine these laws and the political discussion surrounding them to understand their connection to and the social perception of Islam - a religion particularly affected by this legislation and whose role in both societies is currently controversial - and its place in the communities in question. It will also examine the assumptions these laws make about the interplay of secularism, religion in identity, and public displays of religion. In the French case, the law is a reflection of the desire to ensure the secularism of the institution that instills the value of secularism and the prominence of national identity over religion as a facet of membership in the community, as well as the two facets of the French construction of *laïcité*. In the Turkish instance, the institution and repeal of the ban reflect the tension over public manifestation of Islam in the Turkish nation and a state preference between two types of Islam in an almost-entirely Muslim state. In both cases, these laws are not about defeating or destroying Islam; they are about the perpetuation of a national identity that is at odds with publicly-manifesting religion.

Comparing France and Turkey negates objections that could be leveled against these laws were they considered in isolation. Both states are *laïque*, though France is predominantly Catholic and Turkey is almost entirely Sunni Muslim, which eliminates the tension of different views on the separation between religious institutions and the state. The presence of headscarf restriction in both countries contradicts the assertion that France was motivated solely by Islamophobia, as Turkey is almost entirely Muslim but still places even more restrictive limitations on headscarves, without including, as France does, other religions’ symbols or signs. Similarly, the Turkish case demonstrates that restrictions on religious symbols are not merely racist, as Turkey’s ban does not target a racial group. On the other hand, the French case demonstrates that restrictions on religious manifestation are not simply class issues, as has been asserted against the Turkish law. This paper does not suggest that France and Turkey have no race or class-based discrimination; it merely asserts that the bilateral presence of restrictions on some public manifestations of religion suggest these bans transcend those factors. Through controlling for these alternatives, the examination of both France and Turkey and parallel events in their histories exposes another rationale for these laws: nationalism.

Central to understanding France and Turkey’s interest in restricting religious garments in schools is understanding those nation-states’² conceptions of the role of schools in their nations. For nation-states

---

¹ *Laïcité* is distinct from *sécularité*. *Sécularité* denotes being entirely free of religion. Though this paper may use the term secularism, particularly in accordance with source texts, that term should be understood in terms of *laïcité*, as both states’ governments - and their institutions - are *laïque*.

² Nation-states are the socio-political units of nations, typically including the land inhabited by the nation. A nation, to borrow Benedict Anderson’s definition, is an “imagined community” in which members feel an affinity with each other, though they may never meet, because they believe that they are connected, usually by a shared “imagined” history but also possibly by language and cultural characteristics.

to continue to exist, nations must instill a belief in national membership in each subsequent generation. Nation-states, including France and Turkey, have used the education system to indoctrinate their developing citizens. Thus, schools, with state-controlled curricula, teach citizens a shared language, a shared edited history, a sense of shared identity, and patriotism. In the words of Bayar, “[i]t is through schooling that individuals come to share a homogenous culture and develop the capacity to communicate.” Under nationalism-targeting education, subjects useful for building national identity, such as language, history, and literature, replaced religion as central facets of education. As Renan notes, though religion and language can be shared by nations, they are not themselves sufficient to define or unify nations. Nation-states are unified, rather, by the belief in a shared, constructed history. As such, education focused on unifying features, including a history; developing the group, through the language of the government; and instilling a sense of their sharedness. The subversion of religion to a national identity and the centrality of education in continuing the nation is then a motive for restricting religion in public schools, especially in nations where secularism, instead of a religion, is a national feature.

This pattern is particularly important to the French and Turkish cases. France pioneered nationalism after the French Revolution to build a unified state in the wake of the destroyed dynastic state and the system of education indoctrination to sustain the mass armies used in the Napoleonic Wars. Nationalism was necessary to encourage soldiers to fight and die for the country, and education made the soldiers more capable of independent action and utilizing advancing technology. Literacy also made the public and soldiers more susceptible to propaganda. The dual benefits of education and nationalism encouraged the state to align the instillations during the Napoleonic Era. The education system continued, after the wars, to instill French values in the citizenry, especially the enshrining of liberté, égalité, et fraternité and laïcité as the foundational principles of French culture. Instruction in laïcité and liberté involved teaching Frances’ two part engagement with religion: 1) the government, though often comprised of religious individuals, is not a religiously affiliated institution, and 2) the freedom of conscious includes freedom from other people’s religious beliefs, meaning behaviors considered to be forcing one’s religion or awareness of one’s religion onto others may be prohibited in the name of laïcité and public order. The wearing of religious symbols in public falls into this second category. The French

---

3 “Edited” reflects the fact that the history that the nation’s members believe they share does not need to be true and usually is not, but rather it has been adjusted to improve national moral or better unite the populace. This fact is will be apparent in the Turkish case.
6 Posen, 114.
7 Renan, Ernst, “What is a Nation?” In Nation and Narration, translated and annotated by Martin Thom and edited by Homi K. Bhabha, (London: Routledge, 1990), 50-53 [Source subsequently cited as Renan].
8 This point may be clearer in the opposite. If, in a given nation, participation and acceptance of a specific religion were important to the national identity, then it would make sense for the state to value the institutions that instill that religious understanding in the citizenry. If the school system filled that role, then the nation would logically enact laws promoting religious instruction in public schools.
9 Posen, 92.
10 Ibid., 121.
11 The French insistence on the complete acceptance of these principles as the primary condition for membership in the nation is evident in the French requirements for another national entrance system: immigration. French immigrants are required to demonstrate, in addition to fluency in the French language and a basic knowledge of French history and government, the adoption of these liberté, égalité, fraternité, and laïcité.
12 Rabbi Benjamin Hecht discusses freedom from religion and its connection with practicing Judaism in France. Dominique Decherf discusses the establishment of freedom from religion to defend religious minorities from the prevalence of the Catholic Church.
system is also tasked with and has been highly successful at instilling the French identity, especially the primary rule of French nationalism: the French value being French above all other identifiers, including religion, which is private. The French educational system has been successful at instilling that principle. According to a 2011 Pew Research Center study, 90% of French Christians identify firstly as French. Only 8% identify primarily as Christian.13 Permitting conspicuous public displays of religious adherence in the secularizing institutions would be contradictory to the government’s objectives. Owing to the role of the education system in instilling Frenchness and its incumbent focus on the French identity, laïcité, and freedom from religion, maintaining secular and secularizing education is central to France’s public schools’ purpose and informs the French response to religion’s manifestation in that sphere.

After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey needed to create a national identity for the peoples in the newly-formed state. That process, according to Hroch, involves promoting an existing local culture, often based on a language used in administration and education; declaring or recognizing existing political autonomy; and creating a social structure separate from divisive ethnicities, including educative and political structures.14 For Turkey, Atatürk prescribed Kemalism to develop the state, two pillars of which were nationalism and secularism.15 “Atatürk’s goal was to reduce the influence of Islamic organizations on political and social life and to redirect popular loyalties toward symbols of nation and state […] not to abolish Islam as a personal belief system.”16 To decrease the influence of Islam in the running of the state, he removed Islam as the national religion, eliminated the Ministry of Religious Endowments, and ended the caliphate, among other changes. He sought to bolster the Turkish language by commissioning a Turkish-language Qur’an.17 Translating the Qur’an and mandating that the call to prayer be issued in Turkish symbolically affirmed the dominance of the Turkish national identity over the Islamic identity, because the language of the state was replacing the language of the religion even in the practice of the religion. Most importantly, the nascent Turkish government established a Turkish system of education with which to instill Kemalist secularism and Turkish nationalism via language and constructed history to all the grouped peoples was an early part of that process. The developing system was also tasked with balancing secularist values, sometimes conflated with Westernization, with the prevalence of Islam, concluding with the educational system participating in the diminishing public prevalence of Islam.18 In the early 1920’s, Islam was believed to be an important part of the Turkish identity. As such, education included both scientific and religious instruction.19 In 1924, the Law for the Unification of Education was passed. All education, including foreign and religious schools, was brought under the purview of the Ministry of Education in order to ensure that students in those institutions were

14 Hroch, Miroslav, “From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation,” The New Left Review 198 (1993): 6, 7. Hroch’s work focuses on building nationalist movements and national separatist movements in mixed-nation states; however, this paper is drawing on the pattern he recognized in those cases.
15 Cleveland, William L., and Martin Bunton, A History of the Modern Middle East, (Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2009), 183, 184 [Source subsequently cited as Cleveland]. Kemalism is the system by which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk sought to develop the Turkish state. Its six pillars were republicanism, statism, populism, reformism, laïcism, and nationalism.
16 Ibid., 181.
17 Ibid., 180-1.
19 Bayar, 19, 20.
19 Ibid., 23.

35
also educated into the nation. For the first decade after the law's introduction, religious education continued in public high schools. After that, religion was removed from the curriculum. This decision underscores the perceived connection in the government's understanding between education and membership in the nation-state. In 1931, the Republican People's Party (CHP) reframed the educational program along "nationalist, republican and secular lines," concluding, in that arena, the victory of nationalism over religion. The new program focused on pre-Islamic Turkish history and rewritten Ottoman history, creating the edited history described by Renan. Thus the education system was the nexus of fostering the sense of nationhood, through a belief in a shared past, especially a shared past notably distinct from the practice, hierarchy, or state enforcement of Islam.

Effectively, Turkey attempted to create a “civil religion based on the national characterological virtues of the pre-Ottoman Turkish national culture, that is, the old central Asian ones” to replace the religion that citizens might identify with more strongly than they identified with the nationalism the government was attempting to create. In turn, Turkish nationalism, including its principles of modernism and secularism, replaced, theoretically, Islam with nationalism and Kemalist Islam, in which citizens might believe primarily in the tenets of Islam but do not publicly manifest their belief. Politicians might still draw on religion when it was politically expedient, but the state was laïque. The state preference for one way of practicing Islam subsequently manifested itself in the enforced restriction on religious clothing. The Turkish system, though, has not so readily succeeded in supersedng religion with national identity as the French system; in fact, the results are not consistent. In a 1994 survey, 69% of respondents said that they were Turks; 4% said they were Muslim. 21% identified as “Muslim Turks.” However, according to the 2011 Pew Research Center survey, 21% of Turkish Muslims identify primarily as Turkish; 49% identify firstly as Muslims. The Turkish government has yet to convince the nation, despite a secular national principle, to identify primarily with the nation, instead of primarily or concordantly with their religion. Nonetheless, the Turkish government has not discontinued its efforts to promote national secularism, nor has the public accepted a large population that prioritizes its Muslim identity as a reason to withdrawn from strict state secularism.

The French law, “la loi n° 2004-228 du 15 mars 2004 encadrant, en application du principe de laïcité, le port de signes ou de tenues manifestant une appartenance religieuse dans les écoles, collèges et lycées publics,” prohibits all conspicuous religious symbols in schools. In this way, the French law is regulating practice, the public display of religion, and not piety, the sincerity of religious belief. The law’s circulaire clarifies conspicuous religious symbols to mean “signs and garments […] the wearing of

---

21 Ibid., 29.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., 31; Renan, 52, 53.
24 Bayar, 33.
27 Heper, 81.
28 Pew.
29 The other primary identifiers were not reported in the study.
30 The name of the law translates to “the law of March 15, 2004 governing, in application of the principles of laïcité, the wearing of signs and clothes manifesting religious membership in public elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.”
31 French laws are succeeded by a document called the circulaire that is designed to clarify and develop the law and guide its enforcement.
which causes immediate recognition of one’s religious membership.”

