

Meaningful Mediums:
A Material and Intellectual History of Manuscript and Print Production
in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Cairo

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Abstract

Meaningful mediums is a study of the political economy of writing in the first Ottoman city to develop a sustained urban print culture. Cairo's writing economy comprised the longstanding manuscript industry, the governmental printing industry from the 1820s, and the for-profit private press printing industry from the 1850s. I investigate these industries' functions, interactions, and reputations to explore why Cairene printing developed and how contemporaries ascribed meaning to textual production during this period of flux.

This study relies on the texts themselves to generate the history of their production. I aggregate the names, dates, and other information contained within their openings, contents, and colophons to chart the work of their producers and vendors for the first time. I then contextualize this information through contemporary iconographic and descriptive depictions of Cairene texts. My sources are drawn from libraries and private collections in America, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France. They include formal and ephemeral manuscripts and printings.

Against narratives that invoke printing as a catalyst for modernity, I argue that printing was simply a tool. Its adoption increased because it was useful for different actors like the state, private entrepreneurs, and scholars who employed it to respond to

specific political, economic, and intellectual needs. My argument reverses the causality of modernization narratives, in that I establish that printing was the result of practical demands instead of the origin of new demands. As a tool, printing was deployed by Cairenes flexibly. Some used it to appropriate western norms, including the idea that printing is a civilizing force. Others used it to enact manuscript tradition.

The history of this process is important to social practices, like the creation of new professions. But it is also important to historical legacy. Nationalism, Enlightenment, and civil society are assigned their origins and proof in Cairene printings from the 1870s and 1880s. Yet this narrative of the Middle East's generic print modernity draws from the expectation for printings to engender public discourse and galvanize society, instead of from the words that these texts actually contain or an understanding of who made and consumed them and why. To counter the prevailing idea that printing is fixed and universal in its value and effects, *Meaningful mediums* examines printing as both a social and economic practice, and itself a space for ideas. It therefore emphasizes the significance of human agency, local context, constraints, and continuity during a period of momentous technological, textual, and cultural change.

In conclusion, this study documents Cairenes' incorporation of printing into their political economy of writing and revises the widely held notion that this process was an agent of social change, a marker of modernity and colonial restructuring, and a foreign disruptor of local textual tradition.

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To my mother, my stepfather, and my sister.

And to the memory of my father and of my grandmothers.

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CHAPTER ONE. Introduction.

“In Egypt, literary work is daily on the increase,” observed the German Arabist Martin Hartmann (1851-1918) at the start of his 1899 essay on *The Arabic press of Egypt*.¹ “New printing-offices, new books, new periodicals, and new men follow one another with a rapidity that is surprising in an Oriental country. As a natural consequence, the former condition of printing and publishing will soon be forgotten.”² If texts like newspapers were only just beginning to be printed by “new printing-offices,” as Hartmann posited, then what and how did Cairenes print under the “former condition of printing”? What mode of writing had this earlier version of printing supplanted in turn? Did these changes indeed occur “with a rapidity”? And to whom were they “surprising”?

The texts that Cairenes produced during the nineteenth century present a different view of the changes that Hartmann described. Just six years before Hartmann’s book was published from London, for example, a Cairene scribe drew up a probate contract for the heirs of a deceased man. Such documents were once written entirely by hand. But the Egyptian government now standardized their openings with a printed formula. In a gesture of specificity, the scribe ticked out the government’s printed prompts to render them invalid. He then proceeded to rewrite them, and the case’s details, out by hand. It is unclear whether he acted to insist that the particulars of this case transcended the printed form, or to rebel against printing’s intrusion into the traditional domain of

¹ Hartmann, Martin. *The Arabic press of Egypt*. London: Luzac & Co., 1899, first page of prologue.

² *Ibid.*

writing: the longstanding manuscript industry; the governmental printing industry from the 1820s; and the for-profit private press printing industry from the 1850s. I investigate these industries' origins, functions, interactions, and reputations to answer four questions. Why was Cairo the first Ottoman city to develop a sustained urban print culture? How did Cairene printing draw from the people, places, materials, and practices that constituted its manuscript tradition? What did contemporaries think of the changes that they detected in Cairene textual output? And what caused the history of this process, which is integral to scholarship that relies upon written sources from the nineteenth century, to be told from a European perspective?

Meaningful mediums traces the meanings that people have ascribed to Cairene writing, while anchoring these narratives to material history. I use the example of Cairo to argue that Ottoman printing should be examined through delineated incidents from a framework that privileges locals' preexisting methods for producing texts, and for thinking about them. My sources are drawn from libraries and private collections in America, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France. They include formal and ephemeral manuscripts and printings, and depictions of texts through iconography and contemporary descriptions. A major weakness of my research is that it does not include systematic field work from Egypt. The U.S. State Department withdrew its support for scholars working from the Fulbright program in Egypt in September 2013 for reasons of security, and the Egyptian government rejected my applications to conduct research from Egypt's National Archives. However, these obstacles pushed me towards the innovation of studying the production of Cairene texts from the names, dates, and other information contained within their openings, contents, and colophons. Moreover, these obstacles

enabled me to focus on ephemeral texts held by private and institutional collectors outside of Egypt. Such texts tended to be preserved for the fame of the figures who collected them and the scarcity of Orientalia, rather than for recognition of their inherent value, making these texts even more uncommon in Egyptian libraries. My approach is informed by book history and by social, cultural, and material histories of the Ottoman Middle East.

Book history is by no means fixed. It developed with a focus on textual production in Europe,⁴ but its application has expanded globally in recent years.⁵ Moreover, there is little scholarly consensus on which discipline it belongs to, whether it is a subfield or a methodology, or if its name is accurate given that scholars have expanded their focus beyond just ‘the book.’⁶ Still, certain trends within book history have emerged since the 1979 publication of Elizabeth Eisenstein’s (b. 1923) *The Printing press as an agent of change*.⁷

⁴ For an overview on book history, refer to: Darnton, Robert. “What is the history of books?” *Daedalus*, Vol. 111, No. 3, (Summer, 1982), pp. 65-83; and Darnton, Robert. ““What is the history of books?” revisited.” *Modern Intellectual History*, 4, 3 (2007), pp. 495-508.

⁵ See for example: Suarez, Michael F. and H. R. Woudhuysen (eds.). *The Book. A global history*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁶ See for example: Fuller, Danielle and DeNel Rehberg Sedo. *Reading beyond the book: the social practices of contemporary literary culture*. New York: Routledge, 2013; Pollmann, Karla and Meredith J. Gill (eds.). *Augustine beyond the book: intermediality, transmediality, and reception*. Boston: Brill, 2012; and Kafka, Ben. *The Demon of writing: powers and failures of paperwork*. New York: Zone Books, 2012.

⁷ Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing press as an agent of change: communications and cultural transformations in early modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Eisenstein argued that the standardization and mass production of print technology enabled the Protestant Reformation, the Renaissance, and the Scientific Revolution in Europe. Her work sparked a series of debates among scholars of book history.⁸ Their topics ranged from the impact of printing on European society,⁹ to the fixity of printed texts,¹⁰ to the role that printing played within wider social structures for the production and consumption of knowledge.¹¹

These debates prompted new lines of research in turn, four of which have informed this dissertation's methodology. First is the study of manuscripts in the age of print, which developed in recognition of scribal culture's survival alongside print culture.¹² Second is the study of the industry of print, which examines the ways in which

⁸ See for example: Grafton, Anthony. "The Importance of being printed." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 265-286; and "AHR forum. "How revolutionary was the print revolution?'" *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 84-128.

⁹ See for example: Johns, Adrian. *The Nature of the book: print and knowledge in the making*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

¹⁰ See for example: McKitterick, David. *Print, manuscript, and the search for order, 1450-1830*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

¹¹ See for example: Houston, Robert Allan. *Literacy in early modern Europe: culture and education, 1500-1800*. New York: Longman, 1988.

¹² See for example: Love, Harold. *Scribal publication in seventeenth-century England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993; Hindman, Sandra (ed.). *Printing the written word: the social history of books, circa 1450-1520*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991; and Beal, Peter. *In praise of scribes: manuscripts and their makers in seventeenth-century England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

practical forces like laws and the desire for profit shaped textual production.¹³ Given that popular texts dominated the work of most presses due to the reliable demand for them, scholars have incorporated the study of ephemera into their analyses of printed output.¹⁴ Third is the focus on print production within particular communities, so as to understand the ways in which printing developed differently from place to place.¹⁵ And fourth is the study of peoples' responses to changes in textual production at the level of feelings, ideas, and actions.¹⁶ These strands of thought have inspired *Meaningful mediums* at a basic level, and this dissertation is the first to explore them together within an Ottoman context.

¹³ See for example: Pettegree, Andrew. *The Book in the Renaissance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010; and Hoffmann, George. "The Montaigne monopoly: revising the *Essais* under the French privilege system." *PMLA*, Vol. 108, No. 2 (Mar., 1993), pp. 308-319.

¹⁴ See for example: Preston, Cathy Lynn and Michael J. Preston (eds.). *The Other print tradition: essays on chapbooks, broadsides and related ephemera*. New York: Garland Pub., 1995; and Halasz, Alexandra. *The Marketplace of print: pamphlets and the public sphere in early modern England*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

¹⁵ See for example: Blayney, Peter. *The Stationers' Company and the printers of London, 1501-1557*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 2 vols.

¹⁶ Darnton, Robert. "Readers respond to Rousseau: the fabrication of romantic sensitivity." *The Great cat massacre and other episodes in French cultural history*. New York: Basic Books, 1984, pp. 215-256; Shapin, Steven. "'The Mind in its own place': science and solitude in seventeenth century England." *Science in Context*, 4, (1990), pp. 191-218; Jardine, Lisa and Anthony Grafton. "'Studied for Action': how Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy." *Past & Present*, 129:1, (Nov., 1990), pp. 30-78; and Blair, Ann. *Too much to know: managing scholarly information before the modern age*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

I do so, however, from the understanding that these ideas are rooted in the European history of manuscript and print culture, and that there is a limit to the extent to which they may be applied to the Ottoman Cairene fold. A significant weakness of much of the scholarship on Ottoman printing has been its predication on the European experience of printing. This has led authorities on Ottoman printing to conclude that the Ottoman adoption of print technology was delayed, destined, and equivalent to the European experience in its effects.¹⁷ To the contrary, I demonstrate the Ottoman Cairene nature of printing's development in Cairo. Such a framework "provincializes Europe," to quote Dipesh Chakrabarty, rendering the European experience of print as one of many instead of paradigmatic of all.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is important to note that Cairenes were aware of European printing, and that they integrated some of its material and intellectual norms into their own textual production consciously. Indeed, privileging the Ottoman Cairene context for textual production makes it possible to detect instances of Cairenes' intentional engagement with foreign practice.

¹⁷ See for example: Roper, Geoffrey. "The Printing press and change in the Arab world." *Agent of change: print culture after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007, pp. 250-267; Sabev, Orlin (Orhan Salih). "Waiting for Godot: the formation of Ottoman print culture." *Historical aspects of printing and publishing in languages of the Middle East: papers from the third symposium on the history of printing and publishing in the languages and countries of the Middle East, University of Leipzig, September 2008*, (Ed. Geoffrey Roper). Boston: Brill, 2014, pp. 101-120; Ayalon, Ami. *The Press in the Arab Middle East; a history*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995; and Hanebutt-Benz, Dagmar Glass, and Geoffrey Roper (eds). *Middle Eastern languages and the print revolution: a cross-cultural encounter: a catalogue to the exhibition*. Westhofen: WVA-Verlag Skulima, 2002.

¹⁸ Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: post-colonial thought and historical difference*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000.

My emphasis on the Ottoman Cairene context has drawn inspiration from several recent social histories. Scholars from various disciplines of Middle Eastern studies have challenged the historical narrative of Ottoman modernity during the late nineteenth century due to its western teleological bias, and have tried to surpass twentieth century scholars' reliance upon elite voices and formal historical sources.¹⁹ With regard to Egypt, Ziad Fahmy has studied nationalism and mass colloquial culture through music and oral culture.²⁰ Eve Troutt Powell, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, and Adam Mestyan have explored ideas of race, radicalism, and nationalism through the theatre.²¹ Paula Sanders, Nezar alSayyad, Irene A. Bierman and Nasser Rabbat have analyzed the process by which Cairo was made to appear modern by the cultivation of its medieval heritage through architecture and its depictions in texts and photographs.²² Khaled Fahmy and John Chalcraft have investigated Cairenes' responses to increasing state intervention into

¹⁹ See for example: Lewis, Bernard. *The Arabs in history*. New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950; Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of modern Turkey*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961; and Hourani, Albert. *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

²⁰ Fahmy, Ziad. *Ordinary Egyptians. Creating the modern nation through popular culture*. California: Stanford University Press, 2011.

²¹ Powell, Eve Troutt. *A different shade of colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the mastery of the Sudan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003; Khuri-Makdisi, Ilham. *The Eastern Mediterranean and the making of global radicalism, 1860-1914*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010; and Mestyan, Adam. "Arabic theater in early khedivial culture, 1868-72: James Sanua revisited." *Int. J. Middle East Stud.*, 46 (2014), pp. 117-137.

²² Sanders, Paula. *Creating medieval Cairo. Empire, religion, and architectural preservation in nineteenth-century Egypt*. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2008; and alSayyad, Nezar, Irene A. Bierman, and Nasser Rabbat (eds.). *Making Cairo medieval*. New York: Lexington Books, 2005.

their lives by extracting their stories from the police records, judicial paperwork, and petitions preserved in government archives.²³ And Beth Baron, Lisa Pollard, Michael Gasper, and Felix Konrad have studied gender, family, and political representation through popular printings from private presses.²⁴

This dissertation complements these scholars' efforts in generating locally framed histories of nineteenth century Cairo from underappreciated sources, like handwritten texts in the age of print, lithographies, and ephemera. But it also grounds their research by explaining how the written sources that they rely upon came to be created. Moreover, it does so by focusing on Cairenes who have been similarly overlooked by earlier scholars. That is because it focuses on the people who constituted the producers, vendors, and consumers of Cairo's manuscript, governmental, and private printing industries.

Meaningful mediums has also drawn inspiration from recent cultural histories of texts in the Middle East. Although these studies cover different places and times, they

²³ Fahmy, Khaled. "The Anatomy of justice: forensic medicine and criminal law in nineteenth-century Egypt." *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1999, pp. 224-271; Fahmy, Khaled. "Women, medicine, and power in nineteenth-century Egypt." *Remaking women. Feminism and modernity in the Middle East*, edited by Lila Abu-Lughod. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 35-72; and Chalcraft, John. *The Striking cabbies of Cairo and other stories: crafts and guilds in Egypt, 1863-1914*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.

