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NEGOTIATING MODERNITY:
EDUCATION AND TRANSLATION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY EGYPT

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Between the French and British occupations, Muhammad Ali Pasha (r. 1805-48) and his successors ruled Egypt as an autonomous Ottoman province. In order to establish and maintain that autonomy from both Ottoman and European imperial interests, Muhammad Ali sought European technical expertise to aid in the rapid modernization of the country – reorganizing the military, building new infrastructure, and reforming the civil service. Establishing a state-of-the-art education system was fundamental to this process, and yet it remains a neglected subject in contemporary historical scholarship on the modernization project initiated under Pasha's rule.

The dissertation focuses on two institutions that served as the original sites where European knowledge was transmitted and translated: the first student missions to France (1826-49) and the School of Languages in Cairo (1836-51). Using archival documents, correspondence, and published records in both French and Arabic, it uncovers the complicated mediations integral to the acquisition of this expertise through the missions, in the context of defensive modernization against European encroachment. The dissertation further explores how those educated in the student missions used their experiences to choose and localize useful knowledge. It also traces the ways in which Egyptians envisioned a hybridized government and religious education system by advocating for this new knowledge in educational practice and intellectual life through an examination of debates published in the first Egyptian educational journal *Rawdat al-Madaris al-Misriyya* (*The Garden of the Egyptian Schools*). By investigating the role played by those in favor of the inclusion of indigenized European knowledge, it highlights the implications of early nineteenth century Egyptian experiments with education on larger literary, religious, philosophical, and political trends in the Middle East in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

I employ a simplified version of the transliteration system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* for all Arabic and Turkish words which do not have a standardized English spelling (i.e., *kuttab*), or are familiar names or terms (i.e., Ismail). My transliteration style differs in that it omits diacritical marks and uses symbols for the letters *ayn* (ʿ) and *hamza* (ʾ) only when they occur in the middle or at the end of a word. I make use of Arabic plurals that are commonly understood in English (i.e., *ulama*). Otherwise, I pluralize Arabic words by adding an “s” to the end of the transliterated word (i.e., *madrasas*).

All translations from Arabic and French are my own unless otherwise indicated. In places where my translation needs clarification, changes are indicated in brackets.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: KNOWLEDGE AND THE ORIGINS OF EGYPT'S NEGOTIATIONS OF MODERNITY.....	1
CHAPTER 1: WHY FRANCE? THE CONTINGENT ORIGINS OF THE STUDENT MISSIONS TO PARIS.....	16
CHAPTER 2: CREATING INDIGENOUS EXPERTISE: EGYPTIAN STUDENT MISSIONS TO PARIS, 1826-49.....	43
CHAPTER 3: TRANSLATING A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION: RIFA‘A AL-TAHTAWI AND MADRASAT AL-ALSUN.....	96
CHAPTER 4: EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE: TRANSLATION AND EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE, 1831-77.....	133
CONCLUSION.....	162
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	167
APPENDIX: PARTIAL LISTING OF RELEVANT BOOKS FROM AL-TAHTAWI FAMILY LIBRARY.....	178

INTRODUCTION: Knowledge and the Origins of Egypt's Negotiations of Modernity

Virtue is not a characteristic of only one group of people over all others, nor is it limited to one profession over all others. Virtue is a quality that develops in people according to their acquisition of *ilm* [knowledge] and *adab* [good conduct]. Just as religious scholars possess it, so it is possessed by engineers and doctors and merchants, and by the people with good morals among the peasants and artisans. People are not defined by their origin and descent, but by the completeness of their knowledge and the good nature of their conduct...¹

-Ali Mubarak Pasha, *Alam al-Din*, 1882.

In his landmark work of didactic fiction, the educational reformer Ali Mubarak Pasha (1823-93) wrote of an Egyptian shaykh named Alam al-Din, who traveled to Europe with his eldest son Burhan in the employ of an Englishman to Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. Organized as a series of conversations between the shaykh and others he encounters on his journey, Mubarak used the work in part to advance a reinterpretation of *ilm*, translated here as beneficial knowledge. Formerly limited to the revealed laws and the sciences of the Arabic language, Mubarak's definition of *ilm* encompassed "all that is necessary to know for all members of the *umma* [Islamic community], and indeed, all the residents of the world."²

In one such conversation on "Education and Learning," Alam al-Din and the Englishman discussed the impending decision of how best to educate his son. The Englishman raised the question of whether Burhan should follow in his forefathers' footsteps. This led to a debate on the virtue of careers outside of the religious professions of the ulama. As a shaykh himself, Alam al-Din expected his son to take up a religious education, followed by a career as an *alim*, either as a shaykh, judge, or scribe. When asked what he would prefer, Burhan, who in this work represents the future Egyptian, expressed the desire to be educated in the government schools, rather than follow his father's footsteps at Egypt's premier religious institution, al-Azhar in Cairo.

"I have wanted to become one of those students, because of all that is desirable in the [government] schools – the quality of education, which is the growth of the innate powers, strengthening memory, imagination, and intellect, and refining moral qualities...I heard that when the students finished what was prescribed for them in

¹ Ali Mubarak, *Alam al-Din*, (4 vols.; Alexandria: Matba'at Jaridat al-Mahrusa, 1882), 1: 246.

² Mubarak, *Alam al-Din*, 4: 1349.

one school, they were promoted to another school, according to their degree of readiness, and according to their results on general and special examinations, until they were prepared for the service of their country... When they leave school for their work, they will progress in rank and are considered among the people of justice because of their friendship, uprightness, and good administration.”³

What is striking about Burhan’s response is his insistence that a government education and subsequent career as a civil servant was not inconsistent with or inferior to his birthright as an *alim*. As an obvious piece of propaganda in support of the government schools that Mubarak helped establish, this passage also suggests the evolution of conceptions of *ilm* and the role of ulama. Contrary to conventional narratives that emphasize an irreconcilable divide between “secular” government education and “traditional” religious training, Mubarak’s worldview as reflected in *Alam al-Din* did not see an incompatibility between indigenous and Western forms of knowledge.

During the reign of Ismail Pasha (r.1863-79), an all-inclusive educational philosophy developed amongst the men administering government education. It encouraged the study and practice of European subjects alongside equally important pre-existing religious frameworks of knowledge. For these reformers, this inclusivity was essential to the implementation of the educational strategies required to serve Egypt best. The culmination of the educational reforms first initiated by Muhammad Ali Pasha (r. 1805-48), this was a fleeting moment in the history of modern education in Egypt. Government and religious education moved towards a potential convergence, ultimately disrupted by the British occupation beginning in 1882, and the subsequent overhaul of the education system.

This study traces the contingent historical processes through which European knowledge was transmitted and translated to Egypt through education during Muhammad Ali’s reign. It examines the effects of the circulation of this knowledge under the rule his successors through the end of the nineteenth century. The central thesis is that Egyptians were agents of their own

³ Mubarak, *Alam al-Din*, 1: 256-58.

development, negotiating modernity by bridging expertise acquired in Europe with preexisting local forms of religious and philosophical knowledge to indigenize what they deemed beneficial. The methods they used to translate and legitimate the use of this knowledge in the new education system reveals a steady intellectual and cultural engagement predating the larger literary, religious, and philosophical “revivals” at the turn of the twentieth century, collectively known as the *nabda*. This term means awakening or renaissance, implying a period of prior decline. This dissertation offers a critical reassessment of the foundations for the emergence of this ideology of revival in relation to these cultural movements.

These arguments unfold through an examination of two components of the Pasha’s educational project that were foundational to the consumption of indigenized European knowledge.⁴ The first two chapters analyze two organized student missions Muhammad Ali sent to Paris, l’École Égyptienne (1826-36) and l’École Militaire (1844-49). These were part of a larger project in which the Egyptian ruler sent over 250 young men to Europe to acquire expertise in beneficial subjects like military science, medicine, printing, administration, agriculture, diplomacy, architecture, and translation. The men trained in Paris returned to become arbiters of the modernization process. The third chapter examines the School of Languages (1836-51) under the directorship of Rifa‘a Rafi‘i al-Tahtawi (1801-73), a celebrated translator and educational reformer. This school trained students in the art of translation with the first instance of a hybridized European-Islamic curriculum. It also operated as a translation bureau that produced the translated texts required by the education system established under the new reforms. The final chapter traces how the graduates of these government

⁴ I use the term indigenized European knowledge to refer to the realities of translation. Following Lydia Liu’s concept of “translingual practice,” which holds that words and concepts communicated in one language cannot simply be mirrored in another language because in many cases the analogous word or concept does not exist. The act of translation is therefore a process through which foreign ideas are made relatable within the local context. See Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity – China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 26.

schools advocated for the use of this knowledge in educational practice and intellectual life through an examination of the first Egyptian educational journal *Rawdat al-Madaris al-Misriyya* (*The Garden of the Egyptian Schools*).

From 1805 to 1877, Egypt's position in the world shifted from that of a semi-autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire to full autonomy. Before this period, Egypt was the first Arabic-speaking country to be occupied by a European power, invaded in 1798 by France, as a part of Napoleon Bonaparte's "scientific" expedition. Though Egypt is still marked today by French cultural influence, the official colonial presence did not linger after the French were expelled from Egypt in 1801. During the rule of the Pasha and his successors, the French government was preoccupied with its own political upheavals, and its colonial projects in North Africa. The primacy of French-modeled state institutions and French technical knowledge in indigenized European-style technical education during the Pasha's reign was a choice made by Muhammad Ali and his advisors, not a policy pursued by France. This choice was contingent on the political situation in Egypt, the Pasha's tenuous relationship with his Ottoman sovereign, and his diplomatic relations with Europe. Egypt's first negotiation with modernity does not conform to prevalent teleological understandings of modernities produced through the colonial experience. Rather, Egypt in the nineteenth century serves as an example of an indigenously driven engagement with the modern at the apex of European colonialism.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The history of nineteenth century government education in Egypt has not been the subject of a monograph-length study since James Heyworth-Dunne's *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt* (1938). As can be expected from a history written in the early twentieth century, Heyworth-Dunne's approach portrays Muhammad Ali's reforms as the result of a one-way

interaction inspired “directly or indirectly from the West.”⁵ Similarly, Joseph Szyliowicz’s 1973 survey of education and modernization in the Middle East argues that the French expedition in Egypt “opened the door wide to Westernization,” and “paved the way for new leaders who eagerly accepted Western science and technology in an effort to strengthen their power.”⁶ Szyliowicz further states that the French model of extreme centralization was congenial to Muhammad Ali’s philosophy of government, suggesting that the ruler followed the French in modernizing his method of governance as well.⁷ In this way, much of this older scholarship characterizes the French involvement in the Egyptian modernization project as a natural extension of the French colonial experience in Egypt, part of the wholesale importation of Western technical prowess.

While the Arabic language historiography on education in Egypt is considerably larger, it too portrays the modernization initiated by Muhammad Ali as involving the importation of Western knowledge. This scholarship also anachronistically portrays the Muhammad Ali period as the proto-genesis of the modern Egyptian nation-state. Ahmad Izzat Abd al-Karim’s history of education in Egypt (1938) categorizes the era of Muhammad Ali’s rule as one of “Arabization” of European knowledge in which the Pasha recognized that the translation of European technical knowledge was necessary for its implementation in Egypt, depicted as an effort to mirror European technical prowess in word-for-word Arabized renderings.⁸ Later historians like Jamal al-Din al-Shayyal acknowledge this Arabization of European science and arts as a process guided and transformed by

⁵ James Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt* (London: Luzac & Co, 1938), 1.

⁶ Joseph S. Szyliowicz, *Education and Modernization in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 101. This view is also advanced in the following works: Alain Silvera, “The First Egyptian Student Mission to France Under Muhammad Ali,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 16, 2 (May, 1980), 17-19; and Fritz Steppat, “National Education Projects in Egypt before the British Occupation” in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 281-98.

⁷ Joseph S. Szyliowicz, *Education and Modernization in the Middle East*, 107.

⁸ Ahmad Izzat Abd al-Karim, *Tarikh at-Talim fi Misr* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1938), 329.

Muhammad Ali's vision for modern Egypt.⁹ Recent Arabic scholarship on the history of Egyptian education consists mostly of edited collections of primary source materials with introductions that echo the arguments of al-Shayyal and Abd al-Karim.¹⁰

More recent chapters and articles only briefly treat the educational reforms and translation movement of the Muhammad Ali period and are largely focused on developments after the British occupation.¹¹ The most influential account of education in this period is Timothy Mitchell's chapter "An Appearance of Order" in *Colonizing Egypt* (1988). Mitchell argues that the European model of schooling used by Egyptians in l'École Militaire and some primary schools during the Pasha's rule inscribed colonial ordering and discipline in local discourse and practice, laying the groundwork for British colonialism.¹² Mitchell deals strictly with the theoretical application of panopticon-inspired European models like the Lancaster "mutual improvement" schools. Yet, Mitchell does not acknowledge the ways these schools differed in their Egyptian implementation, or the resistance to such methods by students, teachers and administrators. This approach renders colonization as an inevitable consequence of acquiring modern knowledge and a modern educational infrastructure.

In general, literature on government education in Egypt during the nineteenth century does not acknowledge the agency of Egyptian actors, or the indigenization of European knowledge and

⁹ Jamal al-Din al-Shayyal, *Tarikh al-Tarjama wa-al-Haraka al-Thaqafiyya fi Asr Muhammad Ali* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1951).

¹⁰ For example, Abd al-Moneim Ibrahim al-Dusuqi Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim al-Ali fi Misr Khilal al-Qarn al-Tasi Ashbar* (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Amma li-Dar al-Kutub wa-al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyya, 2004); and Abd al-Hakim Abd al-Gani Qasim, *Tarikh al-B'athat al-Misriyya fi Asr Muhammad Ali* (Cairo: Madbouly Bookshop Press, 2010).

¹¹ A couple of other examples: Lisa Pollard gives an overview of the history of the School of Languages and the student missions as foundational to the introduction of the idea that domestic habits were responsible for the rise and success of nation-states and their citizens in her study about how European discourses on domesticity were embedded in modern Egyptian national identity. See Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt, 1805-1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 12, 15-47; Hoda Yousef's article on European influences on Egyptian education both before and after the British occupation discusses Muhammad Ali's reforms within the context of the introduction of European methods, to make her larger argument that European-style education was fashioned as a "cure" for the ills of Egyptian society in the early twentieth century. See Hoda Yousef, "Seeking the Educational Cure: Egypt and European Education, 1805-1920s," *European Education*, 44, 4 (Winter 2012-2013), 51-66.

¹² Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 63-94.

methods in local discourse and practice. This dissertation, with its attention to the ways in which European knowledge and educational methods were negotiated and legitimized by the Egyptians advocating their use, addresses those issues. It builds on contemporary research on the expansion of modern education in the Middle East in the mid-nineteenth century that investigates how new European models of schooling were synthesized and appropriated in the Muslim Middle East. The work of historians including Benjamin Fortna and Paul Sedra disentangles the concepts of modernization from westernization by approaching the age of education globally, asserting indigenous agency while accounting for the dialectical nature of education policies that both preserved and transmitted elements of indigenous and Islamic culture while spurring social and cultural change.¹³

Sedra's study of missionary schools in nineteenth-century Egypt is particularly relevant to this dissertation because of his refutation of the secularization narrative in educational histories. Sedra shows that faith became an idiom through which educational reform was justified.¹⁴ Similarly, this dissertation finds that the indigenization of European knowledge through translation often took advantage of Arabic and Islamic literary conventions to lend this foreign knowledge legitimacy. The widening conceptions of *ilm* as beneficial knowledge, rather than strictly religious knowledge, were also derived through interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadith*.

This work is also inspired by trends in intellectual history, in its attention to how frameworks of knowledge were conceived and transformed as translation made European subjects available for

¹³ Linda Herrera, "Education, Islam and Modernity: Beyond Westernization and Centralization," *Comparative Education Review*, 48, 3 (August 2004), 318-19; Monica M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2001); Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers and Education in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); and Emine Ö Evered, *Empire and Education Under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform, and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

¹⁴ Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity*, 175.

consumption.¹⁵ Marwa Elshakry's study of scientific translations and the politics of language argues that greater attention needs to be paid to local factors in deciphering Arabic translations of scientific concepts, as they reveal contemporary concerns with literary, cultural or religious tradition and anxieties about foreign borrowings and impositions.¹⁶ This dissertation's focus on how education can be used as lens to understand the indigenization and dissemination of knowledge introduces the significance of methods drawn from intellectual histories to the study of education in the Middle East.

MODERNITY AND THE "NAHDA"

This dissertation analyzes education as a conduit of knowledge and its relationship with modernity. Examining how European knowledge was chosen, transformed, and disseminated through education is integral to situating Egypt's negotiation of modernity in the mid-nineteenth century. This follows Mitchell's imagining of modernity as originating in global interaction, produced across a space of cultural and historical difference.¹⁷ This project conceives of potential multiple negotiations of modernity as a means of detaching conceptions of modernity from teleological associations with European trajectories of progress and development. Such Eurocentric approaches are characteristic of older modernization paradigms that posit unidirectional Westernization, or transfer of knowledge and modern institutions to the Middle East from Europe.

¹⁵ This work is in part inspired by Omnia El Shakry's *The Great Social Laboratory*, which traces the appropriation of the social sciences by the Egyptian elite at the turn of the century to understand how these reformulated social sciences fueled an imperative to socially engineer a "new Egypt." The reformulation of these European subjects began in the nineteenth century with the translation movement and the educational discourse of reform in the Ismail period. See Omnia El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory: Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial and Postcolonial Egypt* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

¹⁶ Marwa Elshakry, "Knowledge in Motion: Cultural Politics of Modern Science Translations in Arabic," *Isis*, 99, 4 (December 2008), 701-30; and Elshakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

¹⁷ Timothy Mitchell, "The Stage of Modernity," in *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000), 1-27.

These models elided the different results that could occur in the global implementation of the modern.¹⁸ At the other end of the spectrum, concepts of “indigenous,” “alternative,” and “multiple” modernities essentialize the cultures with which they are associated and therefore fail to undermine the teleology of Eurocentric models.¹⁹

To be sure, the Egyptians who translated, transformed, and disseminated European knowledge through education in the nineteenth century did not use the term “modern.” Yet, they saw themselves as engaged in the improvement of their country and the general intellectual advancement of its people to meet the demands of modern statehood.²⁰ Even the term for education in Arabic was transformed in this process. While the word for education before the introduction of government education was *ta’lim*, derived from the same root as *ilm*, it was recast by the educational reformers produced by Muhammad Ali’s reforms as *tarbiya*. While the former means instruction, the latter can be translated as cultivation or nurturing, and is linked with ideas of development and progress.²¹ Omnia El Shakry notes that in colonial Egypt, the modern (*al-hadith*) came to mean a specific set of attributes and interlinked projects of moral and material progress, scientific inquiry, and the management of health, hygiene, and social welfare, all relying on new technologies of knowledge.²² These projects of modernity can be traced to Ismail’s Egypt and are discussed in the first Egyptian educational journal *Rawdat al-Madaris*. What differentiates this pre-colonial negotiation of modernity from its colonial successor is the emphasis on the continuity and

¹⁸ For example, see Fredric Jameson, “The Four Maxims of Modernity,” in *Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (New York: Verso 2002), 15-87.

¹⁹ Fredrick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 114.

²⁰ Kenneth Cuno corroborates this, writing that nineteenth century intellectuals and civil servants conceived on their project as producing “civilization”, a term that was replaced in the twentieth century by “modernization and development.” See Kenneth M. Cuno, *Modernizing Marriage: Family, Ideology, and Law in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth- Century Egypt* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 6.

²¹ For lengthier discussion of the development of the term *tarbiya*, see Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, 88-89.

²² The concept of modernity as a project, or a series of interlinked projects follows Talal Asad. See Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular, Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 13; and El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory*, 8.

compatibility of these new technologies of knowledge with religious and other pre-existing epistemologies. This negotiation of modernity was upended by the British colonial incursion, which bifurcated the education system. Under the British, education was divided into religious primary schools or *kuttabs* providing a terminal education for the masses and government primary schools feeding into higher education for the tuition paying elite. The colonial negotiation of modernity was characterized by the essentialization of religious knowledge as backwards, contributing to the development of the binary between the secular and modern versus the religious and traditional.

This is the dominant historical narrative for our current understanding of processes like the intellectual and literary developments of the so-called *nahda*, and may account for the persistence of this term's use in scholarship. The endurance of this vague and imprecise term within historiography is surprising in the wake of the significant revision of the decline thesis in Middle East history. This now defunct periodization held that from the mid-sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire experienced an intellectual, cultural, demographic, and economic decline – akin to the European dark ages. The region was brought out of this state of torpor through contact with Europe, beginning with the French occupation of Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century.²³ There has been significant scholarship disproving the validity of the decline thesis. Some of this scholarship is especially pertinent for contesting the use of the term *nahda*. Nelly Hanna's work on a thriving literate and manuscript based book culture among the middle class in Egypt from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, Khaled El Rouayheb's research into the cultural and intellectual florescence of the seventeenth century in the greater Islamic world, and Peter Gran's

²³ For a discussion of the decline/revival thesis in relation to Egypt in the nineteenth century see, Kenneth M. Cuno, "Muhammad Ali and the Decline and Revival Thesis in Modern Egyptian History," in *Reform or Modernization? Egypt in the age of Muhammad Ali*, ed. Ra'uf Abbas (Cairo: Supreme Committee of Culture, 2000), 93-119.

work on the *Islamic Roots of Capitalism* conclusively demonstrate the fallacy of the decline thesis.²⁴

Despite this, the use of the term *nabda* to describe the intellectual developments of the twentieth century has come under little critical scholarship in any field, history included, even though the word indicates a decline or dark age from which Arabs were awakened through their contact and engagement with the West.²⁵

Why does the myth of the *nabda* persist? It could be because it was perpetuated not only by Orientalists, but also by those Arab intellectuals involved in the intellectual and cultural movements of the early twentieth century. The historical narrative surrounding the *nabda* characterizes the Arab world's relationship with the West as an uneasy one. It held that encounters with Europe in the nineteenth century engendered an awareness of Western superiority in matters of technical prowess and civilization. As such, Arab intellectuals themselves bought into modernization theory from the outset. They realized their own state of societal decline as religious ideas and indigenous ways of life were challenged through a confrontation with Eurocentric modernity. This may have been true of Egyptian individuals of the twentieth century like Jurji Zaidan, Tawfiq al-Hakim, or Taha Hussein, all of whom lived after the penetration of colonialism in Egypt. But in the nineteenth century before British colonialism, this was not the case. Educational reformers of the nineteenth century like Mubarak and al-Tahtawi did not see their reforms as a means of compensating for Egyptian backwardness. To the contrary, they understood the utility of pre-existing frameworks of knowledge for making European technical knowledge legible, and envisioned an education system that

²⁴ Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Century* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003); Khaled El-Rouayheb, "Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab-Islamic Florescence of the 17th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38, 2 (May 2006): 263-81; and Peter Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998).

²⁵ Even the most contemporary work dealing with the *nabda* itself does not problematize the continued use of the term, but instead highlights the pre-modern continuities through with the *nabda* was "gestated." See Abdulrazzak Patel, *The Arab Nabdaq: The Making of the Intellectual and Humanist Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

combined older religious modes of education with newly introduced European curricular and pedagogical strategies. By doing so, they negotiated a modernity that did not recognize an irreconcilable difference between the so-called traditional and the modern.

In tracing the emergence of this initial negotiation of modernity, the dissertation engages with the nature of the European encounter after the initial impetus: Napoleon's invasion of Egypt at the turn of the nineteenth century. Much of the literature assumes that the persistence of French cultural hegemony was a direct consequence of the French occupation. This was not the case. The choice to make use of French expertise and technical knowledge was a contingent one. Chapters 1 and 2 critically engage with the contingent nature of the organized student missions to Paris.

Chapter 1 demonstrates that French influence in Egypt during the Pasha's reign was not inevitable. It reappraises French involvement in Muhammad Ali's modernization project through an examination of the stakes for all the actors involved. Rather than projecting France's superiority in knowledge and its imperial interests as constant throughout the nineteenth century, it demonstrates that French involvement in Muhammad Ali's modernization project was not initially due to government effort. Rather, it was the work of a persistent few who had fallen out of favor after Napoleon's exile. While France's newly acquired colonial interests in North Africa motivated government involvement in the second student mission of 1844, l'École Militaire, historians have projected that motivation backward on the first mission. The chapter also accounts for other factors that impacted the missions' viability like the involvement of the Franco-Egyptian population of Marseilles, French politics during the Restoration period, the Greek war and philhellenism, and France's experience in North Africa.

Chapter 2 focuses on the two organized student missions sent to Paris during Muhammad Ali's reign, paying special attention to the differing circumstances that led to each mission. The

decision to send Egyptian students to Paris was made carefully in each instance and for different reasons. The first mission established l'École Égyptienne (1826-36), a preparatory institution in Paris for Egyptian students. The second mission created l'École Militaire (1844-49), which prepared the Pasha's potential heirs and their carefully selected cohort to enter France's top academies for civil and military administration. While these missions have been analyzed as a singular project to create indigenous Egyptian expertise and import European knowledge, this chapter situates these distinct missions in their respective historical moments, shedding light on how the ambitions and aspirations for these missions shifted according to the personal circumstances of those involved, as well as political conditions.

These missions left extensive records of the day-to-day trials of these Franco-Egyptian collaborations. The chapter details the daily decision-making and administration of these schools established in Paris, focusing on moments of cooperation and conflict that engendered institutional changes.

Shorn of their assumed pseudo-colonial nature, it is possible to understand the student missions as an Egyptian choice to create the indigenous experts who would translate European knowledge, which became foundational to the intellectual and cultural movements of the early twentieth century. In this way, chapters 1 and 2 complicate the picture of Egypt's relationship with European colonial powers, demonstrating that colonization could not be an inevitable consequence of engaging with technical European knowledge and infrastructure.²⁶ In the period before British colonization, modernization was a process that was largely guided by Egyptians.

²⁶ This pushes back against Mitchell's argument about the place of colonialism in the critique of modernity. His contention rests on the penetration of ideas about Egyptian backwardness and the need for the order of the modern West within local discourse, a discourse that largely arose with the British occupation, and did not exist in the same ways prior to it. See, Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, 171; Shaden Tageldin similarly argues that Egyptian intellectuals were seduced by European Orientalism as they did not recognize their lack of power within the colonial order, seeing European and Arab-Islamic cultures as equal, reifying the inevitability of

Chapters 3 and 4 argue that the Egyptian intellectuals produced through the student missions and the government school system did not see the European knowledge as incompatible with pre-existing forms of knowledge in the Islamic and Arabic traditions. In the case of al-Tahtawi, whose intellectual genealogy and directorship of the School of Languages is expanded on in Chapter 3, his pragmatic understanding of the definition of *ilm* as any beneficial knowledge (not limited to knowledge that was religious or spiritual in nature) was built on his educational experiences as a graduate of al-Azhar and an alumnus of l'École Égyptienne. During his directorship of the School of Languages, he conceived of an Egyptian version of comprehensive education, combining indigenous Arabic language training with European subjects like history, geography and arithmetic to create one of the first hybridized curriculums. His influence over the translation movement and in the production of intellectuals through the School of Languages inspired a larger trend to conceive of *ilm* as all-encompassing, in which they argued for continuities between pre-existing religious epistemological frameworks and the new European fields of study they sought to pursue.

Chapter 4 explores the potentialities of this hybridized understanding of knowledge and its influence over educational reform in the Ismail period. It does so by tracing how concepts of beneficial knowledge shifted as the goals of government education transformed from demand for technical expertise to a state-building enterprise. To do so, it compares subject-based analysis of French works translated and published in Egypt from 1835 to 1851 with a breakdown of subjects covered in *Rawdat al-Madaris* (1870-77). The results demonstrate a shift from technical developmentalist knowledge during the Pasha's reign to an all-inclusive definition of beneficial knowledge in the Ismail period. This shift is further explored through an analysis of the first two years of *Rawdat al-Madaris* and its campaign to bring a wide variety of subjects into the religiously

colonial incursion. See Shaden Tageldin, *Disarming Words: Empire and the Seductions of Translation in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 6-8, 17-24.

sanctioned category of *ilm*. It argues that the inclusive philosophy of the journal and the educational reforms of the government system and al-Azhar indicate a possible convergence of the government and religious schools, which was disrupted by the imposition of British colonialism at the end of Ismail's reign.

Egyptians were the agents of their own modernity until the colonial incursion. Though the foundations of the literary and intellectual movements of the early twentieth century had their roots in the educational reforms of Muhammad Ali Pasha and his successors, the rupture of colonialism brought with it an essentialization of religious knowledge as backwards. Modern technical knowledge, now the realm of the colonizer, was not longer understood to be compatible with indigenous forms of knowledge. Arab intellectuals of the early twentieth century therefore conceived of the *nabda* as an awakening from stagnation, rather than the development of epistemologies that had continuities with pre-existing indigenous frameworks of knowledge.

The negotiation of modernity in the mid- to late- nineteenth century by Egyptians engaged in the translation and legitimation of European knowledge emphasized continuities and compatibilities of knowledge. This engagement with modernity was upended by British colonial incursion, which set into motion a different trajectory for another negotiation of modernity characterized by the opposition of religious and European forms of knowledge. In advancing the concept of multiple negotiations of modernity, this dissertation argues for the necessity of revisiting a negotiation of modernity that was in effect erased or subsumed by that dominant narrative. By doing so, it restores the contingency of historical circumstances and challenges teleological conceptions of history.

CHAPTER 1: Why France? The Contingent Origins of the Student Missions to Paris

The Pasha wishes to civilize the states he governs; so he must go search for the seeds of this civilization in the countries in which they are germinating. In this respect, England and France are the first two countries toward which he turns his eyes... The choices are these, and everything demonstrates that the relations with France offer the viceroy every kind of advantage, without the slightest bit of anxiety, and it is not the same with England, which, in the current state of affairs, may desire to occupy Egypt... everything I told you above is to prevent it recurring and to try and guard against British policies.¹

-Letter from Comte Augustin Daniel Beillard to General Pierre Boyer, March 1, 1825.

Written six months after the initiation of the French military mission in Egypt, Beillard's letter urged France to court Muhammad Ali Pasha before he could turn to England for aid. His insistence that France's interests were more aligned to the Pasha's needs betrayed an anxiety felt by veterans of the Napoleonic expedition to establish sole French mentorship of Egypt. The role of France in the construction of a modern education system in Egypt was not inevitable, as Beillard's words demonstrate. French-modeled educational institutions and French cultural hegemony in Egypt was not a direct consequence of the French occupation of Egypt at the turn of the eighteenth century. The choice to make use of French expertise and technical knowledge in this negotiation of modernity was a contingent one. This chapter examines Muhammad Ali Pasha's decision to send two organized student missions to study in Paris. How did France, over all other contending European powers, become the primary destination to send Egyptian students during the Pasha's reign?

The standard answer to this question is that the policy of the Restoration government was to strengthen Egypt, in order to maintain their influence over the eastern Mediterranean.² As P.J.

Vatikiotis put it in his *Modern History of Egypt* (1969),

¹ Letter from General Beillard to General Boyer, March 1, 1825 in Georges Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française auprès de Mohamed Aly* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale pour la Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte, 1923), 32-33.

² Vernon J. Puryear and H.E. Bolton, *France and the Levant: From the Bourbon Restoration to the Peace of Kutiah* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), 42.

“The peculiar rivalry between England and France in the Near East via the Ottoman Porte which was developing during the first forty years of the nineteenth century caused successive French government to pay special attention to the Pasha.”³

Almost three generations of historians have maintained this assumption that France had a vested interest in Egypt at the time. It is an argument upheld in diplomatic histories, general surveys of modern Egyptian history, and also in histories of education.⁴ Scholars like Heyworth-Dunne assume France was the natural choice for an Egyptian educational mission, Paris being the center of state-of-the-art knowledge production at the time. The legacy of the Napoleonic expedition paved the way for an official French role in fostering the education of Egypt’s youth. Two veterans of the Napoleonic expedition, the French consul Bernardino Drovetti and geographer-engineer Edmé-François Jomard, advanced a plan “for civilizing Egypt by means of education.” These two representatives of their government lobbied the Pasha until he was swayed to redirect Egyptian students from Italy to France, with the first mission to Paris initiated in 1826.⁵ However, this answer does not stand up to a close scrutiny of the evidence.

French involvement in l’École Égyptienne, the first student mission of 1826, was not the result of a concerted effort by the French government. Rather, the location of the first mission in Paris was due to the efforts of men who had fallen out of favor with the government after Napoleon’s exile. To be sure, France’s newly acquired colonial interests in North Africa motivated government involvement in the second student mission of 1844, l’École Militaire. However, historians have projected that motivation backward on the first mission.

Previous historians failed to account for the shifting stakes for France and Egypt. Relations between the two countries were affected by the Pasha’s relationship with his Ottoman sovereign,

³ P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt* (New York: Fredrick J. Preager Inc. Publishers, 1969), 97.

⁴ See other examples of this argument in Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 158-159; and Silvera, “The First Egyptian Student Mission,” 1-2.

⁵ This explanation can be found in varying levels of detail in the works of James Heyworth-Dunne, Alain Silvera, Darrell Dykstra, Ahmed Izzat Abd al-Karim, Omar Tusun, and Amin Sami, among others.

French politics between Napoleon's exile and the Second Republic, and the Greek War (1821-32) for independence from Ottoman rule. They were also influenced by the subsequent surge of philhellenism in Europe and France's burgeoning colonial conquests in North Africa. Other factors that shaped French involvement in Egypt were the growing popularity of Saint-Simonian thinking among French intellectuals, the presence and participation of members of the Franco-Egyptian population of Marseilles in the first mission, the poor quality of students graduating from the new technical schools founded by the Pasha, and his desire to educate a cadre of indigenous experts who could serve in the reformed administration of his army and government.

This chapter begins with an examination of the Pasha's motives for military and educational reform, focusing on the circumstances precipitating his decision to send the first student mission to Paris. The following sections emphasize the contingent nature of French involvement in the student missions. The example of the French military mission of 1824 demonstrates that any French involvement in Egyptian affairs in this period was not officially sanctioned. The first student mission to France was not inevitable, but rather a consequence of a few French men looking to revive Napoleon's civilizing mission. Burgeoning Saint-Simonian sentiment and hopes of personal gain motivated ex-Bonapartist officers and officials to advocate for and organize the first mission, in the absence of government interest. The existence of an Egyptian population in France also favored the first student mission. After the French conquest of Algiers in 1830 and the Ottoman *firman* (order) granting the Pasha hereditary rule of Egypt in 1840, relations shifted between the two countries drastically. The Pasha now desired for his sons and grandsons to acquire the proper military education befitting the future rulers of Egypt. He turned to France again, at a time when the French government could benefit from appearing as benevolent educators in their colonial project in North Africa. The second student mission was therefore an official French undertaking, unlike its antecedent.

MILITARY AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM: THE PASHA'S MOTIVES

Muhammad Ali's motives for creating a technical education system lay in the requirements of his modernizing military. He had been exposed to the Ottoman *nizam-i jadid* reforms, and followed their example, building a modern army and then reworking civil institutions to support that army. This required a technical education system that taught the basic kinds of knowledge necessary for its administration: military science, engineering, medicine, geography, diplomacy, etc. The student missions were a complementary step to the in-country educational project. Until this point, it had focused on military science and training, and delivered mediocre results. The first student mission sought to rectify this problem by allowing for the preparatory and advanced training of Egyptian students in diverse areas of expertise.

Before delving into the circumstances that necessitated the expansion of the educational project to include student missions, it is important to consider the Pasha's reasons for modernizing and expanding his army. His military conquests affected his relations with his Ottoman suzerains and European imperial powers, which in turn affected the probability of sending students abroad. For example, Egypt's military support of Ottoman efforts to suppress the Greek War of Independence inspired philhellenic sentiment across Europe, especially in France. This was an important factor in their unwillingness to host a student mission. The Pasha's conquest and rule of Syria (1831-40) in defiance of the Ottomans ended in his capitulation to the Ottomans and their European allies, including Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. In the terms agreed upon in the Convention of London in 1840, the Pasha was granted hereditary rule of Egypt and Sudan, in exchange for a promise to reduce his standing military. Forced retrenchment scaled back educational priorities in Egypt but hereditary rule necessitated the education of the Pasha's sons to rule Egypt.

Why did Muhammad Ali see a need to enlarge and modernize his army? Some have argued that Muhammad Ali had proto-nationalist inclinations and needed a strong military to gain

independence from Ottoman rule.⁶ It is more likely that he desired to turn his tenure as governor into a more permanent position he could pass on to his descendants. To do so, he needed a reliable naval and military force, not only to increase Cairo's control over Egypt, but also to expand his rule well beyond Egypt's borders.⁷ This is not to say that the Pasha had a singular intent from the beginning of his reign. Egypt's participation in the Greek war and the expedition into the Arabian Peninsula (1811-12) to reconquer Mecca and Medina were at the command of the Ottoman sultan. The Pasha's goals were contingent and evolving. He ruled Egypt for decades and his aims changed according to circumstances.

Egypt's modernizing reforms began in emulation of Istanbul. In enacting the *nizam-i jadid* reforms, Muhammad Ali followed the Ottoman example, which had adapted French military reforms first established in the eighteenth century to fit their own needs.⁸ In the realm of education, the most important of these French reforms to the Egyptian educational project was the creation of the *École Royale Militaire* in 1751. This school trained military officers, and its coursework placed heavy emphasis on mathematics, supplemented by technical drawing, history, and contemporary foreign languages in a militarized disciplinary regimen. Among its graduates were the Revolution's most famous generals, including Napoleon Bonaparte himself.⁹

The first schools the Pasha founded were meant to support the expansion of the army and civil administration. However, a decided lack of technical expertise to administer such schools prompted him to send individual Ottoman students to Leghorn, Milan and Rome as early as 1809. A lack of records makes it difficult to determine exactly why these Italian states were the chosen

⁶ Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 197.

⁷ Khaled Fahmy, "The Era of Muhammad Ali Pasha, 1805-1848," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. 2, Modern Egypt From 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. M.W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 139.

⁸ Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, his Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2002), 80-81.

⁹ Rafe Blaufarb, *The French Army, 1750-1820* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 20-24.

destinations, though the influence of Italian advisors in the Pasha's employ and the technical expertise their schools offered could have been factors. Furthermore, Italian states had little political influence compared with France and England.¹⁰ A total of twenty-eight students were sent to Europe, mostly to the Italian states, during 1809-18. Unfortunately, the information regarding their studies and what they returned to do in the Pasha's administration did not survive a fire that destroyed archives housed at the Citadel in 1820.¹¹ Only the careers of two students can be traced in what remains. The first student sent to Italy in 1809 was Uthman Effendi Nur al-Din (1797-1834), the son of Muhammad Ali's *saqqa bashi*, or head water-carrier. Nur al-Din spent five years in Leghorn, Milan, and Rome. He continued his studies in engineering, military science, and printing under the guidance of Jomard in Paris before returning to Egypt in 1817. He was initially put in charge of the schools in Bulaq, and later in Qasr al-Aini.¹² The other student, an Ottoman of Syrian descent by the name of Niqula Massabiki Effendi, was sent to Rome as well to study printing in 1815. Massabiki returned to Egypt in 1819, and was placed in charge of the press at the Bulaq school. Jomard related that upon Nur al-Din's return to Egypt, Jomard implored him to persuade the Pasha to send more Egyptian students to Paris, to which Muhammad Ali replied, "Now that you've acquired all that learning abroad, why don't you create a school of your own right here with the means at your disposal? When your students have attained a level of proficiency I shall send them to Paris."¹³

¹⁰ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 105.