It also states that the law applies to all religions. As examples of restricted garments, it cites the veil, the kippa, and large crosses; it also makes provision for the introduction of new religions and new signs. The law applies both to students and to teachers who must not publicly manifest their personal religious adherence while representing or serving the state; it does not apply to parents.

The regulation was very popular. The law passed the National Assembly 494 to 36 with 31 abstentions. It passed the Senate with 276 votes in favor and 20 opposed. The law obtained multiparty support, including the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire, le Parti Socialiste, l’Union Centriste, Communiste, Républicain et Citoyen, and the Rassemblement démocratique et social européen. A 2004 poll found that 69% of French citizens favored the law; 57% said they would support a law banning all visible religious symbols. The law replaced a previous judicial ruling from 1989, which was passed after two girls were excluded from public schools for wearing veils. Under that ruling, merely demonstrating recognizable religious adhesion through clothing or symbols did not contradict laïcité, as it was protected free expression. However, that decision allowed restriction of “ostentatious” symbols and garments or those that “trouble the public order.” In 2003, a parliamentary committee suggested that all visible religious symbols should be banned. However, President Jacques Chirac chose to limit the bill to ban only conspicuous symbols.

The political discussion of the law highlights the connection between the French educatory system and principles of French nationalist secularism. Chirac’s Minister of National Education, Luc Ferry, justified the law by asserting that schools are “the best tool for planting the roots of the republican idea,” which means inculcating citizens with the principles of liberté, égalité, fraternité, and laïcité. The circulaire asserts the law’s targeting the enforcement of secularism is inseparable from French values:

The law of March 15, 2004 governing, in application of the principles of laïcité, the wearing of signs and clothes manifesting religious membership in public schools, middle schools, and high schools indicates the very widely shared willingness to reaffirm the importance of this principle [laïcité] that is inseparable from the values of equality and respect for others.

It also states that a school’s mission is to impart the Republic’s values to the populace. The school, according to the government, will not be capable of teaching values such as equality and secularism if the

33 Ibid., 2.1.
34 Ibid., 2.3.
35 The exception for parents requires that they follow security regulations.
37 “La loi sur le voile à l’école définitivement adoptée.” Le Monde, March 5, 2004. [Source subsequently cited as “Loi”].
38 Ibid.
40 42% of French Muslims supported the law. 42% favored banning ostentatious or conspicuous religious symbols.
41 Bronner, Luc, “La loi sur le voile” marque l’aboutissement d’un long débat sur la laïcité,” Le Monde, August 31, 2004 [Source subsequently cited as Bronner.].
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Sciolino.
46 “La loi du 15 mars 2004 encadrant, en application du principe de laïcité, le port de signes ou de tenues manifestant une appartenance religieuse dans les écoles, collèges et lycées publics, marque la volonté très largement partagée de réaffirmer l’importance de ce principe indissociable des valeurs d’égalité et de respect de l’autre.” (Circulaire).
institution is not religiously neutral.\textsuperscript{44} This principle is also evident in the provision the \textit{circulaire} makes for violators. Schools are instructed to engage students and parents in a dialogue about \textit{laïcité} and a plan for the future and to clarify that the law does not require renouncing religious belief nor is it intended to injure religious belief.\textsuperscript{45} The same provision states that \textit{laïcité} bars the state from interpreting religious practice or commandments for adherents.\textsuperscript{46}

The Turkish law restricting headscarves in public schools has a longer history. In the beginning of his regime, Kemal introduced regulations encouraging the adoption of Western-style clothing, such as the Hat Law of 1925, which barred fezes and turbans in favor of Western-style hats. Law number 2596, the Dress (Regulations) Act, which passed in 1934, forbade wearing religious garments except to religious officials and during religious ceremonies.\textsuperscript{47} He also sought to remove “overt symbols of religious affiliation” amongst civil servants.\textsuperscript{48} Women’s clothing was not initially explicitly regulated; they were not required to unveil, though it was legal to do so.\textsuperscript{49} However, it was assumed that women would give up headscarves and adopt “the new, secular Turkish identity.”\textsuperscript{50} The regulations were an attempt to change the minds, not the religions, of the people whose clothing was being regulated,\textsuperscript{51} effectively converting them to the state-sponsored version of Islam, in which Islam is not publicly manifested.\textsuperscript{52} Despite this attempted conversion, veiling persisted in parts of the Turkish population.\textsuperscript{53}

Over time, the state developed the headscarf ban. Some municipalities banned the veil in the 1930’s. In 1956, three female parliamentarians proposed a national ban on the veil through an amendment to law number 2596; however, the ban was not enacted.\textsuperscript{54} In the 1980’s, after a military coup, the “Dress and Appearance Regulation” was amended to ban headscarves in universities, schools, hospitals, and government buildings.\textsuperscript{55} In 1981, the Regulation Concerning the Dress of Students and Staff in Schools barred wearing any headscarves by staff in public organizations or institutions. In 1982, the Higher Education Council prohibited Islamic headscarves in lectures.\textsuperscript{56} The bans forced approximately 2,000

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
The law does not interrogate the suggestion that it may be easier for Christians and Jews to conceal their religious membership than for Muslims. This point will be touched on later in this paper. However, that concern is still subservient to the French conception of in nationalism.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 3.1, 3.2.
Ibid., 3.3. (Students who continually fail to comply may be excluded from public schools).

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 3.2.
A “very small number” of students have subsequently been excluded from schools. Most Muslim female students remove the veil for school and replace it subsequently.


\textsuperscript{47} Olson, 162.
The punishment for violation was one-year imprisonment.


\textsuperscript{48} Pamuk, Humeyra, “Turkey lifts generations-old ban on Islamic head scarf,” Reuters, October 8, 2013.

\textsuperscript{49} Olson, 165.

\textsuperscript{50} Doğaner, 39; Bleiberg.

\textsuperscript{51} Smith, Roff, “Why Turkey Lifted its Ban on the Islamic Headscarf,” \textit{National Geographic}, October 11, 2013. [Source subsequently cited as Smith].

\textsuperscript{52} Doğaner, 39.

\textsuperscript{53} Bleiberg, 155.

\textsuperscript{54} Veiling particularly continued in rural populations, economically underdeveloped communities, and Muslims who did not consider it anti-secularist; however, even some urban and educated Turks considered veiling an aspect of Islamic life (Turam; Bleiberg).


\textsuperscript{56} Doğaner, 44-5.

\textsuperscript{57} Olson, 163; Smith.

\textsuperscript{58} Bleiberg, 140.
women to remove their veils. Enforcement increased after the military triggered the removal of the Erbakakan government in 1997. As such, this period of regulation was the culmination of the effort to enforce the vision of secularism and Islamic practice imagined in early Turkish nationalism.

However, the Turkish law has experienced a revision not present in the French case. In 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) pledged to relax the law. The AKP and the National Movement Party (MHP), an opposition party, passed a repeal in 2008 under a constitutional amendment guaranteeing a right to education, but the repeal was barred by the Constitutional Court. In September 2013, Turkey rescinded the veil ban as part of a package of pro-democracy reforms. The prohibition remains in effect for police, military personnel, judges, and prosecutors, who were deemed to have a specific need to demonstrate neutrality. Hursit Gunes, deputy secretary-general for the Republican People’s Party (CHP) said, “The reason why we don’t allow a headscarf for, say, a judge, is that it is a symbol of religion. The state should be impartial to race, religion, everything.” More than 70% of the public supported lifting the ban.

Nonetheless, the lifting of the ban spurred concern about a revival of anti-secularism or Islamism. Supporters of rigidly maintained secularism propounded that veiling indicated a level of devotion to Islam that would eventually favor reversal of the secular system and, with it, reversal of modernization. As the veiling population itself would be too small to achieve such goals and because these accusations were leveled against male politicians, such as Erdoğan, it seems that proponents of the ban attributed such anti-secular objectives to supporters of a right to veil. Director of the Turkish think tank SETA, Ibrahim Kalin, exemplified this view with the statement, “If you allow the head scarf in universities today, they will declare a sharia state in 10 years.” Veil-opponents favored perpetual state enforced laïcité as a method of securing religious freedom. Republican People’s Party (CHP) Parliamentarian Safak Pavey asserted, “The greatest insurance for religious freedom is not about controlling our future with religious guidance but providing flawless secularism.” For the staunch secularists, the permission to veil was not just permission to public exercise of a religious interpretation that differed from the state’s interpretation - it was a threat to the foundational principle of laïcité.

For both Turkey and France, the regulation and the discussion around the laws give insight into the societies’ perception of Islam. For France, the problem is not Islam per se or the individual’s piety, her level of devotion to doctrine, but the public practice of Islam. The problem is intersecting levels of identity and the threat that the national identity. Conspicuously demonstrating religious affiliation is perceived as an affront to laïcité and a symbol of failure of the individual in question to be French. That problem is not singularly manifested with the wearing of religious symbols, a fact for which the law’s circulaire accounts. Reportedly, students used religion to justify ignoring the curriculum and attempting to alter school practices, including refusing to attend classes about biology or reproduction; refusing to

57 Bleiberg, 163.
58 Head, Jonathan, “Quiet end to Turkey’s college headscarf ban,” BBC News, December 31, 2010. [Source subsequently cited as Head].
59 “Turkey lifts decades-old ban on headscarves,” Al-Jazeera, October 8, 2013. [Source subsequently cited as “Turkey lifts”].
60 Head; “Turkey to Lift University Head Scarf Ban.” Spiegel, January 25, 2008. [Source subsequently cited as “Turkey to Lift”] The principle was that the ban illegally prevented Muslim women who chose to veil from obtaining an education.
61 “Turkey lifts.”
62 Head.
64 Pamuk; “Turkey lifts”; Bleiberg, 166.
65 Head.
66 “Turkey to lifts.”
67 Arango.
Her representation ignores the fact that she is not favoring a true removal of religiosity from the public sphere, just a removal of a certain kind of Islam in favor of another.
participate in mixed-gender classes, especially physical education; denying the Holocaust; demanding prayer breaks during the classes and during academic testing; and opposing the presence of pork in school. The law provided a national policy for these issues, furthering the institution of a shared educational experience. With these requirements, in conjunction with the bar on religious symbols, the French state is enforcing the principle of laïcité, which demands that others not be made aware of private religion and requiring a similar education experience for all students so the means and subjects of national indoctrination are not challenged or undermined in the institutions that are meant to propagate them. The demanded presentation of religious neutral invariably disproportionately impacted Muslims but that impact is not a symbol of specific anti-Muslim sentiment. It merely reflects the fact that observant Christianity does not require the wearing of a symbol that others can see and that many observant Jews do not cover their hair or wear yarmulkes. Also, the Jewish population in France is one-tenth the size of the Muslim population, which causes potential impact on the Jewish population to be smaller. Additionally, the Catholic Church was already pressured into a more restricted sphere by the state and the populace after the French Revolution and the 1905 Law Concerning the Separation of the Churches and State, which, along with forbidding discrimination based on religion, made church property state property, forbade the placing of religious symbols in public spaces, allowed the state to police religious practices and meetings in religious buildings, and proscribed punishments for religious leaders who opposed or encouraged opposition to state laws. As such, French Christians and Jews are less likely to object to new laws maintaining secularism in public schools. Additionally, Conservative and Orthodox Jewish families, who might object to pork and mixed-gender classes, have created private schools that are gender-segregated and keep kosher. There is even a Muslim school in Lille. These facilities indicate that those wishing to adhere to their religious interpretations despite the nation’s principle of freedom from religion maintain that option in France, as long as they also exempt themselves from the structures meant to inculcate secularism in the members of the nation. Thus, the French law is not manifestation of anti-Muslim animus but an attempt to perpetuate a system where no religion is exempt from the national identity and an effort to restrict manifestation of private religious belief in state spaces.