²⁴ Baron, Beth. *Egypt as a woman: nationalism, gender, and politics*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005; Pollard, Lisa. *Nurturing the nation: the family politics of modernizing, colonizing and liberating Egypt (1805-1923)*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005; Gasper, Michael. *The Power of representation: publics, peasants, and Islam in Egypt*. California: Stanford University Press, 2009; and Konrad, Felix. "'Fickle fate has exhausted my burning heart': an Egyptian engineer of the 19th century between belief and progress and existential anxiety." *Die Welt des Islams*, 51 (2011), pp. 145-187.

engage with topics and methodologies from book history in a variety of ways. Konrad Hirschler, Boris Liebrez, İsmail Erünsal, and Meredith Quinn have studied the reading and library cultures of Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul through endowment deeds, reading certificates, library catalogs, and ownership inscriptions.²⁵ Nelly Hanna, ‘Abd al-Majīd Ša‘bān, and Orlin Sabev have researched book ownership among middle class Cairenes and Damascenes, and Istanbulite printers through probate records.²⁶ Adrian Gully, Christine Woodhead, Yuval Ben-Bassat, and Fruma Zachs have analyzed the contents and social dimensions of epistolary correspondence among elites and at the popular level.²⁷ Chalcraft, James E. Baldwin, and Ben-Bassat have done the same with regard to

²⁵ Hirschler, Konrad. *The Written word in the Medieval Arabic lands: a social and cultural history of reading practices*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013; Liebrez, Boris. “The Library of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt. Books and their audience in 12th to 13th/18th to 19th century Syria.” *Orientalwissenschaftliche Hefte. Marginal perspectives on early modern Ottoman culture. Missionaries, travellers, booksellers*, edited by Ralf Elger and Ute Pietruschka, 32/2013, pp. 17-59; Erünsal, İsmail E. *Ottoman libraries: a survey of the history, development and organization of Ottoman foundation libraries*. Cambridge: The Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 2008; and Quinn, Meredith. “Books and their readers in seventeenth-century Istanbul.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, forthcoming.

²⁶ Hanna, Nelly. *In praise of books: a cultural history of Cairo’s middle class, 16th-18th century*. Syracuse University Press, 2003; Ša‘bān, ‘Abd al-Majīd. “Amlāk aš-šāikh ‘Abd al-Ghanī an-Nābulusī wa maktabatahu fī wathā’iq maḥākīm Dimašq aš-šar‘īya.” *Al-Majalla at-Tārīkhīya al-‘Arabīya lil-Dirāsāt al-‘Uthmānīya*, 35 (2007), pp. 165-184; and Sabev, Orlin (Orhan Salih). “Rich men, poor men: Ottoman printers and booksellers making fortune or seeking survival (eighteenth-nineteenth centuries).” *Oriens*, 37 (2009), pp. 177-190.

²⁷ Gully, Adrian. *The Culture of letter-writing in pre-modern Islamic society*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009; Woodhead, Christine. “The Gift of letters: correspondence between Nergisi and Veysi.” *Kitaplara vakfedilen bir ömre tuhfe İsmail E. Erünsal’a armağan*, edited by Hatice Aynur. Istanbul: Ülke, 2014, pp. 971-988; and Woodhead, Christine. “Writing to a grand vezir: Azmizade Efendi’s letters to Nasuh Paşa, 1611-1614.” *Osmanlı’nun izinde: Prof. Dr. Mehmed İpşirli armağanı*, edited by Feridun M. Emecen, İshak Keskin, and Ali Ahmetbeyoğlu. Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013, pp. 485-492; Ben-Bassat, Yuval and Fruma Zachs. “Correspondence manuals in

petitions that subjects sent to their rulers.²⁸ Dana Sajdi and Johann Strauss have examined emerging literary trends in Damascus and throughout the Ottoman Empire through the texts of the manuscripts and printings that people produced.²⁹ Ami Ayalon and Benjamin Fortna have studied the development of late Ottoman reading practices and literacy.³⁰ Ayalon and Afshin Marashi have researched the establishment of bookshops across the Ottoman Empire and within Tehran through printed advertisements and memoirs.³¹ Nile Green has traced the development of Iranian printing from a transnational technological context.³² Brinkley Messick, J.R. Osborn, Natalia Suit, and

nineteenth-century Greater Syria: between the *arzuhalci* and the advent of popular letter writing.” *Turkish Historical Review*, 4 (2013), pp. 1-25.

²⁸ Chalcraft, John. “Engaging the state: peasants and petitions in Egypt on the eve of colonial rule.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), pp. 303-325; Baldwin, James E. “Petitioning the Sultan in Ottoman Egypt.” *Bulletin of SOAS*, 75, 3 (2012), pp. 499-524; and Ben-Bassat, Yuval. “Mass petitions as a way to evaluate ‘public opinion’ in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman empire? The case of internal strife among Gaza’s elite.” *Turkish Historical Review*, 4 (2013), pp. 135-152.

²⁹ Sajdi, Dana. *The Barber of Damascus. Nouveau literacy in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Levant*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013; Strauss, Johann. *The Egyptian connection in nineteenth-century Ottoman literary and intellectual history*. Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 2000; and Strauss, Johann. “Who read what in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th centuries)?.” *Arabic Middle Eastern Literatures*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2003, pp. 39-76.

³⁰ Ayalon, Ami. *Reading Palestine: printing and literacy, 1900-1948*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004; and Fortna, Benjamin C. *Learning to read in the late Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic*. New York: Palgrave, 2012.

³¹ Ayalon, Ami. “Arab booksellers and bookshops in the age of printing, 1860-1914.” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:1, (2010), pp. 73-93; and Marashi, Afshin. “Print culture and its publics: a social history of bookstores in Tehran, 1900-1950.” *Int. J. Middle East Stud.*, 47 (2015), pp. 89-108.

Hala Auji have explored the connections between handwritten and printed Ottoman texts through the lenses of textual authority, physicality, and aesthetics.³³ And Yoav Di-Capua has considered the role that the contents of the Royal Egyptian Archives played in shaping Egyptian history writing.³⁴

These pioneering studies offer new ways for scholars of the Middle East to think about the materiality of the sources that inform their scholarship, the ways in which people engaged with them in time, and their impact upon intellectual history. *Meaningful mediums* contributes to this work empirically and methodologically by focusing on texts in nineteenth century Ottoman Cairo through its five content chapters.

Chapter two situates *Meaningful mediums* within the wider historiography on Ottoman printing. I argue that much of the scholarship surrounding the topic of Ottoman printing, or the occurrence of printing within the Ottoman Empire (1453-1918), is structured around two inquiries: technological determinism and the question of ‘what

³² Green, Nile. “Paper modernity? Notes on an Iranian industrial tour, 1818.” *Iran*, vol. 46 (2008), pp. 277-284; Green, Nile. “The Development of Arabic script in Georgian Britain.” *Printing History*, vol. 5, 2009, pp. 15-30; Green, Nile. “Journeymen, middlemen: travel, transculture, and technology in the origins of Muslim printing.” *Int. J. Middle East Stud.*, 41 (2009), pp. 203-224; and Green, Nile. “Stones from Bavaria: Iranian lithography in its global contexts.” *Iranian Studies*, 43 (2010), pp. 305-331.

³³ Messick, Brinkley. *The Calligraphic state. Textual domination and history in a Muslim Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993; Osborn, J. R. “The Type of calligraphy: writing, print, and technologies of the Arabic alphabet.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California San Diego, 2008; Suit, Natalia Kasprzak. “Quranic matters: media and materiality.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2014; and Auji, Hala. “Between script and print: exploring publications of the American Syria Mission and the nascent press in the Arab world, 1834-1860.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Graduate School of Binghamton University, 2013.

³⁴ Di-Capua, Yoav. *Gatekeepers of the Arab past: historians and history writing in twentieth-century Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

took the Ottomans so long to print?'. I maintain that these frameworks are ahistorical because they predicate Ottoman printing on the European experience of print. To support this point, I provide a factual overview for incidents of printing among Ottomans and compare them to their historiographical portrayal. I then examine the disproportionate role played by certain early modern European accounts of Ottoman printing within western and Arabic historiography. In particular, I examine the life cycle of scholars' belief that the Ottoman sultans banned printing, which I contrast with the imperial Porte's portrayal of its own stance on printing. I argue that the Ottoman sultans never banned printing and that this claim arose from the search to explain why Ottomans did not print. Moreover, I conclude that scholars should study printing through delineated incidents from a framework that privileges locals' preexisting methods for producing texts, and for thinking about them. The rest of *Meaningful mediums* applies this approach to Cairo, since it was the first Ottoman city to develop a sustained printing industry.

Chapter three examines Cairenes' encounter with printing during the French invasion of Egypt (1798-1801), and it does so from the perspective of Cairo's manuscript culture. I use contemporary accounts and texts to describe the city's manuscript industry during the long eighteenth century to demonstrate its extent and the unique ways in which it functioned. Doing so shows how Cairenes copied texts without printing, and how their manuscript tradition influenced their approach to printing later on. The French exposed Cairenes to Arabic typography *en masse* for the first time. But French printings did not impact Cairene textual production fundamentally, or elicit comment from Cairene chroniclers about the medium employed to produce them so much as for the message they carried and the way they were deployed. I establish this point by examining

Cairenes' handwritten renderings and descriptions of French printings in Egypt. I then contrast Cairenes' accounts to contemporary French accounts of their printing in Egypt. French accounts claimed that the introduction of printing to Egypt initiated a civilizing transformation and that Egyptians appreciated this meaning of printing. The distinction between these accounts is important due to the dominant role played by the French understanding of printing within English and Arabic historiography. Nonetheless, French printing did shape the development of Cairene printing technologically, formally, aesthetically, and organizationally. I therefore conclude this chapter by examining the aspects of French printing which influenced the implementation of governmental printing during the 1820s under the rule of Mehmed 'Alī (r. 1805-1848), the Ottoman governor of Egypt.

The adoption of printing by Mehmed 'Alī's government has been described as an intellectual turning point in Ottoman Egypt, under the supposition that technological determinism generated this change. Chapter four challenges this narrative by arguing that governmental printing thrived due to its links with the Cairene manuscript industry. I explore how Mehmed 'Alī's governmental printing worked and what made it distinctive from the vantage of Cairo's manuscript culture. I pair contemporary accounts with formal and ephemeral printings to argue that two governmental practices in particular secured the development of Cairene printing throughout the nineteenth century. These are: the *multazim*, or contractor, system, by which the government allowed subjects to commission privately funded printings from its presses during the mid-1830s; and the sale of governmental printings from a bookshop in Cairo's manuscript market in Khān al-Khalīlī from at least 1833. The importance of these two practices derives from their

participatory nature, as they allowed Cairenes to engage with printing according to longstanding manuscript custom. The *multazim* system drew from Cairo's manuscript tradition for commissioning texts, as the government assumed the role of the copyist for hire by offering to print texts that wealthy locals ordered. And the vending of governmental printings from Khān al-Khalīlī folded print into Cairenes' domain for trading manuscripts. These practices laid the ground for Cairo's mainstream private printing industry, as the government's actions were neither strictly private nor governmental, but an amalgamation of manuscript custom and printing practice. They also helped to solidify and sustain Cairene printing, allowing it to endure in a lasting way that had not characterized previous Ottoman printing endeavors. In this sense, the cause for Cairene printing's unprecedented persistence actually derived from the very manuscript industry that the historiography on printing has overlooked.

In chapter five, I describe Cairo's private printing industry from its lithographic beginnings in the 1850s to its typographic codification in the late nineteenth century. I situate private printing within the constellation of manuscript production and governmental printing to show why and how it developed as it did. Moreover, I demonstrate that these developments were more Ottoman Cairene in nature than they were European. I argue that the private printing industry developed from the people, places, practices, and tools that constituted Cairo's manuscript and governmental printing industries. I do this through the experiences of two families of printers, the Šāhīns and the Kāstalīs, whose stories I trace through the colophons and content of their formal and ephemeral output between the 1850s-1870s. This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the development and function of Cairene private presses during the

nineteenth century. It also explains the origins of the professional Cairene private printer. Finally, it encourages scholars to consider publications via their long-neglected printers instead of just their authors and particular genres like the newspaper. This is important because historians of modern Egypt make great claims about the late nineteenth century on the basis of private press publications. Nationalism, political dissidence, Enlightenment, and cultural renaissance, or the *Nahḍa*, have been assigned their origins and their proof in private printings from the 1870s and 1880s. When scholars touch upon the private presses that produced these printings, they present them as fully formed businesses that functioned just as European private presses did. Very little scholarship exists about where Cairene presses came from, how they functioned, who ran them, and what their owners sought to accomplish. In challenging the prevailing idea that the Cairene experience of private printing was generic and without human agency in its details, output, and effects, this chapter encourages scholars to be critical of the way that private printing has been invoked as a catalyst for modernity.

Cairene textual production changed during the nineteenth century, with the incorporation of the governmental and private printing industries into the manuscript economy. In chapter six, I examine how the meanings ascribed to Cairene textual production evolved with these changes. I distinguish between contemporary Ottoman and European projections of Cairo's writing industries to show their significant divergence during the first half of the nineteenth century. I argue that Egyptian sources projected state printing as a practical tool that implemented the government's projects and enhanced its symbolic power. By contrast, European accounts of Cairene textual production revolved around the theme of civilization, and placed Europe above Cairo in

an inherent civilizational hierarchy. During the latter half of the century, western accounts of Cairene textual production adapted this civilizational theme to accommodate the development of Cairo's print culture. At the same time, Egyptians' textual projections began showing the impact of European influence in both foreign forums like the great exhibitions, and domestic ones like the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya*, or Khedivial Library, established in Cairo in 1870. For example, Egypt's rulers came to view domestic printings as representative of their territory's international prestige, and founded the library for public benefit regardless of the visitor's religion. Cairene writers who published in print also began engaging with foreign textual norms both thematically within their compositions and emblematically to establish their legacies, as I show through the writings of 'Alī Mubārak (1823-1893), James Ṣānū' (1839-1912), 'Abdullah an-Nadīm (1845-1898), and Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905). While scholars have examined the rise of civilizational discourse in Egyptian writing generally during this period, they have not studied the ways in which this discourse was applied to textual mediums. It is important to recognize the changes in the meanings ascribed to Cairene texts during the early years of print because these ideas shaped textual production and practices. They have also influenced the historical legacy of the period and its actors.

Meaningful mediums emphasizes that the material and intellectual changes to texts in nineteenth century Cairo developed on a local continuum in response to Ottoman phenomena and customary patterns of textual production and thought, instead of as a series of inevitable ruptures catalyzed by foreign intervention, technological determinism, and destined modernity.

CHAPTER TWO. The Reinvention of Ottoman Printing.

Much of the scholarship surrounding the topic of Ottoman printing, or the occurrence of printing within the Ottoman Empire (1453-1918), is structured around two inquiries: technological determinism and the question of ‘what took the Ottomans so long to print?’. In this chapter, I argue that these frameworks are ahistorical because they predicate Ottoman printing on the European experience of print. To support this point, I provide a factual overview for incidents of printing amongst Ottomans and compare them to their historiographical portrayal. I then examine the disproportionate role played by certain early modern European accounts of Ottoman printing within western and Arabic historiography. In particular, I examine the life cycle of scholars’ belief that the Ottoman sultans banned printing, which I contrast with the imperial Porte’s portrayal of its own stance on printing. I argue that the Ottoman sultans never banned printing and that this claim arose from the search to explain why Ottomans did not print. Finally, I conclude that scholars should study printing through delineated incidents from a framework that privileges locals’ preexisting methods for producing texts, and for thinking about them.