¹¹ Jean Deny, *Sommaire des Archives Turques du Caire* (Cairo : Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, pour la Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte, 1930), 15-17.

¹² Nur al-Din defected to Turkey in 1834 after enraging the Pasha by his mild rule as governor of Crete. Silvera describes his career as erratic, as he served as the Pasha's first chief of staff in 1825, and three years later as an admiral of the Egyptian navy. See Silvera, "The First Egyptian Student Mission," 7.

¹³ Though Silvera's source for this conversation is not cited in the article, he describes it as a confidential report Jomard submitted to Muhammad Ali on June 27, 1839, entitled, "Notes sur plusieurs branches de administration publique de l'Égypte, contenant des vues de réforme et d'amélioration." See Alain Silvera, "Edme François Jomard and the Egyptian reforms in 1839," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 7, 3 (1971), 312.

Even before this first group of students returned from Europe, the Pasha had decided to localize the production of indigenous expertise in the manner he suggested to Nur al-Din. He opened the first government school in the Citadel of Cairo under the directorship of Hasan Effendi al-Darwish, whom Heyworth-Dunne describes as an Arab who had spent some time in Istanbul, and was educated in several languages, mathematics, and other “branches of knowledge.”¹⁴ This school was intended to train young mamluk soldiers in the skills necessary to be officers in the army.¹⁵ They studied the pre-existing primary or *kuttab* curriculum of reading and writing, Arabic, and memorized the Qur’an. They also took language classes in Turkish, Persian, and Italian, and studied military tactics, the use of arms, and riding.¹⁶

An engineering school (Dar al-Handasa) was opened in the Citadel a few years later, with the purpose of educating the civilian sons of the elite Ottomans in Cairo to serve in the Pasha’s administration.¹⁷ These two schools, though they catered to military and civilian students respectively, can be seen as the foundational step in conceiving a type of school that would produce the officers and officials needed by Muhammad Ali’s modernizing government. These schools evolved into the School of Engineering (Madrasa al-Handasa) housed at Bulaq beginning at 1821, and the War College (Madrasa al-Jihadiyya al-Harbiyya), which relocated to Qasr al-Aini in July 1825. Both were entrusted to Nur al-Din.

¹⁴ Hasan Efendi came to the Pasha’s notice by teaching calligraphy and arithmetic to some of the Pasha’s mamluks. Hasan Effendi eventually suggested to the Pasha that he should be allowed to open a school where the Pasha’s mamluks and the sons of the inhabitants of the town would be educated, and the Pasha agreed. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 107.

¹⁵ These mamluks were his own, bought by his family members, high-ranking loyal officers and government bureaucrats after the massacre of the old mamluk households in 1811 and the dispersal of his Albanian troops to Arabia, Sudan and the Egyptian provinces. See Emad Helal, “Muhammad Ali’s First Army: The Experiment in Building an Entirely Slave Army,” in *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: Histories of Trans-Saharan Africans in Nineteenth Century Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Mediterranean*, ed. Terrence Walz and Kenneth M. Cuno (New York: American University Press, 2010), 18-19.

¹⁶ At this early stage, French was noticeably absent from the curriculum, despite Jomard’s desire to be involved in the educational project. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 107.

¹⁷ Heyworth-Dunne and Silvera note that these students were trained in mathematics and geometry. See Silvera, “The First Egyptian Student Mission,” 6; and Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 109.

By 1826, it was apparent that the military schools were not producing students with an adequate level of training. The schools had been established in a haphazard fashion. Most lectures were delivered by Italian speaking instructors and had to be translated. The students were not prepared for their studies; many had only received a *kuttab* education and some military training beforehand.¹⁸ The mediocre quality of the students produced by these early schools was perhaps the most important factor in the Pasha's decision to send a student mission abroad to complement in-country educational efforts.

THE "UNOFFICIAL" FRENCH MILITARY MISSION

The French military mission of 1824 illustrates the lack of interest of the Restoration government in pursuing an official mentorship of Egypt. This affected the way the first student mission was conceived and executed. The standard narrative casts projects like this military mission and the student missions as components of an official effort to recover French influence in the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁹ Although the correspondence surrounding the military mission demonstrates government interest in preserving commercial relations with Egypt, French foreign policy precluded direct involvement in the Pasha's regime, especially in military matters, so long as his army was embroiled in Greece. Individual actors who had fallen out of favor with the French regime after Bonaparte's exile spearheaded efforts like this military mission and the first student mission.

Drovetti typically arranged for the employment of European military advisors in the Pasha's army. When the French military mission led by General Pierre Boyer arrived in November 1824, it took him by surprise. The Pasha had engaged a merchant by the name of Tourneau in seeking a

¹⁸ Silvera, "The First Egyptian Student Mission," 6.

¹⁹ Puryear and Bolton, *France and the Levant*, 42.

capable French general to train three new regiments.²⁰ Tourneau consulted General Augustin Daniel Beillard, another Bonapartist who lost his position upon the French emperor's exile. Though Louis XVIII rewarded him with a peerage and the rank of major general in 1814, his loyalty to Bonaparte during the Hundred Days war resulted in the loss of his title and his temporary imprisonment.²¹ Beillard's supervisory role was not in an official capacity, owing to his lack of a position.

Beillard's choice to head the mission was his colleague General Pierre Boyer, who had served under Bonaparte in Egypt and Syria, and was a leading figure in the armies the First Empire. Much like Beillard, Boyer lost his position in the army when he was taken off active duty in September 1815, with his pay stopped in 1816, due to his allegiance to the emperor. Since Boyer had no job prospects in the French military under the Restoration regime, Beillard had no trouble arranging for the general to serve ten years in the Pasha's employ.²²

When the military mission arrived at the port of Alexandria in early November 1824, Drovetti had yet to receive word of it from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Drovetti received Boyer and his companions in his official capacity as consul. When Drovetti finally received official notice of the mission later in the same month, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron de Damas, distanced the government of Louis XVIII from the mission. He wrote that although the government was informed about the mission's arrival in Egypt, "the government has not wanted to take any part, even verbal, in their project; [The king] has showed the most complete indifference to the notice they have given him, leaving them to do what they see fit."²³ The minister instructed Drovetti to maintain an open channel of communication with the members of this mission, as he would with

²⁰ The reason the Pasha did not recruit the general through Drovetti is not known. One can speculate that the Pasha knew that a capable general could not be secured through official channels.

²¹ He was not reinstated in an official capacity until 1831, when he was posted to Belgium and put in charge of organizing the Belgian infantry. See Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française*, xxii.

²² *Ibid*, xvii-xviii.

²³ *Ibid*, 5.

any other compatriots, but to be extremely cautious to prevent any rumors that this mission was even the slightest bit encouraged by the king and his regime.²⁴

In responding, Drovetti reported that the arrival of the generals was well received by the Pasha, who gladly accepted the five hundred guns and other weapons and equipment they brought as a gift.²⁵ He lamented that he could not object to the “brilliance that General Boyer gave to the delivery of this gift,” but resolved to be more cautious, especially “to avoid the effect of an alarming impression on the minds of our rivals and those supportive of the Greeks.”²⁶ In a follow-up letter to the Minister, Drovetti wrote that since he did not receive instructions in advance of the mission’s arrival, the rumor that these gentlemen had obtained government approval was unfortunately public opinion now.²⁷ What is clear from Drovetti’s correspondence at this early stage is that a diplomatic misunderstanding created the official veneer of the military mission. The mission was at no point recognized by the French government as representative of its interests.²⁸

The main reason the French government wanted to distance itself from the efforts of Beillard and Boyer was the mission’s presumed covert goal: to aid the Pasha in declaring Egypt independent of the Ottoman Empire.²⁹ This goal alarmed the government, which sought to be neutral with respect to the question of Greek independence and therefore did not want to meddle in Egyptian efforts to the same end. Drovetti took extra care to reassure his superiors that this was

²⁴ Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française*, 5-6.

²⁵ It is unclear how the gifted weapons were procured. A clue to their origins can be found in the events surrounding the contemporary Egyptian purchase of naval vessels built at shipyards at Marseilles, and which were condoned by the French government, though they took great pains to distance themselves from the deal. See Puryear and Bolton, *France and the Levant*, 44-48.

²⁶ Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française*, 19.

²⁷ This rumor is one that has persisted in the historiography, but as this letter clearly states, the mission was never meant to be one that represented French interests in Egypt. See Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française*, 19-20.

²⁸ In the published correspondence related to the military mission compiled by Douin, there is not one instance of an official response from anyone other than Drovetti to any of the reports submitted to state ministries by Boyer. See Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française*, 19-20.

²⁹ The Minister writes, “It is generally believed here, for example, that they are in Egypt to help the Pasha declare himself independent from the Porte.” See Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française*, 6.

merely a rumor and not corroborated by the Pasha's actions. Writing to the minister in December 1824, he reassured him that the Pasha's expedition against the insurgents in Greece proved his devotion to his sovereign. It is not clear from the correspondence between Beillard and Boyer if their mission meant to deliberately aid the Pasha in an effort to emancipate Egypt from Ottoman control, though it does seem that Beillard encouraged the idea as long as it was achieved as a part of an alliance with France.³⁰ In the first series of letters Beillard writes to Boyer instructing him in his new role, Beillard makes it clear that the "grand question of independence cannot be spoken of out loud or in person and treated with the greatest caution." According to Beillard, the enterprise of emancipation could not take place unless its success was assured, with the support of France, whether in a secret or open capacity. He cautioned Boyer to be careful in his written and verbal communication, as the question of independence was of the greatest interest and could not be allowed to mature before its time.³¹ To this end, Boyer wrote periodic reports to the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasizing the desire for the favor of His Majesty Louis XVIII in this mission in Egypt.³² But the only instructions he received were from Beillard in the form of informal guidance.

The story of the French military mission makes it clear that involvement in the Pasha's modernization efforts did not align with French government interests. The policy of the Restoration government at this time generally dictated the strengthening of ties with Egypt for their own military and economic purposes. But the Pasha's assistance in the Ottoman suppression of the Greek rebellion and later French involvement in Algeria caused ties between the two countries to wax and

³⁰ In a letter to Boyer written in March 1825, Beillard writes, "Certainly with an army of 60,000 men, organized, instructed, and disciplined as it can be with the means Mehemet Ali wants to employ, with the support of France, his natural ally, his independence would be fully assured." See Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française*, 30-31; Also, Puryear makes mention of Douin's assertion that it is "practically certain" that Boyer received instruction from the French government, but without citation or mention of evidence. See Puryear and Bolton, *France and the Levant*, 44.

³¹ Douin, *Une Mission Militaire Française*, 3.

³² *Ibid*, 18.

wane.³³ Men who were out of state favor after Bonaparte's exile lobbied for the importance of the 1826 student mission to France's imperial interests. These ex-Bonapartists sought to further their careers by implanting French knowledge and expertise in Egypt through education. This dream lived on especially in the efforts of Bernardino Drovetti and Edmé-François Jomard.

L'ÉCOLE ÉGYPTIENNE: REALIZING EARLY SAINT SIMONIAN ASPIRATIONS

In 1811, Jomard, a veteran of the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt and the editor of the multi-volume compendium of knowledge collected on the Napoleonic expedition, *Description de l'Égypte*, submitted a plan to Muhammad Ali through his friend and colleague the French consul Drovetti to “civilize Egypt by means of education.”³⁴ In a report he compiled in 1839, Jomard looked back on that time, affirming that he had placed his faith in “the native qualities of Egyptians” and believed that the seeds that had been planted by the French occupation would ultimately bear fruit in the intellectual regeneration of Egypt.³⁵ In his 1811 plan, Jomard urged the Pasha to send a large group of students to France to receive a thorough education, adding that this was a better alternative to employing translators who could distort the imparting of knowledge. This was the first suggestion of an organized mission made to the Pasha, who until this point sent individual students to Italy and France to acquire specialized expertise through private tutorials. The student mission of 1826 was the first to establish a school with a standardized curriculum meant to prepare the students for further studies in specialized fields. The idea of a mission of Egyptian students was realized in part due to the dogged perseverance of these two scheming, self-serving ex-Bonapartists. Jomard

³³ Puryear and Bolton, *France and the Levant*, 42.

³⁴ The *Description de l'Égypte* is a twenty-three volume compendium of “scientific” knowledge collected about ancient and modern Egypt during the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt. The volumes were published in two editions, from 1809-29. See *Description de l'Égypte, ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'Armée française* (2nd. ed., 37 vols.; Paris: C. L. F. Panckoucke, 1821-29).

³⁵ Jomard's desire to educate Egyptians as a means to “civilize” them was not meant to be pejorative, but rather was part of an effort to advance Egypt along a set civilizational trajectory. See Silvera, “Edme-François Jomard and Egyptian reforms in 1839,” 312.

and Drovetti worked independent of (often against) their government's instructions, espousing the plan to "civilize" Egypt through education, with the intention of creating a link between the two countries, hoping personally to reap the benefits of such a relationship.³⁶ In a letter Jomard wrote to Drovetti in October 1825, he expressed their shared desire in no uncertain terms, "Nothing could be more useful for the maintenance of relations between Egypt and France as the group of young men whom Muhammad Ali proposes to send to Paris."³⁷

Jomard and Drovetti's motivations are in part explained by the prominence of the Saint-Simonian School of thought in France, a form of aggressively colonial utopian socialism that was popular amongst graduates of the *École Polytechnique* and other military academies in France at the time. Conceived by Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825), in theory, it preached that society should be ordered on terms of personal merit, and governed by eminent men of arts, letters, and sciences. These men had the knowledge to foresee and meet social needs, and they alone could be entrusted to educate and shape the opinions of their fellow countrymen. They were also responsible for nurturing subordinate races by encouraging their contact with technologically superior cultures. Saint-Simon's understanding of subordinate peoples was not racially or biologically derived, but rather he believed that human civilization progressed at an unequal pace through three historical stages, theological, metaphysical, and scientific. Saint-Simon argued that the continued progress of all humankind must be achieved through modernization of primitive societies, through their

³⁶ Projects like the first student mission can be considered early experiments in conceiving colonial education strategies in assimilation vs. association. In French colonial theory, assimilation was the practice of culturally civilizing a colonized populace before naturalizing them as citizens of the colonizing state. Association was when the colonizing power associated with the colonized, respecting their diverse institutions and progressing in tandem. With respect to education, assimilationist education policies did not attempt to ease native embrace of French values, whereas association admitted inequalities between human civilizations and would create strategies to guide natives' evolution towards integration. In practice, these strategies were not mutually exclusive. For more on the colonial theory, see Patricia M.E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice, & Race in Colonial Algeria* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 7-13; For more on the educational practice, see Osama Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity: Saint Simonians and the Civilizing Mission in Algeria* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 9-10.

³⁷ Silvio Curto and Laura Donatelli, eds., *Bernardino Drovetti: Epistolario (1800-1851)* (Milan: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1985), 375.

association with the best-equipped European polity.³⁸ Thus, Saint-Simonians welcomed the spread of colonialism, touting it as an endeavor with mutual opportunities and rewards, as a means of supplying European industry and of ensuring the “peaceful” extension of French culture to the unenlightened regions of the world.³⁹

Though Saint-Simonian thinking was in fashion at the time, Drovetti and Jomard were in a small minority of Egyptophile academics who admired Muhammad Ali and saw his modernizing project as an opportunity for France to play a civilizing role in a country of much scientific and archeological interest. This was not the general opinion amongst the intellectual elite of Paris. For example, the prominent French linguist Silvestre de Sacy was shocked at the praise heaped on the Pasha by Jomard in the introduction to Felix Mengin’s *Histoire de l’Égypte sous le Gouvernement de Mohamed Aly*.⁴⁰ Responding to it in the *Journal des Savants*, De Sacy wrote that though Muhammad Ali possessed many notable qualities of a great ruler, his ambitions were driven by dishonesty and cruelty, as was exemplified in his bloody massacre of the mamluks. He added that he was surprised that a man of letters like Jomard should be so taken with the Pasha’s qualities, as they should inspire outrage rather than admiration.⁴¹ De Sacy echoed the sentiments of much of the French public, especially after the repression of the Greek movement for independence at the hands of the Ottoman and Egyptian armies. In line with general sentiment against the Pasha, French foreign policy precluded direct involvement with his regime. Just as the Restoration government was unwilling to associate with or sponsor the French Military Mission to Egypt of 1824, when Jomard explored potential options for educating Egyptian students in Paris, the French government refused

³⁸ Saint-Simonians typically supported colonial practice aligned with association, as they believed that it was their duty to guide primitive societies to the modern scientific age through provisional regulation of their own native laws, gradually introducing newer measures to transition them to modernity. See Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 31-21.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 28-30.

⁴⁰ Félix Mengin, *Histoire sommaire de l’Égypte sous le gouvernement de Mohammed-Aly, ou, récit des principaux événements qui ont eu lieu de l’an 1823 à l’an 1838* (Paris: Didot, 1839).

⁴¹ As quoted in Yves Laissus, *Jomard: Le Dernier Égyptien, 1777-1862* (Paris: Fayard, 2002), 307.

to admit them to public schools, and circulated a proposal to establish an alternate “oriental college” in Marseilles with the intention of holding the students hostage.⁴² Unable to garner official support for their plan, Jomard and Drovetti eventually established l'École Égyptienne as a private enterprise.

Given the reservations in France toward Egypt and its Pasha, why would Drovetti and Jomard push Muhammad Ali to engage in a project that most of their fellow citizens would not welcome? One reason was their genuine “scientific” curiosity regarding the aptitude of the Ottoman Turks in relation to the native Egyptians and the black Sudanese, Ethiopian, and Nubian slaves in the Pasha’s employ. Drovetti sent a second group of young African slaves to the *École Égyptienne* in 1827 to be educated at his own expense, precisely because he wanted to understand their capacity for learning.⁴³ A summary article about l'École Égyptienne that Jomard wrote for *Journal Asiatique* reads like the findings of an experiment, with statistics on the student’s aptitudes and deficiencies with respect to their ethnic background. In it, Jomard concludes, “We can expect that many prejudices will pass out, and the band that covers their Oriental eyes and holds them somehow in a state of childhood, falls by degrees, at least in some of our young guests: a condition necessary for them to be penetrated by many of our ideas, to make progress beneficially in science and the useful arts in a humane society.”⁴⁴ Indeed Jomard and Drovetti saw the mission as a means to test whether the Saint-Simonian call to modernize primitive societies could be realized.

The timing of the first mission suggests that they were also attempting to reignite government interest and financial support in pursuing a special influence over Egypt, which if successful, could result in great personal gain for Jomard and Drovetti. Both had run into unfavorable conditions in their careers around the time they began pushing for this project, due to

⁴² Ian Coller, *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 182.

⁴³ Drovetti had conceived the idea in 1811, when he observed the “native intelligence” displayed by the black slaves working in Muhammad Ali’s factories. See Silvera, “The First Egyptian Student Mission,” 14.

⁴⁴ Edmé François Jomard, “École Égyptienne De Paris,” *Nouveau Journal Asiatique* (August 1828), 102.

their service to Bonaparte, but also because of the lack of importance placed on knowledge about Egypt during this unstable time.

As a contributing editor of *Description de l'Égypte*, Jomard had a distinguished career leading up to Bonaparte's exile in 1815. His primary responsibility was to oversee the production of the thirty volume work, which was compiled through the efforts of the scientific corps that accompanied the Egyptian expedition, known as the Commission des Sciences et des Arts. However, beginning in 1815, he began to have trouble securing the funds from the Restoration government for its completion. The ordering of knowledge collected during the Napoleonic expedition was no longer a priority, and Jomard was appointed the Director of Education for the Seine prefecture in July 1815 as a conciliatory gesture, a replacement for the work he could not do on the *Description de l'Égypte* due to the precarious political circumstances.⁴⁵ Jomard embraced this new role, but continued to persevere to keep the projects of the Commission des Sciences et des Arts alive. When the compilation of the first edition of the *Description* was complete in 1822, Jomard tried to convince the government to allocate money for the construction of an Egyptian wing at the Louvre museum, a project that was rejected by the Minister of Fine Arts.⁴⁶ These difficulties in garnering support for academic projects related to Egypt caused him to delve wholeheartedly into his duties as director of education and as a member of the Bureau of Public Instruction. His work in education undoubtedly strengthened his desire to foster an educational mission of young Egyptians in Paris.

Drovetti's career as consul was also affected by Bonaparte's abdication at the end of 1814. Drovetti's first tenure as consul for Bonaparte's regime was not an easy appointment. Drovetti saw the consulate through the tumultuous French occupation and the military standoff between French,

⁴⁵ Laissus, *Jomard: Le Dernier Egyptien*, 278.

⁴⁶ Charles Du Bus, "Edme-Francois Jomard et Les Origines du Cabinet Cartes," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, XLVI (1931), 5.

Ottoman, and British troops, with little guidance from the First Consul or the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁷ He was considered most knowledgeable European when it came to the political affairs of Egypt. With regime change came an overhaul of the diplomatic service, and Drovetti found himself having to publicly renounce his Bonapartist allegiances. Though he did so, this halfhearted action did not save his position. The Bourbons valued loyalty more than knowledge of the Egyptian political terrain, so Drovetti was replaced in November 1815.

He did not leave Egypt in the five and half years between his two terms as consul and, instead, chose to travel, embarking on a series of exploratory journeys across Egypt, looting antiquities and artifacts to add to his immense collection.⁴⁸ Despite his unscrupulous conduct in looting and taking Egyptian antiquities, he maintained his political influence while living as a civilian in Egypt, remaining a close advisor of the Pasha.⁴⁹ This worked to his advantage, as his influential role in Egyptian affairs as a civilian prompted the Bourbons to reappoint him as their consul after Bonaparte's death in 1821. When he resumed his post, Egypt was embroiled in the Greek War. Drovetti had to balance a precarious position once again, recruiting European officers to train the Egyptian army, an army that was engaged in a war against the Greeks, who were favored by the French public. When in 1825 the Pasha's secretary Yusuf Boghos wrote to Drovetti on behalf of his benefactor asking if Egyptian students would be better served if they went sent to Italy or France,

⁴⁷ Ronald Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul in Egypt: the Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti* (London: Rubicon Press, 1998), 66.

⁴⁸ Drovetti is infamous for his unsavory role in contributing to the creation of the largest Egyptological collections in Europe, both for his hostility to other collectors, but also for his haphazard and careless treatment of the antiquities they discovered. France, Britain and Italy all vied for the ownership of Drovetti's collection. The collection went to Turin when Drovetti was awarded the cross of the Order of Saints Maurizio and Lazzaro, where it remains in the Museo di Egizio di Torino. Other items from Drovetti's collection are housed at the Louvre, and at the Egyptian Museum of Berlin. Ridley surmises that one of the reasons Drovetti was reappointed as consul was the prospect of bringing his collection of antiquities to France. See Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul*, 106-11.

⁴⁹ There is a correspondence recording consultation between the Pasha and Drovetti on the establishment of a salt fish industry, the construction of the Mahmudiyya canal, and a request from the Pasha for Drovetti to recommend some books on the history of ancient Egypt to be translated for him. See Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul*, 72-73.

that the Italian-born Drovetti was able to convince the Pasha that France would be a safer place to send his young scholars, despite the philhellenic sentiments of its people, is a testament to his remarkable influence in spite of the most unfavorable circumstances.⁵⁰

Nurturing a relationship between France and Egypt could potentially bolster Drovetti's and Jomard's respective careers. Jomard could continue to pursue his interests in contemporary Egypt and Egyptology within the French academy. Drovetti would have an eager market in which to sell his ever-growing collection of looted Egyptian antiques. Aside from what they could each personally gain, both men saw the student mission as an opportunity to heed the Saint-Simonian call to modernize primitive societies through the strategic project of educating Egyptian students on French soil.

PAVING THE WAY: THE EGYPTIAN LEGATION

The efforts of Jomard and Drovetti were not the only factor that played a role in the Pasha's decision to send a student mission to France. The existence of a Franco-Arab community of refugees in Marseilles with ties to the French academy helped in assuring the mission's viability. These refugees were first and second-generation descendants of the Legion Copte, a group of Armenians and Coptic Christians who aided in the French conquest of Egypt. What began as a small group of Coptic and Armenian tax collectors led by prominent notable Ya'qub Hanna grew into an organized self-led unit of over one thousand men by the end of the occupation.⁵¹ Coptic Christian notables initially served as the intermediaries between the French occupiers and the local Muslim

⁵⁰ Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul*, 136.

⁵¹ Hanna was a Coptic notable who married a Syrian Christian woman. Hailing from Asyut, he occupied a high position in the provincial government before the French conquest. Though the local governor Suleiman Bey encouraged Hanna to learn to ride a horse and wield a sword, but like other Christians living within Muslim territories, he could not rise any higher within the Egyptian elite or take up any active role in the military. As Coller describes, "Ya'qub allied the force of indigenous Coptic social status to the geographic mobility and commercial dynamism of Syrian Catholics." See Coller, *Arab France*, 37-38.

population. After a violent uprising in Cairo against the occupation in 1800, anger directed at the Coptic community for their collaboration with the French effectively ended their role as interlocutors. Hanna was then instructed to create a Coptic legion to replenish the ranks of the French army. When the French surrendered to British and Ottoman troops, the treaty they signed contained language guaranteeing the security of those Egyptians who had cooperated with the French.⁵² Despite these provisions, the majority of the men in the Coptic legion fled to France in January 1800. They settled in Marseilles, where they formed an expatriate community known as the Egyptian Legation. Members of this community came to serve as instructors and translators for the first mission, and some even rose to positions in the administration of the school. The legacy of this Arab French community is tied to the student missions in more ways than one.

To begin with, the assumption that France could help realize the dream of an independent “self-ruled” Egypt was born with the aspirations of the Egyptian Legation. Hanna dreamed of an Egypt independent from any imperial rule. He worked to ensure that the treaty ending French occupation included provisions for his men to evacuate without any consequences, not because he wanted his followers to settle in France, but rather he wished to gain European military support to reconquer Egypt and secure his homeland’s independence from French, English, and Ottoman rule. He drew up a military plan with a Maltese knight named Lascaris while in transit overseas to France, and lobbied the pertinent authorities in both France and Britain. He reasoned that his homeland’s independence would lead to the end of competition between the world powers for Egypt’s position in the Mediterranean. Ian Coller argues that the Legation’s official correspondence was carefully crafted to please its audience; in letters intended for British eyes, they emphasize the stability an independent Egypt could bring in matters of trade and administration. In appeals to the French

⁵² The Treaty of El-Arish also guaranteed that any resident of Egypt who wanted to leave his or her homeland was free to do so without prejudice to property or to family members remaining behind. See Coller, *Arab France*, 40.

government, the letters harkened to Egypt's age-old relationship with France. They held that Egyptians bestowed upon Greece the lessons of civilization in "distant epochs," and in turn France needed to help them realize Egyptian independence.⁵³ While this plan never came to fruition, and Hanna passed away just a few days into the overseas journey, it created a political cause that kept the Egyptian population living in France in the spotlight through the 1830s.⁵⁴

The presence of educated Arab men in France certainly eased the transition for the Egyptian youth sent during the Pasha's reign. The Pasha was aware of their position in France as middlemen in his project of accumulating European expertise, and he hired many Arab expatriates to work in his military and educational projects. Members of the Egyptian Legation participated in the administration of both student missions hosted in Paris. During the first mission, five of these men served as interpreters and instructors in the initial French language training while the students were quarantined in Marseilles in 1826. The most distinguished of these interpreters, Joseph Agoub, became the permanent liaison to the first mission and was eventually appointed by the Pasha to be Jomard's personal assistant.⁵⁵

The practice of using middlemen like the educated members of this refugee population was not unprecedented. There was a legacy of Arab youth studying in France predating the Napoleonic invasion entirely, with roots in eighteenth century French missionary activities in North Africa. One example of this was the *Jeunes des Langues*, a group of young Levantines recruited by the Capuchins to

⁵³ Older historiography holds that Lascaris was the author of the plan, but Coller argues convincingly that while Lascaris used the rhetoric of colonization (by the French) in discussing the plan, Ya'qub's correspondence propagated the establishment of an independently ruled Egypt, in the vein of the libertarian-revolutionary conception of the nation. See Coller, *Arab France*, 44.

⁵⁴ The life of the Egyptian Legation in Marseilles leading up to the student mission was not an easy one. The anti-Bonapartist White Terror after the Hundred Days had grave effects on the Egyptian community, who along with blacks were assaulted and killed. Coller credits the massacre and its aftermath with the dissolution of the Egyptian communal identity of the Legation, as well as a clear obstruction in any efforts to assimilate. See Coller, *Arab France*, 121-40.

⁵⁵ Joseph-Élie Agoub was born in 1795 in Cairo. His father Elias Agoub was Armenian, and his mother was a Syrian Melkite Catholic. His mother, widowed during the occupation, remarried a French-Egyptian merchant by the name of François Naydorff. Agoub, together with his parents and brother left Egypt with the rest of the French population at the end of the occupation. See Coller, *Arab France*, 153.

be trained as native missionaries and consular interpreters in a special school called the *Salles des Armenians* in France in 1740. There was also an official strategy of creating native collaborators who would aid in diplomatic affairs, which was first adopted during the French occupation of Malta beginning in 1798. Bonaparte's soldiers rounded up sixty of Malta's most promising young men and sent them to Marseilles to be educated at their parent's expense. The intention was to create a group of indigenous middlemen who understood Maltese culture and would ideally take up positions in the colonial governance of Malta.⁵⁶

When Bonaparte's armies invaded and occupied Egypt, they did not employ the same tactic of recruiting indigenous young men to be educated in France because of the general instability and hostility toward the occupation. Though Bonaparte chose not to recruit Egyptians to be educated as he did in Malta, he contended that if "Arab lads and *Chieks al Balad*" were sent to France to be educated, after only a couple of years they would be dazzled by France's greatness and become "the sturdiest champions of our cause on their return to Egypt."⁵⁷ It is therefore no surprise that Bonapartists like Jomard and Drovetti persevered in the cause to educate Egyptians in France, in hope that it would reinspire their government's interest in Egypt.

Men like Agoub and his counterparts bridged a cultural and civilizational gap constructed by much of the literature on the relationship between Europe and Egypt in this period. There was a pervasive assumption of an irreconcilable divide between French and Egyptian civilization, one that Egypt tried to overcome by emulating Europe. That this community of expatriates and refugees with deep roots in Egypt lived in France and participated in the civilizing of young Egyptian men blurs the lines between metropole and once-coveted colony. Egypt needed these liminal citizens to make French knowledge legible to the Egyptian students, thus aiding the Pasha's project of indigenizing beneficial expertise.

⁵⁶ Silvera, "The First Egyptian Student Mission," 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 4.

Several contingent factors coalesced to bring about the first student mission to France in 1829. The poor quality of students produced by the military and engineering schools in Cairo, the perseverance of Jomard and Drovetti in conceiving and lobbying for the mission, and the presence and participation of members of the Egyptian Legation all contributed to the realization of l'École Égyptienne, despite a lack of French government support for the project. It was not until France occupied Algeria that the Egyptian student missions became valuable to French imperial policy.

SHIFTING INTERESTS: FRENCH NORTH AFRICA AND L'ÉCOLE MILITAIRE

French policy before the student missions was to maintain commercial interests with Egypt. However, it was neutral in the question of Greece and opposed Egypt's independence. The government was explicit in its lack of support for Boyer and the military mission and did not provide support for l'École Égyptienne during its eight year run. By the time l'École Militaire opened its doors to the princes of Egypt and their companions in 1844, French policy had shifted drastically. The school was conceived as an official enterprise of the French and Egyptian states. It was established under the direct supervision of the French Minister of War. The faculty was composed of French officers who were experts in the fields they taught. During its five-year run, the school received official visits by the crown prince, among other French dignitaries. What changed between the two missions to warrant such a shift in French policy with regard to the Pasha's education project?

Between 1826 and 1844, French and Egyptian relations waxed and waned in accordance with military and diplomatic conflicts between the Pasha, his Ottoman suzerain, and the various European powers that meddled in their relations. The complicated history that resulted in the Ottoman sultan issuing a *firman* or official order granting the Pasha and his descendants hereditary rule over Egypt in 1841 played a role in determining the future of French relations with Egypt. But it

was the Algerian crisis and France's eventual colonization of the region that was the greatest factor in the shift in French policy. With the invasion of North Africa, the ongoing project of educating young Egyptians in Paris became more relevant to state interests, as a worthy example of what French education was capable of accomplishing.

Egypt had a potential role in managing Franco-Algerian affairs. The invasion of Algiers was not connected with the colonial policy of the Restoration Bourbon monarchy. It was a makeshift attempt to deflect the internal discontent of the French population, carried out by a government that sought out a "useful distraction from political trouble at home."⁵⁸ The impetus for the invasion was based on debts owed to the dey of Algiers by Jewish grain merchants who had colluded with French officials to defraud the ruler.⁵⁹ In April 1827, this conflict came to head in a tense conversation between the French consul, an unsavory businessman who was personally involved in the transaction, and the dey. The encounter culminated in the ruler striking the consul in the face with a fly swatter, effectively ending diplomatic relations between France and Algiers. The French government demanded reparations for the insult, which the dey refused, providing the excuse for a naval blockade of all Algerian ports in June 1827. The three-year blockade did little to subdue the Algerians. In August 1829, the French attempted diplomatic reconciliation with the dey, who responded by firing on the French ship carrying the commander in charge of the blockade, escalating the conflict further.

⁵⁸ Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present*, ed. and trans. Michael Brett (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc, 1991), 5.

⁵⁹ France owed the merchants eight million francs for wheat sold to the French army between 1793-98. The merchants in turn owed money to the dey, and claimed they could not make payments to the government until the French paid them. The French government settled their debts with the merchants in 1820, but no provisions were made to pay back the Algerian government. In addition, certain French factories had been fortified with canons, a move sanctioned by the French consul, but was contrary to the agreements French merchants had reached with the Algerian government. See Charles André Julien, *Histoire de L'Algerie Contemporaine La Conquete et Les Debuts de la Colonisation, 1827-1871* (2 vols.; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 1: 21-29.

As the French government did not favor a military response to the Algerian escalation, the newly retired Drovetti came forward with a plan in 1829. He proposed that Muhammad Ali be deputized by the French to deal with the North African insurrection, as Egyptian troops had experience fighting in the desert and the Ottoman sultan would surely approve of the Pasha settling the rebellion against his authority. This plan gained the support of King Charles X. Muhammad Ali accepted the proposal immediately, but as word of the venture spread in European diplomatic circles, opposition to it became overwhelming. By January 1830, the French government had redrafted the plan in response to the concerns of their European neighbors, proposing that France undertake the conquest of Algiers while the Pasha subdued Tripoli and Tunis.⁶⁰ By the end of February, the Pasha rejected these new terms, claiming that it would undermine his political standing in the Islamic world. He could not, as “the hero and hope of Islam” be seen as an ally with a Christian power looking to expand into Islamic lands.⁶¹

Thus, there was an early link between Egypt and Algiers at the beginning of the French engagement there. Even after Charles X was overthrown in the July Revolution of 1830, just weeks after Algeria fell to France, the imperative to continue the project of colonization was sustained by the hope of civilizing the newly conquered population.⁶² Plans to establish colonial schools in Algiers were submitted to the Ministry of War as early as 1831, most notably by Jomard, who was still serving as the director of l'École Égyptienne. His proposal was based on firsthand experience using the Bell-Lancaster method of mutual primary instruction with his Egyptian students, though his plan

⁶⁰ The Pasha's incentives in this enterprise were mainly of a monetary nature; he initially asked for a loan of twenty million francs and 4 warships, which was reduced to a gift of eight million francs to buy the necessary ships. When the plan was redrafted and Egypt's role reduced to that of an allied force, the gift was rescinded and a loan of a mere ten million francs was offered. See relevant correspondence in Georges Douin, *Mohamed Aly et l'Expédition D'Alger (1829-1830)* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire pour la Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte, 1930), 35-36, 97-98, 136-37.

⁶¹ The documents and correspondence surrounding the Drovetti Plan can be found in Douin, *Mohamed Aly et l'Expédition D'Alger*. For the most detailed description of the events surrounding this venture, see Julien, *Histoire de L'Algérie Contemporaine*, 33-36.

⁶² Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 53-54.

for Algeria envisioned a school where Arab and French students could monitor each other's acquisition of language, among other skills.⁶³ A version of his proposal was implemented when the first colonial school opened in June 1833, but Jomard was not allowed a supervisory role. Muslim attendance was low due to widespread fears among the Algerian population that the schools were meant to convert their sons to Christianity, as there was no awareness of the French legacy of educating Egyptian students. Arab parents would send servants to school in place of their children, disguise their sons as daughters to avoid public recruiters, or alternatively send their daughters to school in male garments.⁶⁴ This apprehension only grew when, in 1838, the monarchy tried to establish a secondary school for Algerian notables in Paris, clearly inspired by l'École Égyptienne.⁶⁵ When the announcements recruiting students for the Collège Arabe de Paris were circulated in the principal cities of Algeria, the local response was just short of panic. Muslim parents removed their sons from colonial schools en masse, and the appearance of French agents almost provoked uprisings in many districts. The enterprise turned out to be a failure, with only eleven Algerian Muslim students attending the academy from 1839 to 1847.⁶⁶

In light of the difficulties of recruiting Arab students in the colonial schools, the Pasha's decision to educate the brightest of Egypt's youth, his own sons and grandson among them, was a fortuitous development for France. While the government's reluctance to support l'École Égyptienne precluded colonial officials from using it as an example of France's benevolent civilizational strategies, as an official government project l'École Militaire was heralded as a shining example of France's civilizing mission, one that would help recruit Arab students to the French cause in other parts of North Africa. When, in 1844, France requested a Moroccan embassy to visit

⁶³ Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 57.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶⁵ The venture was spearheaded by Antoine-François Demoyencourt, a longtime associate of Jomard at the Egyptian School in Paris. See Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 69.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Paris following the French bombardment of Tangiers, the French agent Léon Roches included the Egyptian example in his correspondence to convince the ruler to send a delegation. “You should come to our country to seek the instructors who will furnish magnificent battalions to Turkey, Egypt and Tunis, and to study our science and industry.”⁶⁷ Sure enough, when the Moroccan delegation visited in December, they were afforded a chance to meet the students of the mission at the court celebration of New Year’s Day. The secretary to the delegation, Muhammad ibn Abd Allah al-Saffar, wrote of the encounter in his travelogue. He described the Egyptian students as dressed in their finest livery, wearing “long gowns covered in so much gold embroidery, pearls, and precious stones that the cloth could hardly be seen. Their buttons were studded with gems and the girdles from which they hung their swords heavy with gold.” The Moroccan secretary was quite obviously in awe of the princes and their entourage, writing that “their splendor was indescribable; they were more handsome than the Christians by far.”⁶⁸ The Moroccan delegation was introduced to the students of the Egyptian school in a very public demonstration of France’s role in nurturing Egyptian development.