The Turkish law, unlike the French law, represents a state disapprobation for Islam, at least the publicly-manifested variety of Islam. From the initial clothing restrictions, the decision to regulate Islamic dress in favor Western dress relied on and perpetuated the perception of Islamic “backwardness” and the belief that these garments prevented the citizens of Turkey from becoming a “civilized people.” This discussion is unique to the Turkish case. The French discussion about how manifesting religion is not secular does not assert that doing so is uncivilized. This use of term such as “backward” indicates not a general opposition to religion but a societal opposition to this practice of Islam. Furthermore, the laws

68 Sciolino.
69 Circulaire 2.4.
70 French law does not allow the government to collect data on citizen’s religious affiliations, so only estimates are available. The Jewish population in France is about 480,000 people. The Muslim population is estimated based on the percentage of the population who immigrated from or whose ancestors were from Muslim-majority countries. The estimates range from four million to 6.5 million.
71 The term is used in the plural because the law explicitly referenced and applied to multiple sects of Christianity and to Judaism, not one particular church or religion.
73 Sciolino.
74 Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim schools can receive state funding if they abide to the national curriculum.
75 Oliver, 164.
76 Doğaner, 37.
demonstrate that the Turkish state and factions of Turkish society were interested in promoting only a certain kind of Islam. The regulation helped restrict practice to a more laïque variety of Islam, in accordance with the Kemalist principles of nationalism and secularism. By deviating from that variety, women who veiled seemed less Turkish: “The headscarf-wearing professor and students are seen as ‘betraying the faith,’ as threatening the very ideological wellsprings of Turkish culture and society.”

Coupled with the impression that outwardly-manifested Islam was un-Turkish and a symbol of social regression, there is concern that observers of that variety of Islam are interested in enforcing that practice on others, which would be similarly un-Turkish, by being opposed to laïcité. Deputy Head of the Higher Education Board (YOK) Isa Esme expressed those concerns when the law was repealed: “All female students may eventually be forced to wear head scarves. Turkey is turning to sharia law, not to the EU but to the Middle East.”

This mindset perpetuates the notion that there is a continuum or hierarchy of progress or modernity in which outwardly-manifesting Islam and the regions in which it is common are less desirable than seemingly-secular regions. The banning of the headscarf, which forces Turks into the inwardly-manifested variety of Islam, is not anti-Islam per se. It enforces, though, adherence to the practice of Islam that appears more aligned with national values, such as secularism.

For both France and Turkey, the laws that they have constructed and, in the case of Turkey, deconstructed regarding the wearing of Islamic veils are manifestations of national identity and states’ beliefs about how Islam can conform to it. France’s ban on all religious symbols in public schools for students and teachers and Turkey’s previous interdiction on head scarves in a variety of public institutions, including schools and universities, reflect not only the social value of secularism but the importance of educational spaces in the social construction. Because educational institutions are the means by which France and Turkey have chosen to inculcate their citizenry with national values, including secularism, these states and societies place a higher premium on secularism in those locations, which the states have sought to defend by banning religious symbols in those facilities. Similarly, public response to these laws shows an awareness of the impact that these laws have on Muslim female students and demonstrate the impressions in those states about Islam and its relationship to the state - namely that outwardly-manifesting Islam is a sign of failure to accept the nation’s secular values and the possibility, in Turkey’s case, of a desire to regress socially or to enforce outwardly-manifesting Islam on others. As such, these laws are best regarded as pro-nation, instead of anti-Islam.

76 Olson, 167.
77 “Turkey to lift.”
Bibliography


Bonzon, Ariane. “Faut-il supprimer la ‘loi sur le voile’?” *Slate*, December 17, 2013


http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000417977&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id

Law of December 9, 1905, J.O., December 11, 1905, p. 7205
http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=16C5C0C437818995445F39BFFECDCF49.tpdeo12v_1?cidTexte=JORFTEXT00000508749&dateTexte=20140319


Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm and the Production of Supranational Literature

Egyptian lawyer, journalist, playwright, poet, and author, Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm, between 1926 and 1974, published more than eighty plays, four novels, three books of short stories, a biography, and a book of essays. Al-Ḥakīm mastered a number of literary genres, and he also proved to be adept in the linguistic variation of the Arabic-speaking world, as he used three different varieties of the Arabic language in his works: one of these linguistic varieties he created himself in an attempt to transcend local boundaries. For example, both the narrative and the dialog of his short story, "Wajidatahā... Wajidatahā" ("I've Found It, I've Found It"), from the 1952 collection of stories, Fann al-'adab (The Art of Literature), were in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the language of literature, media, and (post-secondary) education. In addition, the dialog in his 1956 play, al-Ṣafqah (The Deal), includes three varieties of Arabic: MSA, Colloquial Egyptian Arabic (CEA)—the language of common communication—and his experimental third language, which primarily uses MSA lexical items in nonstandard syntactical or lexical usage. Al-Ḥakīm used different registers of the same language to produce pieces of national literature and supranational literature, but showed little interest in creating international literature: a diachronic examination of the works of al-Ḥakīm elucidates how his short stories and plays were able to simultaneously be pieces of both Egyptian nationalism and pan-Arab (supra)nationalism.

By means of a qualitative and quantitative examination of the linguistic features of al-Ḥakīm’s choice of words in specific literary contexts, this essay illustrates how al-Ḥakīm used features of MSA, CEA, and his own hybrid third language, both in the play and in the short story, in order to enhance both Egyptian nationalism and pan-Arab nationalism. To place al-Ḥakīm's language usage into proper context, theories of variation in the Arabic language are first examined, as is the social and political climate in Egypt while al-Ḥakīm was writing. This study will then demonstrate that although “I've Found It, I've Found It” and The Deal are very Egypt-centric in their content and can be considered pieces of nationalistic literature, the language al-Ḥakim used ensures these works will be easily understood on a supranational level.

Claudio Guillén presents three models of supranationality in comparative literature. The first model implies internationality and contains historically relevant authors and texts with a shared culture. The second compares genetically independent texts, texts with little to no relation, compared because the works share common sociohistorical conditions. This study fits into Guillén's third model of supranationality, an evolution of the first two models, which states a comparison must include two genetically independent texts, fit into the theory of literature, and contribute to the field of literary history. These texts can be considered genetically independent because they are of two different genres (play and short story), written in different linguistic registers, about different topics, spanning a large synchronic (but small diachronic) time period—one piece written in the middle of a revolution in a colonized country run by a monarchy, and the other written post-revolution in a sovereign country with a new “democracy.” It just so happens that these two genetically independent texts share a father, al-Ḥakīm. Though al-Ḥakīm is well regarded in the Arabic-speaking world, his works are not often studied by

2. Guillén, The Challenge of Comparative Literature, 70.
3. It is assumed here that Guillén is referring to Söseki's Theory of Literature, which states that literature is (F+f), where F is the idea in a cognitive consciousness and f is the emotional response to said idea or focal point; al-Ḥakīm's works fit into Sōseki's concept of literature (Sōseki 52).
5. Only four years of diachronic time passed between the time “I've Found It, I've Found It” and The Deal were written, a number of events occurred in Egypt in this time period (discussed later), indicating a larger synchronic time span. See: Kristeva, Julia, “Women's Time,” in The PrincetonSourcebook in Comparative Literature: From European Enlightenment to the Global Present, eds. David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongiseni Buthelezi. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
English speakers due to a dearth of translations, but these two texts, in particular are excellent documentations of Egypt in the 1950s.

**Variation in Arabic and Linguistic Manipulation**

Having a firm grasp on the technical and social aspects of the registers of the Arabic language is vital in understanding how al-Ḥakīm manipulated the language to alter who could comprehend his works and to determine how the pieces are nationalistic or supranationalistic. Linguists use the term *diglossia* to describe the relationship between the Arabic language and its dialects, meaning that there is both a formal (high, H) and an informal (low, L) version of the language, each used under different circumstances. Ferguson, who first posited diglossia, explained it as follows:

A relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

In the diglossic model MSA (called *fuṣḥā* by Arabic speakers) is the H-register, meant to connect with educated Arabs both inside and outside Egypt, and CEA (called *ʿammīyya* by Arabic speakers) is the L-register—the common language of communication spoken by the educated and uneducated alike in public spaces in Egypt, but not widely understood outside the country. Generally speaking, MSA and the dialects share a large part of the basic vocabulary, such as pronouns, kinship terms, body parts, social structure, animals, geographical objects, and basic activities.

Al-Ḥakīm believed that the problem with the idea of diglossia is that it divided the Arab people between the educated and the uneducated, and it also segregated the Arabic speaking countries from one another. In an attempt to span the linguistic abyss, al-Ḥakīm crafted his *third language* so that it might be well-received by speakers of other colloquial dialects; it was his belief that “by allowing for some license with commonly used substitutions and abbreviations for demonstrative and relative pronouns in conversation and dialogue, we could in Arabic also narrow the boundaries, distinctions, and barriers. We could reach as sound as possible a united form for the Arabic language.” Al-Ḥakīm wrote that The Deal was an attempt to work out problems of language and facilities in theater, and that he was trying to use a language “which is correct and does not offend the principles of classical Arabic, but which, at the same time, can be articulated by the characters, and is not incompatible with their natures or their environments.” Al-Ḥakīm created the *third language* to make his plays more believable and intelligible; if he had written the dialog in MSA it would have been inauthentic, but if he wrote the dialog in CEA it would not be able to be performed in other Arabic-speaking countries without first being translated into

---

8. Ibid., 336.
10. Trans. and qtd. in Hutchins, Plays, Prefaces and Postscripts of Tawfiq Al-Hakim, 337.
local dialects.

Al-Ḥakīm’s third language simultaneously supports and refutes the theory of diglossia: the fact that it is called the third language verifies that there are indeed two existing registers of language in use in Egypt. However, the existence of the third language means the diglossic model is not specific enough; diglossia leaves no room for hybrid forms of the high and low registers in the language. Al-Ḥakīm’s third language is a hybrid or intermediate form, which primarily uses MSA lexical items in new syntactic forms and words that are common in a number of the dialects. Hybridization follows the sociolinguistic variationist perspective, which states that speakers shift linguistic style or register either consciously or unconsciously based on social cues. Variationists see style as part of a system of distinction, in which registers are differentiated from one another and are used in distinct social domains or settings. Eid explains the linguistic hybrids as registers that “include features from both varieties of fushā and dialects and, therefore, they cannot be clearly identified as belonging to one or the other.” El-Said Badawi posits five registers of Arabic in Egypt. The five registers presented follow the idea of style-shifting in that each register is appropriately spoken in different settings or by different individuals. The system:

…envisages a synchronic language scheme in which these two systems are at extremes from one another, while between them lie three other distinguishable systems. Each of these five systems, or levels, contains elements which exist also in one or more of the other levels but in varying proportions; although the divisions between the levels are of course blurred rather than clear-cut, each level can nonetheless be typified by its own specific combination of linguistic and allied, social, educational, and psychological characteristics.