A. Historiography.

I am not the first person to problematize the historiography on Ottoman printing. So far as I am aware, the historian John-Paul Ghobrial was the first to do this as a graduate student in a 2005 paper entitled “Diglossia and the ‘methodology’ of Arabic print.”¹ Ghobrial bracketed the term “methodology” to highlight its inadequacy.² He

¹ Ghobrial, John-Paul. “Diglossia and the ‘methodology’ of Arabic print.” Presented to the 2nd International Symposium of History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages

argued that Ottoman printing ought to be studied through the roles played by vernacular languages, and the global production of oriental typefaces.³ Ghobrial's critique was furthered by the historian Dana Sajdi in a 2009 paper entitled "Print and its discontents. A case for pre-print journalism and other sundry print matters."⁴ Sajdi elaborated upon the orientaling and Eurocentric tropes that have featured in writings about Ottoman printing from the eighteenth century.⁵ Moreover, she called for scholars to study the continuities between handwritten and printed texts through the survival of distinctive authorial practices and literary genres, arguing for example that the manuscript chronicle served the purpose of the journal and the printed newspaper.⁶

As the chapters beyond this one show, my own approach is to study printing through the ways in which people from particular locales incorporated it into their preexisting economies for producing texts, and their preexisting frameworks for thinking

and Countries of the Middle East. Paris, 2-4 November, 2005, Permission for citation granted by its author.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 3 & 7.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8 & 17.

⁴ Sajdi, Dana. "Print and its discontents. A case for pre-print journalism and other sundry print matters." *The Translator*, Vol. 15, Number 1 (2009), pp. 105-138, p. 113.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 105-123.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-126.

Sajdi maintained this argument through her 2013 book, *The Barber of Damascus*, which demonstrates the development of chronicle writing amongst non-elites in eighteenth century Damascus (Sajdi, Dana. *The Barber of Damascus. Nouveau literacy in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Levant*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

about them. I do so by focusing on the material and intellectual production of texts in nineteenth century Cairo, the first Ottoman city to develop a lasting urban printing industry. However, this chapter attempts to flesh out the history of the issue that Ghobrial and Sajdi raise, namely how the study of Ottoman printing came to be dominated by the European experience of print. This issue is important because it has precluded most scholars from examining Ottoman printing without bias.

The topic of Ottoman printing has been studied by scholars from various fields and disciplines, ranging from library studies, Middle Eastern history, and book history. Nonetheless, scholars have framed Ottoman printing in a uniform way. In library studies, George Atiyeh (1923-2008) may be taken as an authority on Ottoman printing due to his role in editing the 1995 volume *The Book in the Islamic world*.⁷ In Atiyeh's chapter on "The Book in the modern Arab world" he wrote:

In most of the Ottoman Empire, including the Arab world, the 'ulamā' [or experts in Islamic law] opposed the introduction of printing. It was only in 1727 that the use of the printing press for printing in Arabic script was permitted, and that was only for the production of non-religious materials. Belief in Islam's superiority over other religions, because the Koran is God's eternal word, and veneration of the Arabic language as the medium for revealing the word of God, made the 'ulamā', the Sultan, and others oppose the use of a metal object, coming from Christendom, to reproduce the honored language of revelation. There were certainly other reasons for this opposition, but those listed above were the weightiest ones. Here one wonders if the absence of printing was not an important element in the late arrival of modernism and modern technology to the Empire. Most of the Empire was rather slower in the assimilation and circulation of the new learning, leaving the Arab world far behind the West in terms of progress. Lebanon and Egypt were the first to realize this and to take advantage of

⁷ Atiyeh, George N. (ed.). *The Book in the Islamic world: the written word and communication in the Middle East*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1995.

the printing press.⁸

Atiyeh anchored his approach to Ottoman printing in Europe. Although he did not ask why the Ottomans took so long to print overtly, he used this question to structure his pursuit of the past. He then offered generalizations about religion to explain the “absence of printing.”

In Middle Eastern history, Ami Ayalon may be considered an authority on Ottoman printing since he authored several publications on the topic, including two books.⁹ In Ayalon’s 2010 paper on Arab booksellers and bookshops he wrote:

Printing was adopted in the Middle East several centuries after it had swept Europe. A common explanation for this striking historic delay ascribes it to a distrustful attitude of sultans and ‘ulama’ alike toward the foreign invention, on religious as well as political grounds: they feared that machined mass-production of writings might desecrate Islam’s holy texts and sacred language. If becoming widespread, it might also undermine their exclusive say in the community. Middle Eastern societies, then, did not adopt printing because their political and spiritual leaders were wary of it. The delay has also been attributed to opposition by the Empire’s scribes and book copiers, presumably an influential cadre, who naturally feared for their livelihood. Of late, scholars have begun to question the plausibility of such explanations and the credibility of their underlying evidence. Recent probes into the historic Middle Eastern dislike for printing tend to look at cultural factors rather than religious and political ones. They focus mostly on the society’s time-honoured preference for oral over written modes in communicating and retaining knowledge, a preference that would render the mass production of texts unnecessary. Such an explanation is perforce as tentative as the old, and seems to leave something to be desired.

⁸ *Ibid.*, “The Book in the modern Arab world: the cases of Lebanon and Egypt,” pp. 233-253, p. 235.

⁹ Namely: Ayalon, Ami. *The Press in the Arab Middle East; a history*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995; and Ayalon, Ami. *Reading Palestine: printing and literacy, 1900-1948*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004. He also authored a book that treats printing as a major subtheme: Ayalon, Ami. *Language and change in the Arab Middle East*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Be that as it may, the old aversive attitude to Gutenberg's invention began to lose ground in the eighteenth century, as a part of broader changes in the Empire's domestic and international realities.¹⁰

Ayalon highlighted the futility of the explanations offered for the "old aversive attitude to Gutenberg's invention." But although he found no satisfactory explanation for "this striking historic delay" between European and Ottoman printing, he supported its pursuit.

Finally, in book history we may look to Geoffrey Roper as the foremost authority on Ottoman printing.¹¹ Scholars of book history published a compendium entitled *The Oxford companion to the book* in 2010.¹² In it, Roper authored a chapter entitled "The History of the book in the Muslim world" in which he asked:

Why was book printing not adopted by Muslims for more than 1000 years after it was invented in China and 250 years after it became widespread in western Europe (in spite of its use by non-Muslims in the Muslim world)? The reasons for this delay must be sought both in the nature of Muslim societies and in the supreme religious and aesthetic role accorded to the written word within them. Some indications of the profound Muslim attachment to MS books and scribal culture have already been given, and there can be no doubt that this was the main reason for the reluctance to embrace printing. Some more specific reasons can also be adduced.

The use of movable type seemed to be the only practical method of printed-book production before the 19th century. This involved creating punches and matrices and casting individual types for all the letters and letter combinations of the Arabic alphabet, in their different forms; then, the compositor had to reassemble these separate sorts to create lines of text and pages of a book. As far as Muslims could see, this was done without regard to the intrinsic subtleties of the processes of calligraphic

¹⁰ Ayalon, Ami. "Arab booksellers and bookshops in the age of printing, 1860-1914." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:1, (2010), pp. 73-93, p. 74.

¹¹ See for example: Roper, Geoffrey (ed.). *The History of the book in the Middle East*. Vermont: Ashgate, 2013.

¹² Suarez, Michael F., and S.J. and H.R. Woudhuysen (eds.). *The Oxford companion to the book*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

composition, and its relation to underlying aesthetic and ‘spiritual’ considerations. Such segmentation and mechanization of the sacred Arabic script seemed tantamount to sacrilege in the eyes of devout Muslims. The production of the Qur’an by mechanical means was considered unthinkable, but other texts bearing the name of God (as nearly all did) were also regarded by most scholars and readers as not to be violated by methods of mass production. Rumours were also spread of the use in printing of ink brushes made from hogs’ hair, which would automatically defile sacred names; other rumours circulated about impure inks, which might also have the same effect.

Apart from these considerations, the mass production of books by printing challenged the entrenched monopolies of intellectual authority enjoyed by the learned class (*‘ulamā*), and threatened to upset the balance between that authority and the power of the state.¹³

Like Atiyeh and Ayalon, Roper attempted to explain something that never occurred with imprecisions.

These three examples demonstrate that important scholars of Ottoman printing have predicated their research on the European experience of printing. Although they came to Ottoman printing from different subfields, they structured their research around technological determinism and the question of ‘what took the Ottomans so long to print?’. Such cohesion amongst experts of Ottoman printing has empowered others to draw similar conclusions about Ottoman printing. For example, a 2011 study of Saharan literacy noted a Muslim resistance to printing. It included the claim that “it was only in the 1800s that Muslim societies, that had resisted for centuries the industrialization of manuscript production, adopted the printing press, centuries after it was in use among most Western and Asian literate societies...”.¹⁴ A 1988 history on Middle Eastern

¹³ *Ibid.*, Roper, Geoffrey. “The History of the book in the Muslim world,” Vol. 1, pp. 321-339, pp. 332-333.

¹⁴ Lydon, Ghislaine. “A thirst for knowledge: Arabic literacy, writing paper and Saharan bibliophiles in the Southwestern Sahara.” *The Trans-Saharan book trade: manuscript*

photography applied the idea of an Islamic discomfort with printing to the reproduction of photographs amongst Jews and Muslims: “But even more restrictive...were the religious taboos of a traditional society; for example, the second Commandment, which forbids the making of graven images, offered little chance for the new invention to root itself among pious Jews. The first local photographers to open shop were mostly Christians who did not see themselves bound by such a prohibition or converted Jews. (This was true even in the more progressive Ottoman Empire, where the leading photographers, the Abdullah brothers, were Armenians converted to Islam, and Sebah was of Greek-Christian origin.)”¹⁵ A 2004 anthropological study presented the imperial stance on printing as representative of a “tradition-modernity tension,” which the Porte eventually settled in favor of modernity: “by the early nineteenth century, even the Koran could be discussed in print, and by 1848, a wide variety of texts, totaling 514 and covering diverse topics in science, literature, and language, among others, were printed and marketed.”¹⁶ A 2000 cultural history of the subjects of the Ottoman Empire featured a section entitled “For and Against the Art of Printing” which focused on explaining why Ottomans were “against” printing: “It has long been a matter for debate among Turkish, European and recently also Tunisian scholars, why the printing of Ottoman works began

culture, Arabic literacy and intellectual history in Muslim Africa, edited by G. Kratli and Ghislaine Lydon. Boston: Brill, 2011, pp. 35-72, p. 63.

¹⁵ Perez, Nissan N. *Focus east: early photography in the Near East, 1839-1885*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988, pp. 74-76.

¹⁶ Shapiro, Michael. *Methods and nations: cultural governance and the indigenous subject*. New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 16.

only in the eighteenth century. A series of religious, aesthetic, socio-political and ultimately economic factors played a part in this...Many Istanbul bibliophiles regarded the Arabic characters generally used in Europe as decidedly unlovely...Another problem resulted from the many errors contained in a high proportion of printed texts...Printing also had the drawback of arriving in the Muslim world as a ‘Christian invention.’...Moreover, by no means all literary figures and theologians were convinced that the spread of reading was a good thing...At least until well into the seventeenth century, the Ottoman bureaucracy also looked on printed books as a potential source of conflict...As well as these political and religious-cum-cultural arguments against printed books, there was also an economic consideration.”¹⁷ Finally, a 2005 historical survey of the Ottoman Porte proclaimed that: “Printing had had a chequered history in the Ottoman Empire. Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal had brought this relatively new technology with them when they settled in Istanbul and elsewhere in 1492, but according to contemporary Jewish sources, Sultan Bayezid II soon banned all printing and his order was reiterated by Sultan Selim I in 1515 – the crime was punishable by death.”¹⁸

These quotes present a cohesive portrayal of Ottoman printing in tone, from which readers may understand that the Ottomans did badly not to print, and that there was something particular about the Ottomans which held them back from printing. Despite this coherent tenor, however, the seven quotes that I have provided offer seven different

¹⁷ Faroqhi, Suraiya. *Subjects of the sultan: culture and daily life in the Ottoman Empire*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000, pp. 94-96.

¹⁸ Finkel, Caroline. *Osman’s dream: the history of the Ottoman Empire*. New York: Basic books, 2005, p. 366.

explanations for why the Ottomans did not print. They argue that the Ottomans were held back by some combination of: two Ottoman sultans who prohibited printing; a “tradition-modernity tension;”¹⁹ a Semitic religious taboo on printing which impacted Jews and Muslims but not Christians; the jealous interests of the Muslim world’s intellectual elite in conjunction with the general Muslim love for handwriting; an “old aversive attitude” towards printing;²⁰ and a general opposition to “a metal object, coming from Christendom.”²¹ The differences between these explanations arise because much of the scholarship on Ottoman printing lacks reference to specifics. It is usually unclear whom scholars are referring to when they talk about Ottoman printing, whether their subjects be Muslims, Ottomans, or certain Ottomans. It is also unclear as to what type of printing scholars are referring to, whether that be typography, lithography, or impressions generally. Finally, scholars are unclear as to when, where, and whom their conclusions apply. This lack of specificity derives from the lack of interest on the part of early modern Ottomans for explaining why they did not print.

Nineteenth century Cairenes developed the empire’s first comprehensive and lasting printing industry. Up until the advent of Cairene governmental printing in the 1820s, Cairenes overwhelmingly produced their texts in manuscript form.²² With the

¹⁹ For more on this thesis from its originator, refer to: Schulze, Reinhard. “The Birth of tradition and modernity in 18th and 19th century Islamic culture. The Case of printing.” *Culture & History*, 16, 1997, pp. 29-72.

²⁰ Ayalon, 2010, p. 74.

²¹ Atiyeh, 1995, p. 235.

²² For more on this topic, refer to chapter three.

introduction of printing under the government of the Mehmed ‘Alī (r. 1805-1848), Cairenes began remediating certain types of writings from manuscript to print: those of which the state required multiple copies.²³ Later, the governmental printing industry abetted the growth of Cairo’s private printing industry.²⁴ These developments made incursions into the domain of the city’s copyists.²⁵ But before Cairo’s printing industry began, the Ottoman Empire hosted several other printing endeavors. These instances of printing overturned the monopoly that handwriting held over the Ottoman written word. Nonetheless, manuscript production remained hegemonic.

In contradistinction to printing in nineteenth century Cairo, these earlier Ottoman presses did not spark a sustained, societal-wide remediation from manuscript to print production. This lack of broad societal change did not result from the failure of early modern Ottoman presses. With the exception of one eighteenth century Istanbulite press,²⁶ their printers did not predicate their work on the goal of revolutionizing written production. Their presses operated outside of mainstream Ottoman society. And instead of printing to subvert manuscript production, these early modern Ottoman printers worked towards discrete purposes. Only some of their presses would impact the development of printing within Cairo.

²³ For more on this topic, refer to chapter four.

²⁴ Refer to chapter five for the development of Cairene private printing in the nineteenth century.

²⁵ Refer to chapter five.

²⁶ Specifically that of İbrahim Müteferrika (1675-1745), as I discuss further below.

Despite the discrete nature of early modern Ottoman presses, scholars of Ottoman printing welded presses together narratively. Nearly every twentieth and twenty-first century history of Ottoman printing begins by listing typographic presses chronologically, whether the book's ultimate topic be printing in a specific nation,²⁷ from a specific press,²⁸ or within the wider Arab world.²⁹ Scholars varied their starting points: some began their lists with the invention of woodblock printing in China,³⁰ while others with Gutenberg's press.³¹ But regardless of their lists' beginnings, they converged around early modern Europe's oriental printing presses.³² From Europe, scholars' lists jumped temporally and geographically to Ottoman printing presses.³³ Once they

²⁷ See for example: Ṭanāhī, Maḥmūd Muḥammad. *Al-Kitāb al-maṭbū' bi-Miṣr fī al-qarn at-tāsi' 'aṣar: tāriḫ wa taḥlīl*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Hilāl, 1996, pp. 19-24.