CONCLUSION

The French role in educating Egyptian students in Paris was a consequence of the ambitions of ex-Bonapartists cast out of their careers, who saw the Pasha’s state-building project as an opportunity to steer French policy toward a special mentorship of Egypt. A close look at the history of the first student mission demonstrates that the French government did not sanction official participation in Egyptian efforts to modernize the army and educate officials due to anti-Ottoman and anti-Egyptian sentiment over the Greek War. This is clear in the unofficial status of the French

⁶⁷ Muhammad as-Saffar, *Disorienting Encounters: Travels of a Moroccan Scholar in France 1845-1846*, ed. and trans. Susan Gilson Miller (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 10.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 180.

Military Mission of 1824, as well as the difficulties Jomard and Drovetti had in pursuing government support for their experimental Egyptian student mission. The realization of l'École Égyptienne was contingent on the willingness of these men to organize the formal education of a large group of Egyptian students as an unofficial project without government support, at a time when Egyptian educational institutions were not efficiently producing the kind of educated men needed to administer the Pasha's government and schools. The presence of an Egyptian expatriate population also factored into the viability of the mission, proving to the Pasha that the French had indispensable experience in educating Egyptian men through the participation of these interlocutors. In the end, Jomard and Drovetti's hard work in creating an educational institution catering to the Pasha's subjects in France failed to achieve the support of the government and of their colleagues in the French academy. As such, it does not easily fit into definitions of colonial or imperial influence, but rather an intellectual or cultural influence supported by a diplomatic relationship that shifted over the Pasha's reign.

By the time of the opening of l'École Militaire in 1844, circumstances had changed drastically. With the seizure of Algiers in 1830, France's first new colonial foothold since 1800, the Saint-Simonian dream of widening France's imperial influence was realized. It was now colonial policy to spread French influence through civilizing missions in North Africa. The legacy of l'École Égyptienne was now claimed by the French government as an example of France's capable role in educating Egypt's best and brightest, demonstrative of the positive influence France's civilizing mission could have. Indeed, the model of the first student mission informed the first colonial schools in Algeria. The Pasha's decision to send a second mission to France, this time to educate his sons, was a fortuitous development for French colonial policy, and one that was administered with full government support.

CHAPTER 2: Creating Indigenous Expertise: Egyptian Student Missions to Paris, 1826-49

This chapter focuses on the two organized student missions sent to Paris during Muhammad Ali's reign. It analyzes the stakes for those managing and being educated within l'École Égyptienne (1826-36) and l'École Militaire (1844-49). The stream of students sent abroad during the Pasha's reign prompted historians of Egyptian education like James Heyworth-Dunne and Umar Tusun to view the missions as components of a single development project. However, each mission was a distinct endeavor initiated in different circumstances.¹ Their location in France was a choice carefully made by the Egyptian government in each instance and for different reasons due to changing political circumstances. The first mission was conceived during the early period of reform of the military and civil administration, and the establishment of specialized schools. It was meant to facilitate and complement these developments. The latter mission, commonly referred to as the mission of the Princes, had as its main purpose the education of Muhammad Ali's sons and grandson in the manner of European royalty.

In each mission, the goals and expectations of the French and Egyptians differed. L'École Égyptienne was an experiment for its French administrators and instructors. Educating Egyptians on French soil using the latest methods was a bold project conceived by Jomard, who was known in French intellectual circles for his ardent advocacy of cutting-edge educational practices and his Saint-

¹ Most recently, the edited compilations of archival documents on the missions by Jumayy interpret Muhammad Ali's decision to send students abroad, first to the Italian provinces, then to France and England as the beginning of a long tradition of state sponsored student missions and study abroad programs through the presidencies of Nasser and Sadat. See Jumayy, *Al-B'athat al-Ilmiyya al-Misriyya ila Urubba*, 3-18; For the older more established argument, see Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 157-81, 221-23, 243-64; and Umar Tusun, *Al-B'athat al-Ilmiyya fi abd Muhammad Ali :Thumma fi Ahday Abbas al-Anwal wa-Said* (Alexandria : Matba'at Salah al-Din, 1934).

Simonian predilections.² Could Egyptians, Ottoman Turks, and Armenians successfully be educated using French methods? By demonstrating that they could, Jomard, and his partner in the project, Drovetti, hoped that the student mission would be a step toward the regeneration of Egypt's glory under France's tutelage. In stark contrast, the Pasha saw Jomard and Drovetti's proposal as a welcome opportunity to supplement the expansion of technical higher education already underway. Though he encouraged the students to become experts in the fields assigned to them, setbacks due to the quality and age of the students shifted the Pasha's expectations. As l'École Égyptienne alumnus Rifa'a al-Tahtawi surmised in the introduction to his travelogue about Paris, by the end of its tenure the mission had evolved into a project to collect and disseminate within Egypt all the "required sciences and desirable skills" which were essential to modern nations.³

By the time l'École Militaire was established in 1844, education was no longer a top priority of the Pasha's modernizing project. The *firman* or official Ottoman order granting Muhammad Ali and his family hereditary rule of Egypt as an autonomous province also required him to severely scale back his military, necessitating cuts to education as well. Thus the Pasha's approval of an educational mission to Paris in the form of a military-style preparatory school was not an obvious choice. The key to understanding his motives was the inclusion of his sons and grandsons: this mission was intended to prepare the potential future rulers of Egypt for the responsibilities of modern leadership. Unlike the first mission, l'École Militaire had the backing of the French government. The Ministry of War supported it to highlight France's role in civilizing Arabs during a critical period in their colonization of North Africa.

² Edmé-François Jomard is best known for being a veteran of the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt, and as the editor of the multi-volume compendium *Description de l'Égypte*, described below. See Laissus, *Jomard: Le Dernier Égyptien*, 256-350.

³ Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Paris," *Al-A'mal al-Kamila li-Rifa'a Rafi'i al-Tahtawi*, ed. Muhammad Imara (5 vols.; Cairo: Al-Hayya al-Misriyya al-Amma lil Kitab, 2010-11), 2: 25.

The historical context that shaped each mission's institutional form and outcome accounts for the discontinuity between these two missions, as do the contrasting motives of the French and Egyptians. The ambitions of those involved in each project also undoubtedly shifted according to personal and political circumstances even during the missions. The day-to-day dealings of the students and administrators reveal contentious negotiations through which institutional practices were continually reinvented.

L'ÉCOLE ÉGYPTIENNE, 1826-36

No one can deny the arts and skills are thriving today in Egypt, no, they prosper where they did not previously exist...One need only look at the workshops, factories, schools and other similar things. Look at the organization of the military, which is indeed among the best things the ruler has done...The necessity of such a reorganization can be understood only by one who has seen the lands of the Franks or who has actually witnessed the developments...Our ruler, may God protect him, has tried to improve his land. He brought in as many European scholars as he could, and sent as many people as he could from Egypt to those countries...The fruit of this journey will, God willing, be obtained with the dissemination and widespread distribution of the sciences and arts...⁴

-Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz*, 1833

In his travelogue, al-Tahtawi reinterpreted the official purpose of l'École Égyptienne as it was constructed for posterity: to accelerate the spread and use of state-of-the-art knowledge in Egypt. This goal is also spelled out in a letter sent by the Pasha to the students of the mission in October 1829. The Pasha urged students not to settle for reading a few French books on science and art, but instead to aim to perfect the European arts and sciences in order to show their Egyptian colleagues their use.⁵ As a complementary step to the modernization already underway, the first mission was central to the Pasha's educational project, which was committed to creating capable indigenous experts who would bring Egypt the practical knowledge of Europe.

Cultivating Egyptian expertise was a goal shared by the mission's French administration, though they approached it with an experimental attitude. They wanted to discern whether the Pasha's subjects were capable of acquiring the well-rounded education provided by their cutting-

⁴ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 25.

⁵ *Ibid*, 210-11.

edge European system of schooling. Jomard and Drovetti hoped that their involvement would aid in the establishment of government and academic interest in the project of educating Egyptians. The difference in expectations and goals between the Egyptians and the French created moments of collaborative but also contentious negotiation, through which institutional practices were not only reinvented, but often conceived as well.

The project's viability was complicated by the attitude of the French government and popular sentiment, which considered the education of a group of young Egyptians inconvenient if not dangerous. During the experimental first mission, French instructors and administration were forced to adapt their initial plans to student requirements and political circumstances in Paris, while at the same time meeting the Pasha's timeline and expectations. This task proved harder than what Jomard and Drovetti had anticipated. The gap between the Pasha's and the French administrators' expectations and the reality of what students could actually achieve propelled a reworking of institutional practice.

Planning for l'École Égyptienne began as early as 1811, when Jomard conceived of the idea to educate the Pasha's subjects in the French capital. However, it was not until 1825 that serious organizing began. Jomard faced considerable impediments when preparing for the school. The Pasha had yet to agree to send Egyptian students to Paris, casting uncertainty on the endeavor until a few months before its initiation. Moreover, the Greek War contributed to popular hostility at the prospect of the young Egyptians' arrival.

In August 1825, Jomard wrote to Drovetti of his intention to hire Joseph Agoub to instruct the students in French language and literature, since it was believed that there was no one better suited to introduce the students to the sciences and arts.⁶ Jomard was still unclear of the Pasha's

⁶ Agoub became the permanent liaison to the first mission, and was eventually appointed by the Pasha to be Jomard's personal assistant. See Coller, *Arab France*, 121-53. Also, Jomard adds that he had initially thought of

preferences regarding the students' living arrangements. Were students to be housed in a private pension or did he expect them to be admitted to a royal college? Jomard preferred a more manageable operation. He imagined a private house in an isolated corner of the city where around twenty students could be housed and educated with few distractions.⁷

The Restoration government explicitly refused to admit the students into French public schools. Some in the regime suggested the creation of an "oriental college" in Marseilles for the children of the "princes of Barbary and Egypt," with the explicit purpose of holding them as "hostages who will ensure [France] of the good disposition of these princes, for whom we will undertake the education of subjects better capable of serving them."⁸ While it was in the government's interest to pursue a project like the one Jomard and Drovetti were putting together, they preferred for the school to be outside the capital, in a remote location where the presence of a large group of Egyptian students would not become a spectacle. Drovetti and Jomard wanted the opposite, as one of their primary motivations for hosting such a mission was to have their efforts covered in popular newspapers and academic journals. Such publicity would help them advocate for a renewed French government interest in Egypt. As such, they pushed to have their school situated in Paris, the center of French civilization and culture, where the mission would have the most visibility.

The first official correspondence acknowledging that Muhammad Ali wanted to send this student mission abroad reached Drovetti in January 1826, just months before the first group of students arrived in Marseilles. Yusuf Boghos, private secretary to the Pasha, wrote to Drovetti on his benefactor's behalf asking for his opinion on whether students from Qasr al-Aini should be sent to

Ellion Boksour for the position when he first proposed his plan, but after his death it was Agoub he had settled on. See Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 425.

⁷ At this point, these plans were up in the air, as they depended on orders given by the Pasha; Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 425.

⁸ Collier, *Arab France*, 182.

study abroad in Italy or in France. Drovetti's answer reveals much about the overt expectations and requirements for such a student mission before its initiation.

Drovetti explained that though it might be assumed that he would advocate for the country of his birth, the subject of educating youth and civilizing Egypt was too important to consider in such a simplistic manner.⁹ The first point he considered was the quality of language instruction in each country. Intensive language instruction could enable the students to acquire French in a matter of months. France had renowned schools specializing in oriental languages with capable translators. This would allow the students to study French in comparison with their native languages of Arabic or Turkish, which was a benefit that could only be found in Paris.

There were several other factors he considered in deciding between the two choices. According to Drovetti, religious and political tolerance was unknown in Italy. The Pasha's subjects, as practicing Muslims, would be at a severe disadvantage there. In France, all institutions of public instruction preached tolerance, and individual students were free to belong to any religion they chose. Additionally, in Italy no school or professor could teach a principle or idea that did not conform to the views of the local ruler. The police supervised all public and private educational and scientific institutions and all students and professors were subject to rigorous inspection.

Drovetti revealed the primary purpose of the mission at this juncture. If the young men the Pasha wished to send were taking up positions in public service, their education would not serve them well if they specialized in only one carefully tailored field. Rather, they should be able to read all manner of periodicals and books, mix with all classes of society, be taught by all the most capable educators, and learn as much as possible about politics and military institutions. How could this be possible without freedom of the press and expression, which the Italian kingdoms clearly lacked? Though there certainly were men of principle in Italy who could be commissioned to instruct the

⁹ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 446.

young Egyptians, they would be forced to risk their lives to teach the Pasha's subjects. Italy possessed academic prowess in law, medicine, theology, physics, Latin and Italian, painting, and poetry, but France was the best place to send students to make quick work of subjects related to diplomacy, military science, and administration.

The contents of this letter demonstrate shrewd Drovetti's diplomatic abilities, as he elided the xenophobic sentiment of the French government and academy toward Egyptians to strengthen his argument. His response also summarized the key goals in ensuring a successful educational experience for the students: excellent language instruction by instructors fluent in Arabic as well as French, a well-rounded curriculum that would prepare students for their specializations, and an atmosphere of religious tolerance. Drovetti's response made a strong and convincing case for the Pasha to choose France over Italy as the destination for a student mission. The students arrived in Marseilles on May 15, 1826 where they began basic French studies while in quarantine before they were transferred to Paris at the end of July.

About a month after their arrival, Jomard wrote to Drovetti that he had officially accepted the position of director of studies for l'École Égyptienne. In the June 25th letter, Jomard stated that he was inspired by his commitment to the cause of universal education and his own initiative in proposing this project. It was apparent to him that the "welfare of both countries seemed visibly attached to the success of the institution."¹⁰ He reported that preparations were underway, explaining that before he finalized the plans for the school, he consulted with a committee of five, all of whom were distinguished by their knowledge of science, letters, and administration. He proposed that the students remain in France for a period of five years. The curriculum was decided, with the proper alternation between manual and intellectual instruction. Jomard also mentioned that he had recruited professors who were both talented and reliable to teach at the school.

¹⁰ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 488.

The remaining arrangements were not without difficulties. A major concern was finding a location for the school at this late stage in the planning. The Pasha had not yet authorized the acquisition of a building to house the school, and Jomard worried that without a stable location the project would lose out on talented professors. He proposed buying (rather than renting) a building for the price of 250-300,000 francs in Paris, following the example of the College of Ireland in Paris, situated on a private campus owned by the college itself. Jomard wrote that he sought a well-located house that would accommodate the forty five students comfortably, in a quiet area with good air, a vast garden fit for the student's exercises and physical activities, located close to the center of Paris. Jomard added that the French government welcomed the students with interest and was making arrangements for their protection, but without a very "marked affectation."¹¹ Even with these remaining issues, the school was almost completely organized and ready to receive the students by July 1826, as was reported by Agoub in a letter of gratitude he wrote to Drovetti that month.¹²

THE PREPARATORY PHASE, 1826-28

This first student mission can be divided into two phases: a preparatory period in which the students were taught the basic language and subjects necessary to advance to the second stage, during which the students undertook specialized study meant to train them in the kinds of expertise necessary to the Pasha's modernization efforts. The students' initial experiences in the first phase were marked by the experimental nature of the mission on the whole. Jomard expected pupils to be impressionable and obedient young men but many were advanced in age and social position, and some were already government officials, which made the obedience required by Jomard's methodology impossible. The first phase was characterized by a near constant conflict between the

¹¹ Curto and Donatelli, eds, *Epistolario*, 487-88.

¹² *Ibid*, 494; Also, despite Jomard's desire for the school to have a stable location, circumstances changed causing the location for the school to shift during the mission. It was first located on the Rue de Clichy, but was then moved to the Rue de Regard in the Latin Quarter. See Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul*, 209.

students and French administration over Jomard's curricular and pedagogical choices, not to mention a power struggle over who was in charge of the school's day-to-day affairs. Student responses and the resolutions reached through these conflicts are reflected in the way Egyptian student missions abroad were conducted for the rest of the Pasha's reign. The correspondence among Jomard, Drovetti, and their colleagues is marked by a civilizational rhetoric, which cannot be overlooked as anticipating strategies of colonial education in French Algeria, beginning in the latter years of the mission.

One of the biggest challenges Jomard faced was the variation in age of the students and their lack of preparation. The first cohort sent to l'École Égyptienne totaled forty-four students ranging in age from fifteen to thirty-eight years old. Only twenty-five of the students matriculated from Cairo's secondary schools at Bulaq and Qasr al-Aini, and a majority lacked a basic understanding of arithmetic. None knew French. Most had been chosen for their positions as members of Cairo's prominent families rather than for their academic capabilities. Distinguished exceptions include the native Egyptians on the mission, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, Mustafa Effendi Mahramji, and Muhammad Effendi Mazhar, in addition to the four Armenians Artin Effendi, Khusrau Effendi, Estefan Effendi, and Yusuf Effendi.¹³ Among those chosen for their status were those whom the Pasha had chosen to administer the mission, like Abdi Effendi, the keeper of the Pasha's seal, and Mustafa al-Mukhtar Effendi, who was charged with the students' finances.

The students' arrival coincided with an upswing of local philhellenic fervor due to the news that Muhammad Ali had commissioned two new Egyptian frigates to be built in Marseilles' shipyards just two months earlier. While the radical press condemned their arrival as indicative of

¹³ Eighteen students were born in Egypt, while nineteen were born in Circassian territories. The remaining students' ethnic backgrounds are not known. Also, though Tahtawi was initially appointed as an imam, or religious guide for the mission, during the initial quarantine and intensive language training that all members of the mission attended, he proved himself a quick study and was singled out to be trained in translation. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 159-64.

the French prime minister's pro-Turkish sentiments, the academic journal *Revue Encyclopedique* took the Pasha's side. It argued that the Egyptian role in "exterminating the heroic nation of Greece" was forced on Muhammad Ali by Istanbul, adding that the Pasha should be praised for the wise determination of his decision to send young Egyptians to France. There was no doubt that these students would take up important positions in their country on their return.¹⁴ If the students were aware of the disturbance they caused upon arrival, the only student who left any chronicle of his experiences, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, did not make mention of it.¹⁵

After the eighteen-day quarantine, the students were moved to the Chateau de Bonneveine on the outskirts of Marseilles, where they began a month-long intensive course in French, beginning with the alphabet and basic nouns and verbs. Al-Tahtawi describes the kind of sentences he was made to memorize in French: "this is a horse with three legs; birds only have two legs, but they have wings with which they fly, as for the fish, it swims in the water..." Al-Tahtawi compares this elementary French instruction to that of his native tongue. He wrote that the Arab grammarians also made use of statements of fact that are known to the speaker to ease understanding of the foreign language.¹⁶ The students were expected to make rapid progress, as Drovetti had assured Boghos in his letter encouraging the Pasha to send his mission to Paris, claiming that intensive tutoring could impart knowledge in just a few months.¹⁷ The gap between what was expected of the students and what they were actually capable of became apparent when they began their studies in Paris, where they relocated at the end of July 1826.

Just as the arrival of the students sparked discontent among the residents of Marseilles, their transfer to Paris also caused apprehension, this time with the Paris prefecture of police. Though

¹⁴ "Institution fondée à Paris, pour élever quarante jeunes Égyptiens, envoyé en France par leur gouvernement," *Revue Encyclopedique*, XXX (May 1826), 577-78.

¹⁵ As the students spent over two weeks in quarantine, it is possible that they were not aware of the turmoil their arrival had caused.

¹⁶ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 204.

¹⁷ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 446.

Jomard wrote of the French government's assurance of protection for the students in his June letter to Drovetti, the arrival of a group of highly visible Egyptians dressed in their native clothing took the authorities by surprise. The bulletin of the Prefecture reported that the students were able to proceed to their destination "without provoking the slightest gathering."¹⁸

The students soon settled into a routine devised by Jomard, in which they would spend two hours in the morning reading history. After lunch, they worked on writing and French conversation. In the afternoon, they took instruction in drawing, followed by French grammar. Three times a week, the students took classes in arithmetic and engineering. As they grew more confident in writing and speaking French, the schedule was modified to emphasize less language instruction, adding geography to the lesson plans.¹⁹

This program of "universal education" in which equal time was allotted for each subject confounded the students. Their grasp of the French language was not strong enough to understand French instruction in multiple subjects, especially mathematics. Since the students were not young impressionable men, but rather *effendis* from the princely families of Egypt who were entirely aware of the political currency of the missions project, they were not shy in expressing their frustration with the curriculum as it was being taught. The students demanded the suspension of lessons in arithmetic and geometry, and attempted to shift the manner in which they were taught drawing and the French language, initiating a debate with their instructors that lasted several days.

Jomard wrote of the ongoing tension to the Minister of the Interior in September 1826. "If this is how they begin, I fear these difficulties will come up again, even to the choice of methods, books, and the teachers themselves...They have declared their intention to run their own affairs [in terms of discipline and finances] and have decided to ignore the French administrators."²⁰ Al-

¹⁸ Coller, *Arab France*, 181.

¹⁹ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 204-05.

²⁰ Coller, *Arab France*, 183.

Tahtawi made no mention of this protest, but did note a shift in the curriculum. He wrote that the curriculum of basic arithmetic and humanities without adequate French language instruction “did not yield any advantage to us, except the mere learning of French grammar.”²¹ In addition, Abdi Effendi, Mustafa al-Mukhtar Effendi, and Hasan Effendi took charge of matters of discipline and finances, much to Jomard’s dismay.²²

After their disappointing performance on a final exam in July 1827, the students were divided into small groups of two or three and sent to different boarding schools or were put in the personal homes of teachers.²³ The intention was to encourage the Egyptians to make use of the French language by mingling with their French peers and instructors, as they were accustomed to lapsing into Arabic when housed together. The advantage of splitting the students up to prevent further insurrection cannot be overlooked. Formal classes were still convened on the school premises, and the building served as a social center for the students as well.²⁴

Jomard’s letters reveal his desire to civilize his students, which in turn would help France civilize Egypt itself. In a letter Jomard wrote to Drovetti in August 1827, Jomard complained of the “persecution” and “torment” involved in his position to date. He resolved to carry on because “Egypt was becoming civilized little by little, and France was glorified by [Egypt’s] trophies in science and literature, which proved to be stronger than the laurels of war, though no less brilliant.”²⁵ He was far less optimistic about the progress of the students and their continued disobedience in his personal correspondence with Antoine Clot Bey, the Pasha’s personal doctor and medical advisor. Clot shared Drovetti’s and Jomard’s desire to establish France’s mentorship over Egypt. “Emulation did not produce its effect immediately,” Jomard wrote, “The rewards

²¹ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 204-05.

²² Ridley, *Napoleon’s Proconsul*, 209.

²³ Silvera, “The First Egyptian Student Mission,” 12; and al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 204-09.

²⁴ Silvera “The First Egyptian Student Mission,” 12.

²⁵ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 517-18.

attracted their attention only faintly, and the stimulus of self-love remained weaker than I would have liked.” Clot was familiar with the task of educating Egyptians through his directorship of the Egyptian medical school. He responded with the advice that Arabs “were a people made for civilization, but in order to make that happen, they must be governed by an enlightened absolutism.”²⁶ This exchange is indicative of a shift in the perception of Arabs by Europeans, from the recognition of their backwardness to justifying colonial rule in order to impart civilization. This shift in thought prepared the ground for the imperial turn of French relations with North Africa in general and Algeria in particular, and had palpable effects on the French stakes in the Egyptian student mission project through the 1840s.²⁷

The dispute over the leadership of the mission raged on through November, despite the separation of students from one another. Jomard again wrote to Drovetti delivering the news that he had dealt with each of the troublemakers with prompt remedies. “It is only in forced tolerance and concessions that I can maintain the fair state of things as they are, and I applaud this work, despite the few pains they have cost me, but I confess to be sustained by the hope that one day this seed of civilization will grow.” He singled out the youngest of the three senior students, of whom he wrote, “this is a man who obeys fantasy and passion, and not reason or caution...the Mission is useless to him.” So distraught was Jomard that in a postscript the director revealed that if the troublemaking student were to cause any other disturbance, he would have no choice but to declare his complete withdrawal from the administration of the school.²⁸

Jomard’s concessions allowed Abdi Effendi, Mustafa al-Mukhtar Effendi, and Hasan Effendi to maintain their authority over the disciplinary and financial affairs of the mission. Al-Tahtawi goes into great detail explaining the rules that the *effendis* conceived for the mission, a system of self-

²⁶ Coller, *Arab France*, 183.

²⁷ See Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 53-54.

²⁸ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 525.

governance in which members of the mission who were designated as on-duty would note the comings and goings of the students on days they were allowed to venture outside their school. The rules did allow for students to make complaints against teaching methods and curriculum, but complaints against individual teachers were not tolerated. Each student's pocket money would be determined by their performance on monthly exams designed to "ascertain what they have acquired of the sciences" and to chronicle their exact progress and activities. The students were required to participate in all the extracurricular activities of the pension to which they were attached, and abide by all regulations set forth by each school's administration. If any student were to break the rules, the student would be punished as the Pasha saw fit, and in the worst case, be sent back to Egypt.²⁹

The rules reflected a balance reached only after students had been separated into pensions. Jomard had reluctantly accepted that Abdi Effendi, Mustafa al-Mukhtar Effendi, and Hasan Effendi would deal with matters of discipline and finances, and worked with them to keep a watchful eye over the other students. While Abdi Effendi was in charge of the mission's finances, it was Jomard who dictated the amount of pocket money each student received and planned for the use of these funds to pay for extracurricular activities on Thursdays and Sundays.³⁰ In this way, the French administration of the school came to terms with the autonomy desired by the Egyptian student leadership, establishing a relationship upon which future missions would base their organization and administration.

FINAL EXAM, FEBRUARY 1828

Preparatory studies concluded at the end of February 1828 with public examinations in French, mathematics, and the arts. These exams served as the first opportunity for Jomard see how his experiment of educating Egyptians in Paris would be received by his academic and political

²⁹ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 207-09.

³⁰ Silvera, "The First Egyptian Student Mission," 12.

peers. This was a critical moment, as the exams not only assessed the student's progress, but also the viability of Jomard's grand civilizational plans for Egypt. The exams were convened in the presence of notable members of the government and the Parisian academy and presided over by a veteran of the Napoleonic expedition, the Comte de Chabrol. Jomard's lengthy report on the results was published in the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique* and read like the findings of an experiment, with scrupulous cataloging of each student's age and ethnic background, sample exam questions and examples of student answers. He explained that the students took written exams in French, drawing, and mathematics, and an oral exam meant to assess their fluency in the spoken language.³¹

The hour-long French exam tested students in narrative skills and composition, as well as logic and grammatical analysis. The composition prompt asked the students to write a letter home, describing their two year long stay in Paris.³² The mathematics exam gave the students one hour and fifteen minutes to answer several questions in arithmetic, geometry, and algebra. Of the mathematics exam, Jomard provided five examples of the test's questions, and remarked that though the questions would not be difficult for more advanced students, they were tailored to the mission students' aptitude, which had been predetermined by prior testing.³³ The two-day long oral examinations that followed produced many examples of the student's clever answers. For example, when al-Tahtawi was asked, "What is an exam?" he answered, "After an exam, one knows whether to hold a man in esteem or despise him." Another student delivered his musings on science, which Jomard described as being surprisingly clear and fluent, with a kind of grace. "Science is a torch that illuminates and guides our minds, and it provides the most noble and vivid enjoyment; so it deserves our respect and our efforts."³⁴

³¹ Edme-François Jomard, "École Égyptienne de Paris," *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, II (August 1828), 96-97.

³² Jomard, "École Égyptienne," 102-03.

³³ *Ibid*, 98.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 99.

The public examinations were followed by an awards ceremony in the presence of various French dignitaries, including ex-Bonapartists like Comte Beillard and Jules Planat. Various prizes were handed out to the students who ranked highest in each subject. Muhammad Effendi Mazhar distinguished himself by winning the awards for French composition and mathematics. Among the other award recipients were Estefan Effendi, Ali Effendi Haiba, Khalil Effendi Mahmud, Ahmad al-Attar, Ahmad Effendi Yusuf, and Ahmad Effendi al-Najdali. Six consolation prizes were distributed to those students who ranked directly below the prizewinners, awarded to al-Tahtawi, Muhammad al-Baiyumi, Muhammad Effendi Shanan, Mustafa Effendi Mahramji, Yusuf Effendi al-Ayyadi, and Sulaiman Effendi al-Buhairi. In his report on the school, Jomard remarked that he could note with satisfaction that the native Egyptians did nearly as well as the Turks established in Egypt, while the Turks born outside of Egypt fared the worst. He also noted that the youngest of the students were his most promising, adding that “one regrets that the Egyptian government did not send more young subjects.”³⁵

Al-Tahtawi devoted a section of his travelogue to a description of all of the exams he took in Paris, making brief mention of the exam of 1828. He remarked that the French (presumably unlike the Arabs) are not content to ascribe prowess simply by a person’s fame as a learned scholar or by the praise given by a teacher to a student, but rather they must acquire tangible proof of the strength of a person’s knowledge. It is for this reason that the students were tested every year, both in public examinations where the students were made to answer questions in front of an invited group of scholars and notables, and private examinations made by teachers periodically to assess their progress.³⁶ Al-Tahtawi noted that Jomard sent him a volume of Silvestre de Sacy’s Arabic poetry as his consolation prize in French grammar. Along with the book, Jomard sent a note congratulating al-

³⁵ Jomard makes special mention of Mazhar, Bayoumi, and Mahramji as exemplary of this young group. See Jomard, “École Égyptienne,” 101.

³⁶ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 225.

Tahtawi on his progress in the French language, and assured him that he would communicate the young imam's successes to the Pasha.³⁷

While Jomard wrote favorably about the results of this preparatory phase in his report published in the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, he was far less enthusiastic about his experience as the school's director in a private letter to Drovetti in March 1828. Rather than deliver a report of the student achievement as he did in his published report, Jomard confided displeasure with the rumors that he would accept financial compensation for his efforts. He insisted that all of his hard work and sacrifice had been for the mission and not for his own personal gains - as some unjust and prejudiced people implied, assuming the worst about his intentions. He emphasized that his participation in the mission should be considered from its "true point of view" – the utility of the mission's success to France, and the interests of civilization. He also mentioned the difficulty of his circumstances. The success of the mission was a difficult charge given the advanced ages of the students. His reputation and authority over the students was damaged by his ill treatment by the teachers and the Egyptian students put in charge of the school. Despite this hardship Jomard pledged to refuse any reward, assuring Drovetti that this action should protect how the motivations of the school are perceived, both within France and with respect to the wishes of the Egyptian government.³⁸ This was especially important for the future of the mission, as Jomard feared that intrigue surrounding its' goals could potentially cause problems as the students advanced to their

³⁷ It seems that it was Jomard's practice to send his most promising pupils a gift of a book when they achieved high marks on these public examinations, as al-Tahtawi mentions a few other instances where Jomard and his colleagues sent the students gifts of important volumes following successful marks on an exam. See al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 225-26.

³⁸ He kept his word as he made his disavowal of a salary very public, publishing the letter he wrote to the Pasha in a Parisian daily. In his words, "I only consented to direct the studies of the young Egyptians with the approval of a large number of the friends of enlightenment and humanity, and on the understanding that my work would be voluntary." He used this opportunity to remind the Pasha that the goals of the educational endeavor could not be achieved "unless the students were allowed a free hand on return to introduce those principles of justice and order which, alas have for so long been sadly neglected in their wretched and unhappy country." See Edme-François Jomard, "Des jeunes Égyptiens envoyés a Paris en 1826," *Le Moniteur Universel* (Paris) March 12, 1828.

courses of specialization. He concluded his letter by apologizing for not including details on the proceedings of the month prior, because “the complicated politics make it so the horizon is so confused that it is impossible to predict the future [relationship between France and Egypt] with any degree of certainty.”³⁹

Despite Jomard’s report describing the preparatory phase of mission as a success, French popular sentiment in his view remained wholly unsupportive of the mission’s endeavors. Though the students were able to think in French after only twenty months of study and they were comparably successful despite their different ethnic backgrounds, these promising findings had not elicited the response in the scholarly community that Jomard and Drovetti had hoped for. With the graduation of the first class of students from the mission school, the experimental phase of educating young Egyptians was now over. Equipped with tried and tested methods and curriculum ready for the second group of Egyptian students to arrive, a new sort of experiment would begin. In May 1829, Jomard welcomed six “Ethiopian” students to a private course of study affiliated with l’École Égyptienne.⁴⁰

THE MISSION AS EXPERIMENT

Jomard, Drovetti, and their like-minded colleagues viewed the education of young Egyptians in France as a scientific endeavor, an experiment to assess the intellectual potential of a more primitive people. They were not motivated by biological racism, insofar as they believed in their students’ potential to learn and be transformed by their educational project. Rather they found European civilization superior and understood difference from European society as indicative of the

³⁹ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 544-45.

⁴⁰ Jomard and Drovetti refer to these young Africans as Ethiopians in their correspondence, but the students could have come from anywhere between Bornu and western Ethiopia. For more on the origins of the African slaves in Egypt, see Walz and Cuno, eds., *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*.

backwardness of the students' native societies.⁴¹ In the Saint-Simonian fashion, they thought that it was their duty as the intellectual ambassadors of the French academy to uplift these peoples through education.

The findings of the initial experiment, the preparatory phase, were circulated in the Parisian press and academic publications. They caught the eye of many eminent thinkers of the day, though the endeavor still lacked the support of the French government, the public, and the academic community at large until its latter years. It is unclear whether the decision to extend the mission to educate black Africans from the Sudan came from the lack of interest in the mission's goals within Europe or the relative success of the preparatory phase. The end of Drovetti's diplomatic career in Egypt could have also inspired him to act on a long-held desire to see whether instilling civilization through education could work for black Africans as well.

In October 1827, the first step was taken toward this new facet of the mission experiment. A proposal was published in the *Bulletin de La Société de Géographie*, espousing Drovetti's views.⁴² It explained that Drovetti had observed the intelligence and native sagacity in the young African slaves who arrived in the Nile Valley every year, prompting him to pose the questions, if blacks are so intelligent as individuals, why are they in an "intellectual torpor?" Why had they not built ships, dug ports, or crossed the desert?⁴³ After discounting older modes of thought regarding the intelligence of men being affected by climate, or some other "outrageous human classification," Drovetti asserted that the lack of African innovation can be attributed to three main factors: their relative isolation

⁴¹ This type of thinking was rooted in the "developmental paradigm," a prevalent belief system from 1500 – the mid 1900s. It assumes that all societies move through uniform trajectories of social change, like the life cycle of individuals. For a more in-depth explanation, see Arland Thornton, *Reading History Sideways: The Fallacy and Enduring Impact of the Developmental Paradigm on Family Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 14-21.

⁴² This article was written under the name Jean Pacho, but the ideas it contained were ascribed solely to Drovetti.

⁴³ Jean Pacho "Essai sur la civilisation de l'intérieur de l'Afrique d'après un projet de M. Drovetti, consul-général de France en Égypte," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, XII (October 1827), 344-45.

from the outside world, the efforts of certain commercial nations in enslaving African peoples, and more recently, Islamic fanaticism clouding their inherent potential. In Egypt, Drovetti witnessed Muhammad Ali's successful use of African slaves in the military, and saw this as the first step in instilling civilization in them.⁴⁴

Drovetti proposed an extension of this effort. By "bringing home these interesting children of Africa" and giving them an education in French schools, they would benefit from the wisdom Europe had acquired over centuries. Upon returning to their homeland, they would propagate these ideas, eventually igniting what so many centuries failed to produce.⁴⁵ Political circumstances in Europe prevented the realization of this objective on a large scale, so Drovetti would personally purchase a small group of young black slaves, between the ages of nine and twelve, and send them to Paris. By doing so, the author of the report claimed that Drovetti was laying the foundation of a new social order, and rallied his compatriots to support this honorable effort.⁴⁶

The first notice of this attachment to the Egyptian mission was published in the society's monthly bulletin. Jomard penned the letter on behalf of the society responding to Drovetti's proposal himself.⁴⁷ He expressed the organization's interest in the proposal, as it bore importance not only for the interests of those who study geography, but was also important from a scientific perspective as a means to spread useful knowledge throughout the world. Given the precedent set by efforts of the Society of Education and the Naval Ministry in educating students from Senegal and Madagascar, Jomard expressed little doubt that the Society of Geography would be able to help Drovetti garner support for his project. Interestingly, neither the proposal nor the response mentioned Jomard's involvement in the project. Neither stated any attachment of the students to the

⁴⁴ Pacho, "Essai sur la civilisation," 345-47; See also, Emad Ahmed Helal, "Muhammad Ali's First Army," 17-42.

⁴⁵ Pacho, "Essai sur la civilisation," 347-48.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 348.

⁴⁷ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 521.

Egyptian School, even though the black students were Muhammad Ali's subjects and the students would be educated in the same infrastructure created for the Egyptian school. There is no indication that the Pasha was involved at all in this particular extension of the mission's goals, as the Egyptian government provided no funding for the students. It appears Drovetti himself purchased the young boys who were sent to France by private merchant vessel.⁴⁸ This was perhaps why there was no effort made to integrate them with the Egyptians at the mission school. The age difference between the effendis and the young African boys, and the ambiguity of their attachment to Egypt as they were to return to their home country, made their affiliation to l'École Égyptienne a superficial one.⁴⁹

Jomard had trouble raising the promised financial support for the living expenses of these students. His own Society of Geography refused to help, citing a lack of resources. Jomard reached out to government sources; the Ministry of the Interior gave no response, and the Ministry of Instruction referred him to the Navy. The latter agreed to provide the living expenses for only two of the six students. The Society of Education would minimally fund the remaining students.⁵⁰

Jomard had also already planned for the curriculum and instruction of the students. From these early plans, the duration of the student's stay in France remains unclear. He assured Drovetti that he was aiming to produce men who could carry back some idea of the European arts and sciences to their own country. The eventual goal was to train the young men to make geographic observations about their own country. They would learn French, natural history, drawing,

⁴⁸ Though slavery had been abolished in France before the French Revolution in 1794, it was reinstated by Napoleon in 1802. Slavery was not officially abolished again in France until 1835, and not in French colonies until 1848. See Lawrence Jennings, *French Anti-Slavery: The Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in France, 1802-1848* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴⁹ Previous scholarship on the mission (i.e., Silvera, Ridley, Heyworth-Dunne, etc.) jumps to the conclusion that the Ethiopian students were formally attached to the Egyptian school with the Pasha's approval, but from the sources available there is no indication that was the case or the intention of the project. The only instance in which an attachment to Egypt is mentioned is when the first student died, which coincided with the defunding of the students by the Société de Education. Jomard wrote to the Pasha for funding, and no one replied. See Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 621.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 595.

mathematics, and geography - beginning with that pertaining to their own Sudanese homeland.⁵¹ Jomard wished for these young students to be housed together, but the organizations funding their living expenses each chose different accommodations for the students. Those under the Naval Ministry's funding would be housed in a Catholic boarding school, while the four students under the School of Education were to be put up in a pension or boarding house in the vicinity of the mission school, albeit only for around six months before Jomard took over their financial upkeep personally.⁵²

Only the progress of four of the students in the early days of the mission is known, through a report published by a commission formed to oversee the education of the students in June of 1830.⁵³ The tone of this report is far more sober than the previous publication about the Egyptian students' progress after their final preparatory exam. One of the students, a young boy named Murjan did not survive the harsh winter of 1829, succumbing to consumption despite the care of the married couple who ran the pension housing the group of four. In the report, Jomard described him as capable and active, while in a personal letter to Drovetti, he confided that Murjan was the best and "most docile" of the six Africans.⁵⁴

The author emphasizes the amount of care put into fostering these young men. The husband and wife who were the proprietors of the pension treated the students as if they were their own children. They attended to their health and well being, especially in cases of sickness. The director also provided for their education with the same care as he would for his own children, granting them the same attention, the same lessons and the same exercises. It is this care, the author emphasized, that instilled the blessings of freedom and instruction in these children, despite the difficult start to

⁵¹ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 596, 602.