These five levels of Arabic language are: fushā al-turāth: the language of Islamic high culture; fushā al-ʿāsr: contemporary fushā, MSA; ʿāmmiyya al-muthaqafīn: the everyday language of the highly educated; ʿāmmiyya al-mutanawwirīn: common ʿāmmiyya such as CEA; and ʿāmmiyya alummīyyīn: the language of the illiterate. Classifying al-Ḥakīm’s language variation using the Badawi model; it can be said he used fushā al-ʿāsr (MSA), ʿāmmiyya al-mutanawwirīn (CEA) in the works examined here, and with his third language, he was attempting to create a form of an ʿāmmiyya al-ummīyyīn, a language of the illiterate, that could be understood outside of Egypt. Al-Ḥakīm sought to construct a new universal dialect akin to MSA, which could be universally understood by the educated and uneducated alike throughout the Arabic-speaking world. He used the third language in his plays but not the novels or short stories because MSA has long been the language of literature, and one must be educated to in order to read it. MSA is a supranationalistic language of the educated; whereas the third language, as a colloquial supranational language, will open up theatre doors for less educated Arabs inside and outside Egypt.

Because of al-Ḥakīm’s blatant manipulation of language norms in the creation of his third language, many of the same theories applied to poetry are relevant to these works. Jacobson “stresses the innate importance of syntactic forms or associations” in poetry, and al-Ḥakīm manipulates the syntax of MSA to create his third language and increase comprehension in the same manner a poet manipulates syntax to sustain rhyme or meter. Riffaterre calls the stylistic alteration of “specific

13. Irvine, “‘Style’ as Distinctiveness,” 22.
procedures” the stylistic context; however, in the case of al-Ḥakīm’s third language, this stylistic context was not only done for stylistic purposes, but also as a means to ensure theatergoers throughout the Arabic-speaking world are able to easily follow the play.

Yip writes of the inadequacy of language that poets discover; that is, the norms imposed on a language defeat the very purpose of language: to communicate real-world ideas (in the created literary world). Yip explains, “Behind many of the language experiments by poets and discussions on language by philosophers is one central obsession: Can language authenticate experience in the real-life world?” al-Ḥakīm asked the very same question before creating his third language, when he faced the issue of creating authentic character dialog in a supranationalistic language. Yip says, “language is a prison-house, constantly coding, decoding, and recoding at once closed as a system (as the structuralists want to see it) and open, changing and growing with overlaying signification, forming a net of continually interweaving and yet restrictive perpetual modes,” and he goes on to say writers need to break free of this prison.

For al-Ḥakīm, this restriction was not so much a problem of language in general, but rather the result of specific social and cultural constraints put onto the domains of the registers of the Arabic language by its speakers. Because Arabic has both a supranational register for the educated (MSA) in addition to a number of registers for uneducated individuals in the various Arab countries (the dialects, such as CEA), this notion of language inadequacy or unintelligibility is not simply philosophical: the dialects are not entirely mutually intelligible. While, according to Yip, the problems of presenting the real world in literary texts are virtually impossible to remedy because of universal language norms, al-Ḥakīm created a solution to his problem of presenting the “real-life” speech comprehensible to those unfamiliar with other dialects (typically the uneducated). He tried to create a universal dialect for his characters that could be understood by all Arabs, regardless of education or native dialect, a dialect that could be spoken. Despite his best efforts, al-Ḥakīm was the only one to adopt his created third language, and he only ended up doing so for two plays.

Egypt and Nationalisms

To grasp what it is al-Ḥakīm was doing with his manipulation and creation of language, one must not only need an understanding of the function of Arabic language and its dialects, but also have some knowledge of the sociopolitical climate in Egypt during the time each pieces was written. Auerbach states, “one cannot concern himself solely with the literature of a given period; one must study conditions under which this literature developed; one must take into account religion, philosophy, politics, economics, fine art, and music; in every one of these disciplines there must be sustained, active, and individual research.”

When al-Ḥakīm published The Art of Literature in 1952, Egypt was still recovering economically from World War II, and the divide between the country’s rich and poor was extreme. For much of al-Ḥakīm’s life Egypt was an occupied country: Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire until the empire was dissolved after World War I, and while the Egyptians were satisfied with the end of Ottoman occupation, they were not pleased with the continued British presence. Britain claimed they were permitted to control Egypt, as they had inherited Turkey’s liabilities through the Treaty of Lausanne and Egypt’s rights through the protectorate, and the British remained in Egypt, shaping economic development and political leadership. After the expulsion of the Turks, the British were the focus of an anti-imperial nationalist

18. Ibid., 74.
20. Ibid., 65.
movement that affected Egyptian politics for decades to come.\textsuperscript{22}

In 1952, \textit{The Art of Literature} was published and the Free Officers' Party staged a coup; days after the coup, the king was sent into exile, the monarchy, parliament, and constitution were abolished, and the groundwork for democracy was laid. When “I've Found It, I've Found It” was written, Egypt was an occupied monarchy. The new regime immediately began a somewhat hastily conceived program of social and political reform. For example, The Agrarian Reform Law of 1952, which the play \textit{The Deal} revolves around, limited the amount of land an individual could own and distributed the excess land to those with little or no land in an attempt equal out the economic chasm in Egyptian society.

A new constitution was established in 1956, which reaffirmed the regime's commitment to a state free of imperialism and feudalism, with democracy, social justice, and a strong army, as well as protection from discrimination based on sex, religion, language, or race, and the addition of voting rights for women.\textsuperscript{23} On 26 July 1956 Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal after the withdrawal of British and American offers to fund the building of the Aswan Dam, setting the scene for the Suez crisis. The British withdrew their troops with the resolution of the crisis: this was seen as the time at which Egypt gained full independence. It was the same year, 1956, that al-Ḥakīm published \textit{The Deal}, the year Egypt became independent and “democratic.”\textsuperscript{24} Given the trauma Egypt was experiencing while al-Ḥakīm was writing, it is no surprise that he would include nationalistic themes to support his fledgling country.

These social, political, and economic changes provided a catalyst for al-Ḥakīm's literary works, which are great representatives of Egyptian national literature. Glissant states that national literature comes into place when:

\begin{quote}
We recognize the changes of our present history as un-noticed moments of a great civilizational transformation: the passage from the transcendental universe of the Same, fruitfully imposed by the West, to a diffracted ensemble of the Diverse, conquered no less fruitfully by the peoples who have today seized their right of presence in the world.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

In the case of Egypt, their Sameness was realized when they were colonized by the Ottomans and the British, as Egyptians tried to band together in solidarity against their occupiers; and their newfound sovereignty led them to embrace the Diversity of pan-Arab nationalism, and reach out to other Arabs. This existence of Sameness and nationalism compared to Diversity and supranationalism is evident in the language of al-Ḥakīm, who first used only MSA and CEA during Egypt's occupation, but created his \textit{third language} after Egyptian emancipation. Glissant says, “Sameness requires Being, the Diverse established Relation.”\textsuperscript{26} Al-Ḥakīm sought not to establish international relations, but supranational relation in the Pan-Arab world.

A strong theme of this national literature is nationalism, and the history and diversity of Arabic allows the language to drive the concepts of nationalism and national identity. As Suleiman explains:

\begin{quote}
A History of the Modern Middle East, 308.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{22} William L. Cleveland, \textit{A History of the Modern Middle East}. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), 103-104.

\textsuperscript{23} Cleveland, \textit{A History of the Modern Middle East}, 308.

\textsuperscript{24} Using the term "democracy" to describe the new government in Egypt is problematic. Though it's proponents defined the government as such, it is not considered a democracy by Western standards. See: Selma Botman, \textit{Egypt: From Independence to Revolution, 1919-1952} (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991), and Israēl Geršoni and James P. Jankowski, \textit{Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930-1945} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Arthur Goldschmidt Jr., Amy J. Johnson, and Barak A. Salmoni, eds., \textit{Re-envisioning Egypt 1919-1952} (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005).


\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
... nationalists therefore use the past as the basis of an energizing dynamism which enables the community the address to mobilize for the purpose of defending itself against the externally generated challenges, while, at the same time, embracing change and projecting it as part of the inner fabric of this past in an almost seamless progression of history into the present and beyond.\textsuperscript{27}

Suleiman believes nationalism has been—and continues to be—created with the help of language, and he says the Arabic language, with its rich religious and cultural history, has an especially pertinent role in Arab nationalism. In addition, Giles, best known for his speech accommodation theory, states that language can express ethnocentric attitudes towards the self or another group, depict ethnic solidarity, or organize members of a group into social categories.\textsuperscript{28} That is, the different registers of the Arabic language can be used to depict different types of nationalism.

The dichotomy between the colloquial and the standard in Arabic allows for one language to propel country nationalism and the other to drive pan-Arab supranationalism, respectively. Attention needs to be given to the use of the Arabic language as a tool by which the Arabic-speaking world can be united, connecting Egyptian nationalism to Lebanese nationalism to Saudi nationalism to Algerian nationalism, and so on; Eid states MSA is “considered a unifying force, the pan-Arab ‘national’ language.”\textsuperscript{29} However, the Arabic language can also promote territorial nationalism, as each Arabic-speaking country has at least one dialect of its own. Territorial nationalism occurs when a shared ideology is present in a given geographical area: this can be a city, country, or region.\textsuperscript{30} By using MSA in the dialog of “I've Found It, I've Found It” and the MSA, CEA, and the third language in The Deal, it was al-Ḥakīm’s intention to expand Egyptian territorial nationalism to pan-Arab territorial supranationalism.

**Analysis of al-Ḥakīm's Arabic**

A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the language of al-Ḥakīm’s literary works reveals his astute manipulation of language norms to spread Egyptian nationalistic ideas supranationally in order to promote Pan-Arab nationalism. The issue of linguistic registers and their usage is especially pertinent to the works of al-Ḥakīm because he is known for developing and pushing for a third language. Although the standard is typically the language of literature, Egyptian authors—al-Ḥakīm included—have been known to mix language and domain usage and incorporate the colloquial for character dialog in novels.\textsuperscript{31}

One of al-Ḥakīm’s motivations for writing in the third language was to increase intelligibility and relatability of literary and dramatic works amongst the larger population. Al-Ḥakīm used his works to highlight cultural issues both within the Arab world and between the East and the West, and he examined the ties between ancient and modern Egypt, as well as spirituality, emotions, and social issues in modern Egypt, such as government corruption, rural peasant life versus city life, and the place of women in society. The variation in themes also demonstrates al-Ḥakīm’s commitment to identifying with Egyptian and pan-Arab ideas and promoting nationalism and supranationalism.

Both “I've Found It, I've Found It” and The Deal cover distinctly Egyptian scenarios. The short


\textsuperscript{30} Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity*, 163.

\textsuperscript{31} Eid, “Arabic on the Media.”
story, “I’ve Found It, I’ve Found It” is about an Egyptian man who comes up with a scientific theory for hydroelectricity. The story was written during the planning stages of the Aswan High Dam project, which would provide Egypt with a major source of hydroelectricity. It is made up primarily of the dialog between two Egyptian men, the narrator (a common man who would primarily speak CEA) and what he calls another “man of the world” (an educated man who would speak MSA). The story is al-Ḥakīm's argument that Egyptians are just as brilliant as the Greeks (or any other nation), as the narrator states he is Archimedes—famous for his water displacement theory; the narrator, like Archimedes, makes his discovery in the bathroom.