²⁸ See for example: Raḍwān, Abū al-Futūḥ. *Tāriḫ Maṭba'at Būlāq wa lamḥa fī tāriḫ at-ṭibā'a fī buldān aš-Šarq al-Awsat*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba'a al-Amīriya, 1953, pp. 1-27.

²⁹ See for example: Elias, Elias Hanna. *La Presse Arabe*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1993, pp. 8-12.

³⁰ See for example: 'Azab, Khālīd Muḥammad and Aḥmad Maṣṣūr. *Al-Kitāb al-'Arabī al-maṭbū': min al-judhūr ilā maṭba'at Būlāq*. Al-Qāhira: ad-Dār al-Miṣriya al-Lubnāniya, 2008, pp. 13-28.

³¹ See for example: Abdulrazak, Fawzi. "The Kingdom of the book: the history of printing as an agency of change in Morocco between 1865 and 1912." Boston University: Ph.D. Dissertation, 1990, pp. 57-74.

³² See for example: Šabāt, Khalīl. *Tāriḫ at-ṭibā'a fī aš-Šarq al-'Arabī*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1958, p. 17; and Ḥamāda, Muḥammad Māhir. *Al-Kitāb al-'Arabī makhṭūṭān wa maṭbū'ān: tāriḫuhu wa taṭawwuruḥu ḥattā maṭla' al-qarn al-'iṣrīn*. Ar-Riyāḍ: Dār al-'Ulūm, 1984, pp. 219-229.

³³ See for example: Gdoura, Wahid. *Le Début de l'imprimerie Arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie: évolution de l'environnement culturel, 1706-1787*. Tunis, Tunisie: Université de

completed this tour, scholars embarked upon their primary topics of research.

Scholars generated these lists under the expectation of printing's domination of the written word. They ascribed a teleological agency to Ottoman printing, as illustrated by Roper's conclusion about eighteenth century presses: "print had not yet become an agent of change in the Muslim world, although the way was now open for it."³⁴ This sense of expectancy fueled scholars to search for isolated instances of printing irrespective of parameters of time, space, and culture. The fusion of Islam and technology transcended historical detail, and provided justification for scholars to cover presses that ranged from Safavid Iran to Europe.³⁵ Safavid printing during the seventeenth century marked an instance of Muslim printing, while Semitic printing in humanist Europe demonstrated that typography could support oriental languages. Although the Safavids and Venetians had little impact upon the development of Ottoman presses, this detail mattered not. The guiding force behind Ottoman printing's historiographical narrative was not man; it was the determinism of the printing press's appeal to man.

By connecting unique instances of printing, scholars projected the idea that typography was cumulatively inevitable. Idiosyncratic efforts at printing became related forays into the twentieth century Middle East's destined print culture. The enthusiasm

Tunis, Institut supérieur de documentation, 1985, pp. 38-197; and Dāwud, as-Sa'īd. *An-Našr al-'ā'ilī fi Miṣr: dirāsa ta'šīlīya*. Al-Qāhira: as-S. Dāwud, 2008, pp. 29-65.

³⁴ Roper, 2010, pp. 332-333.

³⁵ See for example: 'Azab, 2008, pp. 29-60, & 62.

for print culture allowed the historian Khālid Muḥammad ‘Azab to proclaim “that it is possible for us to say without any exaggeration that all the advancement that man has attained in the modern era, and all that he is blessed with from civilization, comes foremost from his knowledge of the art of printing.”³⁶ But this enthusiasm obscured consideration for why the presses were established in the first place. In fact, the differences between Ottoman presses provide greater insight into why they came to be than do their similarities.

B. Disentangling the Early Modern Ottoman Presses.

At least thirty early modern Ottoman typographic presses existed before the establishment of Cairo’s printing industry.³⁷ In chronological order they are: the presses of Castilian and Aragonese Jewish immigrants in Istanbul and Salonika (circa 1494, and by 1510),³⁸ the hieromonk Makarije’s Eastern Orthodox press in Targoviste (1508),³⁹ an

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁷ There are doubtless many more. In enumerating these presses, I allot one entry for each printing operation regardless of the number of presses it employed, languages it used, and names it went by. For example, French printing during their Egyptian campaign (1798-1801) counts as one instance of printing, even though the French printed: from two presses run separately by Marc Aurel and then Jean-Joseph Marcel; in the languages of French, Arabic, and Greek; in various locations ranging from aboard *l’Orient*, to Alexandria, Cairo, and Giza; and under different names like The Press of the Naval Army, L’Imprimerie Orientale, L’Imprimerie Française, and L’Imprimerie Nationale.

³⁸ ‘Azab, 2008, pp. 9 & 63; and Gerber, Jane. *The Jews of Spain: a history of the Sephardic experience*. New York: The Free Press, 1994, p. 158.

³⁹ Zimmer, Szczepean K. *The Beginning of Cyrillic printing, Crakow, 1491: from the Orthodox past in Poland*. Colorado: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 135.

Eastern Orthodox press in Goražde (circa 1520s);⁴⁰ an Eastern Orthodox press in Mileševa (1544-1557);⁴¹ an Eastern Orthodox press in Belgrade (1552);⁴² a Jewish press in Edirne (1554-1556);⁴³ Gershom ben Eliazar Soncino's Jewish press in Cairo (1557-1562);⁴⁴ priest Apkar of Sivas's Armenian Orthodox press in Istanbul (circa 1567);⁴⁵ a Jewish press in Safed (circa 1576);⁴⁶ a Jewish press in Damascus (1605);⁴⁷ the Syriac press of the Maronite Monastery of Qozhaya (circa 1610);⁴⁸ Nicodemus Metaxas's

⁴⁰ Andrić, Ivo. *The Development of spiritual life in Bosnia under the influence of Turkish rule*, edited and translated by Želimir B. Juričić and John F. Loud. Durham: Duke University Press, 1990, p. 32.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴² Rogatchevskaia, Ekaterina and Aleksandra B. Vraneš. "The History of the book in the Balkans." *The Book. A global history*, edited by Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 502-512, p. 504.

⁴³ Cohen, Hayyim J. and Eyal Ginio. "Edirne." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, edited by Fred Skolnik. USA: Keter Publishing House, 2007, 2nd edition, vol. 6, pp. 148-150, p. 149.

⁴⁴ Roper, Geoffrey. "Printed matter in Egypt before the Būlāq Press." Paper delivered to the Fourth International Symposium on Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, 27-29 September 2011, Calligraphy Centre, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt; awaiting publication, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁵ Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of modern Turkey*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 50.

⁴⁶ AbiFares, Huda Smitshuijzen. *Arabic typography: a comprehensive sourcebook*. London: Saqi Books, 2001, p. 65.

⁴⁷ Bregman, Dvora and Ann Brener. "The Emergence of the Hebrew sonnet." *Prooftexts*, 11:3, September 1991, pp. 231-239, p. 233.

⁴⁸ Azab, 2008, p. 85.

Eastern Orthodox press in Istanbul (1627);⁴⁹ the Gabbai family's Jewish press in Izmir (1658);⁵⁰ an Eastern Orthodox press in Snagov (circa the 1680s);⁵¹ an Eastern Orthodox press in Moldavia (circa 1690);⁵² Constantin Brâncoveanu's Melkite Orthodox Arabic press in Bucharest (circa 1701);⁵³ Patriarch Athanasius III ad-Dabbās's Melkite Orthodox Arabic press in Aleppo (circa 1706-1711);⁵⁴ an Eastern Orthodox press in Moscopole (circa 1720-1769);⁵⁵ Ibrahim Müteferrika's Ottoman press in Istanbul (circa 1729-1742);⁵⁶ 'Abdullah az-Zākhir's Melkite Orthodox Arabic press in Dhour el-Choueir (circa 1731-1787);⁵⁷ a Jewish press in Yenikale (1734);⁵⁸ a Jewish press in Cairo

⁴⁹ Lewis, 1961, p. 50.

⁵⁰ Heller, Marvin. *Printing the Talmud: a history of the individual treatises printed from 1700 to 1750*. Boston: Brill, 1999, pp. 328-330.

⁵¹ McNally, Raymond T. and Radu Florescu. *In search of Dracula. The History of Dracula and vampires completely revised*. USA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994, p. 109.

⁵² Dumitrana, Magdalena. "In quest of the lost ecumenism." *Romania. Cultural identity and education for civil society*, edited by Magdalena Dumitrana. Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004, pp. 223-256, p. 238.

⁵³ 'Azab, 2008, p. 87.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

⁵⁵ Fleming, K. E. *The Muslim Bonaparte. Diplomacy and orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 34.

⁵⁶ 'Azab, 2008, pp. 67 & 75.

⁵⁷ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 18.

⁵⁸ Roper, Geoffrey. Personal correspondence, 25 October 2013.

(1740);⁵⁹ the Arabic press of the Melkite Orthodox Monastery of Saint Jurjis in Beirut (circa 1751-1787);⁶⁰ an Eastern Orthodox press in Istanbul (1756);⁶¹ the Eastern Orthodox press of the Monastery of Great Lavra in Athos (1759);⁶² an Armenian Orthodox press in Izmir (1759-1763);⁶³ an Eastern Orthodox press in Izmir (1764);⁶⁴ a Jewish press in Tunis (1768);⁶⁵ a Syriac Catholic press in Nabk (1785-1789);⁶⁶ the French, Arabic, and Greek presses brought to Alexandria and Cairo during the French invasion of Egypt (1798-1801);⁶⁷ and the Ottoman presses that Sultan Selīm III (r. 1789-1807) installed in Istanbul, in Üsküdar and at the Mühendishâne, his engineering school

⁵⁹ Yaari, Avraham. “Hebrew printing in Cairo.” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 4, p. 345.

⁶⁰ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 18.

⁶¹ Roper, 2013.

⁶² Staikos, Konstantinos Sp. and Triantaphyllos E. Sklavenitis. *The Publishing centres of the Greeks. From the Renaissance to the neohellenic Enlightenment*, translated by David Hardy. Athens: National Book Centre of Greece, 2001, pp. 173.

⁶³ Adonz, N. “The Light of the Near East.” *The New Armenia*. New York: The New Armenia Publishing Company, May-June 1921, Vol. XIII, No. 1, pp. 39-41, p. 40.

⁶⁴ Roper, 2013.

⁶⁵ Taieb-Carlen, Sarah. *The Jews of North Africa from Dido to De Gaulle*, translated by Amos Carlen. Maryland: University Press of America, 2010, p. 53.

⁶⁶ Roper, 2013.

⁶⁷ ‘Azab, 2008, pp. 101 & 103; and Boustany, Salah el-Din. *The Press during the French expedition in Egypt, 1798-1801*. Cairo: al-Arab Bookshop, 1954, p. 10.

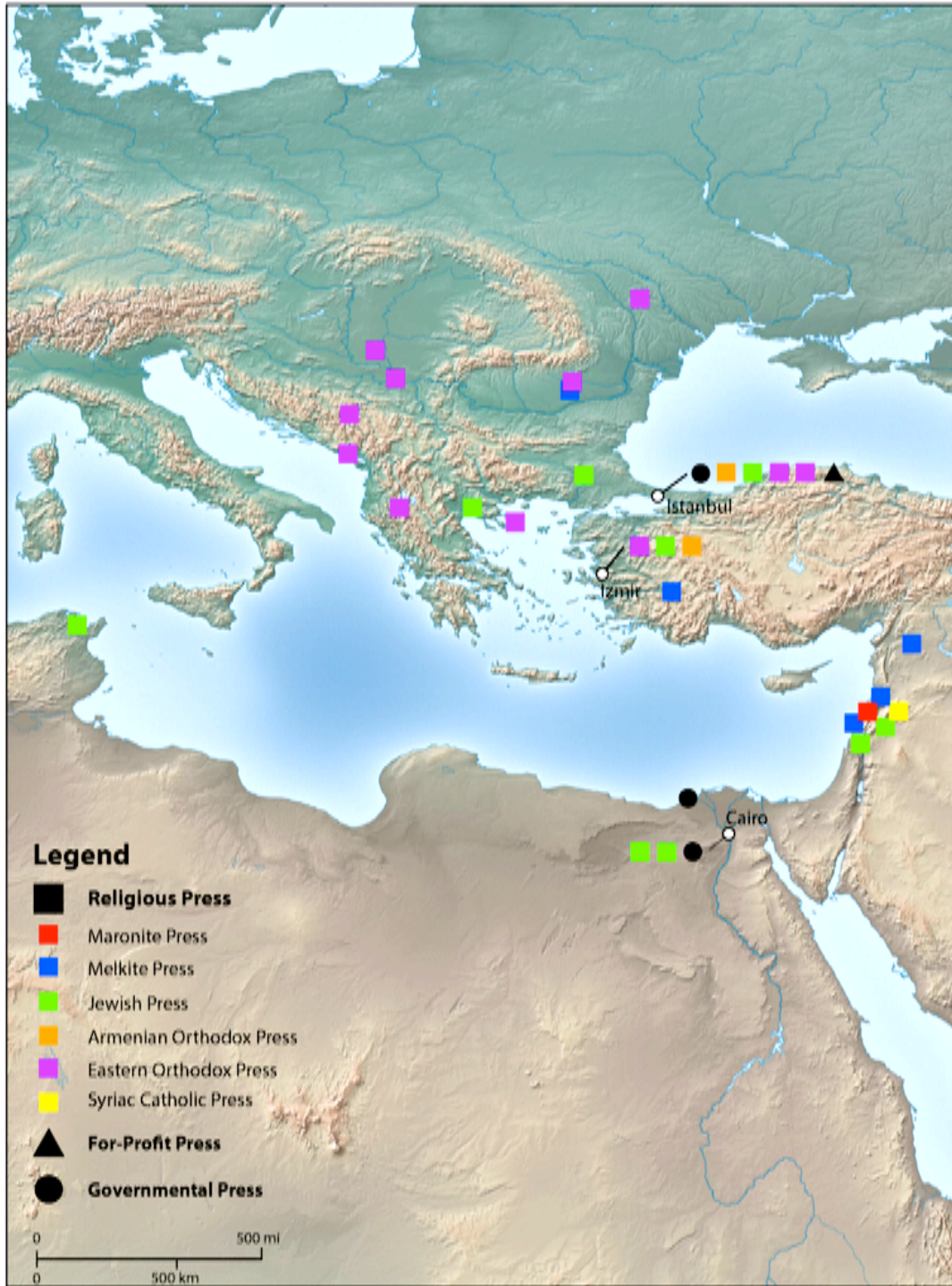


Image 2.1. Ottoman printing sites before the advent of Cairo's printing industry.

(circa 1797).⁶⁸

Taken as a group, very little binds these presses together aside from the empire in which they worked and the technology which they employed. Their first incompatibility appears when they are mapped. For unlike the presses of early modern Europe, which developed along waterways,⁶⁹ the locations of Ottoman printing sites varied immensely. European presses were established by water to facilitate the import of paper and the export of their printings. Moreover, they were founded in urban centers of trade so that their printings could be distributed to distant markets.⁷⁰ Ottoman presses were similarly encumbered by pragmatics, but they did not exist for mass commercial gain save for Müteferrika's press. The second incompatibility of the Ottoman presses concerns their impetus for printing. When I separate the Ottoman presses into the three distinct categories of religious printing, governmental printing, and Müteferrika's for-profit printing, three different purposes for their creation appear.

i. The Religious Presses.