⁵² *Ibid*, 607.

⁵³ "Education des jeunes Éthiopiens envoys en France. Extra it d'un rapport present ... par MM. Bally, Costello et Jomard," *Revue Encyclopedique*, XLVI (June 1830), 806-09.

⁵⁴ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 622.

their experience in France. Apparently an ignorant mob had thrown stones at the carriage in which the students travelled from Marseilles to Lyon. When they arrived in Paris, a large number of curious onlookers flocked to the pension house, and it was difficult to disperse the crowd so that the students could safely go inside.⁵⁵

Despite these initial impediments, the students had made good progress in their studies. For those in charge of the students' coursework, this was evidence that there was no difference between these children and European children in terms of aptitude and scholastic abilities. Though they did not understand one word of the language when they arrived, they were already speaking proficiently in French. They were attentive and their curiosity and excitement for life were a "spectacle to behold."⁵⁶ By 1832, Jomard wrote to Drovetti of the death of another student, this time one of the Catholic students housed by the Naval Ministry. Of the three living in the pension, the oldest "subject" had distinguished himself, particularly in natural science, and could take up medicine. Jomard had high hopes for his success upon his return to Sennar. The remaining Catholic student was not suited for studies, and Jomard was making preparations to send him to Vienna to be consigned to the Russian ambassador, possibly to become his servant.⁵⁷ This is the last record of this experiment we have. It remains unclear if the students were sent back to Sudan to realize the ultimate goal of this phase of the student mission project.

This relatively small episode in the larger history of Egyptian student missions highlights the experimental nature of these educational projects. Conceived as scientific endeavors through which typological data was collected and methodologies for teaching foreigners were tested, their findings

⁵⁵ Pacho, "Essai sur la civilisation," 806-07.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 808-9.

⁵⁷ The meaning of consigned in this respect is unclear. I speculate that the young boy was sold to the Russian ambassador as a personal servant. See Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 653

became early prototypes for French colonial education in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁸ Though not foundational to the French colonial project at this early stage, the language of instilling “civilization” saturates the newspaper and academic reports on both experiments. The project of educating black Africans serves as a clear example of early experimentation in civilizing strategy. The strategy at play in the Ethiopian mission’s Egyptian counterpart was far more complex, where civilizing approaches were coupled with a desire to create a geopolitical mentorship of Egypt.

THE SECOND PHASE: SPECIALIZATION

In an address to his students made at the end of preparatory studies in March 1828, Jomard made clear the precedent for an age-old relationship binding France and Egypt in a mutual exchange of knowledge. He explained that the school had roots in the scientific endeavors to catalogue information about Egypt during the Napoleonic expedition, but also in Europe’s debt to the Orient for the classical knowledge its people preserved. He urged the students to recognize their role in the regeneration of Egypt; they were working to reclaim the “benefits of the law and the arts, that Egypt had enjoyed for so many centuries.” France’s mentorship of Egypt was the mere repaying of this debt.⁵⁹

As the students moved to the second phase of specialization, Jomard publicized the mission’s activities with more fervor, with the explicit goal of stimulating a government interest in Levantine affairs. This began with Jomard’s detailed report on the student’s progress up to the second phase in the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*. Students were assigned to fifteen subjects of specialization based on their aptitude, the needs of the Egyptian government, and their own

⁵⁸ Jomard’s experience with L’École Égyptienne informed his proposals for the first colonial schools in Algeria. See Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 57.

⁵⁹ Jomard, “École Égyptienne,” 115-16.

preferences.⁶⁰ The breakdown of students to subjects was as follows: four (including Abdi Effendi and Artin Effendi) took up civil administration, four (including Mustafa al-Mukhtar Effendi) studied civil administration, three specialized in navigation and naval training, two (including Estefan Effendi) took up diplomacy, two (Mustafa Effendi Mahramji and Muhammad al-Baiyumi) specialized in hydraulics, one took up mechanics, three studied military engineering, two specialized in metal founding and arms fabrication, two took up printing, lithography and engraving, four specialized in chemistry, two in medicine, two took up agriculture, three studied natural history and mining, and one (al-Tahtawi) specialized in translation. Three were sent back to Egypt for their poor performance.⁶¹

Studies commenced on April 10, 1828. In most cases, students took tutorials organized by Jomard as well as selected classes at various universities in Paris. Exceptions include the students undertaking naval training who were to be sent to one of the naval colleges, those studying agriculture who were sent to an experimental farm in Roville, and the medical students who were accepted at the Faculty of Medicine. There were small impediments to their training at this stage. For instance, in August 1828, Jomard reported to Drovetti that while the majority of the students were making sensible progress, the Naval ministry had barred the Egyptian students from attending any of the Royal Naval colleges, which was the prerequisite for any practical training on a naval ship. A year later, Jomard could report that most issues had been smoothed out, with the naval students studying at Brest, and the other students placed at other royal colleges. He wrote to Drovetti in May 1829, reporting that he was still involved in the student's day-to-day studies and took pleasure in

⁶⁰ Jomard, "École Égyptienne," 105; and P.N. Hamont, *Égypte sous Mehemet Aly* (2 vols.; Paris: Léautey et Lecointe, 1843), 2: 192.

⁶¹ Jomard, "École Égyptienne," 109-12.

those who responded with their work and their effort. However, there remained some students for whom he had little hope due to their indiscipline and spirit of resistance.⁶²

We know little about the experiences of the students themselves at this stage of their instruction, except for al-Tahtawi's description of his own course of study in his *Takhlis*.⁶³ He mentioned that the Pasha kept the students' progress under close watch, sending *firman*s or official orders to the students every few months, commanding them to remain diligent in their studies. He reproduced one such *firman* sent to the students in October 1829, in which the Pasha expressed frustration at the curriculum and activities of the students after the first trimester of their specialized studies, writing that he cannot understand what they have achieved in this time. He ordered each of them to send some evidence of their acquisition of expertise, as the goal of the mission was to attain perfection of the sciences and arts."⁶⁴ The students were thus required to send a comprehensive report of their progress on a monthly basis, a practice enforced by Jomard himself.⁶⁵ If we are to believe that al-Tahtawi's experience was the norm, the final examination determining each student's competency to either teach or practice their expertise was determined in a public oral examination convened in front of a jury of distinguished scholars and government officials. Though al-Tahtawi's description characterized this type of examination as the French norm, there can be no doubt that the public nature of the exam was meant to showcase the remarkable progress these foreign students had made in acquiring the French language and their respective specializations.

Jomard devoted considerable effort to publicizing the students' progress, and the imminent impact of the expansion of government education in Egypt with their return. In January 1830 he

⁶² Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 595.

⁶³ Al-Tahtawi provides a very detailed account of the books he read both as part of his formal education, and those he used to supplement his study while abroad.

⁶⁴ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 213-15.

⁶⁵ The nature of this firman suggests that the Pasha was not pleased with the way the student's education was organized, which had considerable implication on the way these students were placed in careers upon their return to Egypt.

wrote to *Le Moniteur Universel* with an update about the progress of the mission project, which had “exceeded all forecasts and expectations of the partisans of civilization.” Though the students’ influence could not be measured, as they had not yet returned, he had great hopes for their impact on the current government of Egypt. Small changes were already underway, changes Jomard attributed to the continuing expansion of education in Egypt.⁶⁶ In 1831, the details of al-Tahtawi’s public examination were published in *La Revue Encyclopedique*. Al-Tahtawi undertook twelve translations of full length books and excerpts during his course of study, the content of which garnered much interest on the part of leading Orientalists like Silvestre de Sacy, Caussin de Perceval, and Jules Saladin.⁶⁷ Despite the circulation of these positive reports of progress, by 1832, Jomard continued to complain of the lack of interest in the school’s affairs. He had managed to present the Egyptian student leaders to the King, but he felt that the French newspapers reported the encounter awkwardly. The government would not even put together a small commission to deal with affairs of the East, and Jomard lamented that though they became involved with Egypt “by the sweat of our brow,” the larger battle for a French government interest in that country would be lost.⁶⁸

Due to his allegiance to the Napoleonic vision for France, Jomard was only allowed a marginal role once the French government became involved in a later stage of the Egyptian educational project near the end of the Pasha’s rule.⁶⁹ But he witnessed the transition of his students into government careers upon their return to Egypt during 1831-36. Of the twenty-eight students who had returned by 1832, Jomard determined that ten were ready to teach the expertise they had acquired, while the remaining students would be capable practitioners.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ He uses the example of the abandonment of the pipe, beard and turban as a sign of a real moral revolution, especially among members of the army. *Le Moniteur Universel* (Paris) January 4, 1830.

⁶⁷ Al-Tahtawi includes letters written by these individuals in his *Takhlis*. See al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 213-18.

⁶⁸ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 628.

⁶⁹ The Egyptian students were abruptly called back to Egypt in 1836, though a few returned to complete their studies. See Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 654.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 628-29.

Contemporary accounts of the employment of the students in the Egyptian government and education system are at odds. These accounts betray the positionality of their authors as much as they lend insight into the impact of the student missions. As they were intimately involved in the Pasha's educational project and in his good favor, Jomard's and Clot's accounts painted a positive picture in which the most capable students were appointed professors and directors of government ministries. Though Jomard expressed concern in 1832 that only eight or nine of his pupils had been employed usefully, by 1835, he gloated over the success achieved by his most prized pupils.⁷¹ In striking contrast, in his *L'Égypte sous Méhémet-Ali*, which is a candid disavowal of Clot's admittedly laudatory work on the Pasha's Egypt, Pierre Hamont delivered a stringent critique of the Pasha's educational strategies across the board. He included a dubious tale in which the ruler, upon interviewing each of the returned students, expressed disappointment and anger in the kinds of expertise acquired, discounting the importance of civil administration, agriculture, and paper making, among other subjects. This is hard to believe given the level of accountability the students had to the Pasha during their time abroad.⁷² Yacoub Artin, the son of mission alumnus Artin Bey, related a possibly apocryphal story about the Pasha's failure to recognize the value of the returned students' expertise. According to it, the returning students were interviewed by the Pasha, after which they were each assigned a book in French on some useful science and imprisoned in the Citadel for three months until they finished translating it into Turkish or Arabic, even though none except al-Tahtawi had studied translation.⁷³

⁷¹ Curto and Donatelli, eds., *Epistolario*, 628.

⁷² Hamont's book is known for its critical take on the Pasha as a savage ruler. His rivalry with Clot was notorious and was perhaps the sole reason for his producing this book. See Hamont, *Égypte sous Mehemet Aly*, 2: 192-95; and also Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 123.

⁷³ The veracity of Artin's work has come into question before, and so this account should also be taken cautiously. See Yacoub Artin, *L'Instruction Publique en L'Égypte* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1890), 73; Regarding the veracity of the Artin's study, see Kenneth M. Cuno *The Pasha's Peasants : Land, Society and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740-1858* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1992), 67; 205-07.

While anecdotes of the Pasha's dashed expectations for the mission were hearsay, and are often found in the accounts of European travelers who had little exposure to the Pasha and his government, they corroborate a shift in the purpose of the student mission over its course.⁷⁴ At the beginning of the mission, Muhammad Ali had anticipated that the students would make a quick study of their respective areas of expertise. But the preparatory phase exceeded the year's time Jomard had allotted, and specialized studies took longer than expected. Despite these setbacks, the Pasha still wrote to the students periodically, encouraging them to perfect the sciences and arts. Even after two years of instruction, the majority of the students were not proficient due to their lack of education prior to the mission or because of their advanced age. It is hard to imagine that the Pasha was not aware of this problem, as the weekly reports he required from the students no doubt betrayed their lack of skills. In the end, only eighteen of the forty-four students sent on the mission returned to have careers in the Pasha's administration, and many took up positions in the government that initially had little to do with their academic training. It is also no surprise that the students who did rise to the top ranks of the Egyptian administration were the youngest and most prepared students. They were the same students who achieved the highest marks on their exams and were certified proficient, not among their own peers, but by French standards.⁷⁵

Despite the modest number of mission students who succeeded, the problems that plagued the first mission informed those that came after. As early as 1828, new students sent to Europe were younger in age and had typically completed preparatory education before their arrival. Rather than sending a large group of students who would specialize in disparate subjects, those who arrived in groups were typically organized by a common subject specialization such as arts and crafts, naval engineering, and medicine. Many were already academically prepared to take on study in their expertise, like the twelve Egyptian students specializing in medicine under the directorship of Clot,

⁷⁴ Silvera, "The First Egyptian Student Mission," 18-19.

⁷⁵ Antoine Clot Bey, *Aperçu Général sur L'Égypte* (2 vols.; Paris: Fortin, Masson, 1840), 2: 335.

whose prior education bypassed the need for the preparatory stage entirely.⁷⁶ The conflicts over administration and curriculum between the Egyptian student leadership and Jomard gave rise to productive institutional changes when the new *École Militaire* was established in 1844.

The first student mission had unexpected results for France. Jomard and Drovetti conceived it as an experiment in educating Egyptian (and black African) students, and hoped that the publication of their findings would inspire official government interest in Egypt, from which they both hoped to personally benefit. The result was a precedent for the colonial endeavor of educating foreign students in France in an effort to instill “civilization,” one that served France as it developed its colonial agenda in Algeria. L’*École Militaire*, with its joint administration by its Egyptian director Estefan Bey and the Ministry of War was the closest approximation of Jomard and Drovetti’s desires for a civilizing influence over Egypt. By educating the future rulers of Egypt and their cohort, the French government saw an opportunity to gain legitimacy as a center of learning for the elite of North Africa, consistent with its colonization of Algeria. For the Pasha on the other hand, it was a project to groom the princes by giving them the education necessary to become competent modern rulers. The differing French and Egyptian expectations set the stage for more contentious and productive negotiation, building on the experiences of l’*École Égyptienne*.

L’ÉCOLE MILITAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE, 1844-49

During the Crusades, France borrowed some of the first rudiments of science and some imperfect arts from the Orient. After long and arduous centuries of creation, France in turn became rich with all the glories and all the knowledge and invites to the lessons of its school and the joys of civilization the elite of Egyptian youth. Is there a nobler way to repay a debt both old and almost forgotten? ...Do not forget that you have a large task to fulfill and high expectations to bridge, but whatever you have done so far as the children of Egypt, you are also now the adoptive sons of France. Do not separate them in your thoughts and your best wishes should be for one another.⁷⁷

-Estefan Bey, Speech to l’*École Militaire* in Paris, May 1846.

⁷⁶ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 176-77.

⁷⁷ *La Presse* (Paris), May 13, 1846.

This speech, given by the director on the occasion of a state visit by Ibrahim Pasha, sheds light on the contrasting goals for Egypt and France in this new iteration of the student mission project. What is striking about Estefan Bey's words is the backdrop of a neutral diplomatic relationship with France. Egypt's princes and their elite cohort could be the "adoptive sons" of France devoid of any meddling imperial influence in a period of colonial expansion. For Egypt, reclaiming European knowledge that was borrowed from the East justified sending the future rulers of Egypt to study in Paris, where they could reap the benefits of improvements made on knowledge borrowed centuries ago. Estefan Bey's recognition of France as the destination for the retrieval of this improved Eastern knowledge worked in France's favor. It legitimized their educational and civilizing mission in the conquest of North Africa under the guise of repaying an age-old debt.

The political landscape had changed drastically between the two student missions. With the Convention of London in 1840, Muhammad Ali was forced to give up Syria and required to reduce his military from over 100,000 men to a mere 18,000.⁷⁸ However, he gained hereditary rule of Egypt. As the education system was tied to the operations of the military, the impact was extensive. With the decrease of war-related industries, the number of jobs for new graduates also dwindled, necessitating the scaling back of the educational system itself. After the signing of the peace treaty in July of 1841, the education budget was cut by 50 percent.⁷⁹ Thus, l'École Militaire was not part of the same state-building project as the earlier student missions.⁸⁰

Muhammad Ali's motive for initiating a new student mission was the education of his sons and grandsons. As the future rulers of Egypt, it was essential that they become well versed in

⁷⁸ Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 249.

⁷⁹ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 223-43.

⁸⁰ While L'École Égyptienne was the only organized student mission to Europe, smaller missions were sent to France, England and the Italian provinces, beginning with the early mission of Uthman Nur al-Din. A Following L'École Égyptienne, over 100 students were sent individually and in small groups to acquire expertise in subjects required by Muhammad Ali's modernization projects. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 170-80.

military science and governance. In the past, the Pasha had sent students specializing in military and naval administration to either France or England. It is not surprising in this context that Egypt would turn again to France, due to England's role in the Pasha's defeat.

This was a fortunate development for the still nascent French colonial project. French colonial authorities were having difficulty recruiting the Algerian elite to their colonial schools, due to fears of religious conversion or kidnapping. There was even an attempt to create a school analogous to the Egyptian Military school in Paris for the Algerian elite, to which they were only able to recruit eleven students.⁸¹ In the face of boycotts and other evasive maneuvers on the part of their colonial subjects, it was a reassuring development that the Egyptian ruler chose France as the best place for his family to be educated. L'École Militaire was heralded as a shining example of France's civilizing mission, one that would recruit Arab students from other parts of North Africa.

The gap between Egyptian and French expectations affected the everyday routine of the students. The joint Franco-Egyptian administration of this mission was unprecedented, and there were many issues that called for constructive negotiation between the two parties. There was, for example, the sensitivity required when educating Egyptian royalty alongside student peers, and the Egyptian expectation that a mission of this kind would feed into France's top institutions of higher education. As with prior missions, these disagreements created the impetus for institutional change, inspired new pedagogical enterprises, and redefined the relationship between France and Egypt.

ADMINISTERING L'ÉCOLE MILITAIRE

While l'École Égyptienne set a precedent for the colonial schools of North Africa, it also impacted l'École Militaire's joint administration, which incorporated improvements devised during

⁸¹ Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 69.

the first student mission. Pushback from the students and the conflicts between the French and the Pasha engendered further institutional change.

Several alumni and faculty from the first mission were involved in preparations for l'École Militaire. L'École Égyptienne alumnus Artin Bey, now the Pasha's Minister of Foreign Affairs, orchestrated the involvement of both Jomard and the Ministry of War. Jomard helped in developing the curriculum and code of regulations for the school using the model of the French military system. However, an administrative conflict with the Minister of War led to Jomard's forced retirement soon after the school was opened.⁸² The Pasha appointed another graduate of the first mission, Estefan Bey, as the Egyptian director of the school. This connection to the earlier mission did not go unnoticed in the French press, which wrote of the involvement of these alumni in an article commemorating the arrival of the princes.

Stephan Effendi, appointed to supervise the princes' education among us, is no stranger to France. He lived in Paris many years ago, a classmate of Artin Bey, who now meets with the Viceroy and has his utmost confidence as his Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commerce. Stephan Effendi is an astute man, and although still young, completely familiar with our Parisian ways of living. The Pasha could not put the direction of the two princes into better hands...⁸³

The inclusion of the two young princes, Husain Bey and Ahmad Bey, son and grandson of the Pasha respectively, was mandatory. The students in their cohort were carefully selected to provide a challenging environment for the Pasha's sons. Special attention was paid to the age and educational experience of these student recruits. This task fell to Sulaiman Pasha al-Faransawi, one of the Pasha's earliest French advisors who rose to the rank of second in command of the Pasha's army during the Syrian campaign.⁸⁴ He was charged to choose students of comparable age to the young princes, ranging from eighteen to twenty-four. Each student in the first group was selected from three military schools, Dar al-Handasa or Cairo Polytechnique as the French called it, the

⁸² Anouar Louca, *Voyageurs et Écrivains Égyptiens en France au XIX siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1970), 76.

⁸³ *La Presse* (Paris), August 31, 1844.

⁸⁴ He originally went by the name of Joseph Sève, converting to Islam in 1824. He joined the Pasha's service in 1819. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 111-12.

Artillery School, and the Cavalry School. The majority of the students were chosen on the basis of their academic success, though some were attached to the mission on account of being the sons of high officials. Military School alumnus Ali Mubarak wrote of the selection process in his autobiography. He explained that although he was chosen to travel with the princes on the mission, the director of the Polytechnique tried to convince him to stay on as a teacher, using the prospect of the officer's salary he would receive as enticement. But Mubarak saw the mission as an opportunity to better his career prospects and to improve his social status by association with the princes. He surmised that though his family was poor and could benefit from his taking an officer's salary, the potential large amount deferred was better than the small amount he could gain at this point in his life.⁸⁵ Sulaiman Pasha ultimately chose thirty-four students based on their academic merits to join the princes Husain Bey and Ahmad Bey in the inaugural class of l'École Militaire.⁸⁶

As a "military" school, the mission was run with strict adherence to rank, order and discipline. This was not unlike most of the schools established by Muhammad Ali in Cairo, which required students to live in hostels, where they could concentrate on their studies. L'École Militaire like l'École Égyptienne before it occupied a single building in which the students lived, took classes, and performed their military drills. They were subject to a code of regulations based on Jomard's early recommendations and formally decided by Estefan Bey and a "M. Poinçot," who was a colonel in the Royal corps chosen by the Minister of War to be the principal of the school.⁸⁷ This was wholly unlike the first student mission, where the rules were drawn up by the student leaders of the mission and supplemented by periodic orders sent to the students by Muhammad Ali. The less formal code

⁸⁵ Darrell Dykstra, "A Biographical Study of Egyptian Modernization: Ali Mubarak, 1823/4-1893" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1972), 72; and Ali Mubarak *Al-Khitat al-Tamjiqiyya al-Jadida li-Misr al-Qahira wa-Muduniba wa-Biladiba al-Qadima wa al-Shabira* (20 vols.; Cairo: Dar al-Kutub, 1969), 9: 41-42.

⁸⁶ Louca, *Voyageurs et Écrivains*, 75.

⁸⁷ Much of the English and Arabic literature wrongly identify M. Poinçot as the French Minister of War, most probably due to Umar Tusun, who describes the school as being under the leadership of the French Minister of War, and then later writes that M. Poinçot was appointed the principal. The Minister of War at the time was Maréchal Soult. See, Louca, *Voyageurs et Écrivains*, 76; and *La Presse* (Paris) January 19, 1846.

of regulations of the first mission was crafted more to deal with the issues of student resistance to curricular decisions made by Jomard. It deemphasized discipline, insofar as students were allowed to go out on Sundays, Thursday evenings, public holidays, and any evening in which they had no preparation in the special course phase of their studies. Students were restricted from going out after nightfall and were discouraged from associating with women in particular.⁸⁸ The logic behind these rules was to prevent them from being morally tainted from their encounter with Parisian society, but also to ensure that they would not be distracted from their task of learning and bringing back the useful European science and knowledge to Egypt.

The rules for l'École Militaire were based in part on the rules for the 1826 mission. They policed the students' comings and goings from the school, what possessions they acquired, and restricted drinking, gambling, and outside food. They also emphasized military values, requiring students to obey orders, and greet faculty and staff with a military salute. Of particular interest is a regulation that allowed students to make complaints against any Frenchman employed in the school, who would then be subject to dismissal by the principal. This rule built on the institutional memory of discontent with some pedagogical practices of the French teachers. The Pasha approved the list of regulations for use in the school in October 20, 1844.

Regulations of l'École Militaire Égyptienne

1. The students should obey and respect the teachers, instructors and employees and should always greet them with a military salute.
2. Students must report for roll call every morning fifteen minutes after the sound of the trumpet; the school principal will determine who is absent by calling names and those who are present will answer for themselves.
3. The time of the roll call will be determined based on the time of the year. Any student who does not report for roll call will be deprived of one of his two free days of the week. And if he repeats this offense he will be fined.
4. No book or drawing should enter the school without special permission.
5. All dice, playing cards and gambling are forbidden.
6. No student may enter any department which is not his own.
7. Every student must wear their issued uniforms inside and outside the school and is responsible for the care of them.

⁸⁸ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 165.

8. The students do not have the right to use the servants in tasks outside the school except with special permission.
9. The guard at the door must inspect every package or file sent to the school in the name of any student.
10. It is forbidden to bring any chemical substance into the school, along with foodstuffs, wine and other alcoholic spirits.
11. The free days to leave the school are Sundays and Thursdays. On Sundays the students can leave the school at ten o'clock in the morning, and on Thursdays at 3:30 in the afternoon. The students must return to the school by 10 o'clock at night except for those who receive permission from the principal. Every such application must be directed to him as students cannot make appointments outside this schedule or be tardy in returning without this permission. Students must sign the register with the guard at the door with their signature and the time they returned. Even those with special permission to be out after the normal hours must sign the register when they return.
12. No student may allow an outsider to enter the school.
13. Students are not allowed to rent a room outside the school for any reason.
14. Student punishments are to prevent them from going out one or more times, to confine them in their rooms or to assign them fines depending on the offence.
15. Students are required to attend studies on Sunday from 10 o'clock in the morning until 3:30 in the afternoon and from six o'clock to 9:15 in the evening on Thursdays.
16. Students should submit all their requests to the principal through the sergeants of the students.
17. Students must remain quiet while they are inside their classrooms, and their classrooms will be assigned to them by casting lots.
18. Students may not move from their assigned desk or classroom or from their personal room to any other room without permission. This system will be followed in all classes.
19. During study hours students should totally cease all play, and refrain from making any commotion and stop doing any activity that distracts from their perseverance in their studies; And students are forbidden from speaking loudly as well as doing anything other than working on their studies.
20. Students should not leave the classroom in order to go to their rooms, walk in the corridor or the garden.
21. Students should not leave the classroom before instruction is over or before the teacher has given them permission to leave.
22. Official paperwork should be signed first by the students and then by the teachers.
23. Students are forbidden from damaging any materials bestowed upon them or use them for any other purpose except that for which they were designed.
24. Students are responsible for their furniture, books, and instruments that are placed in their care and for all things in their bedroom. If anything needs to be replaced, the student will have to pay for it.
25. Any Frenchman employed in the school whose behavior is a source of complaint may be dismissed by the principal of the school.⁸⁹

These rules emphasize an unprecedented measure of discipline and obedience, markedly different from the prior iterations of Egyptian schooling carried out under French guidance in both France and Egypt.⁹⁰ L'École Militaire's administration strove to incorporate regulatory structures

⁸⁹ Heyworth-Dunne gives a cursory description of the "articles" in the code of regulations but leaves out many details. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 244; Mitchell also provides a translation but leaves out a few rules for brevity. See Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, 72; This version is my translation from the original Arabic. See Jumayy, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 421-23.

⁹⁰ Mitchell uses a Foucauldian approach to analyze the shift toward discipline and surveillance in Egyptian education, using these rules as a representative example of the disciplinary trend in education as a method of state ordering and control. What Mitchell does not comment on is the explicit military nature of the school in contrast with the Lancaster primary school model he also analyzes. It is important to note that the Lancaster

similar to those employed in French military academies at the time, in order to gear this student mission toward creating capable military officers. This meant establishing control over the most insignificant freedoms; students were restricted from changing their assigned desks in class and could not speak or act freely during the course of their lessons. The students' daily schedule also reflected this commitment to keeping the students in an environment of military order. Every minute of the student's day was accounted for, and their activities were meticulously regulated, as it would be had they been serving in any contemporary European army. This schedule was adapted to the seasons of the year⁹¹ and modified at several moments during the school's five-year run to accommodate new students and to meet the students educational needs:

Daily Schedule

5:40 A.M.	Awoken by Trumpet
6:00 - 7:00 A.M.	Roll Call and Study
7:00 - 8:00 A.M.	Clean up and Breakfast
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	French and Handwriting
10:15 – 11:15 A.M.	Lunch, Break, Roll Call
11:30 - 1:45 P.M.	Mathematics, Geography, and History
2:00 – 3:00 P.M.	Drawing
3:15 – 5:00 P.M.	Study
5:00 – 6:45 P.M.	Dinner and Break
6:45 – 7:45 P.M.	Military Studies (Soldiership)
8:00 – 9:15 P.M.	Study and Competitive Swordplay
10:00 P.M.	Lights Off and Sleep ⁹²

Due to prior experience with Egyptian students who attended the various schools in Cairo, the students were tracked or divided into sections based on their level of preparation. In spite of these provisions, conflict arose between the students and teachers over language aptitude early on. The students from the Artillery and Cavalry schools were only familiar with military subjects and

system was a system of self-governance, where student monitors would keep a watchful eye on the behavior and work of their classmates. This type of discipline was not employed in l'École Militaire. See Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, 71-74.

⁹¹ The schedule changed during the summer with the Reveille shifted to 5:15 A.M and block scheduling for military subjects. It was modified again during the one month holiday the students were given each year, when the schedule allowed more time for military drills and gave the students a four hour break during the afternoon and some recreational time in the evening. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 246-47.

⁹² This particular schedule was approved on October 16, 1844. See Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 39.

were tracked into one class, while those who came from the Polytechnique had training in mathematics and were tracked into another class with a few students who had served as French teachers in Egyptian schools before they were chosen for the mission. Because there was some knowledge of French amongst the members of this class, the teachers decided to conduct their lectures in French, hoping that language immersion and peer to peer tutoring would help with quick language acquisition. The students who knew French were at a great advantage, and competition amongst the class precluded much cooperation with the tutoring strategy.⁹³ As Ali Mubarak described the situation, “the students who knew French were stingy about tutoring us, so they might progress themselves.” Mubarak and his classmates complained and when their grievance went unheeded, they decided to boycott their classes. This elicited a stern censure from the Pasha himself, who urged the students to be obedient, lest they be sent home in chains. This threat motivated the students to fall in line; as Mubarak put it, “I was afraid of those consequences, so I applied myself diligently to my work.”⁹⁴

Despite initial problems, the system of tracking students by educational background proved to be an effective strategy to motivate students to achieve to the best of their abilities without the pressure of competing with those who were more equipped to handle the course load. The initial curriculum drawn up by Jomard included nine subjects: handwriting, French, chronology and history, mathematics, drawing and topography, military sciences and arts, the science of fortification, artillery, and military maneuvers. As the first group of students undertook these subjects, the curriculum was modified to accommodate the most successful as well as the weaker students. Handwriting was omitted quite early in the first year when it was determined that the students had no need for it.⁹⁵ As some of the students began to distinguish themselves academically and others

⁹³ Dykstra, “Biographical Study,” 79-80.

⁹⁴ Mubarak, *Khitat*, 9: 42.

⁹⁵ Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 428.

began to fall behind, they were reorganized into two classes by the administration in May 1845. The first class, comprised of students who had done well in their exams, began specialized programs in military engineering. The second class, made up of the students weaker in mathematics and military science, continued to follow the basic curriculum.⁹⁶

Toward the end of 1844 and into the beginning of 1845, several new students joined the school. Four who were enrolled in private boarding schools elsewhere in France transferred to the school in December 1844. Ismail Pasha, the grandson of Muhammad Ali and future khedive, joined the school after undergoing eye treatments in Vienna in April 1845. The Pasha's son Halim Bey arrived at the school in June 1845 with a cohort of twenty-two new students. With such a large influx of students, a third class was formed in which students were taught only handwriting, French and geography as preparation to acclimate them to the rigor of the school's basic curriculum. As mentioned before, the students' aptitude and educational background determined their placement in one of the three classes. Of the new students sent by the Pasha in 1845, only five were attached to the second class, while the rest formed the new remedial third class, along with some of the original students who were particularly weak in their studies.⁹⁷

Though the code of regulations, schedule, and system of tracking was meant to instill discipline, there were distractions. Students in the Egyptian government's school system, both in Egypt and abroad, were paid a monthly allowance in excess of their room and board. The amount was based on social rank; Ali Mubarak received around sixty francs a month as an effendi. In an 1849 report on the schools compiled by Joseph Hekekyan for Abbas Pasha, the French professors complained that the practice of giving such large allowances was a distraction from the student's education, resulting in the purchase of useless luxuries. Parisian merchants took advantage of the young Egyptians as well, offering enticing credit lines to those who made frequent purchases. While

⁹⁶ Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 431.

⁹⁷ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 247.

this allowance was not scaled back, a policy was implemented to discourage wasteful spending. Any student who owed money in France when he returned to Egypt would be imprisoned.⁹⁸ Mubarak sent half of his stipend home to his family every month, and carried a six hundred franc debt at the end of his stay in France. To pay back the debt to escape imprisonment, Mubarak borrowed money from a French friend. His friend lent him twice the amount with the caveat that Mubarak should pay him back after he achieved success in his career in Egypt.⁹⁹

While the second mission built upon the lessons of l'École Égyptienne, such conflicts over issues like tracking and allowances forced changes. However it was a clash between the Pasha's expectations for how his sons and grandsons should be treated and the French government's desire to put their education on display that generated the most serious of the administrative problems of l'École Militaire.

THE MISSION OF THE SONS

The conflict over the treatment of the princes highlights the differing stakes of the Pasha and the French government in the mission. The explicit purpose of l'École Militaire was to educate the young princes and their carefully selected cohort in the manner of European royalty. However, its diplomatic importance to France and the instructors' investment in the project's success as a model for colonial education complicated relations between the Egyptian and French administrators. The French administrators and instructors, the Egyptian administrators, and the princes themselves disagreed over how the princes should be treated. The different versions of this conflict shed light on the stakes for these each. Disagreement eventually led to a solution that laid bare the power dynamics at play.

⁹⁸ Dykstra, "Biographical Study," 78-79.

⁹⁹ Mubarak, *Khitat*, 9: 42-43.

When the students first arrived in Paris in August 1844, the princes were subject to the same code of regulations and academic norms as their peers. However, in the early months of the schools' operation, the French administrators made distinctions between the students according to their social status. The French incorrectly assumed that the Pasha wanted to establish a private school for Egyptian students in order to have the princes experience privilege in the manner they would at home in Egypt.¹⁰⁰ This was a controversial choice, as not all parties in charge of the day-to-day administration of the school agreed on a structure that upheld the social distinctions of Egyptian society. In Hekekyan's report, he makes special mention of the widespread disapproval of the instructors regarding the inclusion of the princes in the school at all. The instructors were more invested in the educational efficacy of the school than its diplomatic importance. Therefore, they felt that the presence of Egyptian royalty was another distraction that resulted in an extravagant standard of living for all at the school, which bred an improper vanity amongst the students.

While the administration of l'École Égyptienne did not differentiate between the social status of the students in their living arrangements, the inclusion of the princes in l'École Militaire required that such distinctions be made. The students were of three social ranks: princes, beys, and effendis. Each rank was given accommodations, food, and access to the school's servants based on their status.¹⁰¹ The divisions did not end there. The princes and beys enjoyed three "luxurious and plentiful" meals a day together at one table, while the effendis sat at a separate table at all meals. They took the same meals as the princes and beys for breakfast and lunch, but for dinner, their meal was simpler than their classmates'.

¹⁰⁰ "They (the princes and other students) inhabit the same hotel and follow the same studies. Mehemet Ali wished it were so, so that the emulation of the Princes was constantly maintained." See *La Presse* (Paris), August 31, 1844.

¹⁰¹ The princes had spacious and well-appointed bedrooms, salons, offices and a personal attendant. The beys had their own bedrooms, but shared a salon and servant. The effendis shared a large "suitably furnished" dormitory "without decoration" and one servant. See Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 421.

Disagreement over the princes' treatment came to a head only a few months into the first year. Muhammad Ali wrote to Poinçot. He ordered that his sons and grandsons be treated in the same manner as their classmates, after receiving reports from Artin Bey regarding the day-to-day affairs of the school.¹⁰² This was in direct conflict with the intentions of the Ministry of War's administration of the mission, which assumed that royalty should be treated as such, with no regard for their position as students. The issue was complicated by the princes' desires for special privileges, and the Ministry of War's interest in cultivating the goodwill of these potential rulers. With France's colonial engagement in Algeria and Morocco, maintaining exclusive relations with Egypt meant France would have the monopoly on imperial interests in the Afro-Mediterranean world. It was in France's best interest for the princes to remember their time in that country fondly.

Despite the instructors' frustrations and the Pasha's orders, the French administration preserved most of the luxuries afforded the princes. In a letter to Muhammad Ali dated October 27, 1844, Poinçot wrote "there was no room currently to equalize the living arrangements between the princes, beys and effendis except in the classroom." He agreed with the Pasha that the school ideally "should have been established stripped of all luxury," as l'École Militaire as it stood was more akin to a royal palace than to a French military boarding school. Despite his agreement with the Pasha about the opulence of the school's boarding facilities, Poinçot lamented that the building allowed little room for change.¹⁰³ He agreed to apply reforms in an area that was malleable: the students' meals. The princes and beys would remain segregated at meals from the effendis due to a lack of space, but all would now be served the same meals.

To assure Muhammad Ali of his commitment to equality amongst the students and a lack of favoritism toward the princes, Poinçot wrote again in March 1845, delivering a full report on the

¹⁰² Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 421.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 426.

daily life of the students. He began his letter by assuring the Pasha of his commitment to his task of overseeing the education of the princes:

I will exert my keenest desire to realize your highness' intentions and to give all of my attention and care to acculturate the students as much as I can. It is natural and intuitive of your highness to be interested in knowing the affairs of your sons and grandsons, so here I am to report to you.¹⁰⁴

Poinçot then summarized the student's daily schedule, emphasizing that all of them attended classes at the same time and were subject to the same academic and military exercises without any segregation or discrimination, except by military rank. Poinçot made specific reference to the treatment of the princes in the school, writing that the sons and grandsons of the Pasha were taught without distinction for their royal stature. The teachers asked the same questions of the princes as those asked of the other students. They were required to complete the same exercises on the blackboard and provide the same caliber of answers as their colleagues. They sat in the same kind of chair in the classroom as their colleagues, and they had to meet the same learning requirements and take the same examinations as those administered to their peers.¹⁰⁵

He also confirmed to the Pasha that no privileges outside of those accorded to the students in the code of regulations were given to the princes. They too could not leave the school except at the designated times, and would always be accompanied by a chaperone. The only exceptions made for the princes to this rule were when the King of France or a minister invited them to a meal or special event as long as it was at a reasonable hour. Poinçot closed his report to the Pasha by assuring him that he would use all means within his power to advise and discipline the princes and that he would even resort to violence if necessary, though he hoped that the situation would not render itself so dire.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 427.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 427-28.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 428.

This refusal to rework the living arrangements demonstrates the overriding importance of the mission to French interests. The princes continued to receive special treatment because they were representatives of the Egyptian state.¹⁰⁷ While the beys and effendis spent their one month of holiday each year at the school performing military maneuvers and taking short day trips to museums and chateaus in and around Paris, the princes went on seaside vacations to Le Havre and Le Manche, and to visit royal chateaus at Campigne, Fontainebleau, and Cherbourg.¹⁰⁸ On account of the schools' association with the Egyptian royal family, prominent members of French nobility and royalty visited the school. The students were also invited to important occasions as guests of the French monarch. These events, which we will examine next, were important opportunities for France to publicize its role in fostering Egyptian development so as to legitimize its policies in North Africa.