*The Deal* is about peasants trying to secure land, and was published four years after the new government enacted the Agrarian Reform Law of 1952. All three acts of the play were set in the town square, and he incorporated elements of tradition and folklore into the play about village life in order to appeal to a larger audience. Al-Ḥakīm's two plays written in 1955, *The Deal* and *الورطة al-Wartah (Incrimination)* emphasized the need for Egyptian society to continue to move forward, and both of these plays used MSA, CEA, and the third language.

This analysis of the language used by al-Ḥakīm does not simply make assumptions about the author's choice of language: he wrote a number of commentaries about the status of the Arabic language and its varieties and the effects the language had on society. Al-Ḥakīm was known to vary the language of the play based on the content and characters, and he believed that dialog was the heart of drama. In the postscript to *Incrimination*, “The Play's Language,” al-Ḥakīm recognized the problems with different linguistic registers in society, and he touched on the idea that the division between the educated standard and the colloquial dialect created a rift in society: “No matter how simplified an Arabic I introduce, I have felt a need to change it and translate it into the colloquial dialect in performance. This is a strange situation. The confession of the existence of two separate languages for one people when it is trying to eliminate class differences does not augur well.”

The issue of language usage in theatre is further complicated because plays published in MSA are often translated into the local dialect on the stage. Al-Ḥakīm's writings in the postscripts and prefaces of his plays demonstrate he was aware of this issue of translating theatre for performance, and aimed to create works that did not need to be translated. Al-Ḥakīm said his goal was two-fold:

First, progress towards a unified theatrical language in our literature, which will bring us closer to the unified theatrical language of European literatures; second—and more importantly—to bring closer the various classes of a single people, and the peoples of the Arabic language, by unifying, as far as possible, the means by which they understand one another, without violating the requirements of art.

Al-Ḥakīm was critical of the way the Arabic language was taught and perceived; in a letter to a French friend al-Ḥakīm wrote that the classical writers have created a gulf between literature and the populous, but he mastered this dichotomy in his post-revolutionary works, partly through the use of his third language.

Three of al-Ḥakīm's early plays were written in CEA: these plays involved everyday themes in

---

32. Hutchins' translation of *الورطة* is “incrimination,” though the word is most commonly translated as “dilemma.”
34. Trans. and qtd. in Hutchins, *Plays, Prefaces and Postscripts of Tawfīq Al-Ḥakīm*, 337.
35. Starkey, *From the Ivory Tower*, 196.
36. Trans. and qtd. in Starkey, *From the Ivory Tower*, 197.
37. Ibid., 185.
the lives of ordinary villagers, but his plays written in MSA approached harder issues or were set outside of Egypt. His “philosophical” plays were written in MSA rather than colloquial Arabic, “since these plays were a conscious attempt to raise Egyptian drama onto a new level of literary respectability; as they were not set in contemporary Egypt, the question of authenticity of language did not arise.”  

Whereas, his play الزمر al-Zammār (The Piper) was set in the Egyptian countryside and used CEA as a means of authenticating the characters. Furthermore, his first novel, عودة الروح wdat al-Rūh (Return of the Spirit) used colloquial in the dialog, while the dialog in his short stories from The Art of Literature were in MSA. Because al-Ḥakīm had a history of using CEA for character authentication in novels, short stories, and plays, it would be expected to find CEA in the short story, “I've Found It, I've Found It,” or the play, The Deal.

The analysis in this paper is two-fold. One aspect is a qualitative study highlighting the types of variation found in both the play and the short story. The second aspect is a quantitative study of negation tokens found in 35 pages of the play. In the case of the quantitative study, the tokens are the negators لا lā and ما mā and the adjacent clauses that provide context; in the qualitative aspect of the study, tokens are individual words, which can be classified as belonging to a specific register of the Arabic language.

The lines between the levels of the Arabic language are blurred. Both MSA and CEA share a large, common vocabulary, and analyses of language variation typically code words as MSA-only, dialect-only, or both. In addition, intermediate forms—those with characteristics of both the standard (MSA) and a dialect (CEA) but are not lexical items in either register—are sometimes found, allowing for four different possibilities for classification per token. Coding tokens in such a manner allows for a more faithful analysis of the language, but most studies of language variation in Arabic throw out the intermediate forms, as they are very difficult to analyze. However, in order to determine the breadth of al-Ḥakīm's manipulation of language, this study includes analysis of the standard (MSA-only), a dialect (CEA-only), tokens that fall into both categories (both), and intermediate forms—in this case, al-Ḥakīm's third language (3rd).

This study focuses on the absence and presence of al-Ḥakīm's created language and includes some analysis of language variation with MSA and CEA, but because no CEA-only tokens were found in the short story this study assumes that al-Ḥakīm does not choose the words that would otherwise fall into the both category because they also could be used in CEA. That is, he did not choose intermediate words in an effort to colloquialize the language, but rather, he chose them because the words are generally considered MSA. If al-Ḥakīm had used CEA-only tokens in the text, then it would have been assumed that he was choosing words coded as both as a means of colloquialization. Furthermore, because al-Ḥakīm did not use any CEA in the story and because it is assumed that he did not choose words only because they are found in both MSA and CEA, coding was not necessary in “I've Got It, I've Got It.”

In the works of al-Ḥakīm (and Arabic literature and language in general), negation is an indicator of what register of the language he is using: MSA, CEA, or his created third language. In order to determine the register al-Ḥakīm used with the greatest frequency, one aspect of this study is a quantitative analysis of the negators لا lā and ما mā throughout the play. These two tokens were chosen because they are typically verbal negation markers, and verbal negation is one of the most obvious forms of variation between MSA and the dialects. MSA uses لبس laysa for the negation of nouns, لا lā for present verbal negation, ما mā and لام lam for past informal and formal, respectively, and لن lan for future negation; however, CEA, like most of the dialects, uses ما mā, مش mish, or the م ش mā-sh circumfix for negation.

39. Starkey, 196.
40. Ibid.
41. For this study, "token" refers to any instance of a studied variable.
Although Arabic literature is typically written in MSA, it is common for Egyptian literature to include colloquial dialog, and al-Ḥakīm himself used CEA for the dialog of his first novel. Therefore, in theory, “I Found It, I Found It” should contain colloquial dialog, especially considering that it was written during a time of increasing nationalism and has characters from both the educated (MSA) and the artisan classes (CEA speakers). The presence of characters from different social classes might have provided al-Ḥakīm with the opportunity to use both MSA and CEA in the text; however, the entire dialog is conducted in MSA: there are no lexical markers of CEA in the story, nor is there evidence of al-Ḥakīm’s third language. Using only MSA and no colloquial dialog allows the text to be read supranationally.

Below is an example of formal negation occurring in the dialog:

(1)

وهو ما لم يخطر ولا شك على بال أحد من خبراء مشروع الخزان...

And **what/that did not occur**, no doubt in the minds of the experts on the Aswan Dam project.⁴²

Here, the formal negation construct is used in the dialog, which is unlikely and unrealistic in speech. ما mā is the spoken, less formal past-tense negation for MSA, and لم lam is the formal negation found only in literary works. Note that the ما mā before لم lam in the above example is of the alternative meaning of ما mā ‘what/that.’

Looking at a larger piece of the monologue in which Example 1 occurred, one can see how al-Ḥakīm used the MSA feminine and masculine demonstratives, الii’ti al-ii’ti and اليدحī al-идحī, respectively, which mean ‘which, that, who.’ The majority of the Arabic dialects, including those in both Egypt and the Levant, use a gender-neutral demonstrative في il-lī for ‘which, that, who;’ however, in Example 2, below, al-Ḥakīm used both the feminine الii’ti and the masculine اليدحī of MSA instead of the dialectal gender-neutral في il-lī (in this case the /a/ of the definite article ال al is pronounced /i/ as i):

(2)

فاستقبلت هذا الماء المضغوط بكفي من ذلك الارتفاع، فإذابي أشعر في اليد برعشة كتلك الرعشة التي تحدث من لمس سلك من أسلاك الكهرباء. هنا أدركت لساعتي أن ضغط الماء في ذاته يولد قوة كهربية... هنا هذا القياس فإن الماء المضغوط من عيون خزان أسوان يولد كهرباء بطريقة مباشرة بمجرد الضغط والاندفاع... وما لم يخطر ولا شك على بال أحد من خبراء مشروع الخزان. لأن الذي خطر ببالهم هو الانتفاع بضغط الماء في إدارة الفينة.$^{42}$

The pressurized water poured into my hands from that height, suddenly I feel a shock in my hand like that which occurs from touching an electric cord.... Here, I realized then that water pressure in itself generates electric power... In this same manner, the water rushing from the tunnels of the Aswan Dam generates electricity directly the same way as soon as the pressure builds and rushes out.. What did not occur in the minds of the experts on the Dam project... Because that (which) occurred in their mind(s) was using water for the utilization of pressure "propellers" that create electricity⁴³

Al-Ḥakīm abstained from using the colloquial marker في il-lī, which would have allowed him to make the dialog truer to the speech of individuals while still securing readability in a number of dialects.

Another example of a colloquial grammatical marker missing from the dialog of al-Ḥakīm’s short story is the mood and aspect marker common in the dialects، *ba*, which is typically connected to present-tense verbs to denote that the verb is progressive. The MSA equivalent to the present progressive is done with case endings, which are diacritical marks not physically written in works of literature. The

excerpt from the same piece of dialog used in Example 2 illustrates the lack of the present progressive marker:

(3)
فإذابي أشعر في اليد برعشة كتلك الرعشة التي تحدث من لمس سلك من أسلاك الكهربا

Suddenly, I feel a jerk in my hand like that which occurs from touching an electric cord.44

In colloquial speech, the speaker would say بأشعر ba-‘sh’r “I feel.” Al-Ḥakīm chose to maintain MSA grammatical and lexical throughout the text in both the narrative and the dialog. Given the content of the story, Egyptian competence in engineering, and the context of the story—the planning of the Aswan High Dam and the Egyptian revolution against the monarchy—CEA could be expected in the dialog. By using MSA in the short story, “I've Found It, I've Found It,” al-Ḥakīm was able to promote the nationalistic idea of Egyptian scientific superiority supranationally, and share the idea of Arab dominance throughout Arabia. That is, al-Ḥakīm was looking to connect the Relation (Diversity) with Arabs outside Egypt.

The dialog tokens in the play, The Deal, can be classified as MSA-only, CEA-only, both, or third language. Below is an excerpt from the text with a variety of registers included, where items in bold are the third language, items underlined are MSA-only, and items in regular text are both (MSA and CEA):

(4)
تهامي: ما هناك حل! غير أننا نمنعه من الخروج!

Tahāmī: There is no solution; except that we prevent him from going!45

The phrase ما هناك حل mā h nāk ‘there is no’ is an example of al-Ḥakīm's third language because although ما mā is a negator in both MSA and the dialects, it is not used with the proposition هناك hunaka/hunika/ h nāk in either MSA or CEA. In MSA the phrase would be لس لس هنال حل laysa hunāk ḥal ‘there is no solution,’ and in CEA a speaker would likely say مافش حل māfish ḥal to mean the same thing. In this example the ما هناك mā hunāk construction is that of the third language, but is universally understood to mean ‘there is no solution.'