I consider all of the aforementioned presses to be religious, save for the presses of Müteferrika and Selīm III in Istanbul, and the presses of the French army in Egypt. I classify them as religious because their printings targeted their respective religious

⁶⁸ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 24.

⁶⁹ Briggs, Asa and Peter Burke. *A social history of the media. From Gutenberg to the internet*. Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2009, pp. 20-21.

⁷⁰ Pettegree, Andrew. *The Book in the Renaissance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010, p. 33.

communities, and their locations accommodated their preexisting settlements. Very few records testify to the self-reported intentions of these religious printers.⁷¹ However, the nature of their printed output offers some sense of their ambitions. These presses overwhelmingly produced liturgical books in languages that supported their religious communities.⁷² For example, the Jewish printers in Istanbul, Salonika, and Izmir printed in Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish,⁷³ while the Maronites of the Qozhaya Monastery printed in the Syriac script.⁷⁴

Ownership marks within these religious printings support the notion that they remained within their target communities for generations. For example, a copy of *Kitāb al-muwā‘iz aš-šarīfīa*, or *The Book of the holy counsels*, printed from the Melkite press in Aleppo in 1711 carries the handwritten note inside its binding that: “this inscription (*al-khatt*) was fixed from the hand (*‘alaqa fī yad*) of the new Priest ‘Abdullah in the Christian year of 1847.”⁷⁵ The book therefore stayed in the possession of Aleppine Melkites for more than a century after its production. Moreover, accounts written by

⁷¹ A notable exception to this is the case of Müteferrika, as I discuss below.

⁷² Ottoman Jewish presses produced non-religious printings on occasion, like a handbook for interpreting dreams (Roper, 2011, p. 3).

⁷³ Ben-Na’eh, Yaron. “Hebrew printing houses in the Ottoman Empire.” *Jewish journalism and printing houses in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey*, edited by Gad Nassi. Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2001, pp. 73-96.

⁷⁴ Ḥamāda, 1984, p. 244.

⁷⁵ Refer to the opening endpaper in the Arcadian Library’s copy of *Kitāb al-muwā‘iz aš-šarīfīa* printed by the Melkite Orthodox Press in Aleppo in 1711.

European travelers to the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century record the communal safekeeping of such printings.⁷⁶

Scholars have offered different explanations for why these minority religious groups printed when Muslims did not. One line of argumentation ascribed printers with farsightedness on the basis of their presswork. Speaking of Dhour el-Choueir's printer, 'Abdullah az-Zākhir (1684-1748), for example, Joseph Nasrallah (1911-1993) wrote: "Zaher is one of those well-rounded (*universels*) men who succeeds at everything... The *Annales Chouerites* carries the following testimony about him: "On 30 August 1748 recalled to the mercy of his God was the acolyte Abdallah Zaher the Aleppine, star of the Orient, model of savants, singular in his epoch, without peer in his country..."⁷⁷

A more common mode of reasoning compared the religious cultures of Judaism and Christianity to that of Islam. Writing of Christianity, for example, Thomas Carter (1882-1925) proclaimed in his succinctly titled "Islam as a barrier to printing" that "though Arab culture, that so profoundly influenced reawakened Europe, knew of Chinese printing, the refusal of its literary men to profit by the art made Islam on the

⁷⁶ See for example the list of printings kept by the Melkite Orthodox monastery in Dhour el-Choueir in: Volney, Constantin-Francois. *Travels through Syria and Egypt, in the years 1783, 1784, and 1785. Containing the present natural and political state of those countries; their productions, arts, manufactures, and commerce; with observations on the manners, customs, and government of the Turks and Arabs. Translated from the French.* London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1788, Vol II, pp. 196-201.

⁷⁷ Nasrallah, Joseph. *L'Imprimerie au Liban: gravure sur bois de Zaher*. Harissa: Imprimerie St. Paul, 1948, p. 28. See also: Kahale, Joseph. *Abdallah Zakher: philosophe, theologien, et fondateur de l'imprimerie arabe en Orient*. France: Danair, 2000.

whole a barrier rather than a bridge for the transmission of block printing to Europe.”⁷⁸ Carter went on to write that “Crusaders from the west – and the obscure forms of printing that succeeded in spite of prejudice in finding lodgment in Moslem soil” formed “the story of the penetration of this barrier.”⁷⁹ Carter’s frankness on this point gave way to subtler comparisons of religious cultures, like the notion that Muslims did not print because of the authority that speech and the handwritten word held in the Islamic tradition. “My own feeling,” wrote the historian Francis Robinson (b. 1944), “is that the origin of the negative Muslim response to printing lay much more deeply... The problem was that printing attacked the very heart of Islamic systems for the transmission of knowledge; it attacked what was understood to make knowledge trustworthy, what gave it value, what gave it authority.”⁸⁰ The notion that Jewish and Christian groups were generally amenable towards progress has also been put forward.⁸¹

More material avenues exist for explaining why certain Ottoman religious minorities printed, however. The adoption of typography by Ottoman religious groups

⁷⁸ Carter, T. F. “Islam as a barrier to printing.” *The Muslim World*, 33, 1943, pp. 213–216, p. 216.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Robinson, Francis. “Technology and religious change: Islam and the impact of print.” *Modern Asian Studies*, 27:1, Feb. 1993, pp. 229-251, p. 234.

⁸¹ See, for example, how Ottoman religious minority printing is portrayed in the following quotation: “Jews were thus the first to enter the printing trade in the whole Empire; they were followed later by other minorities such as the Armenians (1567) and the Greeks (1627). The Turks themselves refrained from engaging in this type of work, since the printing press was viewed by Islamic leaders as the invention of heathens, and the printing of the Holy Scriptures and the Koran was considered a profanation of the sacred.” (Ben-Na’eh, 2001, p. 75).

corresponded to their exposure to European printing, and their access to typefaces in their language's script. For example, the European Jews who became Ottomans knew of typography from their lives in Europe. Some of the Jews that emigrated from Iberia and Italy in the late fifteenth century had worked as printers before their flight.⁸² When they were expelled from Europe, they brought their presses with them to the Ottoman Empire where they employed Hebrew typefaces to print texts in languages like Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, Latin, and German.⁸³

Like Ottoman Jews, Ottoman Christians were exposed to typography in Europe. This helps to explain why the earliest instances of Ottoman Christian printing occurred in the empire's easternmost territories. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, those Ottoman Christians who studied typographic printing did so by acquiring the requisite skills and technology from Europe. Not until the eighteenth century did an Ottoman make Arabic typefaces from within the empire.⁸⁴ For example, the Armenian and Eastern Orthodox presses secured their tools and expertise in printing from Europe.⁸⁵ The Melkite press in Aleppo printed from a press "procure[d]" from Europe.⁸⁶ And the

⁸² Heller, 1999, pp. 328-330.

⁸³ Pippidi, Andrei. *Visions of the Ottoman world in Renaissance Europe*. London: C. Hurst & Co., 2012, p. 59.

⁸⁴ This distinction belongs to the Melkite Orthodox Christian az-Zākhir (Kahale, 2000, p. 61).

⁸⁵ Apkar of Sivas studied typography in Venice, and Nicodemus Metaxas purchased his press from England (Lewis, 1961, p. 50).

⁸⁶ *An extract of several letters relating to the great charity and usefulness of printing of the New Testament and Psalter in the Arabick language; for the benefit of the poor*

Syriac Catholic press at Nabk began printing four years after uniting with Rome in 1751. This pattern of Ottoman Christian reliance upon their western brethren continued into the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the letters and memoir of Pliny Fisk (1792-1825), an American Protestant missionary: “To day in company with Mr. Wolff I made a visit to Sharfi and Bzomar; the latter place is the residence of the Armenian Catholic patriarch. It is rather a theological seminary than a convent. About twenty young men are here pursuing studies preparatory to the ministry...they made many inquiries about the expense that would attend the purchase and establishment of a press. From their inquiries I infer that the establishment of a press is part of their plan;” and “...Mr. Fisk went to Mar Ephraim, the residence of the patriarch, Peter Jarwy, who is well known in England, having visited that country and solicited donations to enable him to print, as he pretended, and circulate the Scriptures on Mount Lebanon.”⁸⁷

Accordingly, Ottoman religious minority printing corresponded to European religio-political events. Jewish printers established presses within the empire after their expulsions from European states. And Eastern Orthodox presses originated after the start of the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation was notable for the way in which Protestant theologians paired popular printings with religion to target the public.⁸⁸ This

Christians in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt, and other Eastern countries: with a proposal for executing so good an undertaking. London: J. Downing, in Bartholomew-Close, near West-Smithfield, 1720, pp. 13-14.

⁸⁷ Bond, Alvan. *Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk, A.M. Late missionary to Palestine.* Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1828, pp. 326-327 & 334.

⁸⁸ See for example: Edwards, Mark J. *Printing, propaganda and Martin Luther.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994; Gilmont, Jean-François (ed.). *The Reformation and the book.* Karin Maag (trans.). Vermont: Ashgate, 1998; and Green,

practice motivated the Roman Catholic Church to censor texts, and to print works of their own for readers within Europe and missionary and colonial territories.⁸⁹ To check the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, the Ottoman Empire's Eastern Orthodox community acquired presses.⁹⁰ The European competition for Ottoman believers impacted Ottoman printing into the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. For example, Ottoman Melkite printing increased after their union with the Roman Catholic Church in 1729. And as late as 1846, the Roman Catholic Church made theological and material "concessions" at "an expense of no small magnitude" to the Maronites "in order to secure its present influence over them."⁹¹

Once an Ottoman religious group began printing, the technology tended to spread amongst that particular community. For instance, the Gabbai family established a Hebrew press in Izmir before founding another one in Salonika.⁹² Bucharest's Melkite Orthodox press inspired the establishment of Aleppo's Melkite Orthodox press five years

Jonathan. *Printing and prophecy: prognostication and media change, 1450-1550*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012.

⁸⁹ Hsia, R. Po-Chia. "The Catholic Book." *The World of Catholic renewal, 1540-1770*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 172-186.

⁹⁰ Roberts, R. J. "The Greek press at Constantinople in 1627 and its antecedents." *The Library: the transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, S5-XXII (1), 1967, pp. 13-43, p. 13.

⁹¹ Wilson, John. "The Papal eastern churches." *Lectures on foreign churches, delivered in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1846, in connection with the objects of the committee of the free church of Scotland of the state of Christian churches on the continent and in the east*. Edinburgh: W. P. Kennedy, 1846, pp. 1-86, pp. 35-36.

⁹² Heller, 1999, pp. 328-330.

later.⁹³ And the Aleppine press prompted the foundation of Dhour el-Choueir's Melkite press, which served to motivate the fonts cast for Beirut's Melkite press in turn.⁹⁴

The texts that these religious presses produced and the places from which they produced them do not suggest that they attempted to service the Ottoman mainstream, to make printing into the dominant mode of writing, or to convert new followers. Instead, the Ottoman religious presses appear to have functioned to maintain their religion. In 1720, the London based Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge solicited charitable donations for their project of printing Arabic religious texts in Europe for dissemination in the Ottoman Empire. To fund their distribution of the New Testament and Psalter in Arabic to "the poor Christians in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt, and other eastern countries," the Society circulated letters of endorsement for their project written by men familiar with the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁵ One such letter written by Reverend Dr. Samuel Lisle (1683-1749), "*Fellow of Wadham College in Oxford, and sometime Chaplain to the Honourable Turkey Company at Aleppo*," described the impetus behind the Melkite press of Aleppo.⁹⁶

It will be sufficient to say, that the Poverty of the Christians in the *East*, and the Difficulty of Procuring Copies of the Scriptures in that Country, where Printing is not in Use, do both unhappily concur to keep those People without any Knowledge of the Scriptures, but as they now and then hear some few Portions of them read in their Churches. And I will leave

⁹³ 'Azab, 2008, p. 87.

⁹⁴ Raḍwān, 1953, pp. 16-17.

⁹⁵ *An extract*, 1720, p. 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

you, SIR, to judge, what Ignorance, and Corruptions, and Superstitions, are like to follow upon such a Want. And these Difficulties are really so great, that the present Patriarch at *Aleppo*, (a Person never to be named without Honour) endeavouring to relieve, as much as in him lay, these Necessities of his People, did formerly procure a Printing Press from *Europe*, which he erected in his own House, and began to print Copies of their Liturgy: But it soon appeared that this was a Work of too much Expence and Burthen, even for the Magnanimity of this extraordinary Person to support it; insomuch that he was forced to desist from that Undertaking: And as the Press has lain still for some Years; so it does not seem to me ever likely to be set on Work again; and the People must ever continue without the Use of the Scriptures, unless they are reliev'd by some such Method as is now proposed to the Society; and upon which, I beseech GOD to bestow his Blessing.⁹⁷

Lisle maintained that the Aleppine Melkite patriarch Athanasius III ad-Dabbās printed to satisfy “the necessities of his people.” This utilitarian assessment of religious printing is upheld by accounts which noted that religious communities preserved the liturgical texts that they received from Europe, as when a visitor to Qozhaya in 1852 observed that the Maronites conserved printed books from Rome.⁹⁸

The locations of the presses support the view that they were established for discrete purposes. The monasteries of Qozhaya and Dhour el-Choueir, for example, clung to the sides of remote mountain ranges. Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820) visited Dhour el-Choueir in the 1780s and wrote: “this monastery is situated opposite the village of Shouair, on a steep declivity...The convent, built amid rocks and blocks of stone, is far from magnificent, and consists of a dormitory with two rows of little cells, above which is a terrace substantially vaulted; it maintains forty monks. Its chief merit

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁹⁸ Petermann, Julius Heinrich. *Reisin im Orient*. Leipzig: Verlag Von Veit & Comp., 1865, Vol. II, 2nd ed., pp. 319-320.

consists in an Arabic Printing Press...”⁹⁹ Forty years later, Dhour el-Choueir proved no more accessible to Fisk, who recorded: “The convent stands on the side of steep rocky hill with a deep ravine below it. There is no village near. It is a Greek Catholic establishment, and contains 30 or 40 monks. They have an Arabic printing press at which they have printed Psalters; the Gospels in the order in which they are read in the church; the books of prayer and monastic laws; and a few other works.”¹⁰⁰ Not long after visiting Dhour el-Choueir, Fisk ventured on to Qozhaya: “...[we] rode over a plain, and ascended the mountains, till we reached a lofty summit, with a valley before us, which I cannot better describe, than by calling it a frightful chasm in the earth. We dismounted, and descended literally by winding stairs, nearly to the bottom of the ravine, and then, after various windings and gentle ascents among shrub-oaks, we reached the convent of Mar Antonius at Khoshiah, situated on the side of an almost perpendicular mountain... They have a press in the convent, and print their church books in Syriac and Carshun.”¹⁰¹

Religious presses in urban centers also appear to have been established for their specific communities. Efforts in early eighteenth century Bucharest and Aleppo were encumbered by land, restricting the ability to export printings. And while Beirut’s geography made it a worthwhile site for printing, its first press arose when the port town was hardly inhabited. Finally, the Hebrew presses of Salonika, Istanbul, and Izmir do not

⁹⁹ Volney, 1788, pp. 190-191.

¹⁰⁰ Bond, 1828, p. 322.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 327-328.

appear to have functioned as distribution hubs for the empire's non-Jewish readers, or its other Jewish communities.