L'ÉCOLE MILITAIRE ON DISPLAY

One such occasion was a publicized visit of the crown prince of France, the Duc de Nemours, in May 1845. While notable scholars and dignitaries visited l'École Égyptienne, it was usually on occasions of public examinations or graduation ceremonies. The visit of a significant member of the French royal family without such an impetus demonstrates the great importance placed on publicizing l'École Militaire. *La Presse* reported that the crown prince visited the school at noon on May 7 in order to inspect the premises and to examine the students' progress.¹⁰⁹ The students performed in a military parade in his honor and were subjected to an impromptu oral examination in cartography, cosmography, French, and topography. This shows the interest of the

¹⁰⁷ Hekekyan mentions in his report that the princes adversely affected discipline by demanding special privileges for themselves and for their closest friends. During the 1848 revolution in Paris, the princes were accused by the instructors of being defiant so as to instigate their return to Egypt. See Darrell Dykstra, "Joseph Hekekyan and the Egyptian School in Paris," *The Armenian Review*, 35, 2 (1982), 173.

¹⁰⁸ Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 433.

¹⁰⁹ *La Presse* (Paris), May 7, 1845.

French in demonstrating their prowess in educating young Arabs to legitimize their civilizing strategies in North Africa. But the French government also used the school to aid their diplomatic strategy in Morocco in the orchestrated meeting of the December 1845 Moroccan delegation with the students of l'École Militaire.

Following the bombardment of Tangiers in August 1844 and the diplomatic accords that followed, France requested the Sultan send an envoy to Paris to “implement the modifications and changes the new situation [total defeat by France] demanded.”¹¹⁰ France pursued an alliance with Morocco, as the visit of the Moroccan ambassador would quell the fears of the divided French public, convincing them that the goals of the Algerian war had been achieved.¹¹¹ While the visit of this embassy would help sway opinion in France, with regard to Moroccan perceptions, the agenda of the visit was crafted to demonstrate France’s superiority and the inevitability of French colonial rule in the region.¹¹² L'École Militaire played a role in communicating this message in their encounter with the delegation at the 1846 New Year’s Day celebrations at the French court.

An account of this meeting is preserved in the travelogue of Muhammad al-Saffar, the secretary to the Moroccan ambassador. Al-Saffar and his colleagues were summoned to the French court for the New Years celebrations at which the students of l'École Militaire were also in attendance. Al-Saffar mentions meeting seven Egyptians: “two were the children of Muhammad Ali, Pasha of Egypt, and two were the children of ...Ibrahim Pasha. We also met another person from

¹¹⁰ The Moroccan sultan aided the Algerian Amir Abd al-Qadir in his fight against the French, providing his army with arms and supplies as could be justified by religious duty, but the country did not become embroiled in the war until the French army drove Abd al-Qadir into Morocco and laid siege to their two chief ports and the army at the River Isly. See as-Saffar, *Disorienting Encounters*, 6-7, 9.

¹¹¹ As-Saffar, *Disorienting Encounters*, 10.

¹¹² The Moroccan sultan sent a letter with the delegation, requesting more time in considering France’s request that Morocco expel the Algerian Amir Abd-al-Qadir and criticizing France’s incursions on Moroccan borders. The French foreign minister’s reply was to suggest that past grievances be forgotten, and instead concentrate on the task of maintaining and demonstrating the friendly foreign relations between their two countries. See As-Saffar, *Disorienting Encounters*, 25-26.

the inner circle of Muhammad Ali named Sami Pasha, along with two more from their retinue.”¹¹³ He writes that sixty Egyptians were present, sent to France by Muhammad Ali to “learn the sciences one finds only there.” Apparently the Egyptians were dressed in their finest livery, and the Moroccan secretary was quite obviously in awe of the princes and their entourage, writing that “their splendor was indescribable; they were more handsome than the Christians by far.”¹¹⁴ The diplomatic purpose of this encounter cannot be understated. In this crucial period when France worked to build up its position as a permanent influence in the region, putting the Egyptian royalty and elites who chose to study in Paris on display was meant to show the Moroccan delegation that there was much to be gained in a civilizing encounter with France.¹¹⁵

The French government had an interest in publicizing l'École Militaire because of the inclusion of the young princes, whose presence served to emphasize France's foundational role in mentoring the development of Egypt. While this was a crucial point in legitimizing their conquest of North Africa both domestically and abroad, it also served to reinforce preexisting ties with Egypt. The visit of Ibrahim Pasha in May 1846 was a pivotal moment in performing and publicizing the special relationship between the two countries. The prince came to France by way of Italy, where he was sent by Muhammad Ali to take the healing waters at Pisa, after suffering from a host of serious illnesses. He took this opportunity to tour Europe, and was received in England and France in state visits.¹¹⁶ His visit to the school in Paris was celebrated with an unprecedented degree of pomp and circumstance with a grand celebration to which many important French ministers and dignitaries

¹¹³ Al-Saffar is wrongly identifies Ibrahim Pasha as the Pasha's stepson, but he was Muhammad Ali's son. See As-Saffar, *Disorienting Encounters*, 179.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 180.

¹¹⁵ It is interesting to note the Moroccan delegation was never made to encounter the analogous Collège Arabe de Paris, as the student body of only eleven recruited Algerian elite did not communicate the success of colonial educational strategies that France wanted to demonstrate to Morocco. For more about that school, see Abi Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 69.

¹¹⁶ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 248.

were invited.¹¹⁷ The students performed military maneuvers in the school field and were then subjected to an oral examination similar to the quizzing they underwent for the crown prince's review of the school.¹¹⁸ A number of books were distributed to the top three students in each class in a formal ceremony.

This event received lengthy coverage in *La Presse*, which published the entire text of Estefan Bey's speech to the school, given on behalf of Ibrahim Pasha. In his address, the Egyptian director spoke frankly about the educational relationship between France and Egypt in the past few decades, remarking on the symbiotic nature of the two countries' age old relationship. France was merely repaying a debt to Egypt long overdue, after borrowing the foundations of sciences and arts from the East during the Crusades. The superiority of France in war as well as the arts and sciences allowed her to "regenerate other nations without fear for herself." Estefan Bey also paid tribute to Muhammad Ali's foresight in reviving this relationship, ending his speech by addressing the students of the school directly. He cautioned them to continue to work diligently toward the task ahead of them, concluding by reminding them that they were now the "adoptive sons" of France, and thus they should recognize the importance of that relationship in their future endeavors.¹¹⁹

Estefan Bey's words presented France's imperial power as benign, by casting its civilizing efforts as a generous repayment of a debt owed for centuries. Though he acknowledged French power and capacity for domination, he considered the French enlightened enough to use their superiority to instruct those nations struggling to achieve civilization. By doing so he articulated Egypt's comfort in sending princes to France for grooming while reinforcing the perception of an innocuous imperial presence in North Africa. That an Egyptian representative would so willingly endorse France's role as a leader in establishing the "common happiness of mankind" was a telling

¹¹⁷ *La Presse* (Paris), May 13, 1846; and Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 437.

¹¹⁸ Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 437.

¹¹⁹ *La Presse* (Paris), May 13, 1846.

moment in swaying popular opinion in favor of what would evolve into France's civilizing mission.¹²⁰

REALITIES OF FRENCH MENTORSHIP

Despite the glowing endorsement of French educational practices that the school was meant to represent, in practice the students of l'École Militaire were at times barred from the educational opportunities promised to them. The school, like its predecessor l'École Égyptienne, was conceived to be a preparatory feeder school for Egyptian students seeking admission into France's top civil and military academies. When the first group of students completed their final examinations in December 1846 and were ready to begin their studies in the French military and engineering schools, the Egyptian administration encountered resistance from their French colleagues in providing the students with a smooth transition to the schools of their choice. Ahmad Bey, one of the more academically distinguished among the Egyptian princes, expressed an interest in studying at *L'École Polytechnique*. The Pasha approved this plan, and extended the option of attending the engineering school rather than a military academy to the rest of the students. Twelve students wished to follow Ahmad Bey but the French minister objected to the idea. In the end only seven students were allowed to enroll, excluding the prince.¹²¹

Similarly, when nine out of the sixteen members of the first class successfully completed their exams and were ready to be transferred into the French military academies, difficulties arose regarding their living arrangements. Students were distributed equally amongst l'École de Metz, l'École d'État Major and Saumur, where they would be trained in artillery and military engineering, as staff officers and cavalry officers respectively. The Egyptian authorities desired these students to live amongst their French peers in the school dormitories but the French minister would only agree to

¹²⁰ *La Presse* (Paris), May 13, 1846.

¹²¹ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 249.

this condition for l'École de Metz and l'École d'État Major. It was instead suggested that the three students training to be cavalry officers take up a private residence near Saumur. Estefan Bey opposed this idea, especially since the Pasha would not allow the students to rent private quarters. The resulting correspondence between the Ministry of War and the Egyptian government is unknown.¹²²

The 1846 examinations marked a turning point for the school, as the princes and their initial cohort had moved from preparatory to specialized studies. Though the school was conceived as a military institution, after 1846, the students intending to follow through with a military education consisted of five of the weakest candidates, while the remaining twenty-one students sought to specialize in civil studies.¹²³ Following the death of Ibrahim Pasha in November 1848 and the subsequent ascent of Abbas Pasha to the throne, Egypt's relations with France began to wane. Abbas distanced himself from his grandfather's French advisors, and chose to cultivate closer relations with the British.¹²⁴ It was perhaps for this reason that he tasked the British-educated educational administrator Joseph Hekekyan to assess the students during his visit in January and February 1849.¹²⁵

Compiled from interviews of the students, instructors, and the administration of the school, Hekekyan's report wholly dismissed the existing institution, arguing for an education that provided immersion in European culture as key to picking up its virtues over its vices. He proposed that the students would have been better served if they had attended existing preparatory institutions in

¹²² Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 250.

¹²³ Dykstra, "Joseph Hekekyan," 171.

¹²⁴ Kenneth M. Cuno, "Abbas Hilmi I." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, eds. Kate Fleet, et al. (Brill Online, 2016).

¹²⁵ Hekekyan was among the second generation of Armenian bureaucrats to serve under Muhammad Ali. He was sent to England for his education as a part of the less formally organized practice of sending Egyptian students to study in Europe between the two formal student missions to Paris. He returned to Egypt in 1830, and served in various capacities administering education through the 1850s. See Dykstra, "Joseph Hekekyan," 167.

France -- better still if primary education in Egypt was completely restructured. He proposed a system in which five year old boys would attend European-style boarding schools in Egypt, isolated from Egyptian society. The best students would be chosen for further study in Europe, and not necessarily in France, but rather in existing institutions of higher education in the European country best known for the subjects in which the students would specialize. His report demonstrated to Abbas that l'École Militaire was no longer a useful part of the Egyptian educational system. Within two months of receiving Hekekyan's report in March 1849, Abbas Pasha ordered the closure of the school, recalling all of the students to Egypt.¹²⁶

Criticisms aside, l'École Militaire produced an unprecedented number of Egyptian technicians in its short five-year tenure, who after 1850 began to rapidly replace Ottoman bureaucrats at the highest levels of Egyptian government.¹²⁷ Chief among the school's success stories is that of Ali Mubarak Pasha, who upon graduating from l'École Militaire studied at l'École de Metz for two years. Mubarak returned to Egypt in 1849 to begin a distinguished career, marked by his appointment as the director of the Ministry of Education in 1867, the director of Railways, Education and Public Works in 1868, and director of the Education department in 1888.¹²⁸ Other examples of successful alumni include Ali Pasha Ibrahim, who served as an assistant in the War department under Said Pasha, as the director of the preparatory school in Cairo under Ismail, and ended his career as the director of the Justice department beginning in 1882.¹²⁹ Muhammad Bey Sharif had a long and illustrious career, serving as president of the Legislative council, director of the

¹²⁶ Dykstra, "Joseph Hekekyan," 171-75.

¹²⁷ F. Robert Hunter, *Egypt Under the Khedives, 1805-1879: From Household Government to Modern Bureaucracy* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), 88.

¹²⁸ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 253.

¹²⁹ Hunter, *Egypt Under the Khedives*, 90.

Education department, director of the Interior and of Foreign Affairs, Regent during Ismail Pasha's state visits to Europe and Turkey in 1867, and prime minister several times.¹³⁰

These three alumni of the 1844 student mission to Paris were the most well known graduates who had careers in the Egyptian government. Of the sixty five students educated by l'École Militaire, Ismail Pasha became khedive of Egypt, seventeen held high administrative posts in the Egyptian government such as ministers, directors, chairmen, and principals of various bureaucratic departments and schools, four assumed judicial posts, three became engineers associated with the Public Works department, and at least fifteen took up positions teaching in military schools and serving in the Egyptian army.¹³¹ The majority of the remaining students took up some kind of employment in the government on their return to Egypt, partially fulfilling Muhammad Ali's intention in creating a cadre of educated young Egyptians to lead the modernization of Egypt.

L'École Militaire was relatively successful in spite of its performative role as a symbol of Franco-Egyptian collaboration and of France's potential civilizing mission in North Africa. The repeated demonstrations in which the school was put on display indicate that for the French government, the school's success was valued less for the achievements of its students than for the princes' mere presence on French soil. This French objective impeded the realization of all the Egyptian requirements for the school, which were to give the princes the best approximation of a European education while still preserving their cultural and religious heritage in a contained environment. The achievements of the school in training capable students were more a product of the institutional memory upon which the Egyptian Military Mission was conceived. The collective experience of all the student missions to France during Muhammad Ali's reign informed the administration and instruction of l'École Militaire.

¹³⁰ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 254.

¹³¹ Surveyed from the biographical information on the student of l'École Militaire provided in Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 251-61.

CONCLUSION

L'École Militaire incorporated the lessons from l'École Égyptienne, with its curriculum developed by Jomard, its Egyptian administration by Estefan Bey, and its rules adapted from the code of regulations of the first mission. While Muhammad Ali intended the first mission to obtain technical knowledge to aid in the modernization of Egypt's military, his purpose in the second mission was to educate and groom the future rulers of Egypt. At the same time, for the French individuals advocating and administering the first mission, it represented a vital experiment in reigniting France's civilizing role in Egypt. While it failed in that goal, the French government was able to use l'École Militaire's example to further their civilizational goals in North Africa.

The purpose and definition of beneficial knowledge was in flux throughout the Pasha's reign. In this early period of knowledge transmission, the utility of European knowledge was mainly left to the European experts who imparted it through the mission schools. However, students and their Egyptian administrators pushed back when European educational practices and curriculum did not work for their purposes. Indeed, each actor involved in the mission advanced a unique perspective on what constituted a useful education. Their differences created productive moments of tension in which institutional change was engendered. The active role the Egyptian students played in influencing the curricular and methodological choices of their French instructors in both missions demonstrates that the negotiation of modernity initiated by Egypt during the Pasha's reign was largely guided by Egyptian needs, and was not necessarily in emulation of or a desire to be like Europe. The participation of Egyptians in their own education during these missions anticipated the participation of alumni of the student missions as well as the technical schools in the crafting of educational discourse and policy in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The following chapters will discuss how these alumni worked to define what knowledge was beneficial and necessary to

incorporate in Egypt's development, in addition to how this knowledge was translated and indigenized for practical use.

While the tangible result of the student missions was the placing of capable Egyptian experts into government positions, the creation of indigenous expertise did not prevent the hiring of more foreign instructors and consultants as the Pasha's successors expanded the education system. The lasting legacy of the student missions is the educational discourse their most capable alumni engaged in, one that was in step with European educational developments in the mid-nineteenth century. This indigenized discourse on education included issues like education's purpose in honing the intellect as opposed to inculcating useful skills, the role of education in developing a nation, and the question of expanding universal primary education to boys and girls. These questions were addressed in Egypt at the same time as in France, England, and America, despite the fact that "modern" education in Egypt was still only a few decades old.

CHAPTER 3: Translating a Comprehensive Education: Rifa‘a al-Tahtawi and Madrasat al-Asun

This chapter examines how Madrasat al-Asun (1836-51), the School of Languages, brought together European approaches to the study of language and humanities with a curriculum that included indigenous forms of knowledge and pedagogy. Under the directorship of École Égyptienne alumnus Rifa‘a al-Tahtawi, the school also operated as a translation bureau, where European texts necessary for the newly reorganized system of technical schools were translated into Arabic. Translation indigenized this knowledge, making it legible and morally acceptable. The school was also an experiment in constructing an Egyptian version of comprehensive education. It differed from the other government schools, which were more vocational or preparatory in nature. A close look at the history of this school reveals how the student missions impacted educational practice on the ground in Egypt. It also lays the foundation for understanding broader discourse on the place and utility of indigenized European knowledge in the local context, as government schools began to compete directly with already established forms of education provided by the *kuttab* and *madrasa* system.¹ Al-Tahtawi’s contributions to this discourse, which are explored at the end of this chapter, can be better understood when placed in the context of his intellectual genealogy and his career experience as an educator, beginning with his directorship of the School of Languages.

In the extensive historical literature on al-Tahtawi as a translator and a pioneering figure of the Arab intellectual and literary revival of the later nineteenth century commonly referred to as the *nahda*, little attention has been paid to the practical development of his educational philosophy.² Still less notice is given to the stages of his evolution into an influential albeit controversial intellectual,

¹ I use *kuttab* and *madrasa* system to refer to the pre-existing Islamic school system in Egypt before Muhammad Ali’s reforms. It should be noted that while the term *madrasa* referred specifically to a religious school associated with a *mosque/masjid* complex, after 1810 it was appropriated for use to refer to the new government schools as well, rendering the modern meaning of the term, which simply refers to a school.

² As discussed in the introduction, the term *nahda* is an imprecise term, used to signal the revival or renaissance of Arab literature or philosophy in the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries.

whose ideas were foundational for many modernist and nationalist thinkers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Historians and literary scholars have mined al-Tahtawi's writings for modernist ideals with little care for the specific context and literary genre within which those ideas were produced. The approach here is attentive to the ways in which al-Tahtawi's intellectual genealogy informed his thought, tracing how his ideas developed during his career. Furthermore, al-Tahtawi's own educational experiences and scholarly development can also elucidate his administrative choices as director of the School of Languages. The history of the school and its legacy of comprehensive education is a testament to al-Tahtawi's method of combining the local and European educational strategies to which he had been exposed. These ideas culminated in his writings on knowledge and education towards the end of his life.

Studies about al-Tahtawi often analyze his writings out of their historical and literary context. The most frequently examined is his travelogue *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Paris*, or *The Extraction of Pure Gold in the Abridgment of Paris* (1835), which was written during his time in France and edited upon his return. Much attention has also been given to two books, published late in his life. The first is his *Al-Murshid al-Amin lil Banat wa al-Banin* or *The Honest Guide for Girls and Boys* (1872), which addressed all aspects of education, and famously emphasized universal primary education for girls as well as boys. The second is *Manahij Albab al-Misriyya fi Mabahij al-Adab al-Asriyya* or *The Roads of Egyptian Hearts in the Joys of Contemporary Arts* (1869), which is a work that provides insight into his ideas on politics and government. These texts represent very distinct moments in his intellectual life, but his experiences as an educator had an impact on the ways he advocated for the inclusion of European knowledge within the larger sphere of *ilm*, or religiously sanctioned knowledge.

This chapter begins by tracing al-Tahtawi's intellectual genealogy, rather than relating his life from a biographical perspective. It will focus on formative moments and encounters in his educational formation. Though he proved himself a gifted student in his primary studies, his first

significant experience with formal education was at Egypt's oldest and most famous religious institution, al-Azhar, where he enrolled in 1817. It was there that he came under the mentorship of Shaykh Hasan al-Attar (1766-1835), an experience that had a great impact on his educational outlook prior to his training in translation in Paris.

AL-TAHTAWI AT AL-AZHAR

Al-Tahtawi attended al-Azhar during a transitional period in the school's history. At the time of his enrollment, the mosque and *madrasa* complex was experiencing an unprecedented swell in student numbers as a consequence of Muhammad Ali's fiscal centralization policies, which forced the closure of several smaller religious institutions around the country.³ The rising number of students was merely one factor threatening the *madrasa* system.⁴ There was the Pasha's meddling in the administration of al-Azhar and competition from the still nascent government school system, factors that were slowly inspiring a change in the intellectual atmosphere within Egypt, towards openness to European models of education and reform. The government educational project was in its initial phase. Several individuals had been abroad to Europe – mostly to Italy – to acquire expertise in subjects like military science, shipbuilding, printing, and engineering.⁵ There were three government preparatory schools established in the Citadel in Cairo. The first was a school opened to train the Pasha's young mamluks in military affairs, with a curriculum that included reading, writing, the Qur'an, Turkish, Persian, Italian, physical exercises, military tactics, and the use of arms and riding.⁶ The other two were engineering schools, Dar al-Handasa and the Madrasa al-Handasa, both

³ Indira Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 17.

⁴ By *madrasa* system, I am referring to Islamic institutions of higher learning, often situated in a mosque complex. For the history of the development of the *madrasa* system, see J. Pedersen et al., "Madrasa," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. eds. P. Bearman, et al. (Brill Online, 2016).

⁵ Twenty-eight students total were sent in this early period. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 105-06.

⁶ *Ibid*, 107.

formed to teach arithmetic, geometry, and mathematics. The three schools educated members of the Pasha's household and his relatives.⁷ The government schools had little overlap with the curriculum at al-Azhar and did not compete with it for students, though this would begin to change in the latter half of the Pasha's reign.

At the time of al-Tahtawi's attendance, al-Azhar provided an elementary religious education and trained specialists further in the Arabic language, Islamic theology and law. Students in the elementary track, like al-Tahtawi, studied texts in the following subjects: the Qur'an, *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet), *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), *tawhid* or (monotheistic theology), *usul al-din* (the bases of religion or theology), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), Arabic grammar, and logic. Students of Arabic language studied the Qur'an, *hadith*, exegesis, morphology, syntax, expressions, style, and rhetoric. Theology students read texts in exegesis, *hadith*, monotheistic theology, jurisprudence, and logic. Law students read texts in exegesis, *hadith*, and jurisprudence.⁸ It is possible that al-Tahtawi also studied some science, mathematics, or languages other than Arabic, though these subjects were phased out by the 1830s, when the government schools began to teach them. Though this provides us with some general idea of what students might have studied, it is important to note that al-Azhar had no set curriculum, but rather "courses" were offered based on student demand and the availability of scholars to teach particular texts.⁹

The pedagogy of the madrasa consisted of an exercise known as the *halqa*, which can be translated as "circle." In practice, a religious scholar or shaykh claimed an area, either within the Azhar mosque complex or in a nearby mosque. Students and other interested parties gathered around him to listen to him read from and dissect a particular text, explaining its grammatical points, possible interpretations, and generally engaging the students in a dialectical process. Knowledge was

⁷ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 108-09.

⁸ Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 20.

⁹ *Ibid*, 22.

embedded in texts that had to be read out loud. This was in part because written Arabic often leaves off short vowels, making memorized pronunciation crucial to ascertaining exact meanings.¹⁰ This method of teaching placed great emphasis on the oral transmission of knowledge, as it was crucial to preserving authorial intent. Those who were authorized to teach a text were links in a long chain of oral readings going back to the originator of the text or early recipients of it.¹¹

The manner in which students would engage with and pass through this system of *halqa* proceeded with the logic of authority of text – that is to say that commentaries and sub-commentaries about a particular original text would be studied only after that original text was mastered. Students were given personal guidance and attention from the shaykhs who conducted the *halqa* on the text they sought to master. The shaykh would ensure that no student would be allowed to conduct his own *halqa* on that text until he was ready. When a student reached that point, the shaykh would write him an *ijaza*, or permission letter to confirm that he had mastered the text, relating the text’s transmission from author to explicator, and allowing the student to teach his own *halqa* on that particular text. The process through which a student would master a text to the extent that he would be granted an *ijaza* was not standardized, and could take years.¹²

Al-Tahtawi spent four years as a student at al-Azhar. Before his time there, the young scholar had already distinguished himself by memorizing the Qur’an under the guidance of his father, and had started studying some of the major texts taught at the famous Cairo *madrasa* with the help of his uncles. Al-Tahtawi was perhaps more equipped to take on his studies at al-Azhar than the average student, who only had basic training in Arabic and grammar.¹³ His biographer Salih Majdi (1826-81) described al-Tahtawi as a student who did not study in the regular manner, but

¹⁰ Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 17.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 18.

¹² *Ibid*, 18-19.

¹³ *Ibid*, 30.

would attend multiple *halqas* in one day, in keeping with his boundless energy.¹⁴ In his first year he undertook studies in grammar, studying the fourteenth century Arabic grammar by the Moroccan scholar Abu Abd Allah Sidi Muhammad ibn Da‘ud al-Sanhaji (d. 1323), as well as other books befitting his rank.¹⁵ By the end of his first year, he had already reaped a “harvest” of knowledge, and he returned to his hometown of Tahta to conduct a *halqa* on the fifteenth century theological work *Sughra al-Sughra* by the Moroccan scholar Muhammad Abu Abd Allah al-Sanusi (d. 1490).¹⁶

Al-Tahtawi continued to distinguish himself in his final three years as a student, undertaking studies with many of al-Azhar’s most prominent scholars. For example, with Ibrahim al-Bajuri (1783-1860), who became the Shaykh al-Azhar in 1847, he studied a text on Arabic case endings by the fourteenth century grammarian Jamal al-Din Ibn Hisham al-Ansari (1309-60).¹⁷ With Hasan al-Burhan al-Quwisni (d. 638), the blind shaykh who became the rector of al-Azhar in 1834, he studied the collections of *hadith* assembled by Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 1505) and Muhammad al-Saghani (1181-1252).¹⁸ With Muhammad al-Damanhuri (d. 1868-69), who al-Tahtawi would later employ in the School of Languages, he studied the commentary of Egyptian born Abd Allah Ibn Abd al-Rahman Ibn Aqil (1294-1367) on the grammar manual *Alfiyya* by Andalusian grammarian Ibn Malik (1204-74).¹⁹ He attracted the special attention of Muhammad Ibn Shafi‘ al-Fadali (d. 1821) for a poem he wrote on *tawhid*.²⁰ With al-Fadali, al-Tahtawi studied *Sabih al-Bukhari*, a collection of *hadith*

¹⁴ For a more detailed description of al-Tahtawi’s education at al-Azhar, see Salih Majdi, *Hiyat al-Zaman bi Manaqib Khadim al-Watan* (Cairo: Maktabat Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1958), 22-26.

¹⁵ Known informally as *Kitab al-Ajrumiyya*, it is a standard grammar text for Qur’anic Arabic still in use today. The formal title of this text is *Al-Muqadima al-Ajrumiyya fi Mabadi‘ Ilm al-Arabiyya* by Abu Abd Allah Sidi Muhammad ibn Da‘ud al-Sanhaji (Ibn Ajrum).

¹⁶ Majdi, *Hiyat al-Zaman*, 23.

¹⁷ The text was *Mughni al-Labib an Kitab al-Aarib* by Jamal al-Din Ibn Hisham al-Ansari. See Rifa‘a Rafi‘ al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris: Account of a Stay in France by an Egyptian Cleric (1826-1831)*, ed. and trans. Daniel L. Newman (London: Saqi, 2011), 34.

¹⁸ Al-Tahtawi read *Jam‘ al-Jawami‘* by al-Suyuti, and *Mashariq al-Anwar al-Nabawiyya min Sibah al-Akbar al-Mustafawiyya* by al-Saghani. See al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 33.

¹⁹ This was *Kitab Sharh al-Allama Ibn Aqil ala Alfiyya li Allama Ibn Malik* by Ibn Aqil. See al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 33.

²⁰ Majdi, *Hiyat al-Zaman*, 25.

compiled by the ninth century scholar Muhammad Ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (810-70).²¹ He also undertook additional projects of his own, writing a conclusion or *khatima* to a text on Arabic syntax by Ibn Hisham al-Ansari (1309-60).²² By 1821, al-Tahtawi had collected sufficient *ijazas* to become a lecturer at al-Azhar himself, specializing in *hadith*, logic, rhetoric, and poetry.²³

HASAN AL-ATTAR'S MENTORSHIP OF AL-TAHTAWI

Al-Tahtawi's education at al-Azhar gave him a strong understanding of the Arabic language and its literary forms, which together formed the basis for his adept understanding of language and the art of translation. But it was his mentorship by Hasan al-Attar (1766-1835) that inspired his openness to the program of general education he took on in Paris.²⁴ Al-Attar was one of the progenitors of cultural reform in Muhammad Ali's Egypt. His intellectual interests put him at odds with many of his Azhari colleagues, but made him open to the French during the occupation. He later became an ardent supporter of Muhammad Ali's reforms, and was named editor of the first government periodical *al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyya*, and then Shaykh al-Azhar (1830-34).

Al-Attar was interested in logic and the rational sciences, studying medicine, mathematics, and engineering. He believed these subjects were consistent with the Islamic tradition of scientific inquiry, though their study had been declining in Cairo since the 1790s.²⁵ His friendly relations with Napoleon's savants during the occupation of Egypt, teaching them Arabic and exchanging ideas about science and literature, isolated him at a time when antipathy towards Europeans was extreme. This experience had an interesting effect on the trajectory of his career. While it made him more

²¹ This was *Al-Jami al-Sahib* by al-Bukhari. See al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 34.

²² The conclusion al-Tahtawi wrote was for *Qatr al-Mada wa Bal al-Sada* by al-Ansari. See al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 34.

²³ Al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 34-35.

²⁴ For a more detailed biography of Hasan al-Attar, see Gran *Islamic Roots*; and F. De Jong, "The Itinerary of Hasan al-Attar (1766-1835): a reconsideration and its implications," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 28, 1 (1983), 99-128.

²⁵ Gran, *Islamic Roots*, 91.

open to seeking knowledge outside the framework set by the al-Azhar religious curriculum, it deprived him of traditional forms of patronage for shaykhs of his standing.²⁶ Faced with this lack of financial support for his interests, al-Attar left Egypt at the end of the French occupation to pursue further studies in the rational sciences unavailable to him within Egypt. He travelled first to Istanbul, where he spent eight years studying Turkish and the rational sciences, completing a work on *ilm al-bandasa* (geometry), which incorporated astronomy, and engineering, as well as pursuing his commitment to studying medicine.²⁷ He then spent five years in Damascus, intending to pursue studies on the works of the Sufi scholar Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), but ended up teaching jurisprudence, hadith, natural sciences, and medicine to a small group of students instead.

On his return to Egypt in 1815, al-Attar began teaching at al-Azhar once more, but soon felt stifled in its environment. Though his *halqas* were so renowned that seasoned teachers would leave their own sessions to attend his lectures, his peers did not easily accept his style of teaching. His method made use of dialectical reasoning to present arguments about texts and their supportive chains of *hadith* evidence, rather than merely recounting them and presenting their analysis. It was a provocative choice for its time, as most teachers and students at al-Azhar valued the culture of *hadith* that reinforced their social and religious outlook.²⁸ They were unreceptive to the incorporation of knowledge outside the standard curriculum and methods used at al-Azhar.²⁹ Al-Attar withdrew from teaching publically, instead holding private *halqas* in his own home, which were attended by the few students receptive to his interests and methods of teaching. For his closest students, al-Tahtawi included, he would add other fields, like history, geography, geometry, and medicine.

Al-Attar's outlook estranged him from his peers, but brought him in close contact with members of the ruling class. His work also increasingly reflected this commitment to a new cultural

²⁶ Gran, *Islamic Roots*, 91.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 103.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 123.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 124.

order. One of his projects upon his return to Egypt was to write a manual on *insha'*, or the art of letter writing, geared towards writers preparing materials for the new military schools. In this work, he championed a new kind of writing that preserved the literary aspects of the genre while emphasizing clarity of meaning. He dedicated this work to the Pasha himself, garnering the governor's favor. This eventually resulted in his appointment as the editor of the official gazette *al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyya*, when it was launched in 1829, and his eventual elevation to the position of Shaykh al-Azhar in 1830. Though these later achievements had little to do with al-Tahtawi's interactions with al-Attar as a mentor during his studies, the career of his protégé al-Tahtawi was impacted by the breach between al-Attar and his peers at al-Azhar, who saw al-Attar as a divisive figure who did not have the school's best interests at heart.

In his later years, al-Attar grew increasingly vocal in his critique of al-Azhar, writing that scholars there limited themselves to narrow, derivative books composed by recent authors, unwilling to study anything else; many translations of foreign books contained useful knowledge and technical developments, but because they dealt with subjects like biology, engineering, and the military arts, Azhari shaykhs did not read them. He also pointed out that this was a fairly new phenomenon. Azhari scholars had previously engaged with books that were outside the scope of religious studies.³⁰ Al-Attar's most famous pupil, al-Tahtawi, was more moderate in his views on the *madrasa* method of education, especially in his early years as an educational reformer. However, his association with al-Attar meant that his early work and writings were viewed with suspicion.

Under al-Attar's tutelage, al-Tahtawi was introduced to alternative fields of study as part of his Islamic education, a key aspect in the development of his pragmatic approach to translating European texts and legitimizing their use within Egypt. It was al-Attar who encouraged him to leave

³⁰ Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 24-25.

al-Azhar, recommending him for a position as imam to one of the new regiments of Muhammad Ali's army in 1824, which eventually led to his attachment to the 1826 student mission to Paris.

AL-TAHTAWI IN PARIS

Al-Attar appears to have nominated the young shaykh al-Tahtawi as imam to the first organized student mission to France as an opportunity for his protégé to travel and acquire knowledge in an important center of Western learning. It was al-Attar who encouraged his mentee to keep detailed notes of his journey and all that he encountered with the explicit intent of writing a *rihla* or travelogue that would educate Egyptians about France.³¹ Though he was not originally attached to l'École Égyptienne as a student, al-Tahtawi, who had begun his French studies in Alexandria before embarking, excelled at the basic French language training given to the group. He soon distinguished himself as the only member with the language skills necessary to take up the study of translation. From his travelogue *Takhlis al-Ibris fi Talkhis Baris* or *The Extraction of Pure Gold in the Abridgement of Paris* (1835) and the contents of his personal library, it is possible to reconstruct some idea of what he studied and the range of subjects to which he was exposed during his five years in France. Al-Tahtawi's personal experience with education in France was foundational not only to his educational philosophy, but also to the translation movement and educational reforms he helped oversee upon his return to Egypt.

Al-Tahtawi's *Takhlis* was a personal account of his experience as a student in France, as well as of the French society he encountered, with the aim of educating his compatriots. He composed it to conform to the literary genre of the *rihla*.³² A *rihla* can be most broadly defined as a book

³¹ Al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 88.

³² Tarek El-Ariss argues that ignoring the literary and poetic elements in the *Takhlis*, as scholars like Gilbert Delanoue and Daniel Newman have done, detracts from our understanding of al-Tahtawi's personal struggles and literary negotiations between more traditional Arabic literary genres like the *rihla* and *qasida*, and literary and philosophical articulations of modernity. The ornamental and superfluous text (and in turn his use of

recounting travels, but in particular travels in the pursuit of knowledge, entailing an encounter with that which is different, or the other.³³ In the case of this particular text, many tropes of the *ribla* and other Arabic literary conventions are present. For example, al-Tahtawi makes use of a simplified version of *saj'*, which can be defined as prose composed in short rhymed phrases, with rhythmical cadence and alliteration, often making use of obscure or bizarre vocabulary.³⁴ It was used not only in the *ribla*, but in all types of Arabic literature, particularly in introductions. The rhyming title of the text is good example of this particular style of prose. The *Takblis* contains plagiarized information and structure from other relevant texts, which is a common occurrence in *riblas* and a topic of debate in the literature on the genre. For example, the famous fourteenth century *ribla* of the Moroccan scholar Ibn Battuta “borrows” heavily from the twelfth century *ribla* of the Andalusian geographer and poet Ibn Jubayr.³⁵ Al-Tahtawi modeled the first three articles in his *Takblis* on Georges-Bernard Depping’s *Aperçu Historique sur les Moeurs et Coutumes des Nations*. He also quoted Depping in translation at length, without attribution.³⁶ The *Takblis* was paraphrased heavily in the later *ribla* of Muhammad al-Saffar, a member of the Moroccan delegation to Paris in 1845-46.³⁷

Al-Tahtawi also used the literary device of *aja'ib*, a word that can be loosely translated as “marvels,” but generally refers to extraordinary, unbelievable, strange, even untrue, or exaggerated aspects of the “other,” using a comparative perspective intended for an audience who shares the

literary tropes) allows us to understand the logic of juxtaposition of comparison in the *Takblis*. See Tarek El-Ariss, *Trails of Arab Modernity: Literary Affects and the New Political* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 22.

³³ Roxanne Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 13; For an overview of the *ribla* genre, see I.R. Netton, “Rihla,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. eds. P. Bearman et al. (Brill Online, 2008).

³⁴ Al-Tahtawi was particularly fond of *saj'*, and his translations often made ample use it despite the fact that it varied the meaning and detracted from a literal translation. See Euben, *Journeys*, 49.

³⁵ Ibn Juzayy, who wrote the *ribla* of Ibn Battuta, copied several passages from Ibn Jubayr’s *ribla*, which many scholars have taken to mean that he lied about many of Ibn Battuta’s trips. See Euben, *Journeys*, 47.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 117.

³⁷ See al-Saffar, *Disorienting Encounters*.

author's linguistic, cultural, and historical understanding of the world.³⁸ As Roxanne Euben points out, al-Tahtawi's observations about French manners and practices present what his audience would consider the most unusual or strange.³⁹ Al-Tahtawi himself warned his readers that some things in the *Takblis* were contrary to their customs and difficult to believe, but asked that they take comfort in his commitment to honesty.⁴⁰

The *Takblis* is divided into two parts, starting with an introduction and preface explaining why al-Tahtawi travelled, and including some general geographical information about Europe and its place in the world. The body of the book consists of six topical essays, each divided into subsections. The first and second essays deal with the journey to France and the students' stay in Marseilles while in quarantine. The third essay is perhaps the most studied as it offers a survey of life in Paris and the organization of the French state and education system. The fourth essay details al-Tahtawi's studies. The fifth focuses on the revolution of 1830, while the sixth essay provides a discussion of arithmetic, logic, the French language, and some other miscellaneous sciences. For the purposes of this analysis, the third, fourth, and sixth essays are most important.

Some scholars have understood the *Takblis* as a statement of Islamic civilization's inferiority to its European counterpart.⁴¹ Indira Falk Gesink characterizes the *Takblis* as al-Tahtawi's first work of educational criticism, arguing that in describing the French educational system, he was implicitly comparing it with *kuttab* and *madrassa* education.⁴² Gesink's argument is predicated on the idea that the *Takblis* would not have been received well by Azhari readers. Her engagement with the work

³⁸ Euben, *Journeys*, 49.

³⁹ Euben, *Journeys*, 117.

⁴⁰ Al-Tahtawi, *Takblis*, 17-18; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 105.

⁴¹ For example, see C. Ernest Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 3-23; and Vatikiotis, *Modern History of Egypt*, 116.