Example 4 also helps to illustrate that there are many methods of negating nouns, verbs, and adjectives in the Arabic language: the quantitative analysis found that al-Ḥakīm used ي ل 27 times and ما mā 7 times, with 27 MSA tokens, 4 third language tokens, and 3 CEA token. That is, MSA was his primary means of negation, and while ما mā was used in MSA, CEA and the third language, ي ل was only used for MSA and the third language. The quantitative analysis included 35 consecutive pages of the play, in which negation tokens were coded as MSA, CEA, or 3rd (for third language). The pages included 34 tokens of negation (the appendix contains the guidelines for token classification).

With the majority of negation tokens classified as MSA, and the third language being the second-most common register, followed by CEA, it becomes evident that al-Ḥakīm is striving for maximum supranational intelligibility. He primarily uses registers that would be understood outside the confines of the Egyptian borders. Below are some of the examples of register variation in negation in al-Ḥakīm's play:

(5)

44. Ibid., 111.
45. Although the phrase ما هناك حل mā hunāk hal is classified as the third language, each token in the phrase are found in both MSA and CEA; this demonstrates the difficulty in classifying and categorizing tokens in Arabic. Furthermore, the phrase differently غheyr ‘āminā is classified as MSA although ‘āminā can also be used in CEA; the tokens are classified in the context of the phrase.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PG</th>
<th>PHRASE</th>
<th>NEG</th>
<th>TRANSLITERATION</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
<th>FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>ما يقدر</td>
<td>ما</td>
<td>mā ya-qadr</td>
<td>not able</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>لا يلمح</td>
<td>لا</td>
<td>lā ya-limḥ</td>
<td>no hint</td>
<td>MSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>ما عاد</td>
<td>ما</td>
<td>mā ‘āda</td>
<td>no longer</td>
<td>CEA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Al-Ḥakīm used  ما in the context CEA as in  ما عاد  mā ‘āda ‘no longer’ (Example 3), and he used it to negate  هناك hunāk ‘there’ in  ما هناك mā hunāk as an indicator of his third language (Example 4), and he also used it in the MSA construction, below:

لِو كان في قدرتي ما كنت قمت ولا تأخرت

It has been demonstrated that al-Ḥakīm used  ما in three registers: MSA, CEA, and third language. However, he was not as versatile with  لَا lā, as he only used it for MSA and his third language. Example 6, above, shows لَا in MSA usage, and Example 7, below, is an example of his use of لَا with a past-tense verb; this is another example of his third language because MSA would use  ما and CEA would use the circumfix ما-شم mā-sh.

لا دخلت جوفي من يومين

Although لَا lā is in the lexicon of both MSA and CEA, as a verbal negator and general 'no' in both MSA and CEA, the context in the above example shows al-Ḥakīm's third language. This manipulation of the registers of language through negation demonstrates al-Ḥakīm's mastery of the language as a playwright.

MSA and CEA share a number of lexical items, and in some cases a word is used in both registers of the language but the meaning itself changes. Such occurrences add to the difficulty of identifying and classifying tokens into MSA-only, CEA-only, or both. For example, the word عمل mal in MSA means 'to work,' while in CEA it is more commonly used as 'to do' instead of the MSA 'to do,' فعل f’al. Below is an example of al-Ḥakīm using عمل mal in the play:

مَأْبِرَكَةَ:  They did it to us, eh Maḥārūs!
Maḥārūs:  They did it to us!

Perhaps this example is not reason enough to believe that the characters are saying ‘they did it to us,’ because ‘they worked for her’ is also logical. However, to prevent the confusion between ‘do’ and ‘work,’ Egyptians often say use شغل shughl, which is MSA for ‘to be busy, to work’ or ‘job.’ Shortly after this interaction al-Ḥakīm wrote:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Footnote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44. لا تعد  لَا t’da ‘no longer’ is idiomatic in MSA but 'no longer' is  ما عاد mā ‘āda in CEA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Al-Ḥakīm, al-Ṣafqah, 52.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Ibid., 37.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Ibid., 16.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maḥrūs: Even the village barber, our lord improved his situation. And tonight his job is flourishing!\textsuperscript{51}

When seeing شغل\textsuperscript{51} used as ‘job,’ it becomes obvious that al-Ḥakīm uses عمل\textsuperscript{51} as ‘to do.’ This lexical variation of ‘to do’ is not as popular in the other dialects as it is in CEA, but this construction is still likely understood by Arabic speakers outside of Egypt. While there are many examples where al-Ḥakīm included colloquial registers of Arabic in the dialog of his play (examples 8 and 9), there are still places in the play where he omitted the informal forms and used MSA: al-Ḥakīm uses النهي\textsuperscript{52} for ‘finished,’ which is MSA; CEA would have used خلاص khalās instead.\textsuperscript{52} The MSA form is more widely understood supranationally.

Although al-Ḥakīm was a proponent of a universal dialect and he and other Egyptian authors were known to use the colloquial for the dialog in novels, he maintained the tradition of writing both the narrative and the dialog of his short story “I've Found It, I've Found It” in MSA. Writing the stories entirely in MSA allowed (educated) Arabs outside of Egypt to understand the text easily, thereby promoting the spread of Egyptian literature supranationally. Although, he did not write the short story with CEA in the dialog—which would enhance the Egyptian identity or Sameness of the characters and, the content and context of “I've Found It, I've Found It” indicate feelings of Egyptian nationalism. Al-Ḥakīm was leery of using CEA for fear of pushing the colloquial language onto Arabs who maintain their own regional or national dialects, and he worried about having to translate literature that is too dialect-heavy.\textsuperscript{53} He stated:

People are beginning to ask in fact in some Arab countries: Why is Egyptian colloquial imposed on us? Why should we not have our own colloquial? Some harbingers have actually appeared in some types of literature and art. If the situation continues we will find ourselves forced one day to translate books, thoughts and artistic works from one regional language to another within the Arab world. With that, our culture would crumble and our intellectual link be severed.\textsuperscript{54}

Abstaining from CEA ensured that readers outside Egypt would be able to easily read the story and be presented with the idea of Egyptian engineering aptitude: al-Ḥakīm used MSA, a pan-Arab language, to spread the idea of Egyptian nationalism into the rest of the Arab world, creating a Relation and a sense of supranationalism. Whereas, in the play, which one does not need to be literate to attend, he used primarily MSA and his third language and some CEA to promote supranational intelligibly. The illiterate are often familiar with MSA through broadcast media, and many of the MSA words he used are also part of the colloquial lexicon, so using a large amount of MSA and his “universal” third language ensured that people would be able to attend and enjoy his plays outside of Egypt without having to be highly literate.

The two plays he published in 1956 (one of them being The Deal) show al-Ḥakīm’s inclusion of Egyptian nationalism and Arab supranationalism, as he attempted to solve the dilemmas of classical vs. colloquial Arabic by employing a new third language, which can be read and understood as widely as MSA but has the simpler grammatical features of a dialect. In addition, the Egypt-centric story lines concerning the Agrarian Reform Law of 1952 (The Deal) and the construction of the Aswan Dam and Egyptian innovation in invention (“I've Found It, I've Found It”) allowed al-Ḥakīm to promote feelings of

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{53} Hutchins, Plays, Prefaces and Postscripts of Tawfiq Al-Hakim.
\textsuperscript{54} Trans. and qtd. in Hutchins, Plays, Prefaces and Postscripts of Tawfiq Al-Hakim, 341.
solidarity among Egyptians, while more universal registers of Arabic used in the dialog allowed both the story and play to be shared amongst other Arabs.

The analysis of the language of the story and the play indicates that al-Ḥakīm was taking Egyptian themes and using more universal registers of the Arabic language to allow the pieces to be shared with other Arabic-speaking countries, but after the Egyptians had banded together and successfully overthrown the king and later gained complete sovereignty, al-Ḥakīm was likely trying to shift his focus and connect with the rest of the Arab world: Egypt was now able to embrace the Diverse.

The aim of this study was to highlight the variations in al-Ḥakīm's language and to explore how these variations were connected to events in Egypt at the time the works were written. This study concludes al-Ḥakīm manipulated both the themes and the language of his works, especially his plays, to simultaneously reflect sentiments of both nationalism—through the theme—or supranationalism through language. However, further studies should provide more technical and exhaustive analyses of the Arabic of Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, as he remarks on the study of colloquial Arabic, “I hope that those interested in the matter will investigate whether the spread of regional dialects of Arabic has been or will be one of the causes aiding in spiritual and intellectual fragmentation.”

---


Appendix: Token Classification

The coding system is based on the grammatical rules of MSA and CEA, and any token not fitting either grammar system is deemed a token of the *third language* (3rd). Examples of explanations of the reasons for classification include:

**MSA**
- *לָא present*: יִלָּא is used to negate present tense in MSA
- *idiomatic*: the phrase is idiomatic in the given register
- *series*: יִלָּא can negate past tense verbs in MSA if the verbs are part of a series as in *neither-nor*
- *לָא as no/not*: common usage of יִלָּא in MSA
- *לָא cond neg*: יִלָּא used as a conditional negator in MSA (after a conditional particle such as *if*
- *מָא past*: מַמָּא is used to negate a past tense verb

**CEA**
- *idiomatic*: the phrase is idiomatic in the given register
- *active part*: יִלָּא negation is used with the active participle in CEA

**3rd**
- *לָא w/past*: יִלָּא is not used to negate past tense in MSA or CEA
- *not MSA or CEA*: the context of the token does not follow the grammar of MSA or CEA; מַמָּא not used to negate nouns in MSA or CEA
- *מָא present*: מַמָּא is used for past tense negation in MSA in addition to a circumfix negator in CEA, so the absence of the suffix שָׁ לָא would indicate the word is not CEA but the *third language*
Past in Present: Animation, Comics, and the Representation of Historical Memory in *Footnotes in Gaza* and *Waltz with Bashir*

“Every morning brings us the news of the globe, and yet we are poor in noteworthy stories.” ~Walter Benjamin

Penned presciently on the eve of World War II, Walter Benjamin’s sober assessment of an information-saturated yet content-devoid modern global media apparatus echoes bitterly in the opening pages of comic-journalist Joe Sacco’s *Footnotes in Gaza*: conversing with a group of journalists at a Jerusalem bar upon his arrival to the city, a pervasive sense of jaded disillusionment and tired repetition suffuses their discussion. Covering the second Palestinian intifada, their idle discourse reflects a disaffected weariness with the protracted nature of the conflict and its by-this-point banal brutalities, constantly in motion yet never, it seems, fundamentally changing. As Sacco cynically and somewhat exasperatedly reflects, “Bombings! Assassinations! Incursions! They could file last month’s story today—or last year’s, for that matter—and who’d know the difference?”

This grim pronouncement is foregrounded by images of bombed-out buses, tanks jutting out amid piles of rubble, visibly distraught victims of gruesome violence, that do indeed appear sadly, almost timelessly familiar. Yet beyond a more general desensitized boredom, these reporters’ sense of disorienting repetition and seemingly eternal impasse speaks to a larger disturbance posed by the story of Palestine to Western humanist ideas of trajectory, narrative, and temporality. Refracted and differentiated through the social splintering of diaspora and exile, Palestinian experience refuses a pat, unified “national narrative,” reflective as it is of multiple historical junctures and geographic-temporal locations. The bitter failure of the “peace process” to forge even the beginning of a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict stands out as a poignant embodiment of this failure of the traditional narrative in this context, the rhetoric of the linear storyline of normative “progress” exposed in all its hollow, gaping inadequacy.