On balance, it appears that Ottoman religious minorities founded presses to supply their communities with texts that would preserve and sustain their traditions. The texts they printed mirrored their manuscript production, or pre-Ottoman print production in the case of European Jews, in content and in maintaining the unlikeliness that the uninitiated would consume them. These presses therefore defy their historiographical portrayal as harbingers of Ottoman print culture. As the subsequent chapters of this dissertation demonstrate, the religious presses did not influence the development of nineteenth century Cairene printing.

ii. The Governmental Presses.

The presses of French Egypt and imperial Istanbul at the turn of the nineteenth century form the second category of Ottoman presses: governmental presses. Unlike the religious presses, the governmental presses influenced the implementation of Cairene printing under Meḥmed 'Alī. These presses supported the projects of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) and Selīm III (r. 1789-1807). Both leaders controlled their jurisdictions fiscally and militarily, like Meḥmed 'Alī would twenty years later, and they exerted control over their presses in a manner befitting such authority. Indeed, Bonaparte, Selīm III, and Meḥmed 'Alī used their presses to facilitate their wider military projects for Egypt and for the Ottoman Empire.

The French presses relayed French proclamations to French soldiers, and Arabic

proclamations to Alexandrians and Cairenes.¹⁰² Secondly, they entertained French soldiers with periodicals, newspapers, almanacs, and Arabic primers for the more erudite among them.¹⁰³ These latter publications helped Frenchmen to navigate their unfamiliar environment while maintaining a fluid, though delayed and controlled, connection to their homeland. Periodicals merged archeological and zoological discoveries in Egypt with wider French knowledge.¹⁰⁴ Newspapers featured news of French political tussles, announced local military balls, and advertised newly established bistros.¹⁰⁵ And almanacs translated information between the many cultures which the soldiers inhabited.¹⁰⁶ For example, the almanacs provided readers with conversions between the *Hijrī*, Coptic, and French Republican calendars. They also featured conversion tables for the various weights, measures, and currencies that were in circulation.¹⁰⁷ The French

¹⁰² See for example: Lacroix, André. “La Maison des têtes a Valence. L’Imprimerie et la presse Valentinoises.” *Bulletin de la Société (départementale) d’archéologie et de statistique de la Drome*. Valence: Imprimerie de Chenevier et Pessieux, 1881, vol. 15, pp. 81-94, p. 90; and Napoléon I^{er}. *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, Tome IV*. Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1858-1869, p. 323, Document 2723.

¹⁰³ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 22.

¹⁰⁴ Refer to: *La Décade Egyptienne, journal littéraire et d’économie politique*. Au Kaire: L’Imprimerie Nationale, An VII de la République Française, Tome I.

¹⁰⁵ Refer to: *Courrier de l’Égypte*. Au Kaire: De l’Imprimerie de Marc Aurel, VII^e année de la République.

¹⁰⁶ Refer to: *Annuaire de la République Française calculé pour le méridien du Kaire, l’an IX de l’ère française (avec un tableau militaire de l’armée d’Orient, etc.)*. Au Kaire: L’Imprimerie Nationale, 1800.

¹⁰⁷ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 24.

withdrew from Egypt in 1801. However, as I argue in chapter three, their printings in Arabic and French influenced the conduct, aesthetics, and content of the texts published by Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government.

In Istanbul, Selīm III founded his presses under the wider reform program known as *Nizam-ı Cedid*, or the New Order. The program was designed along European lines to produce a new army to supersede the Ottoman janissaries after their strikes, mutinies, and military failures.¹⁰⁸ It included the establishment of two presses: one at Üsküdar, and the other at the imperial engineering school, or Mühendishâne.¹⁰⁹ The presses produced texts in support of Selīm III’s reform agenda,¹¹⁰ however, the *Nizam-ı Cedid* ended when janissaries forced Selīm III to abdicate. Nineteenth-century Egyptian printing drew from Selīm III’s example in two ways. First, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government brought printing to Egypt as part of a reforming project that resembled the *Nizam-ı Cedid*.¹¹¹ Second, some

¹⁰⁸ Shaw, Stanford J. “The Nizam-i Cedid army under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807.” *Oriens*, Vol. 18/19 (1965/1966), pp. 168-184, pp. 169-170.

¹⁰⁹ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 24.

¹¹⁰ Refer, for example, to the dedication page of a military regulations book printed under Selīm III: “It is under the auspices of my august invincible sovereign, Sultan Selim III, that I was enabled to explain myself in a foreign language, and it is therefore out of recognition [of this] that I decided to give this *précis* of some of the regulations of his imperial majesty in French. All of Europe will be convinced of his imperial majesty’s indefatigable zeal for making his Empire flourish” (Rayf Efendi, Mahmoud. *Tableau des nouveaux reglements de l’Empire Ottoman*. Constantinople: Imprimé dans la nouvelle Imprimerie du Génie, sous la direction d’Abdurrahman Efendi, 1798, p. 5). See also: Kut, Günay Alpay. “Maṭba‘a, In Turkey.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, new edition*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989, Vol. VI, Fascicules 111-112, pp. 799-803, p. 801.

¹¹¹ Šayyāl, Jamāl ad-Dīn. *Tārīkh at-tarjama wa al-ḥaraka ath-thaqāfiya fī ‘aṣr Muḥammad ‘Alī*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-fikr al-‘arabī, 1951, p. 195; Hurewitz, J. C. “The Beginnings of military modernization in the Middle East: a comparative analysis.”

of the printings that were produced under Mehmed ‘Alī’s rule copied the content and appearance of those produced under Selīm III.¹¹²

iii. *İbrahim Müteferrika’s For-Profit Press.*

An exception to the religious and governmental press categories comes through the private press of İbrahim Müteferrika (1675-1745), a Unitarian convert to Islam who reached prominence in the Ottoman imperial court.¹¹³ Like the religious presses, Müteferrika’s press provided minimal inspiration for the development of Cairene printing. But crucially, Müteferrika explained his purpose in printing in an essay entitled “*Vesiletu-t tibiaa*,” or “The Usefulness of printing.”¹¹⁴

Müteferrika published his essay in the prologue of his first printed book, the 1727

Middle East Journal, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1968), pp. 144-158, p. 145; and Farhi, David. “Nizām-ı Cedid – military reform in Egypt under Mehmed ‘Alī.” *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1972, pp. 151-183.

¹¹² I examine this topic further in chapter six.

¹¹³ For more on Müteferrika’s background, refer to: Sabev, Orlin. “Formation of Ottoman print culture (1726-1746): some general remarks.” *New Europe College. Regional Program 2003-2004, 2004-2005*. Bucharest: New Europe College, 2007, pp. 293-333.

¹¹⁴ For the full English translations of “*Vesiletu-t tibiaa*” and the Imperial firman granted to Müteferrika by Sultan Ahmed III, refer to: Murphy, Christopher M. (trans). “Appendix: Ottoman imperial documents relating to the history of books and printing.” *The Book in the Islamic world: the written word and communication in the Middle East*, edited by George N. Atiyeh. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 283-292, pp. 284-292. For their reproductions, along with the endorsements, or *taqrīz* of the religious scholars, or ‘*ulamā*’, refer to: Gdoura, 1985, pp. 276-280.

Ottoman-Arabic dictionary *Kitab-ı lügat-ı Vankulu*.¹¹⁵ He wrote it to “become free from public and private questioning...so that it is clear that he is on a true, straight road in this work...”.¹¹⁶ Müteferrika’s description of typography suggests that his contemporaries were unfamiliar with the process. He argued that printing fell amongst the arts, with the proviso that the “...the art of printing is a beneficial one.”¹¹⁷ “When a book is printed,” he explained, “there are several thousand exactly identical copies, and printing is a means of producing many clear, excellent, perfect books in a short time.”¹¹⁸ He elaborated upon this explanation through comparisons, noting that printing functioned as “...a type of inscribing analogous to the action of engraving and writing by the pressing of words and lines on a page, it is like coining money or inscribing walls, or like the impression from a signet ring when pressed down upon a document.”¹¹⁹

Müteferrika explained his motivations for printing. Believing print to be “...an aid and help to the general public,” he endeavored “...to make an effort to publish in the world, in large numbers, books on the necessary arts and sciences, books that are sound and accurate and in every way acceptable.”¹²⁰ After the Jews and Christians lost their

¹¹⁵ Jawharī, Ismā‘īl ibn Ḥammād. *Kitab-ı lügat-ı Vankulu*. Kostantiniye: Darüttibaatülmemure, 1729.

¹¹⁶ Murphy, 1995, p. 287.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

holy books,¹²¹ and the Muslims survived onslaughts of the Chingizids in Central Asia, the Mongols in Baghdad, and the Europeans in Andalusia,¹²² Müteferrika argued that printing could preserve and multiply books to revitalize learning. He admonished that waning Ottoman military prowess jeopardized learning beyond just common threats to books, like “...disturbed conditions, destructive events, and destroying fires...”¹²³ Without books, “students of the sciences [would] suffer severe difficulties.”¹²⁴ Each generation needed to do their part to preserve these vessels of knowledge. But “the men of the current age, being followers of ease and being exhausted, and having debilitating wealth and ease, ignore beauty; consequently, innovative works are not appreciated or preserved.”¹²⁵

Müteferrika enumerated ten benefits of printing. Printing fostered learning. It allowed Muslims to revisit the great works of their noble past. It made beautiful and accurate calligraphy with ink that was “safe and secure from the misfortune of becoming

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 288.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

The notion of Ottoman societal decline, as portrayed by sixteenth century Ottoman sources, is explored in: Fleischer, Cornell. *Bureaucrat and intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. The self-reported Ottoman decline did not come from a comparison to Europe. Rather, early modern Ottoman elites articulated their sense of decline relative to societal changes within the empire itself.

wet,” unlike the fading prone ink of “books written by pen.”¹²⁶ It forged a new commodity for commerce that made each book, when printed up in the thousands, “inexpensive” for “students both rich and poor.”¹²⁷ Printing organized knowledge in “summary” and “detail” respectively, via tables of content and indexes.¹²⁸ It “reduc[ed] ignorance” by disseminating books “in town and country.”¹²⁹ It promoted order and calm in outlying regions of the empire by enlightening the public to ultimately “become a foundation for the strength of the Empire.”¹³⁰ It served as a worthier counterpart to the greatness demonstrated by the Ottoman military. It allowed “the Muslims to take precedence in the book trade” by overcoming the poor quality of European printed books sold within the Empire.¹³¹ Lastly, printing guaranteed the Ottomans everlasting fame through the joy it fostered within the Empire and across the Muslim world:

The various peoples of the world, that is, the Arabs and [Persians], the people of the Turks, Tatars and Turkmen, Kurds, Uzbeks, Chagatay, Hindi and Sindi, Persians and Maghribis, Yemenis, Greeks, Ethiopians and the Sudanese, all together having been exalted by Islam, they have need of various kinds of books. Therefore, introducing and bringing about this important and great work certainly increases and augments the glory and majesty of the Ottoman state, and is the cause of a glorious victory for the Empire and a splendid preface and a glorious superscription, lasting until

¹²⁶ Murphy, 1995, p. 289.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

the day of judgment. It will be remembered with goodness by the tongues of the world and will bring forth the good prayers of all believers; without dispute, printing is a means to enliven and make happy the Muslims.¹³²

Müteferrika followed his essay with a list of endorsements for his work, or *taqārīz*, from Istanbulite elites. The practice of promoting texts through blurbs from eminent figures may be observed in manuscripts from Mamlūk Egypt from as early as the fourteenth-century.¹³³ But Müteferrika applied these accolades to the work of the printer. He promulgated sixteen *taqārīz* over two page openings.¹³⁴ Of these numerous *taqārīz*, Müteferrika included blurbs from such distinguished figures as the empire's chief *qāḍīs*, or senior judges.¹³⁵

In spite of Müteferrika's enthusiasm for printing, his press closed three years before his death in 1745. Its closure may have been caused by problems related to its solvency. The historian Orlin Sabev analysed probate records to conclude that thirty percent of Müteferrika's books went unsold.¹³⁶ Although Sabev found that this figure presided against the notion that Müteferrika's press was a financial failure,¹³⁷ such a proportion is

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 291-292.

¹³³ Rosenthal, Franz. "Blurbs" (*taqārīz*) from fourteenth-century Egypt." *Oriens*, Vol. 27/28 (1981), pp. 177-196.

¹³⁴ Jawharī, 1729, folios 3 & 4.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Sabev, "Formation," 2007, p. 303.

¹³⁷ Sabev, Orlin (Orhan Salih). "Rich men, poor men: Ottoman printers and booksellers making fortune or seeking survival (eighteenth-nineteenth centuries)." *Oriens*, 37 (2009), pp. 177-190, p. 186; and Sabev, Orlin (Orhan Salih). "The First Ottoman Turkish

significant in light of the fact that a single copy of Müteferrika's *Kitab-ı Lügat-ı Vankulu* was valued at the same price as his horse.¹³⁸

Müteferrika's press differed from the religious and governmental presses in orientation and ambition. Indeed, there is little evidence to support the notion that Ottoman printing developed linearly or sequentially.

C. Evidence for the Official Ottoman Stance on Printing.

There is also little evidence to support the notion that the Porte maintained a negative view of printing, or that this view was rooted in Islamic belief. No reference to printing appears in the Qur'ān, or the Islamic sacred book, the *ḥadīth*, or sayings and actions attributed of the Prophet Muḥammad, or the *sunna*, or traditions relating to Muḥammad. At least one early modern Ottoman *fatwā*, or nonbinding religious legal interpretation, did discuss the printing process, but as will be shown below, it did so to endorse printing and was incorporated into a firman, or a secular sultanic decree that lasted the term of a sultan's reign. Indeed, the main genre through which the Ottoman sultans regulated printing arose through firmans. Sultans employed firmans to administer the empire. Firmans fell outside the purview of the religious establishment because they covered topics of military and civil administration. To the extent that the Porte issued

printing enterprise: success or failure?". *Ottoman tulips, Ottoman coffee. Leisure and lifestyle in the eighteenth century*, edited by Dana Sajdi. New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007, pp. 63-89.

¹³⁸ Gencer, Yasemin. "Ibrahim Müteferrika and the age of the printed manuscript." *The Islamic manuscript tradition: ten centuries of book arts in Indiana University collections*, edited by Christine Gruber. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, pp. 154-193, p. 160.

firman on printing, their contents addressed the business of printing. This commercial approach to printing is supported by the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*'s definition of 'firman' as a "written order," "letters patent" or "diploma".¹³⁹

The Ottoman sultans promulgated four firmans on printing, according to the historiographical record.¹⁴⁰ They were issued by Bāyezīd II (r. 1481-1512); Selīm I (r. 1512-1520); Murād III (r. 1574-1595); and Aḥmed III (r. 1703-1730). However, it is unclear whether two of these firmans ever existed, namely those of Bāyezīd II and Selīm I.

i. The Non-Extant Firmans of Bāyezīd II (r. 1481-1512) and Selīm I (r. 1512-1520).

If they ever existed, the most important firmans to the historiography of early modern printing were those of Sultans Bāyezīd II and Selīm I. Scholars purported that these firmans banned printing, but the details that they ascribed to the ban varied. For example, it has been claimed that the firmans prohibited: the printing of texts outright;¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Huart, Cl. "Fermān." *E.J. Brill's first Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913-1936*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993, pp. 95-96, p. 95.