⁴² Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 29-35.

does not take into account its conformity to the *ribla* genre.⁴³ Al-Tahtawi's account of French practices in education and their general scientific progress is consistent with the conventions of *aja'ib*, and should not be taken as an expression of his preference for Western practice and culture or, alternatively, as a critique of Egyptian analogs, except when he is explicit.⁴⁴

Reading al-Tahtawi's description of his education in France with attention to *aja'ib* reveals a less charged account of French civilization and practice. Almost everything he described is unusual when compared to *kuttab* and *madrasa* education in Egypt, from the use of simple texts geared to teach children French in comparison with use of the Qur'an as the basic text for teaching Arabic, to the division of the day into several classes on different subjects, as opposed to the less structured meeting of the *halqa*. In the third essay, al-Tahtawi devoted several pages to a discussion of the reasons why the French have made progress in the science and the arts. He began with a description of the attitude of the French culture toward knowledge generally, and then moved to a discussion of "learned societies, famous schools, and libraries."⁴⁵ This section is replete with instances of *aja'ib* and comparative moments, which in the absence of awareness of the *ribla* genre led scholars like Gesink to misconstrue it as a critique of Arabic scholarship and literary practice.

Al-Tahtawi marveled at the simplicity of the French language and literary style in comparison with Arabic, and explained that one does not need to devote a lot of time to learn the language, and that anyone with a sound understanding of French can read any book, as the style of writing is clear. He compared this with complexity of Arabic prose, which used *saj'* and elaborate metaphors, not to

⁴³ Her only evidence that the travelogue was not received well by ulama is from a single incident Edward Lane reported in a footnote to his translation of *One Thousand and One Nights*. He reports that a shaykh waiting in line to buy the *Takhlis* misconstrued it as an account of al-Tahtawi's indiscretions while in Europe, drinking, eating pork, and "delighting with French girls." Gesink herself points out that this quotation is ambiguous in making any assertion that the ulama did not like al-Tahtawi's book, but rather should be used as an indication that the book was popular. See Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 34-35.

⁴⁴ It is possible that this was how his account was read by his contemporaries at al-Azhar. However, this was not al-Tahtawi's intention. The *Takhlis*' conformed to the *ribla* genre, which demanded a more explicit tone in the writing of criticism. See Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 29.

⁴⁵ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 190; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 260.

mention the lack of short vowels and the imprecision in hand-copied manuscripts. He attributed the ease of use of the French language to a natural propensity the French people had to acquire learning, explaining that they typically have a comprehensive knowledge of all that they have studied and could discuss any number of profound scientific questions even without deep expertise.⁴⁶

Of French scholars, he chose to discuss the practice of specialization in a particular field of study. He remarked on the distinction between the use of the term scholar in French as signifying a man of intellectual distinction who has obtained an academic degree, rather than any man of letters; a teacher or priest is not considered a scholar as they are in Egypt. He noted the various academic societies that support the research of these scholars, comparing the Académie Française to the Akadimat Misr or Egyptian Academy, a neologism that he coined to refer to the Azhar mosque and *diman* or council of its greatest scholars.⁴⁷ Here he included more unusual examples of such groups, like the Society of Book Lovers, the Bureau of Longitudes, and the Society for the Improvement of Wool, another case of the use of *aja'ib*.⁴⁸

Since his exposure to primary education outside of language instruction was limited, his description of the French school system focused mainly on secondary and higher education institutions, including those that were considered open to the Egyptian students after their preparatory education. He discussed the five royal colleges that teach “important practical sciences,” namely composition, ancient languages, sciences, mathematics, history, geography, philosophy, elementary physics, drawing, and calligraphy. He made special mention of the fact that in the six-year program of these colleges, students advanced with differing levels of accomplishment.⁴⁹ The

⁴⁶ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 187; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 256.

⁴⁷ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 195; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 268.

⁴⁸ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 196-8; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 270-71.

⁴⁹ One can speculate that this was unusual for him as the *madrassa* system demanded the memorization of a text and its commentaries before an *ijaza* would be issued for that student, whereas the French system used examinations as assessment of progress and allowed students who had not achieved perfection to move to the next level.

most prestigious of the educational institutions in al-Tahtawi's estimation was the Collège Royal de France, which was run by Silvestre de Sacy, a prominent Orientalist with whom al-Tahtawi had contact.⁵⁰ Of primary schools he mentioned the pensions, or private boarding schools (which he and his classmates experienced after the first year of preparatory instruction), and remarked that in addition to accommodations and full board, children's laundry was also taken care of on the premises.⁵¹ The rest of the section described the print culture of France at the time.⁵²

Having given an overview of the "sciences and arts of Paris," al-Tahtawi moved on to describe his personal experiences with education in France. Much of the two-year long preparatory study from his perspective was discussed in the previous chapter on the student missions, but to review, the curriculum consisted of French language and grammar, drawing, arithmetic, geography, and history. At the end of the preparatory period, the students began specialized studies in fields determined by the Pasha's requirements and their individual aptitudes. For most of the students, this meant attending classes organized by the school's director Jomard, or advancing to study at institutions of higher education in and around Paris. Since al-Tahtawi was the only student studying translation, he undertook many private lessons in language and translation with a military engineer by the name of Chevalier with whom al-Tahtawi had boarded during the second year of preparatory studies, and a certain Laumonerie.⁵³ In addition, he was introduced to and carried on

⁵⁰ The five royal colleges in Paris to which al-Tahtawi referred were those named for Louis le Grand, Henri IV, St. Louis, the Collège de Bourbon, and Charlemagne. Louis le Grand operated off and on since 1582, under many different names. Henri IV was opened in 1796. St. Louis was opened in 1820. Charlemagne was established in 1815. The Collège de Bourbon was opened in 1800. All of these institutions operate as Lycées or public secondary schools in Paris today.

⁵¹ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 200-01; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 274.

⁵² Al-Tahtawi is very openly critical of newspapers, writing that "There is nothing more mendacious on this earth than newspapers, especially those of the French, who avoid lying merely because it is a human frailty. In general, the people who write for these newspapers are worse than poets in terms of their prejudice against or in favor of certain things." As translated in al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 275.

⁵³ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 219; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 292.

correspondence with some of the leading Orientalists of the day, among them Silvestre de Sacy, Caussin de Percevel, and Joseph-Toussaint Reinaud.⁵⁴

Describing this period in his *Takhlis*, he spent little effort describing the nature of his studies except to give a comprehensive list of all that he read. This is unlike his detailed description of the preparatory studies, in which he elaborated the rigor of the schedule – how many hours were spent on what subjects, how the subjects were divided for study over the week, the nature of accommodations, and the rules to which he and his colleagues were subject. It appears that he described the preparatory studies by resorting to the convention of *aja'ib*, which required detailed description because he found them so unusual. His one-on-one translation studies were easier for his audience to understand, as private reading with tutors was similar to the *halqa*. This is especially evident in his characterization of a letter written by his instructor Chevalier to the Ministry of War as an *ijaza*, when the text clearly reads as a testimonial of al-Tahtawi's character and evaluation of his skills, rather than a license to teach.⁵⁵ This experience, which made up the bulk of his education in Paris, was integral to how he framed the knowledge he acquired abroad in relation to the studies he undertook while at al-Azhar, insofar as he found the process very similar and perhaps even judged the knowledge acquired in both experiences as having the same value.

Instead of specializing in a particular field of study and limiting his translation skills to one or two subjects, during his specialized studies he consumed a variety of subjects. He covered what he read while abroad in great detail. Al-Tahtawi either personally translated or oversaw the translation of many of these works mentioned when he took the directorship of the School of Languages. Many if not all of the translations produced by the bureau of translation at the School of Languages were

⁵⁴ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 213-18; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 282-29; Al-Tahtawi includes several letters he exchanged with these individuals in his *Takhlis*, which is also a common trope of the Arabic literary style. As Daniel Newman puts it, the inclusion of *taqariz* or laudatory statements about the author, written by important men, ulama in particular, helped endorse the utility and value of the work. See al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 89.

⁵⁵ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 229; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 305.

intended as textbooks and reference books for the new system of technical schools. An examination of what al-Tahtawi read and encountered while abroad can give us an idea of the kinds of knowledge that were considered useful by the French administration of the first mission and the Egyptian officials involved in the expansion of the schools and the production of indigenous experts.

Al-Tahtawi explained that he took three years to master French grammar and composition, studying Charles-François L'Homond's *Eléments de la grammaire française* (1780), as well as other unnamed grammar texts.⁵⁶ He read broadly in western classical and world history. He and his classmates studied P.C. Levesque's *Vie et Apophtegms des Philosophes Grecs* (1795).⁵⁷ As a part of his specialized study he read a book which he described as an abridgement of ancient world history and mythology, Depping's *Aperçu Historique* (1826), Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence* (1734), Abbé Barthelemy's *Voyage de Jeune Anarchisis en Grèce, dans le milieu de IV^e Siècle avat l'ère vulgaire* (1788), Louis-Phillippe de Ségur's *Histoire Universelle Ancienne et Moderne* (1821-22), Paul Phillippe Segur's *Histoire de Napoléon et de la Grande Armée pendant l'Année 1812* (1824), and three other books, one that he referred to as *Panorama of the World*, and travelogues on the Ottoman State and Algeria.⁵⁸

He studied two works of arithmetic and geometry, Étienne Bezout's *Traité d'Arithmétique à la Usage de la Marine et de l'Artillerie* (1798), and the third volume of Adrien-Marie Legendre's *Eléments de*

⁵⁶ Charles-François L'Homond, *Éléments de la Grammaire Française* (Paris: Chez Colas, 1780); Al-Tahtawi, "Takhliis," 219; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 293.

⁵⁷ P.C. Levesque, *Vie et Apophtegms des Philosophes Grecs* (Paris: Debure l'Aîné, 1795).

⁵⁸ Georges Bernard Depping, *Aperçu Historique sue les Moeurs et Coutumes des Nations* (Paris: Bureaux de l'Encyclopédie portative, 1826); Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et leur Décadence* (Paris: Huart, Clousier Guillyn, 1734); Abbé Barthélemy, *Voyage de Jeune Anarcharsis en Grèce, dans le Milieu du Quatrième Siècle avant l'Ère Vulgaire* (Paris, 1788); Louis-Phillippe de Ségur, *Histoire Universelle Ancienne et Moderne* (Paris: A. Eymery, 1821-22); and Philippe de Ségur *Histoire de Napoleon et de la Grande Armée pendant l'Année 1812* (Paris: Baudoin Frères, 1824). See al-Tahtawi, "Takhliis," 220; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 292-93.

Géométrie (1794).⁵⁹ In geography, he began by studying an unnamed book with Chevalier, which he describes as comprising historical geography, physical geography, mathematical geography, and political geography. Then he read Conrad Malte Brun's introduction to his *Dictionnaire Géographique Portatif* (1827), and subsequently read the first book of this compendium with another teacher.⁶⁰ He also studied large extracts of Malte-Brun's *Précis de la Géographie Universelle* (1810-29).⁶¹ In logic he studied César Chesneau Du Marsais' *La Logique* (1769), several sections of *La Logique du Port-Royal* (1662) by Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, as well as *La Logique* (1780) by Etienne Bonnot de Condillac.⁶² In literature and philosophy, he read a collection compiled by François Joseph Michel Noël titled *Leçons de Littérature et de Morale* (1805), and philosophical works by Voltaire, Racine, Condillac, and Rousseau.⁶³ He made special mention of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (1721), which he claimed "strikes a balance between Western and Eastern morals."⁶⁴ He also read Count Chesterfield's instructional letters on education to his son, as well as many works of fiction.⁶⁵ On the subject of law he studied Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui's *Elémens du Droit Naturel et Devoirs de l'Homme et du Citoyen* *Tells qu'ils lui Sont Prescrits par la Loi Naturelle* (1764), which he translated as a part of his

⁵⁹ Étienne Bezout *Traité Arithmétique à Usage de la Marine et de l'Artillerie* (Paris: Chez Louie, 1798) and Adrien-Marie Legendre, *Éléments de Géométrie, avec des Notes* (Paris: F. Didot, 1794). See al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 220; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 293.

⁶⁰ Conrad Malte-Brun, *Dictionnaire Géographie Portatif, Contenant la Description Générale et Particulière des Cinq Parties du Monde Connue, Revue... et Précédé d'un Vocabulaire de Mots Génériques* (Paris: C. Gosselin, 1827).

⁶¹ Conrad Malte-Brun, *Précis de la Géographie Universelle, ou Description de Toutes les Parties du Monde, sur un Plan Nouveau, d'Après les Grandes Divisions Naturelles du Globe, Précédée de l'Histoire de la Géographie Chez les Peuples Anciens et Modernes, et d'Une Théorie Générale de la Géographie Mathématique, Physique et Politique, et Accompagnée de Cartes, de Tableaux Analytiques, Synoptiques et Élémentaires* (8 vols.; Paris: F. Buisson, 1810-1829).

⁶² César Chesneau Du Marsais, *Logique et Principes de Grammaire* (2 vols.; Paris: Briasson, 1769); Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *La Logique ou l'Art de Penser Contenant, Outre les Règles Communes, Plusieurs Observations Nouvelles, Propres à Former le Jugement* (Paris: J. de Launau, 1662); and Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *La Logique, ou Les Premiers Développement de l'Art de Penser* (Paris: l'Esprit et de Bure l'Aîné, 1780).

⁶³ François Joseph Michel Noël, *Leçons de Littérature et de Morale, ou Recueil en Prose et en Vers des Plus Beaux Morceaux de Notre Langue dans la Littérature des Deux Derniers Siècles* (2 vols.; Paris: Le Normant, 1805).

⁶⁴ Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu *Lettres Persanes* (2 vols.; Cologne: Chez P. Marteau, 1721).

⁶⁵ Eugenia Stanhope ed, *Letters Written by the Late Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to his son Philip Stanhope* (2 vols.; London: J. Dodsley, 1774). The French edition is *Lettres de Comte de Chesterfield à son fils Philip Stanhope... avec Quelques Outres Pieces sur Divers Sujets* (4 vols.; Paris: Volland Aîné et Jeune, Ferra Aîné, H. Verdier, 1779).

studies, but never published.⁶⁶ He also read Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des Loix* (1748).⁶⁷ Of Montesquieu, he wrote that that he was the European Ibn Khaldun, while Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), the North African scholar famous for his *Muqadima* (1377), a work of early sociology, was called the eastern Montesquieu. Al-Tahtawi also revealed an interest in reading and translating daily and monthly newspapers for their political coverage, despite his critical take on the genre. He had a special interest in articles on the 1828-29 conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.⁶⁸

In his assessment of al-Tahtawi's accomplishments as his student, Chevalier commented especially on his student's zeal for learning. Al-Tahtawi was apparently so voracious a reader that he would work for long periods into the night, causing him to weaken his eyesight in his left eye. He consulted a doctor who prescribed rest and refraining from reading at night, which al-Tahtawi blatantly ignored. He was so eager to make progress that when he required books outside what the Egyptian state provided for, he spent his own stipend to purchase books. He also employed an outside tutor to help in his translation studies outside of his work with Chevalier.⁶⁹

From his personal library it is possible to gain some idea of what these extra texts were, and what al-Tahtawi's personal interests may have been. A partial list of his personal collection of French books is included in the appendix, but to give a short overview, his extracurricular book collecting focused mainly in the subjects of history and historical method, but he also seemed to be very interested in geography, as he had saved several copies of the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, as well as several volumes on geography, including a textbook and travelogues. He also was very

⁶⁶ Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui, *Elémens du Droit Naturel et Devoirs de l'Homme et du Citoyen tels qu'ils lui Sont Prescrits par la Loi Naturelle* (Geneva, 1764).

⁶⁷ Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des Loix ou du Rapport que les Loix Doivent Avoir avec la Constitution de Chaque Gouvernement, les Moeurs, le Climat, la Religion, le Commerce... à Quoi l'Auteur a Ajouté des Recherches Nouvelles sur les Loix Romaines Touchant les Successions, sur les Loix Françaises, & sur les Loix Féodales*. (2 vols.; Geneva: Chez Barrillot & Fils, 1748).

⁶⁸ Al-Tahtawi includes a translation of a fictional letter from a French volunteer in the Muscovite army to a Brigadier in Paris. See al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 221-24; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 297.

⁶⁹ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 229; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 305.

interested in contemporary French political affairs, having collected several books on French politics, law, and military affairs. He consumed many books outside the requirements of his course of study, and he saw to it that almost every text he read abroad was translated, either by him or by his students. Al-Tahtawi's diverse course of study was not merely guided by his French instructors, but supplemented by his own desire to be exposed to as much knowledge as possible during his short stay in Paris.⁷⁰

In the three years following his preparatory studies, al-Tahtawi completed full or partial translations of twelve texts. It is unclear whether al-Tahtawi himself chose what to translate or if his instructors assigned these particular texts. Many of the shorter translations he undertook were included in the text of the *Takhlis*, like that of a treatise on hygiene entitled "Advice from a Doctor." Some of the longer translations he completed were eventually published in Egypt. These include Cyprien-Prosper Brard's *Minéralogie Populaire* (1826), published at Bulaq as *Al-Ma'adin al-Nafi'a li-Tadbir Ma'ayish al-Khala'i* (1833) and Depping's *Aperçu Historique sur les Moeurs et Coutumes des Nations* (1826) translated and published under the name *Qala'id al-Mafakhir fi Gharib al-Awa'il wa al-Awakbir* (1833).⁷¹ The remaining translations were as follows: an extract of a history book about Alexander the Great, an almanac pertaining to Egypt and Syria, sections of books on geometry, cosmography, military operations, and ancient Greek mythology.⁷²

The jury convened to assess his progress at the end of his studies found his abilities satisfactory, explaining that he was able to faithfully render French expressions in Arabic without modifying the meaning of the translated original. Though sometimes his translations did not mirror the original adequately, as he would translate a sentence using several sentences, or he would repeat

⁷⁰ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 229; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 305.

⁷¹ Cyprien-Prosper Brard, *Minéralogie Populaire, ou Avis aux Cultivateurs et aux Artisans, sur les Terres, les Pierres, les Sables, les Métaux et les Sels qu'ils Emploient Journallement, le Charbon de Terre, la Tourbe, la Recherche des Mines, etc.* (Paris: L. Colas, 1826). The Arabic translation by al-Tahtawi was *Al-Ma'adin al-Nafi'a li-Tadbir ma'ayish al-Khala'iq* (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1833).

⁷² Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 226-27; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 302.

the same idea in different ways, this did not stray from the spirit of the original. They added that when translating books of science, he must do away with paraphrasing and even go as far as to invent language that is appropriate to the meaning.⁷³ Despite this mild criticism, they found his skills competent enough to “make himself useful to his country in translating important books that are necessary for the spread of the sciences and whose proliferation is desirable in civilized countries.”⁷⁴

Even at this early stage in his career as a translator, al-Tahtawi had already begun to experiment in ways to employ Arabic literary conventions to indigenize the knowledge contained in his translations. Particular mention of this is made in the section of the *Takhlis* on his final examination. Al-Tahtawi included a report on his examination written by Jomard, which was published in the *Revue Encyclopedique* in November 1831. In this report, his use of Arabic metaphor rather than literal translation of French metaphor is noted, using an example. In translating the French phrase “a mine from which this or that is extracted,” he chose to use the Arabic phrase, “a sea from which pearls are won.”⁷⁵ In another part of the *Takhlis*, he elaborated on how Arabic and French rhetoric compare, explaining that the arts of eloquence, hidden meanings of words and stylistic embellishments are more perfected in Arabic than in European languages.⁷⁶ This is partially due to the fact that unlike Arabic where rhymed prose is commonplace, the French “do not have the required knowledge of poetry in order to actually compose it.”⁷⁷ However, he also contended that eloquence in a particular language did not mean that a translated version of that phrase would retain its elegance in another. He used the examples of the following Arabic similes: a woman’s saliva like wine, or a virgin’s vulva like a rose that has not yet bloomed, explaining that both of these phrases

⁷³ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 227; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 303.

⁷⁴ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 228; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 304.

⁷⁵ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 227; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 303.

⁷⁶ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 272; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 342.

⁷⁷ Al-Tahtawi, “Takhlis,” 270-71; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 339.

are beautiful in Arabic, but crude in French.⁷⁸ These passages give us some idea of al-Tahtawi's early philosophy of translation, which was predicated on rendering the French in the proper Arabic literary style, adding the appropriate metaphors, rhyming flourishes, and appropriate Islamic scholarly references while still retaining the clear meaning of the original.

Al-Tahtawi honed his translation skills further upon his return to Egypt, as one of the few returning students to be employed in his field of specialization. Though he was first employed as a translator and French instructor in the School of Medicine (1831-33) and then at the Artillery School at Tura (1833-36), he was also given administrative duties in a preparatory school attached to the School of Medicine. Even before his appointment as director of the School of Languages, he had revised and published the first edition of the *Takhlis* in 1834. In addition, he had completed and published his translations of Brard's text on mineralogy and Depping's book on mores and customs in 1832 and 1833 respectively. He also revised a translation of a French Veterinary Manual, and compiled a geographical manual based on the works of Humboldt, Maissas, and Michelot (whose work he had translated while in Paris). He was also able to complete his translation of the first volume of Malte-Brun's *Précis de Géographie Universelle*, for which the Pasha granted him an honorary military promotion to the rank of *saghaqul aghasi*, which was between a captain and a major.⁷⁹ By the time he proposed the opening of a school of translation, and was appointed as its second director, he was a seasoned translator with ample experience in administering preparatory education.

Al-Tahtawi's educational formation was the basis of his educational philosophy, which he implemented in his directorship of the School of Languages. From the beginning, al-Tahtawi was trained in an atmosphere that valued knowledge regardless of its classification as Islamic or European. At al-Azhar, his zeal for learning and his mentorship with Hasan al-Attar inspired an

⁷⁸ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 273; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 343.

⁷⁹ James Heyworth-Dunne, "Rifa'ah Badawi Rafi' at-Tahtawi: The Egyptian Revivalist," *Journal of the British Society of Orientalist Studies*, 9, 4 (1939), 965; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 40-46.

open-minded approach to the knowledge he attained while abroad. The strong footing he acquired in the Arabic language and the relevant Islamic religious studies gave him a frame of reference from which to engage with the French texts he translated. His approach to translation aimed for clarity of meaning, while imbuing it with the appropriate literary flourishes to make it legible to Egyptian readers.

Al-Tahtawi's belief in the value for knowledge regardless of its origins is exemplified in the introduction to the *Takhlis*, in which he quotes the *hadith*, "wisdom is the stray sheep of the believer who must seize it wherever he finds it."⁸⁰ He quotes it together with Ptolemy, who wrote "take the pearls from the sea and the musk from the rat, gold from the stone and wisdom from him who speaks it," to show that wisdom despite its origins is valued by both the Islamic and classical traditions.⁸¹ He goes as far as to admit that he composed this work to "urge Islamic countries to examine the foreign sciences, arts, and crafts, as their perfection is to be found in Europe."⁸² Many scholars have observed this aspect of al-Tahtawi's disposition in passing reference. For example, Albert Hourani argues that al-Tahtawi lived in a "happy interlude of history" where tensions between East and West were relaxed; though France had already begun its conquest of Algeria at the end of his stay in Paris, he perceived Europe as no political threat, but rather a valuable source for science and material progress.⁸³ This is especially true of his thinking in this early period. His philosophy of cherishing knowledge for knowledge's sake motivated many of his decisions in his administration of the School of Languages.

AL-TAHTAWI'S DIRECTORSHIP OF THE SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

⁸⁰ This type of introduction is typical of the *ribla* genre; they must begin with the appropriate religious acknowledgement of the utility of travel to seek knowledge. See Euben, *Journeys*, 14.

⁸¹ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 25; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 115.

⁸² Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 17; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 105.

⁸³ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 81.

Al-Tahtawi brought many educational innovations to his directorship of the School of Languages, informed by his personal experience with both European and local forms of education. The curriculum was the first attempt to create an indigenous version of a comprehensive, general education. It brought together local methods and indigenous knowledge with European approaches and subject matter in a largely humanities-based approach. It reflected al-Tahtawi's educational philosophy by emphasizing the compatibility of Egyptian and European approaches to knowledge. It was one of the only schools in the government system to recruit exclusively native Egyptian students, and one of the few to phase out the use of European teachers.⁸⁴ The School of Languages was the predecessor to Ali Mubarak Pasha's teachers training college (Dar al-Ulum), and was a direct antecedent to the Faculty of Languages at Cairo's Ayn Shams University, which is still operating today.⁸⁵

Al-Tahtawi's appointment as the director of this school occurred when he was the only native Egyptian member of the newly formed Council of Schools (Diwan al-Madaris), which oversaw the entire government school system. It was while serving on the predecessor to this council that al-Tahtawi proposed the idea for a school to train translators which would eventually serve as a translation bureau as well, centralizing translating operations for the government schools rather than appointing a single translator for each school.⁸⁶ In June 1836, the Pasha acted on this idea, creating the School of Translation (Madrasat al-Tarjama) as one of the special schools under the directorship of Ibrahim Adham Effendi.⁸⁷ When the schools were further reorganized and

⁸⁴ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 268.

⁸⁵ Al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 47.

⁸⁶ Al-Shayyal, *Tarikh al-Tarjama*, 39.

⁸⁷ Ibrahim Adham Effendi was a former officer in the Ottoman army who was drawn to Muhammad Ali's reforms, who had Saint Simonian inclinations and rose in rank in the Pasha's army to eventually become Minister of Education. See al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 60.

transferred to the Council of Schools from the War Council (Diwan al-Jihadiyya), the school was renamed the School of Languages and the Pasha appointed al-Tahtawi director.⁸⁸

The school was set up as a five-year program, which could be extended to six years if necessary. Students were examined at the end of each year to determine whether they were ready to advance.⁸⁹ The majority of the first students were recruited from Upper Egypt; the remainder came from two former preparatory schools, the Royal School of Civil Administration (Madrasat al-Idara al-Malikiyya) and the School of History and Geography (Madrasat al-Tarikh wa al-Jugrafiyya). Both preparatory schools were antecedents to the School of Languages in their own right, administered by graduates of the first student mission and established to train bureaucrats and translators for the newly reformed civil administration.⁹⁰ The students' ages ranged from fourteen to eighteen, and all were native Egyptians.⁹¹ Though the school did not teach any military subjects, it was run like a military school insofar as student achievements and adherence to discipline were directly correlated with their ability to move up in organizational rank.⁹² Graduates were expected to take up jobs within the education system, either as teachers or as translators attached to the translation bureau at the School of Languages, which was opened in 1842.

While the school was founded to educate translators, the curriculum emphasized general education to a degree that was unknown in the other schools within the government system. The other schools tended to focus on a particular subject such as military engineering, medicine, and so on. In light of al-Tahtawi's educational experience in France, and what we know of his voracious desire to diversify his knowledge beyond his specialization in translation, it is not surprising that this was the case. The school's examination committee made the decisions about the initial curriculum in

⁸⁸ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 266.

⁸⁹ John Bowring, *Report on Egypt and Candia* (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1840), 134.

⁹⁰ Al-Shayyal, *Tarikh al-Tarjama*, 38-39.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 38.

⁹² Al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 47; and Bowring, *Report*, 134.

December 1836. The school consisted of two specializations – those students who would learn to translate from French to Arabic, and those who were already proficient in literary Arabic who would also learn to translate from French to Turkish. Within these specializations, they implemented a system of tracking the students by their aptitude and educational background into three sections by language. All students were required to take supplementary coursework in history, geography, and arithmetic, in addition to rigorous language study in their chosen languages. English was added later on.⁹³

Each language had its own specific coursework tailored to each section. French and Arabic had three sections each, while Turkish had only two sections. In French, the first section studied and was examined in reading, writing, common expressions, grammar, inflection, and translation. The second section learned reading, writing, and expressions. The third section studied reading and writing only. In Arabic, the first section studied reading, writing, advanced grammar, metaphors, and case endings. The second section studied reading, writing and advanced grammar, while the third section studied reading, writing, and basic grammar. In Turkish, the first section studied proverbs, structure, grammar, dictation, and writing. The second section studied proverbs, structure, grammar, and dictation. This curriculum was subject to change each year as needed.⁹⁴

What set this curriculum apart was the fact that it made the use of indigenous teaching methods and textbooks, as al-Tahtawi felt that Arabic and Turkish were best taught as they were at al-Azhar. To this end, al-Tahtawi employed Azhari shaykhs, including his own teacher, Muhammad al-Damanhuri (d. 1871).⁹⁵ Al-Tahtawi also saw fit to include Islamic texts in the Arabic and Turkish language curriculum. These were not strictly religious texts per se, but rather grammar and literary texts from the Islamic tradition. The students of Arabic were taught from Khalid al-Azhari's (d.

⁹³ Al-Shayyal, *Tarikh al-Tarjama*, 40.

⁹⁴ Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 192.

⁹⁵ Al-Shayyal, *Tarikh al-Tarjama*, 41.

1499) commentary on Ibn Ajrum's *Al-Muqaddima Al-Ajrumiyya fi Mabadi' Ilm al-Arabiyya*, as well as Hasan al Kafrani's (d. 1788) gloss of the same work. These were ubiquitous grammar texts used at al-Azhar and other *madrasas* within Egypt.⁹⁶ Similarly, the students studying Turkish used *Kitab al-Tuhfa al-Zakiyya fi al-Luga al-Turkiyya*, an anonymously composed medieval grammar.⁹⁷

The School of Languages was one of the few government schools that was not closed in the contraction of the education system in 1841, after the Pasha's defeat in Syria and the subsequent required scaling back of his military operations.⁹⁸ It was instead combined with several other schools – the preparatory school at Abu Za'bal, as well as the newly established School of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence (Madraset al-Fiqhiyya wa Shari'a Islamiyya) and the pre-existing School of Accountancy (Madrasa al-Muhasaba) in 1842. The combined schools were placed under the directorship of al-Tahtawi. The creation of the law school marked the first foray of the government schools into teaching strictly religious knowledge – Islamic jurisprudence, alongside French law. Al-Tahtawi again drew from al-Azhar's ranks to employ teachers who could teach Islamic jurisprudence of the Hanafi school, and required all law students to comply with the School of Languages' course requirements as well, demanding that they study two languages, history, geography, and arithmetic.

Though al-Tahtawi's duties as the director of the school and a member of the Council of Schools kept him quite busy, he remained devoted to his work as a translator and teacher at the school. He personally helped choose the students, traveling to Upper Egypt every year to do so. He picked which European texts were required by the schools and would assign which students and graduates of the school were to translate them. He would review their translations of the books, editing and correcting the text before publication. And he would teach language (presumably Arabic

⁹⁶ Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 192; Gesink elaborates on the use of this text at al-Azhar, explaining that the 12th century text and its commentaries were extremely complex medieval treatise that were difficult for children to engage with. See Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 30.

⁹⁷ Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 192.

⁹⁸ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 223.

or French), civil administration, Islamic or French law, with no consideration for time, sometimes teaching for three to four hours at a time, at all hours of the day or night, until he or his students became weary.⁹⁹

Reception of this school and al-Tahtawi's efforts to indigenize and inculcate European knowledge was mixed. European evaluations of the school were lackluster. In a confidential report Jomard wrote to the Pasha in 1839, he was very critical of his former star pupil and the school under his charge. Expressing his extreme disappointment in the meager accomplishments of the school at a time when there was "an urgent necessity" for mastering European languages and translating European books, Jomard went as far as to call for the dismissal of al-Tahtawi as the director of the school.¹⁰⁰ A report compiled by Eugene Pellissier for the French Minister of Public Instruction in 1849 similarly gave the school an extremely critical review. It seems that Pellissier visited the school when classes had been suspended by Abbas Pasha, and was only able to observe the operations of the translation bureau. Of the school he wrote, "run by an Arab, it is impossible not to be hit by the flattering difference of European pride," insinuating that Arabs were perhaps incapable of even recognizing the state of the school's disorganization.¹⁰¹

Both men wrote favorably of the schools administered by Europeans, so it is likely that their motives were to encourage further French involvement in the Pasha's reforms, rather than to deliver an entirely truthful review of the schools in question. As the School of Languages was one of the only schools not to employ Europeans except in its initial years, the school's operation was viewed as a threat to the continued involvement of Europeans in the Pasha's administration. Furthermore, as champions of the French civilizing mission, both Jomard and Pellissier would have found al-Tahtawi's pedagogical choice to bring together Arabic and Islamic legal subjects with a

⁹⁹ Al-Shayyal, *Tarikh al-Tarjama*, 40-41.

¹⁰⁰ Alain Silvera, "Edme François Jomard and the Egyptian reforms in 1839," 316.

¹⁰¹ Eugene Pellissier, *Rapport Adressé à M. Le Ministre de l'Instruction et des Cultes* (Paris, 1849), 8.

comprehensive European style curriculum completely at odds with reigning European ideas on the education of Arab peoples.

Despite his European critics, al-Tahtawi enjoyed the unparalleled support of Muhammad Ali. When one of the ranked officials of the school insulted al-Tahtawi's credentials and embezzled student wages, the Pasha overruled the examination committee's decision to punish him by removing him from the school and stripping him of his rank, instead ordering to have the officer receive 300 lashes, after which he was to be exiled.¹⁰² The school had a symbiotic relationship with al-Azhar insofar as it employed Azhari shaykhs, but after the opening of the School of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, critics of al-Tahtawi's efforts emerged among the Azhari *ulama*, who viewed the teaching of Islamic subjects in a European manner as an affront. Prior to the opening of this school, if a student in the government school system required instruction in law, they would seek it out at al-Azhar. The decision of the state to create a law school suggested that al-Azhar could not provide the necessary instruction in a timely fashion, to staff the reorganized legal administration and courts.¹⁰³ Furthermore, it suggested that students undertaking fields like law should be guided to careers of more use to the government. In this way, the school itself was perceived as a direct threat to the religious tradition of education that al-Azhar represented.¹⁰⁴ The closure of the School of Languages in 1851 was related to this perception. Abbas, the successor to the short-lived rule of Ibrahim Pasha, continued the scaling back of educational institutions initiated by his grandfather Muhammad Ali. Abbas attended the *halqas* of Shaykh Ibrahim al-Bajuri (1783-1860), who along with many other scholars at al-Azhar was critical of Muhammad Ali's reforms.¹⁰⁵ His personal piety may have inclined

¹⁰² Jumayi, *Watha'iq al-Ta'lim*, 203-4.

¹⁰³ Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 40.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 39-40.

¹⁰⁵ Aaron Spevack, *The Archetypal Sunni Scholar: Law Theology and Mysticism in the Synthesis of Al-Bajuri* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2014), 12-17.

him to distrust al-Tahtawi.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, Abbas sought to purge the government of French influence. He exiled al-Tahtawi to Khartoum in 1850, where he was made to serve as director of a primary school until Abbas' death in 1854.¹⁰⁷

It is interesting to note that the primary and secondary source material on the School of Languages treat al-Tahtawi's blending of Islamic and European knowledge in its curriculum in different ways. Sources closer in time to al-Tahtawi did not especially highlight the inclusion of Islamic texts. His biographer Salih Majdi, who was al-Tahtawi's student at the School of Languages, only mentions the teaching of Islamic texts with respect to the School of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence.¹⁰⁸ Ali Mubarak Pasha, al-Tahtawi's younger contemporary, gives great importance to al-Tahtawi's creativity and dedication to teaching, making especial mention of his classes in *shari'a*, which he presumably taught after the attachment of the jurisprudence school.¹⁰⁹ Neither mention the use of the Arabic grammar texts as anything out of the ordinary, suggesting a general perception in this early period that the two epistemological traditions were compatible.

In great contrast, later historians of Egyptian education like James Heyworth-Dunne, Ahmad Izzat Abd al-Karim, and Gamal al-Din al-Shayyal characterize the use of these texts as a great innovation on al-Tahtawi's part, rather than a natural choice given the nature of Arabic language training at this time, which was based on methods used at al-Azhar. They also make no distinction between the use of these texts and the eventual teaching of Hanafi legal scholarship following the attachment of the school of jurisprudence to the School of Languages, treating both as use of Islamic texts, despite the differing contexts of their inclusion.¹¹⁰ Heyworth-Dunne, for instance, remarks that the greatest drawback of modern education in Muslim countries is that Western

¹⁰⁶ For more on Abbas' piety see Cuno, "'Abbas Ḥilmi I."

¹⁰⁷ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 296-97 and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 54.

¹⁰⁸ Majdi, *Hilyat al-Zaman*, 38.

¹⁰⁹ Abd al-Karim, *Tarikh at-Talim fi Misr*, 335.

¹¹⁰ For example, see al-Shayyal, *Tarikh al-Tarjama*, 40.

educational practices were merely copied, and native learning and culture were allowed to drop into the background. Al-Tahtawi, he contends, was aware of this deficiency and worked to rectify it.¹¹¹ Abd al-Karim writes that al-Tahtawi's directorship of the School of Languages deliberately brought together the two very distinct cultures, the new, innovative outlook of the West and the older more established Arab culture of the East, characterized by the culture of debate at al-Azhar.¹¹² In other words, sources more contemporary to al-Tahtawi's own time treat Islamic and European knowledge and pedagogy as compatible within the context of the school, whereas secondary literature anachronistically reads in a great divide that was bridged by al-Tahtawi's foresight.

This moment in the history of Egyptian education in the mid-nineteenth century was fleeting, where religious and government educational practices were brought together with very little contention, merely because they fit together to provide what was considered a comprehensive general education for the purposes of adequately training translators at the time. Al-Tahtawi's general epistemological outlook did not deviate from his advocating for the value of knowledge in spite of its production in Europe. However, once the School of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence was placed under his directorship, his view on the utility of all knowledge became controversial, as religious schools like al-Azhar were more threatened by the ways in which government schools, and this school specifically, encroached on their purview. It was only towards the end of his life that his writings began to include criticism of the intellectual stagnation at al-Azhar, pushing for *ulama* to engage with subjects like science, history, and mathematics.¹¹³

It was in this period, from 1842 on, that the epistemological debate over what fields of study

¹¹¹ Heyworth-Dunne, "Rifa'ah Badawi Rafi' at-Tahtawi," 966.

¹¹² Abd al-Karim, *Tarikh at-Talim fi Misr*, 338.

¹¹³ Gesink *Islamic Reform*, 62-71; For examples of his more critical writings on al-Azhar, see Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, "Baqā' Hasan al-Dhikr bi-Istikhdām al-Fikr," *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 3 (15 Safar 1287/May 16, 1870); and Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, "Ta'rif al-Taqlid wa Tajazza al-Ijtihad," in *Al-Qawl al-Sadid fi al-Ijtihad wa al-Tajdid* (Cairo: Matba'at Wadi al-Nil, 1870).

could be classified as *ilm* began to develop.¹¹⁴ The more conservative definition of the term *ilm* would be knowledge, but specifically knowledge of God, or knowledge that is concerned with religion.¹¹⁵ In the Qu'ran, *ilm* was equated with both true human knowledge and divine knowledge and in the classical lexicon this came to mean knowledge of “definite things,” encompassing both revealed and acquired knowledge.¹¹⁶ The new intellectual elites of the mid-nineteenth century were in the process of redefining the concept of *ilm*, widening the scope of what was once limited to religious studies to a broader concept of any knowledge that could be religiously sanctioned or spiritually beneficial. Hoda Yousef writes that *ilm* straddled multiple dichotomies in this educational discourse, wreaking havoc “on any sort of strict conceptual categorization of “sciences” as either soft or hard, European or Egyptian, secular or religious.”¹¹⁷ The campaign to expand *ilm*, and a conversation about what knowledge or science could be included arose among the Egyptian intellectuals produced by the government schools and in Europe, as well as among religious scholars. The larger legacy of the School of Languages’ unique curriculum and its project of translating European works was its role in informing this discourse, both through its production of indigenized knowledge and intellectuals who pushed the boundaries of *ilm* in scholarship. Before engaging more deeply with the late nineteenth century campaign to legitimize European knowledge within the realm of *ilm* in the following chapter, a useful starting point is al-Tahtawi’s own thoughts on the subject – the culmination of his intellectual development as both a religious scholar and educational reformer.