Indeed, in living the reality of active settler-colonialism within a “postcolonial” world, Palestine as both a people and a place occupies a unique liminality indicative, in many ways, of larger discontents and paradoxes that haunt postcoloniality, of tensions and slippages between past and present, individual and collectivity, identity and location. In a situation such as Palestine, in which history—one that is, importantly, often discounted or outright erased—exerts such a visceral, powerful force on everyday life, ‘storytelling’ defies Western literary conventions of a unidirectional, goal-oriented ‘plot’ leading smoothly from conflict to resolution. The story of Palestine, and indeed postcolonial narratives at large, refuses containment within these normative constrictions, demanding alternate modes of conceptualizing and capturing temporality and identity. This representational struggle to transcend the “news of the day” in order to weave the “noteworthy story” is one centered around a tension between universalizing political narratives and the sheer interconnected multiplicity of modern life, of the challenge of creating an authentic story under multi-sited pressures to concoct the (illusory) authentic story. I contend that comics and animation, as exemplified in Joe Sacco’s *Footnotes in Gaza* and Ari Folman’s *Waltz with Bashir*, can potentially offer us a new language and narrative means to portray experience that evades narrow conceptions of time and space. Though these two works come from distinctly different viewpoints—one from a Maltese journalist in early-2000s Gaza, one from an Israeli filmmaker and former soldier attempting to piece together the shrouded memory of fighting the 1982 Israeli-Lebanese war in Beirut—I argue that both utilize unconventional forms of visual-textual composition in order to unmoor their stories from traditional subjectivities and linear narratives, thus illuminating the complex interplay between memory and the present, dream and lived waking experience, collectivity and individuality.

---

These mediums – traditionally (and significantly) harboring deep associations with the childish, the juvenile, the fantastical and therefore “un-serious” – and the stories that they portray can thus serve to “queer” colonial (and neo-colonial) teleologies, asserting the vital importance of a historical memory consistently and deliberately forgotten, as well as subverting trajectorial means of enframing and understanding lived reality past and present. In recollecting his early, thrilling engagement with comics during his youth in immediately postcolonial Egypt, Edward Said ruminates on how “comics in their relentless foregrounding…seemed to say what couldn’t otherwise be said, perhaps what wasn’t permitted to be said or imagined, defying the ordinary processes of thought, which are policed, shaped and re-shaped by all sorts of pedagogical as well as ideological pressures…comics freed me to think and imagine and see differently.” In Said’s reminiscence, this subversive abandon unique to comics manifested itself in a startling directness and vernacularity of language, as well as in direct and visceral depictions of sex and violence. Firmly ensconced in both a strict disciplinarian family focused resolutely on academic success and a British educational system “reading almost exclusively English books…where the curriculum was based on the Oxford and Cambridge School Certificate,” the experience of interacting with comics enabled Said to unlock an erotic and rhetorical imagination inexpressible elsewhere. Said’s youthful experience with comics, enlivened and shaped by their strict forbiddance and dismissal, speaks to cartoon artist and theorist Scott McCloud’s notion of cartooning as “not just a way of drawing…but a way of seeing,” a means of “amplification through simplification.”

Judith Jack Halberstam echoes and furthers this idea with regard to animation, exploring the ways in which the estranging abstraction of animal-based Pixar-style animatronics enables such films to portray radically alternative modes of sociality, in contravention to heteronormative capitalist social formations. In Halberstam’s analysis, animation has a unique potential to operate on and in a “childish territory of revolt,” utilizing the dismissal of cultural production aimed at or associated with children as “juvenilia” to forge an expanded latitude enabling the depiction of politically, socially, and culturally transgressive imaginative worlds. Utilizing such visual forms is thus reconfigured as a productive way of artistically engaging and reappropriating mainstream silencing and disapproval, reconstituting popular verdicts of “failure” into a creative space in which alternate visions of the world can be called into being. This engagement with (rather than rejection of) the concept of “failure” in the eyes of dominant discourse is echoed in Said’s explication of the revolutionary importance of Sacco’s graphic journalism covering Palestine. While “most of the comics…read almost routinely conclude with someone’s victory, the triumph of good over evil, or the routing of the unjust by the just…Sacco’s *Palestine* is not at all like that. The people he lives among are history’s losers, banished to the fringes where they seem so despondently to loiter, without much hope or organization, except for their sheer indomitability…and their willingness to cling to their story, to retell it, and to resist designs to sweep them away altogether.” Here, visual form thus mirrors, reinforces, and itself helps create the subject and narrative.

In a very different sense, animation enables Ari Folman in *Waltz with Bashir* to uncover the layers of denial, guilt, and trauma obfuscating his memory of the Sabra and Shatila massacres in 1982. Folman’s narrative differs in vantage point, motivation, and context from Sacco’s; as an active participant in the film’s events rather than a foreign observer, his story represents part of the dark undergirding of Zionist nationalist ideology and its accompanying vision of history, a memory forced into unknowing and unspeaking in order to preserve a morally precarious stability. This imaginative world represents, in some ways, the polar opposite of the queer, fantastical alterity of Halberstam’s Pixar films. Instead, the central animating locus of *Waltz with Bashir* is a horrifically real dystopia, buried deep within the consciousness of those involved yet clearly troubling their psyches in the form of dreams, flashbacks, and melancholic

---


6 Said, v.
unease—psychological disturbances rendered vividly in the film’s visual forms. Animation allows Waltz to move fluidly and seamlessly from reality to dreamscape, present to past, portraying visually the intricate mental interweaving of the foundational, silenced trauma of the war experience into the characters’ contemporary lived reality. Thus, we see the ways in which the texture of these subjects’ lives is subtly yet perniciously haunted by the ghost of a memory consciously and subconsciously “disappeared.” The film’s opening sequence—of what we later learn to be a former soldier’s dream depicting a pack of 26 raging dogs racing through the streets of Beirut in pursuit of the elevated, detached dreamer—exemplifies this ghostly intermingling of remembered images, emotions, and landscapes into a fictional “narrative” more real, in some ways, than any “factual” retelling.

Folman’s engagement with mainstream silencing and designations of “failure” is thus distinctly different from Halberstam’s (and, as we will later see, Sacco’s), stemming at least in part from his positionality as an albeit uneasy part of the “mainstream”—Israeli society. Instead of reimagining “failure” as a space in which to envision aesthetic and social utopias, Folman attacks the very designation (in his particular socio-political context) as fundamentally dishonest, an evasion masking the painful truth of complicity (and, though not dealt with in this film, directly enacted) mass violence. Waltz’s central driving “failure” is a collective and individual amnesia, as attested to by the oft-repeated notion of the subjects’ war experience as simply “not stored in my system,” constituting the originary problematic of the film. His artistic intervention via the visual vocabulary of animation is to remove the mental veil obscuring memory from consciousness, to collaboratively resurrect suppressed memory and piece together a coherent narrative—to resolve the author’s estrangement from his past by actively mentally re-inhabiting it. We can, then, read Folman’s story in Waltz with Bashir as an inversion of Halberstam’s animation of revolt: rather than using animated absurdity and abstraction in order to explode real normative dystopias to create radical new social formations, Folman uses this visual language as a means of traveling from the mythologized, detached abstraction of national narrative to the horrifying truths that lie beneath. This sense of journeying from obscuring myth to ghastly reality is viscerally expressed in the jarring switch at the end of the film from animation, zeroing in on the narrator himself, to real video footage of Palestinian refugees’ return to their decimated camps after the massacre, their streets and homes literally piled with corpses. The film then abruptly cuts out; having traveled with the narrator through his psychoanalytic archaeology, we have arrived at a destination of naked, truthful horror. Abstraction through animation is thus a pathway to truth, a means of approximating, understanding, and depicting the traumatic past so as to eventually render its veracious reality fully visible.

While Waltz with Bashir traverses time and space fluidly through animation, creating a composite of past memory and present lived reality that demonstrates the ways in which each shapes the other through a dialectical relation, its narrative structure is still fairly conventionally subject-focused. Though incorporating the diverse perspectives of his compatriots, both their memory-dreams and their contemporary lives, Waltz’s central story is essentially focused on the narrator’s journey towards understanding, apprehending. Deeply psychoanalytic in approach and content, Folman’s work pursues a kind of mental and emotional excavation, portraying the narrator digging away layers of psychological sediment to uncover the truth lodged in his subconscious. Both literal and figurative archaeology as a mode of viewing history and producing knowledge is voiced vividly by Joe Sacco, as he narrates his quest to “get to the bottom” of one particular massacre of Palestinians in Rafah in 1956, the historical fulcrum around with Footnotes in Gaza revolves: “While we feverishly dig away at 1956, daily events are obscuring our finds, making it that much harder for our subjects to focus on the stratum in question.”

This text block, tellingly, is set in the upper left-hand corner of a panel depicting an elderly woman lying in a hospital bed, her leg in a thick cast as a result of injuries wrought by the demolition of her home by Israeli bulldozers mere days earlier. This metaphor is rendered particularly powerful in the context of a conflict in which the physical land—and (rightful) ownership thereof—remains fiercely contested, the site

7 Sacco, 282.
of nationalist appropriation, violent battle, and exilic longing. Indeed, in a land in which the academic discipline of archaeology itself was marshaled to establish “authentic” historical links to an ancient, proto-nationalist past that conferred legitimacy upon the Zionist project, this is indeed a loaded concept.\(^8\)

Yet ultimately, *Footnotes* in many ways serves to take the liberating aesthetic of the traditionally “childish” one radical step further, critiquing archaeology as a mode of conceptualizing historical inquiry and guiding storytelling even as it attempts to practice it. Sacco’s engagement with “failure,” in his case particularly that of the traditional narrative and the false notion that one can excavate an “objective,” unmarred historical truth, generates something related to but differentiated from Folman’s *Waltz*. While Folman explores to a degree the dialectical relationship between past, present, and the “third” dimension of dream and memory, he frames the multivocal conversation between these elements as means to – at times, even an obstacle to – the “truth” of experience. *Footnotes*, however, starts by pursuing its inquiry in this mold yet slowly begins to discover its inherent narrowness and inadequacy, as well as the maddening impossibility of its execution. This is realized and pointedly articulated at various points in the graphic text through Sacco’s depiction of his own increasing frustration with both the wandering memories of his elderly interviewees and younger generations’ impatient indifference to history in the face of a continually devastating present. Sacco notes, with a mix of frustration and sympathetic understanding, the ways in which “memories change with the years…memory blurs edges, it adds and subtracts” – an effect demonstrated vividly in *Waltz with Bashir’s* almost hallucinatory memory-sequences.\(^9\) During one particular interview with an older Gazan woman, he laments that “…that’s the way it goes: the young ones don’t want to hear about ’56; and the old ones – as witnesses, the old ones are not always very professional. This woman, for example, can’t keep anything straight…her tower of memories has collapsed. She gropes around to offer us a piece of her rubble.”\(^10\) Again invoking physical metaphors portraying memory as a unified, coherent “built” structure proceeding linearly from past to present, Sacco at this stage can only interpret the shape of his subjects’ memories as a “failure” – a failure to conform to his professional goals, his particular project, his ideas of history and the “proper” historical record itself.