¹⁴⁰ Other firmans on printing are likely to have been promulgated. For example, I encountered a reference to a firman from the modern period by Pliny Fisk in a letter from Aleppo written on September 11, 1824 (Bond, 1828, pp. 386-388). Fisk reports that the firman was issued by Maḥmud II (r. 1808-1839) to forbid the distribution of European printed scriptures within the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁴¹ For example, refer to the following quote: "Printing had had a chequered history in the Ottoman Empire. Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal had brought this relatively new technology with them when they settled in Istanbul and elsewhere in 1492, but according to contemporary Jewish sources, Sultan Bayezid II soon banned all printing and his order was reiterated by Sultan Selim I in 1515 – the crime was punishable by death" (Finkel, 2005, p. 366).

the printing of texts by Muslims and Christians both;¹⁴² the printing of texts in certain languages;¹⁴³ the printing of texts in certain scripts;¹⁴⁴ and the consumption of printed texts altogether.¹⁴⁵ This lack of consensus likely derives from the lack of a common source of reference. So far as I can tell, no one has claimed to have seen Bāyezīd II and Selīm I's firmans. Moreover, these sultans' positions on printing should have been nuanced, given that sultanic libraries contained "a wide variety of printed texts on a range of subjects" from the reigns of Mehmed II [r. 1444-1446 and 1451-1481] to Süleyman I

¹⁴² For example, refer to the following quote: "Sultan Bāyezīd II worried that his Muslim subjects would avail themselves of this new invention [*i.e.*, printing], so he had no choice but to issue in the year of 1485 a command that forbade non-Jews from using Gutenberg's technique. When Sultan Selīm I came to the throne he decided to renew in year 1515 the command of his father with regard to the printing press, out of fear that people forgot [the command] as time passed" (Şābāt, 1958, pp. 21-22).

¹⁴³ For example, refer to the following quote: "The ban on printing in Turkish or Arabic remained effective until the early eighteenth century, when its relaxation was due largely to the efforts of two men" (Lewis, 1961, p. 50).

¹⁴⁴ For example, refer to the following quote: "Before establishing its own official press in 1726, the Sublime Porte had hitherto forbidden (edicts of Bāyezīd II in 1485 and of Selīm I in 1515) the Muslims to print texts in Arabic characters (although it permitted the Jews to print texts in Hebrew)" (Oman, G. "Maṭba'a." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition*. Brill Online, 2013. [Reference](#). Harvard University. 09 March 2013).

¹⁴⁵ For example, refer to the following quote: "The Turkish sultan, who was not only the nearest but also the most powerful Muslim ruler, was quick to realize what was happening in Europe [*i.e.* printing], and he feared the consequences of this new activity might have among his subjects. A ban on the possession of printed matter was proclaimed by Sultan Bayazid II as early as 1485, and was repeated and enforced in 1515 by Selim I, who shortly thereafter became the conqueror of Egypt and Syria, the central lands of Islam, and at the same time master of the holy places in Arabia. The ban did not affect the Jews, who from 1490 printed a number of Hebrew books in Istanbul and later on also in Salonika, including the Pentateuch with the Aramaic Targum Onkelos, a free translation, and Sa'dia Gaon's commentary, the latter partly translated in to Persian. Such remained the situation until about 1700" (Pedersen, Johannes and Geoffrey French (trans.). *The Arabic book*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 133-134).

[r. 1520-1566].¹⁴⁶

ii. *The First Extant Firman, Murād III (r. 1574-1595).*

Sultan Murād III (r. 1574-1595) issued the earliest extant firman in 1588. The firman survives at the back of the 1594 Arabic edition of Euclid's *Elements* published by the Medici Oriental Press in Rome.¹⁴⁷ The firman asserted the rights of two European merchants to their trade of "valuable printed books and pamphlets in Arabic" within the Empire.¹⁴⁸ It ordered that the traders were to henceforth be left unmolested by those that "are opening up their shipments by force, and with little or no payment at all are taking their wares and interfering with their trade."¹⁴⁹ Two centuries later, Müteferrika corroborated the value of these Turkish and Arabic printed books from Europe when he lamented Ottomans' desire for them despite their flaws: "They are full of misspellings and mistakes, and the letters and lines are not easily read. There is no one, finding in his hands a book in Western letters and style, who will see in it any semblance of beauty and decoration or correctness in spelling and orthography. These books are being found in the lands of Islam, having been produced in quantity, and they have become desirable,

¹⁴⁶ Roberts, Sean. *Printing a Mediterranean world: Florence, Constantinople, and the renaissance of geography*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013, p. 154.

¹⁴⁷ Euclid. *Euclidis Elementorum geometricorum libri tredecim*. Rome: In typographia Medicea, 1594, verso of last page.

¹⁴⁸ Murphy, 1995, p. 283.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

and are inexpensive. However, their quality and finish is as given above.”¹⁵⁰

iii. *The Second Extant Firman, Aḥmed III (r. 1703-1730).*

Aḥmed III’s 1727 firman endowed Mütferrika with a permit to print. Like the Medici Press did with their firman from Murād III, Mütferrika printed this firman in his book.¹⁵¹ Unlike the Medici press, however, Mütferrika put his firman upfront before his essay on printing. Mütferrika printed the firman’s standard opening phrase in large letters: “As it becomes necessary, it will be accomplished.”¹⁵² To the right of this invocation, he noted that the phrase had been written by the sultan himself.¹⁵³

The firman began by addressing its recipients by name.¹⁵⁴ Its contents appear to have been drawn from Mütferrika’s essay, which it cited as “a learned tract.”¹⁵⁵ For example, the firman established the prominence of books within the Islamic tradition, and it introduced printing through a discussion of the hazards that faced the preservation of learning.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, it stated that printing resembled the operation for “coining money

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

¹⁵¹ Jawharī, 1729, folio 2.

¹⁵² Kutlukan, Şule Aksoy. “Introduction.” *Osmanlı padişah fermanları*, edited by Ayşegül Nadir. London: A. Nadir, 1986, pp. 18; and Murphy, 1995, p. 284.

¹⁵³ Jawharī, 1729, folio 2.

¹⁵⁴ Murphy, 1995, p. 284.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

and impressing paper with a signet ring.”¹⁵⁷

Although some scholars argued that Ottomans rejected typography because of its western origins, the firman referred to printing as a “western technique”¹⁵⁸ and gave it a practical value: “books produced by printing cause several thousand volumes to be produced from a single volume, all of which are accurate copies. With little effort there is great return, making this activity desirable to pursue.”¹⁵⁹ Accordingly, the firman stated that Müteferrika’s work “will be a reason for Muslims to say prayers for you and praise you to the end of time.”¹⁶⁰ It is ironic that the Porte promised Müteferrika eternal Muslim acclaim for opening his press, if the act of printing was a religious taboo in eighteenth century Istanbul. It is also surprising that the narrative arc of Ottoman printing rests upon Aḥmed III’s firman. Several scholars used this firman to signal an about-face in the imperial policy on printing.¹⁶¹ Yet Aḥmed III’s firman was coherent with that of Murād III, to the extent that both documents depicted printing as licit.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ For example, one scholar noted that Müteferrika’s partners “had become acquainted with the art of printing during a sojourn in Paris, and it was they who managed to convince the government that it could be of value” (Pedersen, 1984, pp. 133-134). Another wrote that: “Printing with Arabic metal types was formerly prohibited in the Ottoman Empire, until 1726. However, non-Muslim minorities were allowed to have printing presses on the condition that they printed with non-Arabic characters...After much deliberation, the Sultan Aḥmed III issued a decree in 1726 that allowed the use of Arabic fonts for the printing of secular texts only. This marked the beginning of the printing and publishing of secular Arabic and Turkish books” (AbiFares, 2001, p. 68).

Nevertheless, Aḥmed III's firman designated what Mütferrika could and could not print along religious lines. Many scholars have emphasized this point, as it is the Porte's first documented restriction on printing. But while the firman forbade Mütferrika from printing the Islamic canon, it did not state why. This silence has been interpreted as an Islamic resistance to printing,¹⁶² and as a matter of convention: "[Mütferrika's printings] were all secular works – on history, geography, language, government (including one by Mütferrika himself), navigation and chronology – because the printing of the Qur'an and religious texts was still forbidden."¹⁶³ However an alternative reading of this silence presents itself: that as a privilege granted to a particular person, the firman did not entitle Mütferrika to publish the Islamic canon. Whatever the Porte's reasoning for precluding Mütferrika's press from printing religious materials, the firman suggested that this proposition began as Mütferrika's own: "Excepting books of [jurisprudence], Koranic exegesis, the traditions of the Prophet, and theology, you asked the Padishah's permission in the aforementioned tract [*i.e.*,

¹⁶² For example, one scholar wrote that: "In 1727, when permission was asked by an Hungarian by the name of İbrahim [Mütferrika] for the erection of a printing press at Constantinople, the Ulema under Sultan Aḥmed III delivered a verdict that it was against the religion and honor of Islam to allow the printing of the Koran, because the Koran rested upon written tradition, and must in no other way be handed down. Permission to set up a press was finally given him on condition that the Koran should not be printed, and in 1727 a history of Egypt appeared, but it awakened such opposition that until the nineteenth century no more printing was attempted in Moslem lands, and even through the nineteenth century printing has had to fight against great odds" (Carter, 1943, p. 214). Another argued that Aḥmed III's firman "prohibited the printing of texts that dealt with Koran, *tafsîr*, *ḥâdîth* and *fiqh*. The original restricted injunction was later expanded to include the printing of any manuscripts containing Islamic texts" (Schulze, 1997, pp. 41-42).

¹⁶³ Roper, 2010, p. 333.

Müteferrika's essay on printing] to print dictionaries, history books, medical books, astronomy and geography books, travelogues, and books about logic."¹⁶⁴ Moreover, the firman did not address printing the Qur'ān directly.

Before Aḥmed III's firman was issued, Müteferrika's request to print was submitted to the *şeyhülislam*, or Grand Mufti, Yenişehirli 'Abdullah Efendi (r. 1718-1730).¹⁶⁵ The *şeyhülislam* acted as the empire's chief interpreter of Islamic law. He issued nonbinding legal opinions, or *fatāwā*, to maintain the spirit of Islamic law in the face of new issues. Ottoman Muslims sought out *fatāwā* on all kinds of topics, like whether coffee should be considered an intoxicant.¹⁶⁶ *Fatāwā* take the form of question and response, and Müteferrika printed the *şeyhülislam*'s *fatwā* below Aḥmed III's firman:¹⁶⁷

The question was asked: Zeyd claiming expertise in the science of printing, illuminating, and producing copies of the letters and words of dictionaries, logic, philosophy and astronomy texts, and like works, thus being able to produce exact copies of these books, is there not permission in the Holy Law for this good work? The one who is an expert at printing seeks a legal opinion because producing an accurate edition of a work in a short time, with no errors and many copies, results in there being an increased number of books, which is a benefit to the community.

¹⁶⁴ Murphy, 1995, p. 285.

¹⁶⁵ Murphy, 1995, p. 285.

¹⁶⁶ In the sixteenth century, Sultan Murād III (r. 1574-1595) and the Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi (r. 1545-1574) believed that coffee should be banned, as evidenced by their respective firman and *fatwā* which may be read in English translation in: Eminegül Karababa and Güliz Ger. "Early modern Ottoman coffeehouse culture and the formation of the consumer subject." *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 37, No. 5, February 2011, pp. 737-760, p. 748.

¹⁶⁷ Jawharī, 1729, folio 2.

The answer is: Being able to produce this great benefit, this person receives permission with the condition that several educated persons be appointed as proofreaders.¹⁶⁸

The *şeyhülislam* recognized printing's potential to cause harm by stabilizing errors through numerous copies of a faulty text, but he otherwise endorsed printing. His *fatwā* was incorporated into Aḥmed III's firman, which affirmed that:

Great benefit will come from the order based on that legal opinion, allowing for the exception of the religious subjects mentioned in the tract written with the pearl pen of wisdom. This legal opinion is well-prepared and stands out in a vast ocean as exemplary in the Shaykh's career. . . . The imperial permission becomes proper on account of this well-explained authoritative declaration, this perfectly eloquent and noble opinion.¹⁶⁹

The firman ended by naming the correctors appointed to carry out the *şeyhülislam*'s stipulation, and by repeating the terms of Müteferrika's privilege.¹⁷⁰

Aḥmed III's firman does not appear to have made Ottoman printing licit. Rather, it represents the vast effort that Müteferrika expended to promote his press.

D. The Life Cycle of Scholars' Notion That the Ottoman Sultans Banned Printing.

A disconnect exists between the evidence for Ottoman printing and the way in which the topic has been portrayed by several scholars. The disproportionate role played by the European understanding of Ottoman printing within scholarly writing has

¹⁶⁸ Murphy, 1995, p. 285.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

influenced this outcome. Although I have argued for this point in general terms thus far, let me examine it in greater detail through one particular historiographical claim: that sultans Selīm I and Bāyezīd II banned printing. Specifically, I examine how this rumor originated and how it cycled from the western historiographical tradition into the Ottoman historiographical tradition. I then show how it survived through the writings of the first historians of the Middle East during the mid-twentieth century.

a. The Ban's Rise Amongst Early Modern European Scholars.

Scholarly concern for Ottoman texts began with the rise of the empire, when the Ottomans captured the Christian capital of Byzantium, Constantinople, in 1453. The conquest caused western scholars to lament the loss of Byzantine manuscripts to the Muslim east.¹⁷¹ As historian James Hankins noted, “one aspect of the supposed barbarism of the Turks was their hostility to good letters. This was a highly effective theme in an age and among a class of men who valued Greco-Roman literature as the purest source of the arts and of civilized values. It also fit well with the theme of the fall of Constantinople and the end of Greek civilization.”¹⁷² Notably, these accounts dwelt on the loss of Byzantine manuscripts instead of the lack of Ottoman printing. This was likely because Europeans had just begun to discover typography themselves.

As the sixteenth-century progressed, so did the state of European printing.

¹⁷¹ Pippidi, 2012, p. 39.

¹⁷² Hankins, James. “Renaissance crusaders: humanist Crusade literature in the age of Mehmed II.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 49 (1995), pp. 111-207, pp. 121-122.

Historians of the book argue that the European printed book stabilized in the 1530s, such that there is general agreement that the incunabular period ended by that point.¹⁷³ Early modern European accounts of Ottoman texts shifted from focusing on the loss of Byzantine manuscripts to the lack of Ottoman printing in tandem with this development. The claim that the Ottomans did not print because of bans issued via the firmans of Selīm I and Bāyezīd II arose during this period. It appears that the first person to publish this assertion was the French Franciscan priest and cosmographer André Thévet (1502-1590).

Thévet wrote about the firmans in the second volume of his eight volume work entitled *The True portraits and lives of illustrious Greek, Latin, and pagan men*.¹⁷⁴ Printed from Paris in 1584, the book comprised chapters on history's most distinguished figures. In Thévet's chapter on "Jean Guttemberg, inventor of Printing,"¹⁷⁵ he compared Europe's invention and adoption of printing to the technology's absence in the east. He wrote:

What I know for sure is that the Greeks, Armenians, Mongolians (*Mingreliās*), Abyssinians, Turks, Persians, Moors, Arabs & Tartars do not write their books except by hand. [And] that among the others, the Turks are constrained by the ordinance (*ordinance*) of Baiazeth, second in name, their Emperor [*i.e.*, Bāyezīd II], published in the year fourteen hundred eighty-three, carrying the prohibitions (*defenses*), on the pain of death to not consume (*de n' user*) printed books, which was the ordinance

¹⁷³ Shaw, David J. "The Book trade comes of age: the sixteenth century." *A companion to the history of the book*, edited by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009, pp. 220-231, p. 220.