¹¹⁴ Marwa Elshakry details the transformation of *ilm* from its classical renditions to the narrowing of the term to refer only to science as a more positive and increasingly experimental technical field of expertise and inquiry in the twentieth century. She does so through an assessment of its definition in classical dictionaries from the tenth through eighteenth centuries, contrasting this with more modern dictionaries from the mid-twentieth century. See Elshakry, “Knowledge in Motion,” 705-08.

¹¹⁵ “‘Ilm.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds. P. Bearman et al. (Brill Online, 2016)

¹¹⁶ Elshakry, “Knowledge in Motion,” 708.

¹¹⁷ Hoda Yousef, “Reassessing Egypt’s Dual System of Education under Isma ‘il: Growing *‘Ilm* and Shifting Ground in Egypt’s First Educational Journal, *Rawdat al Madaris*, 1870-77,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 40 (2008), 112.

CONCLUSION:
AL-TAHTAWI'S THOUGHTS ON *ILM AND TALIM*

In his time as director of the School of Languages and head of the translation bureau, al-Tahtawi was instrumental in shaping how the epistemological debate over *ilm* would unfold in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He both chose and controlled what European knowledge was disseminated within Egypt, and how it was indigenized during the height of the translation movement. But how did he figure in this debate? His career upon his return from Sudan took on a new focus: educational reform. Under Said Pasha, al-Tahtawi drafted a plan for the first public schools in Egypt, designed to offer a basic education for all Egyptians. During Ismail Pasha's reign, he continued his work on the Council of Schools, and authored a simplified Arabic grammar primer for use in primary schools. At the intersection of these two trajectories of his career as an educational reformer and translational curator, it is possible to begin to understand his philosophy of what constituted *ilm* (religiously sanctioned knowledge), and how it fit into *ta'lim* (education).

From his *Takhlis* and his engagement with the *rihla* genre, it is possible to unpack al-Tahtawi's early educational philosophy, which was based on the imperative to seek *ilm* wherever one may find it. His outlook conformed to the literary trope of validating the need to travel outside of one's own region to collect valuable information, and it also served the requirements of the Pasha's modernization project. He did not make an effort to argue for the compatibility of foreign sciences with Islam, and merely sought to inspire Muslims to engage with them. His approach was to tread cautiously regarding European knowledge, taking the defensive strategy of only approving "that which does not run counter to the prescriptions of Islamic law."¹¹⁸

By the end of his career, al-Tahtawi was more explicit in advocating for the study and dissemination of indigenized European knowledge within the larger intellectual community, inclusive of the *ulama* and the newly created intellectual elite. His later writings on this subject are in

¹¹⁸ Al-Tahtawi, "Takhlis," 17; and al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 105.

reaction to Azhari resistance to reform. He expressed his view of the role of this knowledge in its application to education at an abstract level in his *Al-Murshid al-Amin lil Banat wa al-Banin*. In this treatise, al-Tahtawi outlined a plan to implement the universal primary education of boys and girls from a young age.¹¹⁹ The curriculum for these schools balanced indigenized European science and arts alongside the study of the Qur'an and the Arabic language, with the explicit purpose of serving the larger Muslim and Egyptian collective.¹²⁰ Al-Tahtawi developed an educational philosophy that addressed the intellectual and social effects of widening *ilm* to include non-religious studies.

True to his Azhari roots, al-Tahtawi's simplified conception of *ilm* was predicated on a redefinition of what constituted beneficial knowledge in the Islamic sense: *ilm yuntafi'a bihi* (beneficial knowledge). This phrase is taken from the *hadith* that recounts the Prophet Muhammad saying that a man's actions could continue after his death in three ways, through charity, a good son, or by leaving behind knowledge from which one could benefit. It was this last term that al-Tahtawi sought to appropriate for knowledge outside the religious sphere as well as within it – as all knowledge had the potential to benefit the *umma*, or larger Muslim community.¹²¹ It is no surprise then that the motto of the educational journal *Rawdat al-Madaris*, which in many ways was the vehicle through which al-Tahtawi and his colleagues sought to prove the validity of this definition, was “learn *ilm* and read.”¹²²

If all knowledge was beneficial to Muslims, what was the role of education in inculcating this knowledge? For al-Tahtawi, education was “the greatest means for a man to acquire knowledge” and

¹¹⁹ Al-Tahtawi's plan called for the primary education of girls and boys together, but that only brighter male students should advance to secondary and higher education. See Kenneth M. Cuno, *Modernizing Marriage: Family, Ideology and Law in Nineteenth and early Twentieth century Egypt* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 94.

¹²⁰ Cuno points out that al-Tahtawi was aware of educational developments in Europe both while in France and after his return. The Guizot law that mandated national education for boys in France was passed in 1833 during his stay in Paris, and the *Murshid* was published just twenty years after the passing of the Falloux law (1850) mandating a system of public education for girls. See Cuno, *Modernizing Marriage*, 93.

¹²¹ Rifa'a al-Tahtawi “Murshid al-Amin lil Banat wa al-Banin” *Al-'amal al-kamila li- Rifa'a Rafi'i al-Tahtawi* ed. Muhammad Imara (5 vols.; Cairo: Al-Hayya al-Misriyya al-Amma lil Kitab, 2010-11), 2: 833-34.

¹²² Yousef, “Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education,” 113.

“a natural part of abstract development that polishes intellect and tames cognition.”¹²³ Education’s purpose was threefold: 1) to promote the development of humankind and foster their physical resources and mental senses, 2) to raise up the individual which in turn helps to develop the nation and religious community, and 3) to generally educate each person for their own fulfillment and personal growth. The advantages of acquiring knowledge through formal education were many in al-Tahtawi’s estimation. It gave people the ability to know accurate and truthful information to counteract backwards customs and traditions. It allowed people to understand the realities of every human condition. It offered people the means to acquire employment, which in turn strengthens the mind, and prevents them from wasting time on trivial matters. Finally it delivered people the benefit of acquainting themselves with good and useful books, which in turn gave them the ability to interact with even the most learned people.¹²⁴

There were three stages in which people could take advantage of the aforementioned virtues of knowledge, and this system made up al-Tahtawi’s conception of public education. At the primary level, the aim was to equalize all subjects in the kingdom through education. The curriculum consisted of learning to read and write, studying the Qur’an, and the basic principles of arithmetic and grammar.¹²⁵ Al-Tahtawi added that this basic education is as necessary to a person as bread and water, and so should be easily available to every child. He adds that this education should be tailored to the needs of its students. For example the poor could not afford a lengthy education, and therefore their teachers should teach the curriculum efficiently and advise their students in the study of useful trades that could provide them with employment.¹²⁶

As for secondary education, al-Tahtawi argued for a more stringent process based on intellectual capability to admit students to the government secondary schools, presumably because

¹²³ Al-Tahtawi “Murshid,” 398.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 413.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 400.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 402.

these students would become employees of the government, tasked with the charge of helping civilize the nation. As more students took on a primary education and succeeded, more of them could advance to this stage of education. The curriculum he conceived called for a comprehensive education in different kinds of mathematics, geography, history, logic, science related to animals, plants and inanimate objects, natural science, chemistry, civil administration, agricultural studies, and foreign languages, so that these students may benefit their nation.¹²⁷

With respect to higher education, al-Tahtawi characterized it as a level of education where one navigates a particular specialization to the level of an expert, as a *faqih* (specialist in Islamic jurisprudence), doctor, astronomer, geographer, or historian is tasked with knowing all there is to know about their particular field of study. There are few such individuals in any particular kingdom, but in order to seek out “the end of knowledge,” it is imperative to foster such hardworking innovators. However, al-Tahtawi placed more importance on government support for education at the primary and secondary schools for the greater good of the country as a whole.

Returning now to the relationship between *ilm* and *ta'lim*. Ultimately, al-Tahtawi felt that when beneficial knowledge was disseminated through education, it could be a powerful force for social improvement, at both the individual and collective levels. This is most clear in his arguments for universal primary education of boys and girls. He contended that the purpose of consuming knowledge through education is to combat ignorance, to find employment, and to enrich lives. His advocacy for the expansion of *ilm* and its practical applications was firmly rooted in his own experience with how education had changed his personal circumstances. He experienced the upward mobility a combination of religious and European education could provide firsthand and enjoyed the fulfillment of a successful career. In this way, al-Tahtawi saw education as first and foremost a means to uplift the Egyptian masses, thereby uplifting Egypt itself.

¹²⁷ Al-Tahtawi “Murshid,” 402.

Al-Tahtawi's contribution to the debate over the expansion of *ilm* was unique for several reasons. He was an early participant in this debate, and one of the few contributing to it who spoke from a place of authority that straddled al-Azhar and the government schools. Al-Tahtawi's ideas were conceived at the cusp of the birth of the concept of secular education, and indeed his ideas about education work actively to dispel a differentiation between religiously sanctioned and indigenized European knowledge. His thought formed the basis for the educational philosophies of many of his colleagues working in government education, especially those whom he personally mentored in the School of Languages. Indeed his arguments about the utility of seeking out knowledge formed the foundation for nationalist arguments for universal public education as a means to strengthen national consciousness. The following chapter will explore what constituted *ilm* in the formative years of the translation movement at the School of Languages and as the education system once again expanded during Ismail's reign.

CHAPTER 4: Expanding Knowledge: Translation and Educational Discourse, 1831-77

This chapter examines how Egyptian intellectuals justified the inclusion of European knowledge by widening concepts of *ilm* in the period of educational expansion under Ismail Pasha (r. 1863-79). Before the introduction of government education in the Muhammad Ali period, the term *ilm* signaled religious knowledge or knowledge from which one could derive spiritual benefit.¹ As European knowledge was indigenized and circulated through the translation movement initiated under Rifa‘a al-Tahtawi’s directorship of the School of Languages, the definition of *ilm* began to shift.² Intellectuals educated in some combination of the government schools, the student missions, and at al-Azhar began to advocate for a broadening of *ilm* to include a wide variety of new subjects, redefining the term to mean beneficial, rather than strictly religious knowledge. This campaign appeared in the Egyptian educational journal *Rawdat al-Madaris al-Misriyya* or *The Garden of the Egyptian Schools* (1870-77), marking a unique moment in the history of modern Egyptian education.³ The journal’s overarching philosophy stressed the compatibility between indigenized European knowledge and pre-existing religious epistemological frameworks. This was the culmination of the negotiation of modernity initiated by the educational project of the Muhammad Ali period, through which hybridized education and knowledge production were explored, before its disruption by the British occupation.

Histories of education have emphasized an opposition between modern secular government schools and traditional Islamic schools in the restructuring of primary and technical education beginning in the Ismail period. These historians contend that the government schools threatened the *madrasa* system, ideologically insofar as they promoted Westernization and secularization, and

¹ For a more extensive discussion of the evolving definition of *ilm*, see the end of Chapter 3.

² See Elshakry, “Knowledge in Motion,” 705-07.

³ *Rawdat al-Madaris al-Misriyya* could also be translated as *The Egyptian School’s Pasture*.

economically and politically as they marginalized the *madrasa* system and the ulama.⁴ In her article on *Rawdat al-Madaris*, Hoda Yousef has made a compelling argument against this older historiography. She highlights the lack of ideological separation between two sides of a bifurcated system of education in the Ismail period. However, her argument still holds that government schools marginalized the role of religious institutions in education.⁵ Her analysis does not fully consider the legacy of the Muhammad Ali period and its aftermath, especially the impact of the School of Languages and its translations on the development of the wide-ranging and all-embracing epistemological framework of the journal.

The government schools had always depended on the *madrasa* system.⁶ The best students and teachers were drawn from al-Azhar, and their religious knowledge was essential to make translated European knowledge legible. *Rawdat al-Madaris* reveals that Egyptians involved in the project of government education were pursuing an increasingly hybridized approach to knowledge, which along with the emergence of hybrid educational institutions like Dar al-Ulum, indicates a potential convergence of the government and religious systems.

The chapter begins by providing background on developments in the government system in the period between the rule of Muhammad Ali and his grandson Ismail. It asks: how did educational priorities change during the reigns of Abbas (r. 1848-54) and Said (r. 1853-63)? It will then turn to a subject-based analysis of what constituted beneficial knowledge, through a comparison of subjects

⁴ As Heyworth Dunne puts it, “(The Egyptians) were familiar with only two kinds of education, that of the mosque and that of the army, the former has been theirs for centuries, the latter for a few decades; the latter had almost ruined the former. . . .” See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 285; See also, Afaf Lutfi Sayyid, “The Ulama of Cairo in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” and Daniel Crecelius, “Nonideological Responses of the Egyptian Ulema to Modernization” in *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 149-66, 167-210.

⁵ Yousef, “Reassessing Egypt’s Dual System of Education,” 110.

⁶ Gregory Starrett shows how religious education evolved into government education at the primary level in both Egypt and England, and explores further how Europeans perceived the *kuttabs* as not fulfilling the standards of even a religious education, with little attention paid to morality. This corroborates both the interdependence of the religious and government systems and the European perception of *kuttabs* as being inadequate. See Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 26-39.

treated in European texts translated during 1836-51 with a sampling of the complete run of *Rawdat al-Madaris*, as presented in Yousef's work. This provides the context for exploring the expansion of *ilm* presented in a sampling of *Rawdat al-Madaris*.⁷ The analysis will center on how contributors combined indigenous and religious knowledge to address questions of intellectual importance on the grounds that they were compatible with pre-existing frameworks. It will also address the ways in which the journal reflected changes in educational practices and the inclusion of European knowledge. Using the journal to demonstrate the trend towards hybridized frameworks of knowledge and education, the chapter will then turn to tracing the reasons why the anachronistic secular-versus-religious binary persists in scholarship about education in this period. It does so through an engagement with early criticism of al-Azhar and the ulama by reformists like al-Tahtawi and Mubarak that could have been misinterpreted. This examination will show that government and religious education in the Ismail period were interdependent, heading towards a hybridized convergence of curricular approaches and institutions, until the British occupation.

EDUCATION AFTER THE PASHA'S REIGN

Many histories of modern Egypt that treat the subject of education in the nineteenth century overlook the period between the reigns of Muhammad Ali and Ismail. They assume that it was devoid of educational activity, and therefore unimportant in the history of educational reform. However, the educational culture that developed under Ismail did not emerge in a vacuum. Abbas and Said Pasha continued to scale back educational institutions, a policy initiated in the 1840s under Muhammad Ali. However, they did invest in education and had their own particular views on its reform. Abbas in particular was instrumental in placing native Egyptians who were educated in

⁷ For the purposes of this chapter, select issues of the journal from 1870-72 were examined. By 1873, the reformers responsible for advancing the inclusive philosophy of the journal, Ali Mubarak and al-Tahtawi, were no longer involved in its production. In addition, the first two years of the journal's production coincide with the final years of educational expansion during Ismail's reign.

Muhammad Ali's schools, the student missions, and at al-Azhar in government positions, creating the precedent continued by Ismail when the school system was expanded during his reign.

The final seven years of the Pasha's reign were marked by a severe reduction in educational activity. Following the peace treaty that granted Muhammad Ali's family hereditary rule of Egypt, plans were circulated to rein in the educational budget in 1841. With the requirement to scale back the number of standing Egyptian troops, educational institutions were no longer a priority.

According to Hamont, Ibrahim, Abbas, and Sharif Pasha (Muhammad Ali's finance minister) devised a plan to close most of the primary, preparatory, and technical schools.⁸ Funding for schools would be reduced by fifty percent. Only three primary schools were kept open after 1841, when the plan went into effect. All were closed by 1849. Only nine technical schools were kept open: four military schools, and the schools of languages, engineering, medicine, veterinary science, and arts and crafts.⁹ Heyworth-Dunne summarizes several contemporary accounts of European visitors to the schools in this period, which report that the activities of the schools had also been curtailed, with the number of students greatly reduced.¹⁰

This was the educational legacy Abbas inherited when he assumed the throne after the death of Ibrahim Pasha in 1848.¹¹ Abbas was the last of the Pasha's grandsons to have an Ottoman education, and was a pious man, known to frequent lectures at al-Azhar.¹² He also notoriously had bad blood with Ibrahim and purged many officials appointed by Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim. This earned him the undeserved reputation of a "reactionary" who desired to undo many of the

⁸ Hamont, *L'Égypte sous Méhémet Ali*, 2: 514.

⁹ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 231-35.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 235-43.

¹¹ Negative renderings of Abbas's character in historical works began with the school of historians patronized by the kings Fuad and Farouk, who lacked an incentive to challenge the negative image of Abbas, and instead fueled rumors of his homosexuality. Stories of his debauchery should be contextualized within similar tales about other members of the khedival family. See Cuno, "Abbas Hilmi I.," and also Ehud Toledano, *State and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 108-134.

¹² Kenneth M. Cuno and Aaron Spevack, "al-Bajuri, Ibrahim b. Muhammad," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, eds. Kate Fleet et al. (Brill Online, 2016).

modernizing reforms enacted by the Pasha.¹³ However, Abbas sustained many of the Pasha's reforms, keeping the government centralized in his ruling household, maintaining its hierarchical bureaucracy and reducing the conscript army. Though he did appoint his own *mamluks* and retainers in place of the men favored by the Pasha, and dismissed many (but not all) Frenchmen serving in the regime, he replaced these men with native Egyptians who had been educated in the government system, beginning a policy of looking within Egypt to replace the ranks of the bureaucracy, rather than recruiting Turks and others from abroad.¹⁴

Abbas' educational policies continued the reduction of educational institutions initiated in the last years of his grandfather's reign, though he pursued educational projects distinct from the Pasha's project. Fifteen schools were still open when Abbas came to power, including five primary schools, and the schools of infantry, cavalry, artillery, veterinary science, languages, engineering, arts and crafts, the naval and medical schools, and one secondary school.¹⁵ These schools were reorganized immediately after Abbas came to power. He closed a further three primary schools, and the infantry, cavalry, and naval schools were shuttered in January 1849. The artillery school was shut down by 1850. The veterinary school, high school, and school of languages and accountancy were closed in 1851, though the translation bureau of the latter institution was not closed until Said's reign. Al-Tahtawi was among those loyal to the Pasha who was exiled by Abbas, and Mubarak took over the translation bureau in his place, using it to provide textbooks for the schools still in operation.¹⁶ By 1852, only four schools remained, the civil school known as *Amaliyyat*, the

¹³ Kenneth M. Cuno, "Egypt to c. 1919," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam, vol. 5, The Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance*, ed. Francis Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 88.

¹⁴ Mubarak was among these native Egyptian experts employed by Abbas' regime and was instrumental in seeing to the employment of native Egyptian engineers to oversee government work. See F. Robert Hunter "Egypt under Muhammad Ali's successors" in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. 2, Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the Twentieth Century*, ed. M.W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 183.

¹⁵ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 292.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 296.

engineering school, the medical school, and a new military training school to support the army.¹⁷

Abbas continued the policy of military conscription Muhammad Ali began, even extending it to include all groups of Egyptian society, but reduced conscription overall. This necessitated the continuation of military education, albeit at a smaller capacity. Combining the training provided by the military schools he closed, he opened a new military training school called Madrasat al-Mafruza (the School of the Chosen). An all-in-one primary, preparatory, and military school, it kept the most desired curricular aspects of the schools he closed. It also provided training in civil and military engineering. In 1849, this school had 1,696 students, which was more than the cavalry, infantry, and artillery schools combined in the last years of Muhammad Ali's reign.¹⁸

Abbas also sent student missions to Europe like the Pasha before him. When he assumed the throne, the Egyptian Military School was still in operation in Paris, and though the students sent in 1844 with the first class were due to return back shortly, all the students were recalled in May 1849. Unlike the Pasha, who was quite comfortable sending students to France alone, Abbas desired to acquire expertise in medicine and engineering, both of which were better pursued in other European countries. He sent several smaller groups of students to acquire medical training in Germany, Italy, and Austria, and to England and France for training in engineering during 1849-54. Most of these students did not complete their studies until after Abbas died in 1854.¹⁹

Abbas's successor, the fourth son of Muhammad Ali and Abbas' uncle, Said Pasha, was in many ways the opposite of Abbas. Said was an avid Francophile, having been educated by European tutors. He appointed many French advisors and opened Egypt to European investment, technology, and enterprise.²⁰ While Abbas's educational policy can be characterized as a practical and economical

¹⁷ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 297.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 294-95.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 301-7.

²⁰ Most infamously, it was Said who granted Ferdinand De Lesseps the concession to build the Suez Canal. As Hunter put it, the granting of concessions favoring Europeans greatly diminished the Egyptian ruler's

one, Said's policies are harder to explain, and were rather erratic in nature. His initial motivation in enacting changes in the government school system seemed to stem from his desire to distance himself from his predecessor and undo Abbas' reforms. As such, he closed the medical, engineering, and civil schools soon after he took power. He removed Ali Mubarak from administering education, sending him to join the Egyptian army in fighting the Crimean War (1853-56). Said reinstated al-Tahtawi, first as director of the European department of the Cairo governorate, and later as the head of the newly formed War School (Madrasat al-Harbiyya), entrusting him with the supervision of the translation bureau, and the schools of accountancy and civil engineering.²¹ All of these schools were only open for three years, and were closed in 1861.

Europeans supervised the new schools opened by Said after 1861. In 1862, Said opened a new military school that he named after himself, supervised by a European by the name of de Bernhardt. He also reopened a Naval School in 1860, under the directorship of an Italian naval captain. The School of Medicine was reopened in 1856 and was initially managed by Antoine Clot-Bey. Said also continued to send student missions to Europe, redirecting most of the students to France mainly to study medicine.²²

By the end of Said's ten-year reign, only the latter three schools remained operational and were in a state of great disrepair. This could be the reason that the period between Muhammad Ali and Ismail's reign is glossed over in contemporary histories of modern education in Egypt. However, the lasting legacy of Abbas and Said's reigns was their continuation of the student missions and their commitment to creating Egyptian expertise and employing them in the larger government bureaucracy. The shift from Ottoman to Egyptian employees in the Egyptian regime laid the

power, and accelerated Europe's penetration of Egypt. See Hunter, "Egypt under Muhammad Ali's successors," 187.

²¹ It was during this time that al-Tahtawi helped conceive of a plan for ten national schools, accessible to all inhabitants of Cairo, Old Cairo and Bulaq regardless of background, age or educational experience. See al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris*, 68.

²² Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 320-21.

groundwork for the larger-scale educational expansion enacted by the Egyptian elite under Ismail.

An alumnus of the Egyptian Military School himself, Ismail ruled Egypt in the period when the impact of Muhammad Ali's government schools and educational project was finally tangible. Not only were the ranks of government filled with men educated in the government schools, but a larger public sphere and political community emerged in Ismail's era, spurred on by the spread of literacy and production of Arabic books and translations, as well as the growth of popular periodicals and newspapers.²³

Education under Ismail was administered by an unprecedented number of native Egyptians educated in the government schools, student missions to Europe, and at al-Azhar.²⁴ Ismail's reforms were characterized by two distinct periods. From 1863 to 1871, he reestablished the primary, preparatory, military, civil, and technical schools, and further expanded the government education that had last operated during the Pasha's reign. From 1871 to 1879, he focused on the establishment of a government administered public education system.²⁵ Soon after he assumed the throne, he reestablished the Schools Council, and appointed Ali Mubarak as *wakil* or deputy director. Under Mubarak's guidance, a few primary and preparatory schools were opened at first, feeding into several technical schools specializing in military and naval science, veterinary science and medicine, administration and languages, surveying, arts and crafts, engineering, and Egyptology.²⁶ In total, sixteen government schools were opened, with only two primary and two preparatory schools as feeders – necessitating the expansion of elementary and primary education.²⁷

²³ Cuno, "Egypt to c. 1919," 92-94.

²⁴ This is consistent with overall trends of employment of Egyptians in the government. See Hunter, *Egypt Under the Khedives*; This is not to say that Ismail did not employ Europeans as well. As Heyworth Dunne explains, there was a huge influx of Europeans in Egypt under Ismail, but administering of education, save for in subjects like military and naval science and Egyptology, was left to the Egyptians themselves. See Heyworth Dunne, *Introduction*, 343.

²⁵ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 346.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 348-58.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 358.

This was addressed through the law of 10 Rajab 1287 (November 7, 1867). Also known as the “Organic Law,” it decreed that all *kuttabs* that had a sufficient *waqf* endowment would be nationalized and come under the control of the government.²⁸ The law was recommended by a committee formed by Mubarak to investigate and reform the *kuttab* curriculum, with the goal of balancing Qur’anic education with the training necessary to widen enrollment in the government schools and therefore create more loyal and competent government employees. Three types of schools came under government supervision – *kuttabs*, primary schools in Cairo and Alexandria, and primary schools in provincial centers and capitals.²⁹ Successful graduates of the primary schools in Cairo and Alexandria could enroll in the preparatory schools. In order to make education available outside these urban centers, a first-degree school was established in each of Egypt’s districts with a population of at least ten thousand, the curriculum of which corresponded to the primary schools in Cairo and Alexandria. Students graduating with high marks from these schools could also advance to a preparatory education. Second-degree schools were established in districts with at least five thousand occupants. These schools along with the *kuttabs* provided a terminal education.³⁰ The intent of the Organic Law was to standardize primary education to serve the state’s needs, though it was not realized due to the financial crisis of 1876. Still, it was an unprecedented move in education reform and in keeping with contemporary developments in education in Europe.³¹

It was also under Ismail’s rule that girls’ primary education was addressed in the government schools.³² First conceptualized in 1867, an all-girls’ primary school was proposed to cater to 500 girls,

²⁸ For the translated text of the law, see Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 363-69.

²⁹ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 363.

³⁰ Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*, 103.

³¹ As a point of comparison, public schools for boys were opened in England in 1868 after the Public Schools Act, and free public education was established in France with the Jules Ferry Laws of 1881-82.

³² The only other school that catered to women was the School for Midwives, started during the reign of Muhammad Ali. See Judith Tucker, *Women in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Khaled Fahmy, “Women, Medicine, and Power in Nineteenth Century Egypt,” in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

between the ages of nine and eleven, with a five-year program of study. The curriculum was to include reading, writing, religion, moral instruction, arithmetic, child rearing, home economics, culinary arts, and needlework. Egypt's first official girls' school, al-Siyufiyya, was finally opened in 1873 under the patronage of Ismail's wife, Cheshmet Hanim. The 298 students were the daughters of large landowning families and government officials, as well as their white slaves. When Ismail was deposed in 1879, the school was subsumed by the larger primary education system administered by the Council of Religious Endowments (*Waqf*).³³

The expanded education system required more teachers to service the new schools. Seeking candidates who would have the best skills to combine indigenous pedagogies for teaching Arabic with European curriculum, Mubarak looked to al-Azhar and its students to find competent candidates for a teacher's training college. Employing Azhari shaykhs and drawing from al-Azhar's student population, this school was in part inspired by al-Tahtawi's School of Languages, bringing together a European style education in subjects like geometry, physics, geography, and history, with studies in Arabic, Qur'anic exegesis, *hadith*, and *fiqh*. Mubarak's plan for the school began with a public lecture series held at the seat of the educational bureaucracy, the Darb al-Gamamiz palace, beginning in May 1871. European and Egyptian instructors, as well as many of the Azhari ulama who contributed to *Rawdat-al-Madaris* were enlisted to give lectures.³⁴ They covered subjects like Islamic literature, astronomy, botany, railroads, history, the science of machines, Islamic jurisprudence, *hadith*, and *tafsir*.³⁵ Government officials, teachers and students attended the lectures. The rector of al-Azhar chose ten students from al-Azhar to attend the lectures as well. Though this

1998), 35-72.

³³ Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*, 104-5.

³⁴ This includes individuals like Shaykh Husain al-Marsafi, Ismail Bey al-Falaki, Shaykh Abd al-Rahman al-Bahrawi, and Shaykh Ahmad al-Marsafi, among others. The lectures were often published in *Rawdat al-Madaris*. See Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 377.

³⁵ A full schedule of the lecture series is provided by Abd al-Karim. Two to three lectures were scheduled each day, from Saturday – Thursday. See Abd al-Karim, *Tarikh at-Talim*, 2: 582.

program did little to contribute to training new teachers, it did generate interest among Azhari students in what the school would have to offer. The school was established in 1872 with a hybrid curriculum meant to train Arabic teachers. It catered especially to the students of al-Azhar, requiring a rigorous entrance examination that only students with advanced training in Arabic could pass. It was called Dar al-Ulum, after the lecture hall where the preliminary proceedings took place.³⁶

Rawdat al-Madaris was founded in this climate, one in which the graduates of Muhammad Ali's schools and student missions and Azhari ulama cooperated to implement an education system that brought together the curriculum and pedagogy of European schools with indigenous forms of education and knowledge.

BENEFICIAL KNOWLEDGE: A SUBJECT BASED ASSESSMENT

The translation movement was integral to the widening of *ilm* and to the expansion of the public sphere and the literary fluorecence of Ismail's rule. Beginning as a supplement to the military and the nascent government schools, the translation of European (mostly French) texts expanded under al-Tahtawi's directorship of the School of Languages. What subjects constituted beneficial knowledge in this period (1831-51)?³⁷ How did this change over time as the goals of government education transformed from a demand for technical expertise during the rule of Muhammad Ali, Abbas, and Said to a state-building enterprise under Ismail?

While most histories of the translation movement in the Muhammad Ali period anecdotally

³⁶ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 37; For more on the *Dar al-Ulum* school, see Lois A. Arorian, *The Nationalization of Arabic and Islamic Education in Egypt: Dar al-Ulum and Al-Azhar* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1983); Hilary Kalmbach "Training Teachers how to Teach: Transnational Exchange and the Introduction of Social-Scientific Pedagogy in 1890s Egypt," in *The Long 1890s in Egypt: Colonial Quiescence, Subterranean Resistance*, eds. Marilyn Booth and Anthony Gorman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); and Hilary Kalmbach, "Dar al-Ulum," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Brill Online, 2016).

³⁷ The year 1831 marks the opening of the Bulaq Press, and the beginning of the larger circulation of printed translations through the education system. The year 1851 marks the exile of Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, and the decline of the translation bureau, which was finally closed by Said Pasha in 1861.

give the number of translations overseen by al-Tahtawi as more than one thousand, there is no complete list preserved.³⁸ Scholars like Edward Abbott Van Dyke, Jurji Zaydan, M.H. Abd al-Raziq, Gamal al-Din al-Shayyal, and Ibrahim Abu Lughod compiled partial lists from sources close in time to the School of Languages.³⁹ Al-Shayyal's list was primarily used for the present analysis. It was crosschecked and supplemented by the lists compiled by AbuLughod, Zaydan, and Van Dyke.⁴⁰ In addition, the translated works mentioned by Salih Majdi in his biographical work on al-Tahtawi are included.⁴¹ The resulting list of 169 titles, includes works translated from French into Arabic and French into Turkish from 1831 to 1853.⁴² This will be compared with a breakdown of subjects covered in a sampling of the complete run of *Rawdat al-Madaris*, as compiled by Yousef.⁴³

The subjects of works translated during 1831-53 were mostly technical, as can be seen in Figure 4.1 (in Figures section below). Technical subjects, defined here as military and naval science,

³⁸ Furthermore, many translations produced by the students and translators of the School of Languages were not published at all, so their impact cannot be known.

³⁹ See the introduction to the Appendices and Appendix 1 in al-Shayyal, *Tarikh al-Tarjama*, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *The Arab Rediscovery of Europe: A Study in Cultural Encounters* (London: Saqi, 2011), 63-67; Jurji Zaydan, *Tarikh al-Adab al-Lughah al-Arabiyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1957), 186-311; Edward Abbott Van Dyke, *Kitab Iktifa al-Qanu' bi ma huwa Matbu'a min Ashar al-Ta'alif al-Arabiyya fi al-Matabi' al-Sharqiyya wa al-Gharbiyya* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Hilal, 1897), 422-28, 454-62; and M.H. Abd al-Raziq "Arabic Literature Since the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 2, 4 (February 1923), 755-92.

⁴⁰ Shayyal's list provides the most comprehensive compilation of translated texts. Others concentrate on particular subject, like AbuLughod with specifically chosen non-technical "humanist" subjects, and Abd al-Raziq with medical texts. All of the aforementioned secondary source compilations rely on the following European sources more contemporary to the translation movement. These works deal specifically with published materials through the Bulaq Press, rather than translations specifically. See Bowring, *Report*, 142-44; Thomas Xavier-Bianchi, "Catalogue General des Livres Arabes, Persans, et Turc, imprimé à Boulaq en Egypte depuis l'Introduction de l'Imprimerie dans ce Pays," *Journal Asiatique*, 4, II (July-August, 1843), 24-61; A. Perron, "Lettre à M. Mohl sur les écoles et l'imprimerie du Pacha d'Egypte," *Journal Asiatique*, 4, II (1843), 24-61; and Joseph Toussaint Reinaud, "Notice des ouvrages Arabes, Persans, Turcs et Français, imprimés en Egypte," *Journal Asiatique*, 2, VIII (October 1831), 333-44.

⁴¹ Majdi, *Hilyat al-Zaman*, 43-58.

⁴² Lists of volumes printed at Bulaq from 1831-43 total to 243 volumes at most, so it is possible that the majority of publications at Bulaq were translations. See Bianchi, "Catalogue Général," 24-61.

⁴³ Yousef examines a sample of the journal's full run: the first and last years entirely, and three six month samples through the course of the magazine's publication, from April 1870 – March 1871, August 1871-March 1872, March-August 1873, February-August 1875, and January – August 1877. In total, she analyzed 511 articles and serialized book chapters from this three and a half year period. See Yousef, "Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education," 113-14.

medicine, veterinary science, engineering, mechanics, hydraulics, agriculture, pharmacy, cartography, and spatial planning, made up the vast majority (over seventy eight percent) of translated works. Of these technical translations, military and naval science, medicine, and veterinary science vastly outnumbered the other subjects, sixty five percent of the total. History, mathematics, and geography make up the in other subjects, about thirteen percent of the total. From this breakdown, it is clear that the main thrust of the translation program was to acquire technical expertise from French language publications. Most of the non-technical works translated in this period were those al-Tahtawi encountered in Paris, and thus it can be assumed that the subjects and texts chosen for translations in less technical areas were guided by al-Tahtawi himself, rather than by government necessity. Another interesting observation is that engineering and mathematical texts are more prevalent in the latter part of the period analyzed, which reflects the shift from al-Tahtawi's humanist interests to Mubarak's more technical orientation when he took over the operations of the translation bureau after al-Tahtawi's exile in 1851.

Yousef's analysis of sampled articles from *Rawdat al-Madaris* paints a different picture of prioritization of knowledge, as can be seen in Figure 4.2 (in the Figures section below). The top five categories include natural sciences (which Yousef defines as agriculture, astronomy, botany, chemistry, oceanography, and so forth), history, language arts, literature, and education. These categories make up almost fifty six percent of the total articles surveyed. There is also a diversity of subjects covered, including religion, culture, literature, poetry, and education, all of which straddle the European/indigenous knowledge binary. As Yousef describes it, the eclectic and open-ended definition of *ilm* advanced by the journal was conveyed in the diversity of topics. The "broader the net cast for relevant 'educational' material, the better."⁴⁴

In accounting for the shift in definitions of beneficial knowledge, and indeed the widening

⁴⁴ Yousef, "Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education," 113.

of the term *ilm* to be inclusive of knowledge outside the religious and moral sphere, the impact of the two generations of Egyptians educated in government schools and in the student missions cannot be overlooked. Though these men were charged with acquiring technical education to provide necessary expertise to develop the Pasha's army and infrastructure, they were also exposed to concepts of comprehensive general education. They formed their own ideas about what knowledge was beneficial, and how it should be used in the expansion of education. *Rawdat al-Madaris*, with its emphasis on the compatibility of local and European forms of knowledge, was one space in which these ideas were explored.

RAWDAT AL-MADARIS AND ITS EXPANSION OF ILM

Rawdat al-Madaris al-Misriyya was founded in 1870, during a surge of intellectual activity. With Mubarak's appointment as deputy director of the School's Council in 1867 and reforms of the "Organic Law" underway, the Egyptians charged with administering education faced new challenges in conceiving and implementing a comprehensive government education system, beginning for the first time with primary education.⁴⁵ Also contributing to the increase in literary and intellectual activity was the revival of publishing in the excitement leading up to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The 1867 World's Fair in Paris provided the occasion for the Bulaq press to produce several books to be put on display, including works in Persian and Turkish, as well as journals published for the military and medical professions.⁴⁶ In 1868, *Wadi al-Nil* was founded. It was hailed as Egypt's first privately printed newspaper, though it was in many ways sanctioned by Ismail and

⁴⁵ Mubarak personally contributed to this movement in the writing of his *Kitab Tariq al-Hija* or *The Book of the Way to the Alphabet*, a basic textbook with simple instruction in the Arabic language, moving from the formation of the alphabet, then short texts designed to teach reading to novices, and finally to more advanced readings dealing with complex ethical and moral topics. This text was widely printed and used in the state school system in the 1870s. See Ali Mubarak, *Kitab Tariq al-Hija wa al-Tamrin ala al-Qira'a* (Cairo: Matba'at Wadi al-Nil, 1968); and Terri DeYoung, *Mahmud Sami al-Barudi: Reconfiguring Society and the Self* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 184-85.

⁴⁶ Egypt received a silver medal for this display. See DeYoung, *Mahmud Sami al-Barudi*, 188.

supplemented the revived official gazette of the government.⁴⁷ The same year, Muhammad Arif Pasha, student mission alumnus, founded the Society of Knowledge for the Publication of Useful Books (*Jam‘iyyat al-Ma‘arif li-Nashr al-Kutub al-Nafi‘a*). This society was established with a general subscription of nearly 600. It used the funds collected to acquire its own private printing press, and published many Arabic classics in history, Islamic law, and literature for the consumption of the elite of Cairo, landowners, and government officials alike.⁴⁸

Rawdat al-Madaris emerged as a part of this surge in literary activity, publishing, and educational development. Ali Mubarak initially proposed the idea of an educational journal, and arranged for al-Tahtawi and his son Ali Fahmi Rifa‘a (d. 1903) to serve as its initial editors.⁴⁹ In keeping with the hybridized educational philosophy of the journal, the editorial board consisted of men who straddled the religious and government education systems. It included the al-Azhar-educated Abd Allah Fikri (1834-90), known for his contributions to the development of modern Arabic prose. Fikri had worked as tutor to Ismail’s son, the future khedive Tawfiq. In 1871, he was appointed as the deputy director of the Directorate of Education, the office in charge of overseeing the *kuttabs* and primary schools.⁵⁰ Also on the board was Shaykh Husayn al-Marsafi (1850-90), who taught Arabic linguistics at al-Azhar and went on to teach at Dar al-Ulum.⁵¹

The journal came out bi-monthly on the fifteenth and thirtieth of each Islamic month, from

⁴⁷ Ami Ayalon describes this paper as “comfortably under the government’s protection, assured of a regular flow of information and an equally reliable subvention.” Other private papers emerged in this period as well but were often closed by Ismail after only one or two issues had been published. A private newspaper did not flourish under Ismail’s reign until the founding of *al-Abram* in 1875. See Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 41.