Indeed, a common thread running through both *Footnotes in Gaza* and *Waltz with Bashir* is a deliberate, almost meta-focus on the narrator’s process of constructing the story. Instead of presenting a narrative to the viewer/reader as an objective whole, the journey towards story-formation is an explicit and integral component of each work. Sacco overtly acknowledges the complex politics of narration in describing the evolution of his informal “vetting” process for his material: sitting at a table late at night poring over the collected testimony, Sacco asks us “Who decides what is credible and what is not? Abed (his translator) and I, that’s who, sitting in our room drinking coffee. We decide. We edit. We determine. In the absence of UNRWA records, of Israeli records – and could we rely on them if we had them? – it’s up to us to fill history’s glass with as much truthful, cogent testimony as we can. If some truth spills along the way, we apologize.”\(^11\) History here is rendered aspirationally material, tangible, perhaps an effort to consolidate the gaseous, ephemeral nature of the testimony and lived experience they are receiving into a more immediately comprehensible form of matter. Sacco also visually expresses this self-conscious narration through his frequent inclusion of himself within the picture frame from a variety of angles. Sacco’s first-person vision of his surroundings is visually juxtaposed with panels depicting his third-person inclusion in the broader environment; we are thus continually conscious of the author’s liminal, self-aware positionality within, yet ultimately foreign to, the society in which he exists in this book.

---


\(^9\) Sacco, 112.

\(^10\) Sacco, 200.

\(^11\) Sacco, 277.
This collaborative mode of storytelling, engaging the reader in the struggle of crafting a narrative rather than presenting a more “finished” product, both implicitly and explicitly critiques such pat chronicles, exposing how all such creations even when purportedly based in “fact” involve a great deal of exclusion, reframing, and subjective composition. This laying bare of the various frustrations, failures, and inadequacies of crafting narrative resonates in a particularly subversive way in Footnotes. As he makes clear at the outset of his work, Sacco is a journalist by training and operates, both professionally and intellectually, within this milieu. He thus perceives the world through an essentially journalistic lens, a fact he readily acknowledges: “I’m a newspaperman at heart…a newspaperman wants the facts, the definitive version, not a bunch of ‘on the other hands’ and ‘possiblies’ or even ‘probablies.’” These text boxes appear floating nebulously in the left-hand side of the long, horizontal panel, amid a sea of photograph-like facial portraits of his interviewees drifting up and away from his words, visually emblematizing these stories eluding and rising beyond his more parochial “newspaperman’s” grasp.

As Scott McCloud explicates in Understanding Comics, this heightened degree of reader involvement in the story being told is a unique and characteristic feature of comic books. In his view, comics – by virtue of their paneled, sequential visual framing – create and make crucial use of what he terms the “gutter”: the intervening space between panels in which the reader is compelled to make the narrative connection from one frame to the next. McCloud terms this narrative synthesis on the part of the reader “closure,” the interpretive act upon which comics hinge. It is this very generative space, the visual and mental “gutter,” that animated film dissolves, forming a single, flowing narrative stream that makes this fictive leap for the viewer, pre-packaged for easier consumption. This intense degree of reader engagement in co-crafting the comic narrative “asks us to join in a silent dance of the unseen, the visible and the invisible. This dance is unique to comics. No other art form gives so much to its audience while asking so much from them as well.” Indeed, in contrast to film, the story in comics is forged interactively in this very collective interstitial space; it is up to the reader to form the narrative connection between discrete panels that renders the comic meaningful and coherent. Comics, then, operate in the margins of both content and form: of cultural production, which often dismisses the comic as “juvenile” and “facile”; and of the visuality it embodies on the page itself. The naming of this key stylistic component of comic-style narration is thus connotatively significant: it acknowledges, embodies, and embraces its designation as a lowly void, a negative space urged into the abyss of elision and forgotten-ness. In this sense, we can read this aspect of comics as related to and perhaps exemplary of Halberstam’s notion of “failed” or voided space constituting a possible generative creative field. In Sacco’s case, form mirrors (and is perhaps uniquely suited to) content: a story of those perpetually marginalized communicated, literally and visually, in the margins, the gutter, the in-between space.

Complicating the conclusions synthesized in these intentional narrative gaps is the potential for a disjunctive mix between past, present, and future enacted in the panels themselves. It is perhaps ironic that the comic-book form, famously characterized as “sequential art” by renowned cartoonist Will Eisner, can play with temporality in the way it does; like written text, comics are by definition organized consecutively, serially, very much designed to be read “in order.” Nonetheless, the panel itself offers the opportunity for a more ambiguous and fluid depiction of time and space – a quality Sacco utilizes in order to convey memory and reality unmoored from teleology. Throughout the work, Sacco utilizes the various possibilities for arranging visual text and image to convey multiplicities of time and affect within a single frame, both in the short and the long term. The full-page depiction of him and a group of teenaged Palestinian boys being veritably chased by an Israeli army tank reads almost like a film, reflecting the disjointed, alarming nature of the momentary experience: images and text boxes are arranged haphazardly.

12 Sacco, 119.
13 McCloud, 92.
and only semi-sequentially on the page, jagged angles of the edges of his frames jutting every which way, disorienting the reader in capturing the jarring, alarming nature of the moment.15

Yet Sacco’s most striking use of this single-frame mixed temporality occurs in his various depictions of his interviewees’ recollections. Numerous times throughout Footnotes, Sacco portrays particularly vivid memories of the ’56 massacre and the events surrounding it by situating the present-day subject within a panel depicting the visual memory in question, suggesting the power such recollections possess to re-immersing the individual entirely. This unusual depiction arises out of “a medium where time and space merge...arranging the page in ways not always conducive to traditional picture-making...here the composition of the picture is joined by the composition of change, the composition of drama, and the composition of memory.”16 A chapter portraying the herding of Rafah’s teenaged-to-adult males into a massive schoolyard by Israeli soldiers contains several such frames: in one, an elderly gardener who claims that “there are others who remember better than he does” is pictured silently foregrounding an image of Israeli soldiers with their backs to us standing behind a coil of barbed wire, looming over a sea of covering captives.17 Abdullah’s positioning at the right-hand corner of the frame, on the spatial side of the soldiers, suggests a certain detachment in this recollection, a kind of out-of-body, third-person memory too traumatic to put into words. By contrast, one of the following pages depicts a more integrated vision of the event told from the perspective of three other informants: in this frame, the contemporary figures of the men are pictured in floating, isolated boxes arranged in a downward-facing diagonal line from the upper left-hand corner to the lower right-hand one, amid a full-page rendering of the captives “sitting with each other like watermelons.”18 Both the reader and the subject here are enveloped within an image communicating the claustrophobic, prison-like atmosphere of the event in question; the memory is first-person, visceral, encompassing. A similar immersion of the subject within the visual environment of the memory is one depicted again and again, at every stage of the historical narrative. Foregrounding and backgrounding are thus utilized as tools to communicate a subject’s relation to the memory in question, expressing varying remembered effects of alienation, detachment, engagement, and viscerality, among others.19 In this way, Sacco portrays a kind of “living memory,” one capable of both pulling the subject into its intensity and resurfacing, reasserting itself in various forms in present lived experience. As McCloud emphasizes, this kind of mixed temporality is a potential unique to comics: “Unlike other media, in comics, the past is more than just memories for the audience and the future is more than just possibilities...both past and future are real and visible and all around us.”20

The use of temporal, spatial, and textual juxtaposition within a single frame to portray different forms of multiplicity is not limited to temporality, however. Seeking to form one neat, coherent narrative from his Gazan encounters, Sacco is alternately intrigued and frustrated by the curious differences and inconsistencies in his subjects’ internal historical records. There is a constant tension between the collective and the individual, common versus the solitary experience of a group of people in the same place and time – a tension particularly acute (and representative) within the context of an oft-suppressed, contested nationalism in which individual experience is often pressured to support a larger national narrative. Sacco’s portrayal of remembered individuality within collectivity enables the two to coexist, ambiguously: a full-page panel depicting his subjects’ brutal beating at the entrance to the schoolyard

---

15 Sacco, 187.
16 McCloud, 115.
17 Sacco, 262.
18 Ibid., 265.
19 This strategic use of foregrounding and backgrounding is also utilized to portray dynamics and relations of power, most often between Palestinians and Israel. A powerful example of this can be found on page 133, a full-page depiction of the imposing concrete and barbed wire of an Israeli checkpoint tower often targeted for suicide bombings. In the top half of the image, Sacco and Abed explain its history and recount the most recent attack against it in tightly connected text/image panels. At the bottom floats a solitary text box, reading “The Israeli position is unscathed.”
20 McCloud, 104.
positions each individual portrait and their accompanying text boxes within a maelstrom of soldiers swinging heavy wooden clubs, picturing one of the few memories from that day vividly shared by all his informants. In this scene, the reader makes a kind of “closure” within the frame itself; in scanning through the textual recollections across and down the page, the eye creates movement out of the static images, generates its own film-like animation. In contrast, his depiction of a single co-remembered phrase – the soldiers exhorting the men present to “raise your heads!” – is portrayed with markedly less fluidity: the three recollections are divided into a triptych of three discrete panels, with the subjects’ contemporary visages at the bottom and differentiated images of the crowd atop, each bisected with a text bubble containing the exclamation. This depiction highlights both the staccato, aggressive nature of the command as well as the individual clarity and singularity with which it was experienced by those present.

Some of the book’s most powerful panels, however, communicate not in text, but in silence. In a sense, the absence of text requires intensified engagement by the reader in order to generate “closure”: one less narrative clue is filled in, one less guidepost is staked to channel and direct interpretation. Stripped of explanation, of the explicit “caption” so ubiquitous and indeed routinized in the journalistic images that flood the contemporary media landscape, pictures without text (made particularly apparent by the typical accompaniment of image with text in the comic) are “set loose” into a vast interpretive space. The typical comic gutter functions by releasing the reader “into the open air of imagination,” after which s/he is “caught by the outstretched arms of the next panel”; yet McCloud then presents us with a question: “but is it possible that closure can be so managed in some cases that the reader might learn to fly?”

Such panels – for example, the stunning two-page burial scene towards the end, depicting the hushed horror of families’ hurried interment of their dead beneath an expansive, pitch-black sky – compel the reader into contemplation, meditation, interpretive “flight” existing in the gutter between intellect and emotion, comprehension and feeling.

It is telling, then, that Sacco concludes his work with just such images, a five-page sequence of wordless frames prefaced with a verbal acknowledgement of his own failures:

Suddenly I felt ashamed of myself for losing something along the way as I collected my evidence, disentangled it, dissected it, indexed it, and logged it onto my chart. And I remembered how often I sat with old men who tried my patience, who rambled on, who got things mixed up, who skipped ahead, who didn’t remember the barbed wire at the gate or when the mukhtars stood up or where the jeeps were parked, how often I sighed and mentally rolled my eyes because I knew more about it than they did.

In the following images, the divide between third-person and first-person narrator collapses entirely: Sacco imagines and depicts the events he has spent his journey trying to elucidate from the direct perspective of one who experienced them. Like Waltz with Bashir, Footnotes ends by abruptly shifting perspective in a manner that draws the reader’s focus to the horrific lived experience of violence, then switching jarringly into blackness. The pure black page concluding both Waltz with Bashir and Footnotes in Gaza thus acts as the ultimate “gutter”: a space representing both personal and narrative failure (to reconcile the collective and the individual, to capture a single “objective” memory that does not exist, to understand incomprehensible violence), in which the author releases the reader to “fly” into an open-ended, non-linear interpretation, contemplation, understanding.

---

21 Sacco, 238.
22 Ibid., 302.
23 McCloud, 90.
24 Sacco, 348-349.
25 Ibid., 384-385.
Bibliography