⁴⁸ Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, 90; and DeYoung, *Mahmud Sami al-Barudi*, 188-190.

⁴⁹ When al-Tahtawi died in May of 1873, editorship was given solely to Ali Fahmi.

⁵⁰ Among Fikri’s contributions to the journal was the serialized book *Al-Athar al-Afkar wa-Manthur al-Azhar* (*Traces of Thoughts and the Scattering of Flowers*) in which he argues that knowledge is best acquired through conversation, encouraging the cultivation of various forms of knowledge. See *Kitab al-Athar al-Afkar wa Manthur al-Azhaar* (Cairo: Matba‘at Wadi al-Nil, 1870).

⁵¹ Marsafi was one of the Azharis who was enlisted by Mubarak to give lectures in advance of the opening of Dar al-Ulum. These lectures dealt with issues of Arabic rhetoric, and were published in *Rawdat al-Madaris* as well. For a discussion of these articles, see DeYoung, *Mahmud Sami al-Barudi*, 192-95.

April 1870 until August 1877. Each issue was divided into two parts. The first contained a selection of announcements and short articles on various subjects. An article often included a short introduction written by one of the editors, explaining the study's larger significance for the aims of the journal. Each issue featured usually anywhere from five to seven such pieces. The second part consisted of two or three installments of serialized books. Each issue was initially thirty-two pages long, but in the third year of production the journal was expanded to forty pages.

The initial press run numbered 350 copies, eventually reaching 700 copies, which was fairly standard for educational publications at the time.⁵² Rather than aim for a wider circulation, the journal was meant for distribution to all the new schools being set up throughout Egypt. As such, its readership was limited to members of the educational community. The top three students of each class in the preparatory schools received a subscription for free. In addition, all teachers and staff at the schools who made over 150 piastres a month were obligated to subscribe.

Students in the government schools, teachers, and members of the editorial board and larger intellectual community were encouraged to contribute to the journal. The open call for submission did not require authors to have any expertise in order to write about a particular subject. For instance, while shaykhs who wrote for *Rawdat al-Madaris* were unlikely to write on technical matters for which they had no training, they did not limit their contributions to topics of language, law, and religion. They also wrote love stories and literary or cultural commentaries. Likewise, topics of religious interest were not limited to the ulama. *Rawdat al-Madaris* was a space in which the expansion of *ilm* could be explored by anyone intellectually inclined, in spite of a lack of specialized training.⁵³

In addition to such contributions, the editors assembled a group of expert authors specializing in

⁵² Yousef mentions that al-Tahtawi's *Tarikh Misr* had a printing run of 500 copies as a point of comparison. Yousef, "Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education under Ismail," 118; For more information on the distribution of *Rawdat al-Madaris*, see Muhammad Abd al-Ghani Hasan and Abd al-Aziz Dusuqi, *Rawdat al-Madaris, Nash'atuba wa Ittijabatuba al-Adabiyya wa-al-Ilmiyya Dirasa Naqdiyya Tabliliyya* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Arabiyya, 1975), 89-90.

⁵³ Yousef, "Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education," 117.

varied and diverse subjects to write articles for the journal from the very first issue.⁵⁴

Though primarily a government publication meant to serve the burgeoning school system, within its own pages *Rawdat al-Madaris* intended to be a vital part of intellectual life in Egypt. In his introduction to the first issue of the journal, Ali Fahmi commented on the publication's relationship to the ongoing educational reforms, but stressed the utility of the periodical's aims to widen the sphere of knowledge accessible to the Egyptian populace. He described the construction of schools and the purpose of the School's Council under Ismail's rule as aiming to popularize the sciences, building knowledge, and spreading and propagating the arts among the "sons of the homeland (*watan*)."⁵⁵ The intent of these reforms was simultaneously aspirational and practical "to widen the sphere of ideas whilst widening the sphere of employment."⁵⁵ *Rawdat al-Madaris'* role in this "improvement project" was to gather in its pages any scientific material of value, especially those with diverse benefits, in a clear eloquent prose and the most beautiful formats. In this way, it would showcase the "greenery of *ilm*, illuminating all with sound minds and moral natures."⁵⁶

Though *Rawdat al-Madaris'* editors desired the journal to have an impact beyond its limited circulation within the education system, the journal did also cover matters of curriculum and pedagogy. Beginning in its second year, it included reports on the state of the schools at every level. These reports reflected the changes in the educational system, highlighting successful implementation of organization and discipline, and marking special events like award ceremonies and lectures.⁵⁷ In one such report, the unnamed author expressed a deep concern for students who attended *kuttabs* outside the government system because the "level of progress and the benefits of

⁵⁴ In the introduction to the journal, Ali Fahmi lists all of the potential authors and topics to be addressed in the first issues. See *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 1 (15 Muharram 1287/April 16, 1870), 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 4.

⁵⁷ For some examples see: *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 2 (15 Rajab 1288/September 30, 1871), 3; *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 2 (17 Dhul Qa'ida 1288/May 6, 1871); and *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 2 (30 Shawwal 1288/January 12, 1872), 3-9. See also Yousef, "Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education," 119.

their education are unknown.”⁵⁸ While the journal only reported on government schools, this article reflected its wider goal of expanding the sphere of education, both formally through schools and informally through the spread of *ilm*.

The journal invoked on a religious imperative to seek knowledge. Printed on the title page of each issue was its motto, “Learn *ilm* and read, invest in the glory of His prophecy, for God said to Yahya [John the Baptist], take hold of the Book with strength.”⁵⁹ To this end, though the journal’s focus leaned towards knowledge classified as European, this foreign knowledge was incorporated into pre-existing indigenous classifications of knowledge.⁶⁰ The authors made regular references to the importance of revealed (*naqli*) and rational (*aqli*) sciences, putting religious scholarship on equal footing with the newer subjects of European origin.⁶¹ For example, in one article al-Tahtawi described the perfect intellectual as having acquired knowledge gathered between two virtues, the the rational and revealed, arguing that the rational could encompass the European subjects.⁶² If *Rawdat al-Madaris* is representative of the scope of a comprehensive general education, it was clear that the founders and contributors believed that the inclusion of both types of knowledge was essential to reach an intellectual ideal.⁶³ Furthermore, almost all articles that dealt with the rational sciences would situate the chosen subject of inquiry with indigenous sources and modes of expression. Just as the title page of each issue featured the religious saying quoted above, articles often began with a discussion of a religious imperative or a Qur’anic verse to convey the importance

⁵⁸ *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 2 (30 Shaban 1288/November 14, 1871); and Yousef, “Reassessing Egypt’s Dual System of Education,” 119.

⁵⁹ The motto was based on Qur’anic scripture, Sura Maryam (19:12). See *Rawdat al Madaris* 1, 1 (15 Muharram 1287/April 16, 1870), 1.

⁶⁰ Yousef describes this as the development of their own “authenticity of knowledge,” one that “did not negate the past, as newer subjects were integrated into already existing models of thought.” See Yousef, “Reassessing Egypt’s Dual System of Education,” 113.

⁶¹ Ali Fahmi wrote that *Rawdat al-Madaris* was meant to widen the *naqli* and *aqli* realms of the students. See *Rawdat al Madaris* 1, 1 (15 Muharram 1287/April 16, 1870), 5.

⁶² *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 1 (15 Safar 1287/May 15, 1870), 18 and Yousef, “Reassessing Egypt’s Dual System of Education under Ismail,” 115.

⁶³ Yousef, “Reassessing Egypt’s Dual System of Education,” 114-15.

of the scholarship being discussed.⁶⁴ The journal also provided a venue for its contributors to reinterpret the use of Arabic literary forms for more modern purposes. For instance, al-Tahtawi, Ali Fahmi, and others used the *tarjama* style of biography to write about historical figures they felt were role models for the current moment.⁶⁵

There were also articles that applied the tools and methods of European subjects to religious questions. These articles best communicate the relative absence of a perceived divide between indigenous/religious and European bases of knowledge, as the authors go beyond arguing for the equal importance or religious significance of newer European subjects, using both realms of knowledge as if they were within the same epistemological base.⁶⁶ One such exposition was by the deputy director of the School of Administration and Languages Ya'qub Sabri.⁶⁷ In an article titled, "Letter on Adjusting the Sizing of Ritual Washbasins," Sabri combined several of the aforementioned strategies to seamlessly apply concepts of mathematics and civil engineering to a question of religious significance: how to standardize the amount of water and size and shape of the ritual washbasin to perform the most perfect ritual ablution? He began with a small religious introduction in which he praises God for being the source of all knowledge. In the simplest and clearest language, Sabri explained the practical nature of this religious inquiry: it was the duty of man to find the most perfect and hygienic way to practice religiously mandated ablution. The question at hand was to determine what size and shape of washbasin would preserve the purity of the water, keeping it clean, without discoloration, or alteration of the taste or smell of the water, which could invalidate the act of ritual cleansing. He then related the requirements of the washbasin as conveyed by jurists. Using principles of geometry and engineering, Sabri determined how much water is

⁶⁴ For an example, see *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 1 (30 Rabi al-Thani 1287/July 29, 1870), 7.

⁶⁵ For an example, see *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 1 (15 Safar 1287/May 15, 1870), 10-15; and Yousef, "Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education," 115.

⁶⁶ For other examples, see *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 1 (30 Safar 1287/May 30, 1870), 14-15; and *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 1 (15 Jamad al-Thani 1287/September 11, 1870), 13-19.

⁶⁷ *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 1 (15 Jamad al-Thani 1287/September 11, 1870), 13-19.

necessary to perform ablution, working backwards from the requirements agreed upon by jurists. Finally, he offered up new configurations for ritual washbasins, which take into account the religious consensus and the issues of hygiene and health. In the introduction to this article, Ali Fahmi glossed over the possible controversial nature of this work, insofar as it suggested the reform of religiously mandated configurations with the application of a subject outside of the sphere of Islamic knowledge. He wrote that until now, jurists did not have the tools of engineering to come to Sabri's conclusions themselves.⁶⁸ This example highlights the extent to which *Rawdat al-Madaris'* contributors put European and indigenous forms of knowledge on an equal footing. It also draws attention to the journal's potential to challenge the ulama's claim to authority in questions of religious significance and indeed the scope of *ilm* itself.

CRITIQUES OF AL-AZHAR AND THE MYTH OF DUAL EDUCATION

The contributors to *Rawdat al-Madaris* assumed the compatibility of indigenous and Islamic forms of knowledge with newer European-derived fields of study. If the journal is taken as representative of the views of these men administering and participating in government education, why is the language of dual education— traditional/modern, secular/religious— so pervasive in the literature on education in late nineteenth century Egypt? One reason could be that some rather significant contributors to the journal did use its pages to respond to resistance to new ideas and reform among some ulama at al-Azhar, though these kinds of articles were in the minority. This discourse was not necessarily oppositional, but desired to create dialogue to improve all forms of education, inspired by the culture of reform in the early years of Ismail's Egypt.⁶⁹ Before examining

⁶⁸ *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1,1 (15 Jamad al-Thani 1287/September 11, 1870), 13.

⁶⁹ Just as the contributors to *Rawdat al-Madaris* did not see indigenous and European knowledge as incompatible, the ulama did not feel ideologically threatened by modernizing reforms, but rather were opposed to changes on the basis of that reforms often marginalized their political influence, social position, and economic well-being. The concept that religious institutions were somehow static and backward was not

two representative critiques penned by al-Tahtawi and Mubarak published in *Rawdat al-Madaris*, it is first necessary to provide some background on the evolution of al-Azhar in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The climate of educational change in Ismail's Egypt did not spare al-Azhar, which had been left out of the substantive reforms in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Ismail appointed Shaykh Mustafa al-Arusi (1864-70) as rector of al-Azhar. Under his leadership, a discussion of changes to the institution's educational practice was opened. Al-Arusi introduced a comprehensive program of reforms meant to bring all facets of life at al-Azhar under the centralized purview of the rector. Several changes to teaching practices were proposed, including the requirement that an *alim's* knowledge of a particular text be vetted by the rector before he was allowed to teach it, and that his teaching style be such that he made sure that his students understood the lessons and benefitted from the knowledge in full. It also introduced yearly final examinations to assess the comprehension of the students. This program of reform also included rules on cleanliness, decorum, and morality. It was rejected by the ulama, who deposed al-Arusi in 1870, only months after the first issue of *Rawdat al-Madaris* went to print.⁷⁰

It is no surprise then that in its inaugural year, articles on the educational affairs at al-Azhar can be found in the journal. As prominent figures in the reform of education who were invested in building a comprehensive system of education inclusive of the religious schools, both al-Tahtawi and Mubarak were outspoken critics of the conservative ulama and of certain institutional practices at al-Azhar. Neither al-Tahtawi nor Mubarak wished to do away with religious education all together. Rather, they sought to open the ulama's minds to what they viewed as more effective pedagogical and administrative tools, and to promote the same inclusive definition of *ilm* that was practiced in

a part of the discourse in Ismail's Egypt. See Crecelius, "Nonideological Responses," 191.

⁷⁰ Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 48-51; and Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, "Modernization among the Rectors of Al-Azhar, 1798-1879" in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: the Nineteenth Century*, eds. William R. Polk and Richard Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1968), 267-80.

the pages of *Rawdat al-Madaris*. Their points of departure for this critique differed greatly. Mubarak, as a leading proponent of the implementation of European pedagogical practices to effect efficient and practical education, was overtly critical of what he perceived as a defective and disorganized educational institution. Al-Tahtawi, an Azhar trained shaykh in his own right, used his religious knowledge to reinterpret Islamic concepts about knowledge and juridical practice to push for the inclusion of new subjects and ideas.

In the very first issue of the journal, Mubarak penned an article that was meant to introduce the reasoning for the founding of Dar al-Kutub (the Khedival National Library) in 1870. From the outset, it was a scathing critique of how the present conditions at al-Azhar required government intervention to preserve precious manuscripts containing the Islamic sciences and arts for posterity. He justified this move by citing the “strange, peculiar events surrounding the rectors of al-Azhar,” no doubt referring at least partially to the troubles of Ibrahim al-Bajuri (1847-60) who in 1853 was manhandled by a faction of North African students over what was considered an unfair distribution of rations.⁷¹ He also called attention to the dilapidated conditions of the *madrasa*'s buildings, what he perceived as the corrupt and vulture-like attitudes of the ulama, and the lack of importance given to the utility of *ilm* and the production of government employees. For these reasons, Mubarak argued that it was necessary for the “people with passion for teaching, learning, and understanding *ilm*” to ensure that these resources were cared for in the proper way.⁷² He also criticized the attitude of the ulama in hiding away these resources as if they were secret knowledge, and praised Ismail for supporting the opening of Dar al-Kutub so all students could reap the benefits of the books, which would be organized and preserved properly for their use there. This article can be seen as an early rendering of a more well-developed argument for wide scale reform at al-Azhar that Mubarak

⁷¹ Marsot “Modernization among the Rectors,” 276-77.

⁷² *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1,1 (15 Muharram 1287/April 16, 1870), 7-8.

included in his *al-Khitat al-Tanfiqiyya*, published in 1888.⁷³

Al-Tahtawi's article was less directly critical of al-Azhar as an educational institution. Instead it was an appeal to religious scholars to be more open to change and evolution in the new social circumstances. Published in the third issue of *Rawdat al-Madaris*, his article "Lasting Legacy through the Application of Ideas," argued for a reinterpretation of the practice of *ijtihad*, a method of independent interpretation of the Qur'an and *sunna* used by scholars to derive legal opinions, rather than following the accepted precedent agreed upon within a particular *madhab*, or school of jurisprudence.⁷⁴ Following prescribed precedent, or *taqlid*, was the prevalent method among religious scholars at the time. Al-Tahtawi framed his call to renew *ijtihad* with an exposition on the importance of seeking knowledge and being remembered not only for one's morality but also for the acquisition of knowledge.⁷⁵ He wrote that the scholars who practiced *ijtihad* in the past expended enormous energy to gain the extensive knowledge necessary to derive these independent legal opinions, to the great benefit of the *umma*, or Islamic community. *Ijtihad* was recast in al-Tahtawi's interpretation as a means of adapting to new conditions, by encouraging the innovation of jurisprudence with the embrace of new knowledge, as long as God did not specifically forbid that knowledge in scripture. This article was also one expression in a larger body of work; al-Tahtawi increasingly used his inclusive approach to religious interpretation to encourage his peers at al-Azhar to accept and legitimize knowledge that was at the time considered outside the Islamic purview.⁷⁶

History has memorialized al-Tahtawi and Mubarak as the founding fathers of modern

⁷³ For a thorough analysis of Mubarak's views on al-Azhar in *al-Khitat al-Tanfiqiyya*, see Michael Reimer, "Contradiction and Consciousness in Ali Mubarak's description of Al-Azhar," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 29, :1 (February 1997), 53-69.

⁷⁴ *Rawdat al-Madaris* 1, 3 (15 Safar 1287/May 16, 1870), 10-15.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 13.

⁷⁶ Al-Tahtawi further discussed questions of *ijtihad*, *taqlid* and *ilm* in a supplement to the sixth issue of *Rawdat al-Madaris* (which is not included in the most recent publication of the journal), as well as in his *Manabij* and *Murshid*, published in 1869 and 1872 respectively. See, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, *Al-Qawl al-Sadid fi al-Ijtihad wa al-Tajdid*.

Egyptian education. As such their criticism of al-Azhar and the ulama is a persistent legacy in the history of education in the nineteenth century, lending credence to the perception of a dual system of education in which the government and religious schools operated in opposition. Placing these critiques in the larger context of *Ramdāt al-Madarīs*, which rarely published criticism, it is possible to understand these articles for what they likely were. The journal's editors desired a symbiotic relationship between the ulama and government educators, as well as an epistemological philosophy that did not recognize conflict between indigenous and European modes of thought. Al-Tahtawi and Mubarak had a heavy hand in editing the journal, especially in its early years, so these few instances of criticism are less marked, and instead can perhaps be interpreted as part of a push to bring religious and government education into a productive dialogue. In no institution was this more apparent than in *Dar al-Ulum*, which opened its doors in 1872, the same year that the first substantive reforms were made at al-Azhar.

Under the leadership of the new rector, Shaykh Muhammad al-Abbasi al-Mahdi (1870-82), an examination code was put into effect. It required students to pass an oral exam in eleven subjects to be certified as an *alim*, a necessary degree to teach at al-Azhar, or work as a judge in the Sharia Courts. The intention of this reform was not to modernize educational practice at al-Azhar, but rather to curb the writing of fake certificates for Egyptians seeking to evade military conscription. The subjects included jurisprudence, principles and texts of religion, monotheistic theology, hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, Arabic grammar, morphology, and three types of rhetoric and logic, which effectively established the first standardized curriculum for students wishing to make a career out of their education.⁷⁷ *Dar al-Ulum* opened its doors in the same year, a hybridized educational institution that hired Azhar-educated teachers, and recruited Azhari students to be trained as Arabic language teachers to serve in the newly expanded primary and secondary education system.

⁷⁷ Gesink, *Islamic Reform*, 53-54.

The beginning of reforms at al-Azhar, the opening of *Dar al-Ulum*, and the publishing agenda of *Rawdat al-Madaris* were all indicative of a trajectory that education could have taken, one in which *madrasas* like al-Azhar and the government schools existed in a mutually beneficial relationship. Yousef argues that the new government system and projects like *Rawdat al-Madaris* necessarily marginalized “traditional carriers of education” insofar as those Azharis who were incorporated into the government system were no longer engaged in producing new shaykhs, but rather the government employees needed to fulfill the requirements of the state.⁷⁸ Her argument privileges the preservation of the traditional role of the ulama, and fails to acknowledge that the purpose of religious institutions could also evolve. The educational developments in the early 1870s signal a potential evolution of religious education in conjunction with the government schools at every level, developing of a hybrid understanding of *ilm* and its role in Egyptian education, a negotiation of modernity that was cut short by the events that precipitated the occupation of Egypt by Britain in 1882.

CONCLUSION:

COLONIAL RUPTURE AND A NEW NEGOTIATION OF MODERNITY

The first ten years of Ismail’s rule (1863-73) marked the apex of educational activity during his reign. In 1873, Ali Mubarak left the Schools Council and ceased to be involved in educational affairs until 1878. Al-Tahtawi, who at the end of his life was less involved in the administration of education, passed away in that same year. Though further reform of the primary school system was proposed by Ali Mubarak’s successor Mustafa Riyad Pasha, in conjunction with the director of the School’s Council, Dor Bey, Riyad was transferred out of the School’s Council before the changes could take place.⁷⁹ The remainder of Ismail’s reign was characterized by a lack of development of

⁷⁸ Yousef, “Reassessing Egypt’s Dual System of Education under Ismail,” 123-25.

⁷⁹ Riyad and Dor had proposed a new schedule of fees for students based on their socio-economic status, as

government education. This was due to Egypt's mounting foreign debt, which mushroomed after the final collapse of the cotton boom in 1866. After this point, a growing proportion of Egypt's revenues went towards debt repayment, leaving the government with less money for its own needs. In 1876, Egypt declared bankruptcy. In response, the French and British set up the Caisse de la Dette (Debt Commission) to oversee the Egyptian budget. This was the beginning of a takeover of Egyptian financial affairs by the British and French, which had an impact on education.⁸⁰ While the government school system was more or less maintained in the second half of the 1870s, enrollment in primary and secondary institutions decreased overall.⁸¹ Even *Rawdat al-Madaris* abruptly stopped publication on August 30, 1877, a victim of Egypt's bankruptcy.

The British began their occupation of Egypt in 1882 and pursued an educational policy with two distinct goals. The first was to bring Egypt out of its debt, necessitating economy in matters of education.⁸² The second, inspired by their experience in India, was to limit the access and scope of primary and higher education to the small numbers they could assimilate into the colonial bureaucracy.⁸³ To do so, the first consul general, Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer), created a two-tiered education system. Elites who could afford to pay tuition could attend paid primary schools or private schools where they would be taught French and English in addition to Arabic, and then would be given the option to attend schools of higher education. All other primary schools, those *kuttabs* that had been subsumed under the government system in Ismail's reign, were given the option of taking a subsidy from the government if they submitted to a set curriculum and

well as further standardization of curriculum and required age to enroll. Riyad was transferred in 1874. See, Heyworth-Dunne *Introduction*, 380-381; and Abd al-Karim *Tarikh al-Ta'lim*, 67-74.

⁸⁰ Hunter "Egypt under Muhammad Ali's successors," 193-195; and Juan R.I. Cole *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's 'Urabi Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 92

⁸¹ Darrell Dykstra, "A Biographical Study," 284-85.

⁸² Peter Mansfield, *The British in Egypt* (London: Cox & Wyman, 1971), 139-41.

⁸³ Mona L. Russell, "Competing, Overlapping, and Contradictory Agendas: Egyptian Education Under British Occupation," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 21, 1-2 (2001), 51.

inspections. This government program required that instruction be given only in Arabic in reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion.⁸⁴ In addition, these schools could only provide a terminal education – intended to give the average Egyptian practical knowledge only, as too much education could make for an “unwieldy, critical populace.”⁸⁵ The contrast between European-style government schools for the rich and the Arabic-language schooling for the poor created the dual system of education that is often projected backward by historians into the Ismail period. The binary of secular/modern vs. religious/traditional education was a product of this rupture under colonial rule.

Histories of education in nineteenth-century Egypt assume the bifurcation between the *kuttab* and *madrasa* system and government schools from the latter’s inception, but a closer look reveals how interconnected these institutions and the individuals participating in them remained up until the end of Ismail’s rule, both epistemologically and materially. The government system of schools was interdependent with the *madrasa* system; the best students and teachers were first educated at al-Azhar, and pre-existing pedagogies were imperative to the legitimation and legibility of translated European knowledge. The intellectuals administering education did not see their own actions as revolutionary. Rather, they saw the European knowledge they sought to cultivate as consistent with pre-existing religious forms of knowledge.

⁸⁴ Hoda Yousef, “Seeking the Educational Cure,” 57-58.

⁸⁵ Russell, “Competing, Overlapping, and Contradictory Agendas,” 51; For a more detailed take on the British education policy, see Robert L. Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 319-48.

FIGURES

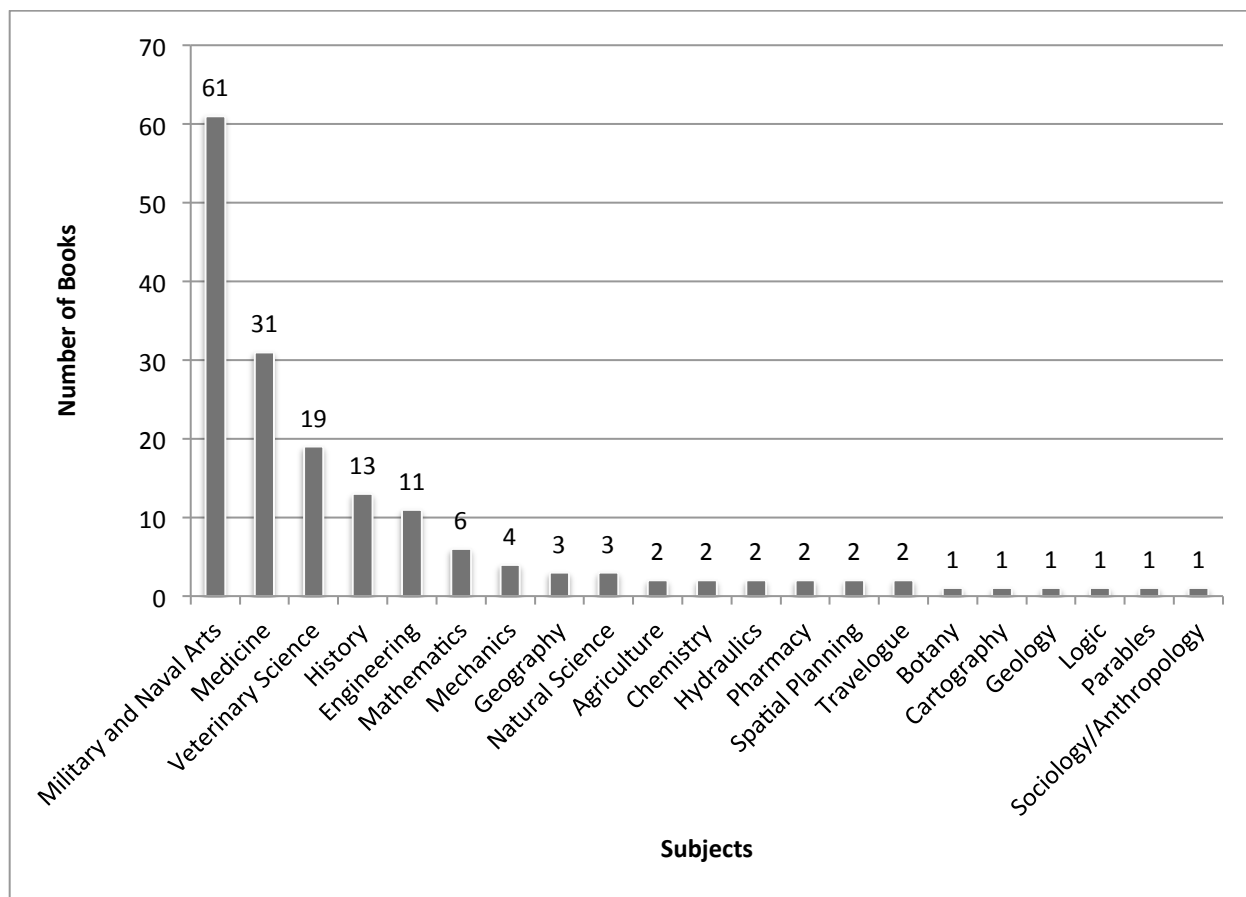


FIGURE 4.1: Subjects of texts translated by the School of Languages and Translation Bureau (1831-53)

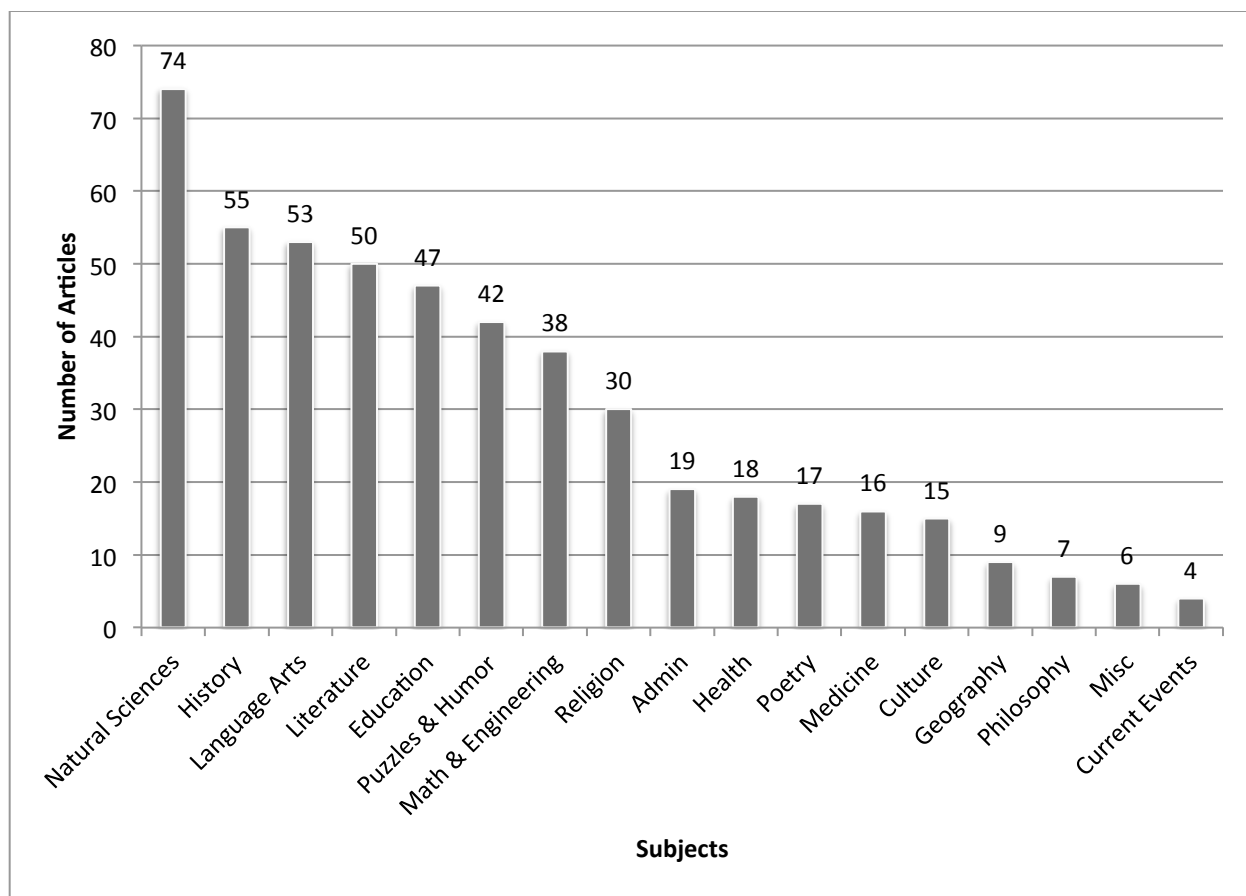


FIGURE 4.2: Subjects represented in Yousef's sampling of articles from *Rawdat al-Madaris* (1870-77)⁸⁶

⁸⁶ This chart is reproduced from Yousef, "Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education under Ismail," 114.

CONCLUSION

The history of modern education in Egypt was marked by multiple negotiations of modernity. A negotiation of modernity began with Muhammad Ali's reforms through which Egyptians became the agents of their own development and guided their own educational pursuits through an engagement with European epistemology and pedagogy. They emphasized continuities and compatibilities between foreign technical expertise and local frameworks, hybridizing knowledge and imagining a further convergence of the already interdependent *kuttab/madrassa* and government systems. Disrupted by the British occupation another negotiation of modernity began from within the colonial experience, marked by the bifurcation of education to religious-versus-secular, backwards-versus-elite, and Arabic-versus-English.

In tracing these multiple negotiations, this dissertation highlights the contingency of historical processes at a time when Egypt's position shifted in the world in ways that could not easily be defined. Egypt occupied a liminal space that was simultaneously colonized and colonizer, autonomous but still tied intellectually, then economically, but not yet politically to European powers. Against this backdrop, Egyptian acquisition of modern technical knowledge and educational institutions from French sources cannot be framed as a colonial or imperial exchange, and does not reflect those dynamics of power.

While the Napoleonic expedition served as the inspiration for the few French Bonapartists desiring to cultivate French mentorship over Egypt, the French government did not support the first student mission in Paris in 1826. The eventual official fostering of l'École Militaire in 1844 had its roots solely in the efforts of the enterprising Edme-François Jomard and Bernardino Drovetti, who saw in their realization of l'École Égyptienne the promise of regenerating their own lost prestige and careers in orientalist pursuits. For Muhammad Ali Pasha, the decision to send a mission of students to Paris was a contingent one, dependent on the failure of the government schools in Egypt to

efficiently educate students in the necessary expertise, and the presence of effective interlocutors among the expatriate Egyptian population in France, along with other factors. By mid-century, France's newly acquired colonies in North Africa and the emergence of an autonomous Egypt ruled by Muhammad Ali's family shifted circumstances to allow for an official French fostering of l'École Militaire. But as the origins of the first student mission demonstrate, French influence in Egyptian education was not inevitable.

The differing circumstances that precipitated each of these student missions show that they were an Egyptian choice. The decision to send students to be educated in France was one made carefully in each instance and for different reasons based on changing political circumstances. While France did become the primary source for the technical knowledge and educational models employed in nineteenth century Egypt, this implementation was marked by Egyptian interpretation and modified for Egyptian needs. An early version of this negotiation played out during the student missions. While the curricular and pedagogical choices were left to the French, students and their Egyptian administrators pushed against French educational practices when they did not work for their purposes. Indeed, the actors involved in the mission advanced a unique perspective on what constituted a beneficial education, contingent on their needs and experiences. Their differences created moments of productive tension in which institutional change was engendered. The participation of Egyptians in their own education during these missions anticipated the involvement of mission and technical school alumni in the administration of education in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The indigenized educational discourse and policy these intellectuals fashioned saw the European forms of knowledge they sought to inculcate as fundamentally compatible with pre-existing forms of knowledge in the Islamic and Arabic traditions. Rifa'a al-Tahtawi was one of the early advocates of this inclusive framework. His educational philosophy was contingent on his

religious and government educational experiences. Al-Tahtawi was a student of Hasan al-Attar at al-Azhar, and then undertook translation training while at l'École Égyptienne in Paris. His intellectual genealogy informed his directorship of the School of Languages, during which he crafted an early Egyptian version of a comprehensive education, bringing together indigenous Arabic language training with a European general preparatory curriculum. His influence over the translation movement while in this position also introduced a wide variety of non-technical knowledge he had encountered while in Paris. His most influential contribution was a definition of *ilm* that included any knowledge from which one could derive benefit, rather than one limited to religious knowledge. This inspired a larger trend to conceive of *ilm* as all encompassing amongst the men administering education in Egypt.

The hybridization of educational practice and the furthering of a discourse of *ilm* that emphasized the compatibilities of European and indigenous frameworks of knowledge was realized during Ismail's reign. Concepts of what constituted beneficial knowledge had also evolved, from the technical and developmentalist frame of Muhammad Ali's modernizing agenda, to a more diverse set of interests as discussed in *Rawdat al-Madaris*. It was in the pages of this journal that Egyptian educators explored and campaigned for a widening of *ilm*. Ulama and government-educated civil servants alike espoused this inclusive philosophy and imagined hybridized uses of these different epistemologies. Set against the backdrop of the first educational reforms at al-Azhar and the opening of Dar al-Ulum, the publishing agenda of *Rawdat al-Madaris* indicates a trajectory education could have taken, in which *madrāsas* like al-Azhar and the government schools could exist in a mutually beneficial relationship. This negotiation of modernity was cut short by Egypt's financial woes and eventual bankruptcy, necessitating the cessation of educational expansion during Ismail's reign. It was disrupted totally with the British occupation, when education was officially bifurcated.

The negotiation of modernity that emphasized the compatibilities of European and

indigenous knowledge was forgotten by the time the literary and intellectual processes which have collectively come to be known as the *nahda* emerged. By associating religious education with the poor and backward, and government education with the secular and elite, the British began the process of entrenching the idea that indigenous sources of knowledge, Islamic and Arabic literary traditions included, were in opposition to epistemologies “borrowed” from the West. This had great implications for how the Arab intellectuals of the early twentieth century, mired in nationalist and anti-colonial struggles, conceived of their engagement with these frameworks. The disruption and erasure of the earlier negotiation of modernity allowed them to think of their work as an awakening from stagnation, rather than a development of epistemologies that had continuities with older, indigenous ways of thinking. This dissertation, with its engagement with how Egyptians chose particular French knowledge for its utility, legitimated it through the use of Islamic sources and Arab literary conventions, and then implemented the indigenous rendering through education, serves as the beginning of a critical reanalysis and reframing of the foundations of the *nahda*.

The ideology of revival and awakening pursued by these Arab thinkers is one that requires further historical investigation. According to Nada Tomiche, use of this problematic term and its accompanying ideology has been limited to literary historians. Historians and scholars of Islam have avoided using the word *nahda*, choosing instead to refer to these processes as modernist, reformist, or nationalist in order to subvert the problematic terminology. It does not feature at all in Albert Hourani’s *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* or Peter Gran’s *Islamic Roots of Capitalism*.¹ Still, as historians engage with literary sources and methodologies in the practice of cultural history, the use of this term is increasing. It is not enough to simply choose to use an alternative term; contending with the historical origins of this term in a way that is sensitive to the contingencies of historical processes is imperative.

¹ N. Tomiche, “Nahda,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds. P. Bearman et al. (Brill Online, 2012)

When we begin the history of Egyptian modernity with the history of the colonial experience, we may overlook other negotiations of modernity that colonialism interrupted. The colonialism that followed this period was not necessary, nor was it inevitable. The negotiation of modernity initiated by Muhammad Ali's modernizing reforms was contingent in ways that had not been appreciated by earlier scholars. By appreciating these contingencies, this dissertation demonstrates that modernity and education looked fundamentally different in the nineteenth century. Instead of casting them in mutual opposition, Egyptian intellectuals of the nineteenth century brought Islamic approaches to education together with European curriculum and pedagogy, modifying both in the process.

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APPENDIX:
Partial Listing of Relevant Books from Al-Tahtawi Family Library¹
 (sorted by subject)

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¹ Located in Maadi, Cairo, I accessed these sources with the permission of Ali Rifaah Tahtawi. This is an family archive that has not been professionally organized. The books listed here were selected and catalogued by me, based on whether or not they could have been part of Rifa'a al-Tahtawi's personal collection, and on their condition and availability of publication information.

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