¹⁷⁴ Thévet, André. *Les vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres, Grecz, Latins, et payens, recueilliz de leurs tableaux, livres, medalles antiques, et modernes*. Paris: Par la vefue I. Keruert et Guillaume Chaudiere, 1584. Vol. 2, p. 515 verso.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 514 recto - 517 verso.

confirmed by Selim, first of name [*i.e.* Selīm I], his son, the year one thousand five-hundred fifteen.¹⁷⁶

Thévet did not provide a reference for this claim. Nor did he address the permissibility of printing amongst Ottoman non-Muslims. In fact, Thévet did not mention the permissibility of the act of printing at all. Ottoman consumers of printed books, no matter their religion, were the target of the ban that he related.

Thévet's account produces more questions than answers. If Bāyezīd II issued his firman in 1485, he did so seven years before the influx of Spanish Jews to the empire. Since Jewish exiles from Spain formed the empire's first printers, it is unclear who printed the books that were forbidden from being consumed, from where, and in which languages. Moreover, an important development occurred within the empire during the thirty years that spanned the firmans of Bāyezīd II and Selīm I. Ottoman Jews and Christians began printing. Despite this change in circumstance, Thévet did not suggest that Selīm I revised his father's ordinance. Instead, he depicted their firmans as one and the same.

There are other reasons to question Thévet's reliability more generally. Although Thévet traveled to the Levant in addition to places like Brazil, he was not an Ottomanist. Additionally, academics from other fields have questioned Thévet's dependability. An anthropologist of the early Americas, for example, wrote a paper entitled "The Reliability of Andre Thevet's New England Material."¹⁷⁷ In it, the author took a strong

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 515 verso.

¹⁷⁷ Salwen, Bert. "The Reliability of Andre Thevet's New England material." *Ethnohistory*, 10:2, Spring 1963, pp. 183-185.

stance on the veracity of Thévet's writing, with quotes like "the Thevet account must almost certainly be rejected," and "this account would be most valuable were it not for the fact that there is good reason to question its veracity."¹⁷⁸

Moreover, other early modern European reports contradicted Thévet's account. Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli (1658-1730), for example, challenged the notion that the Ottoman sultans banned printing. Marsigli interacted with the Porte for twenty years beginning from the 1680s. He travelled in the empire, battled against it in service to the Habsburgs, and lived amongst Ottoman janissaries as a prisoner of war.¹⁷⁹ In Marsigli's book on the Ottoman military, he shot down the notion of the Ottoman printing ban: "The Turks, it is true, do not print their books at all. But this is not, as is commonly believed, because they are prohibited to print, or because their books are unworthy of printing."¹⁸⁰ This statement ought to carry significant credibility, for Marsigli was a linguist and a bibliophile. During his travels, he amassed more than six hundred oriental manuscripts.¹⁸¹ His acquisitions form the basis of the University of Bologna's oriental

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁷⁹ Stoye, John. *Marsigli's Europe, 1680-1730: the life and times of Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, soldier and virtuoso*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994, pp. 23-27 & 36.

¹⁸⁰ Marsigli, Le Comte De. *L'Etat militaire de l'empire Ottoman, ses progrès et sa décadence. Première partie*. La Haye et Amsterdam: Chez Pierre Gosse, & Jean Neaulme. Pierre de Hont, Adrien Moetjens, etc., 1732. Vol I, p. 40.

¹⁸¹ Roman, Stephan. *The Development of Islamic library collections in western Europe and North America*. UK: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1990, pp. 156-157.

collection today.¹⁸² Furthermore, Marsigli printed in oriental languages at a press that he established in Bologna with Medici typefaces.¹⁸³

But European scholars appear to have adopted Thévet's account. Joseph de Guignes (1721-1800), for example, served as the orientalist secretary of the French Royal Library. In 1787, de Guignes published an "Historical essay on the origin of the oriental characters of the Royal Press."¹⁸⁴ His discussion of the development of oriental typefaces in Europe moved from typefaces to remarks on the history of printing within the Ottoman Empire. De Guignes wrote: "we have already learned that Selīm I, emperor of Constantinople, renewed in 1515 an ordinance (*ordinance*) of his father Bajazeth II who forbade, on the penalty of death, the use of (*de se servir de*) printed books."¹⁸⁵ He cited this statement by referring his readers to the "manuscript notes of the secretariat of the king's library."¹⁸⁶ But de Guignes's report likely originated with Thévet's account, given that the two statements align so closely.

Marsigli's effort to correct Europeans' "commonly believed," but false notion of a

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ De Guignes, M. "Essai historique sur l'origine des caractères orientaux de l'Imprimerie Royale, sur les ouvrages qui ont été imprimés à Paris, en Arabe, en Syriaque, en Arménien, &c. & sur les caractères Grecs de François Ier appelés communément Grecs du roi." *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi lus au comité établi par Sa Majesté dans l'Académie Royale des inscriptions et belles lettres*. Paris: De L'Imprimerie Royale, 1787, Vol. 1, pp. ix-ccii.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

ban demonstrates two important points about European thought on early modern Ottoman printing. Firstly, it shows that the idea of an Ottoman printing ban was already secure amongst Europeans during the early seventeenth century. Marsigli's rejection of the rumor that all Ottomans were "prohibited to print" suggests that by then, Thévet's reported prohibition on consuming print had already morphed into a wider sense that the act of printing was forbidden. Secondly, the persistence of the ban's rumor over a century after Thévet's death demonstrates that the accusation struck a chord amongst Europeans. The Ottoman printing ban fit within Europeans' wider sense of Ottoman barbarity and decline,¹⁸⁷ and the empirical dearth of Ottoman printings correlated with the purported ban.

During the eighteenth century, European scholars of the Ottoman Empire searched for causes of Ottoman military and societal weakness.¹⁸⁸ They found their answer for Ottoman futility in the points of difference between their societies, like Ottomans' imperial religion of Islam and their lack of printing. They explained the latter as a missed opportunity for a societal enlightenment of the kind that Europe had experienced. Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820) reflected this stance when he wrote about the absence of printing in Ottoman Egypt: "It is impossible therefore for books to multiply, and consequently for knowledge to be propagated. If we compare this state of things with what passes among ourselves, we cannot but be deeply impressed

¹⁸⁷ For more on European depictions of Ottomans during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, refer to: Valensi, Lucette. *The Birth of the despot. Venice and the Sublime Porte*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2009.

¹⁸⁸ Lockman, Zachary. *Contending visions of the Middle East. The History and politics of Orientalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 62-65.

with the advantages of printing. We shall even be convinced, on reflexion, that this art alone is possibly the main spring of those great revolutions, which, within the last three centuries, have taken place in the moral system of Europe.”¹⁸⁹ Volney articulated the idea that printing caused societal enlightenment. Nineteenth century Ottoman scholars incorporated this notion and the ban into their writings on Ottoman printing.

b. The Ban’s Adoption By Ottoman Scholars in the Nineteenth Century.

So far as I can tell, the first Ottoman scholar to address the history of Ottoman printing was Aḥmed Cevdet Pasha (1822-1895), a leading intellectual and bureaucrat within the Porte who drafted the Ottoman civil code, or *Mecelle*.¹⁹⁰ Aḥmed Cevdet covered Ottoman printing in volume one of his *History*, printed in Ottoman in 1853.¹⁹¹ The Arabic translation of this volume was printed from Beirut in 1890.¹⁹² Because this translation influenced subsequent Arabic scholarship on Ottoman printing in the nineteenth century, I focus on it here.

Aḥmed Cevdet allotted eight pages to the history of printing within the *History*’s

¹⁸⁹ Volney, 1788, p. 450.

¹⁹⁰ For more on Aḥmed Cevdet Pasha, refer to: Chambers, Richard L. “The Education of a nineteenth-century Ottoman *Âlim*, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Vol. 4, No. 4, Oct. 1973, pp. 440-464.

¹⁹¹ Aḥmed Cevdet Paşa. *Tarih-i Cevdet*. İstanbul: Matbaa-yi Ümeyre, 1853-1883, 12 vols.

¹⁹² Aḥmad Jawdat Paşa. *Tārīkh Jawdat*. Bairūt: Maṭba‘at Jarīdat Bairūt, 1890, vol. 1.

first one hundred pages.¹⁹³ “There is no doubt,” he wrote under a section entitled “Digression on the craft of printing,” “that the craft of printing is a magnificent art without a befitting peer so that it is called the mother of civilization (*umm al-madaniya*) because it is the most beneficial and exalted thing of all human invention.”¹⁹⁴ Ahmed Cevdet subscribed to the idea that printing catalyzed societal progress, so much so that he suggested that printing birthed civilization. He acquired this idea from European sources.

Ahmed Cevdet indicated the origin of his sources through the similarity of his ideas to those of scholars like Volney, and through the topics he included in his survey of printing. His coverage was not restricted to printing within Ottoman Empire, but instead began with the invention of typography. Ahmed Cevdet spent six pages charting printing’s development across Europe as it spread among printers from Mainz to Holland.¹⁹⁵ His transliterations of European city names suggest that he relied upon French scholarship for this information.¹⁹⁶ Finally, and ironically given European scholars’ preoccupation with the lack of Ottoman printing, Ahmed Cevdet attempted to account for printing’s slow development across Europe. He attributed the delays in European printing to wars and conquests, “people with feeble minds” who thought print did more harm than good, and the protestations of copyists whose livelihoods were

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-84.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-81.

¹⁹⁶ For example, his spelling of Mainz as ‘*māyāns*’ drew from the French ‘Mayence’ (*Ibid.*, p. 76).

threatened by printing.¹⁹⁷

From printing in Europe, Aḥmed Cevdet moved on to discuss the development of printing in the Ottoman Empire. In contrast to his portrayal of the European resistance to printing, he wrote that: “At the very outset, desire for this craft appeared in the empire from the eastern territories [*i.e.*, the Levant], however its existence did not reach prominence until after several years.”¹⁹⁸ Although Aḥmed Cevdet provided an explanation for printing’s delay in Europe, he did not explain why printing failed to reach prominence amongst the Ottomans immediately. Through this asymmetry he suggested that the Europeans had resisted printing more strongly than had the Ottomans, as Aḥmed Cevdet made no reference to Bāyezīd II and Selīm I’s firmans, nor to a ban on printing.

Aḥmed Cevdet went on to cover Mütferrika’s printing venture. He noted that Mütferrika wrote out his essay to “obtain help in the form of money” for his press.¹⁹⁹ He circulated his “petition...for a license (*rukḥṣatan bi-ṭab’*) to print” amongst important imperial figures who endorsed it, and then the *ṣeyhülislam* wrote him a *fatwā* allowing him to “execute (*bi-ijrā’*) this craft.”²⁰⁰ Finally, the Porte issued all of these documents together in the form of a firman “licensing (*bi-ar-rukḥṣa fī*) [Mütferrika] to print all books except books of exegesis, the Prophetic tradition, jurisprudence, and theology.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 79 & 80-81.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

According to Aḥmed Cevdet's wording, the *şeyhülislam* did not sanction the act of printing. Rather, he endorsed Müteferrika's 'execution' of the craft. Moreover, Müteferrika's "license to print" was described as a permit rather than an endorsement of a taboo art form. The wording of Aḥmed Cevdet's writing therefore provides little indication that he saw this event as a breakthrough moment in Ottoman printing. However, he did represent Müteferrika's work as an important development. Aḥmed Cevdet noted that "before [Müteferrika's request], the use of this craft had been deliberated in the empire, but no one ventured to execute it ('*alā ijrā'hā*) so the representatives of the state were uncertain in responding to [Müteferrika]."²⁰²

Aḥmed Cevdet went on to discuss the success of Müteferrika's enterprise, and its collapse with his death. He wrote that "at that time, the Porte was busy with sweeping preoccupations so it did not have time to permit someone [else] to do the work after him so the aforementioned press remained idle for a long time."²⁰³ Aḥmed Cevdet concluded his "Digression" with a reflection on why Müteferrika's license to print precluded him from publishing religious texts. It is here that Aḥmed Cevdet projected a turning point in the history of Ottoman printing:

It is no secret that the license granted...did not include printing [works of] exegesis, the Prophetic tradition, jurisprudence, and theology...and that is a caution against the resistance of the adherents of fanaticism (*aşhāb at-ta'aşşab*). So a long time passed in which religious books (*kutub şar'īya*) were not printed when the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence did not think it objectionable to print religious books. For in [Islamic jurisprudence] there are acts that violate [these books'] glorification, and that is based on the assertion (*al-qaḍīya*) Muslims have and that is '[to all] things their

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

purposes.’ Building on this assertion they [*i.e.*, the scholars] permitted the binding of the holy Qur‘ān out of fear that its pages would scatter and be lost. However in binding there are issues that violate glorification more so than printing like bruising [the text] with hammers and narrowing [their] quires. And for the purposes [of printing, with regard to the assertion ‘to all things their purposes’] there is good in making books more numerous and altering their nature in terms of making them universal for the benefit of students. So all of the adherents of the disciplines (*aṣḥāb al-funūn*) [surrounding religious books] profit from that.²⁰⁴

Aḥmed Cevdet concluded that the most significant development in Ottoman printing was not Müteferrika’s printing in the first place, but rather, the printing of Islamic books during the years between Müteferrika’s request to print and the *History*’s publication. Another striking aspect of Aḥmed Cevdet’s account is his depiction of what obstructed these religious printings: an extreme religious faction. His explanation counters scholars’ claims to a general Ottoman resistance to typography that originated from the sultanate, mainstream society, widespread Islamic values, copyists, and the religious establishment.

Aḥmed Cevdet’s account of printing represents a bridge between the European and Ottoman historiographical traditions on Ottoman printing. Although Aḥmed Cevdet did not mention the ban, he began entertaining the themes of contemporary European scholarship on Ottoman printing. Moreover, he disseminated these ideas to his fellow Ottomans. In particular, his work found an audience among Arabic readers.

Seven years after Aḥmed Cevdet’s *History* was published in Arabic, Jurjī Zaīdān (1861-1914) published another “History of printing.”²⁰⁵ Zaīdān was among the Beiruti

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

²⁰⁵ “Tārīkh aṭ-ṭibā‘a.” *Al-Hilāl*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at al-Hilāl, September 1897-August 1898, vol. VI, pp. 249-254.

literati who emigrated to Cairo in the late nineteenth century.²⁰⁶ From there, he founded a printing press called al-Hilāl and began producing his “scientific, historical, wholesome, and literary journal published twice monthly” under the same name.²⁰⁷ Zaīdān published “The History of printing” without designating its author.²⁰⁸ The essay appears to be the first history of printing written in Arabic directly. Nonetheless, it drew from the translation of Aḥmed Cevdet’s “Digression” in form and content, and it cited Aḥmed Cevdet as a source.²⁰⁹

Zaīdān’s essay began by restating the European view of printing’s import that had appeared in Aḥmed Cevdet’s “Digression”:

There is no debating that printing is one of the greatest factors in the spread of modern civilization (*at-tamaddun al-ḥadīth*) and the illumination of the minds of the general public, and how much so! Seekers of knowledge before [printing], then, had to search for a book which could not be found save for a few copies. So they had to go about copying [the books], or seeking copies of [the books], and so they spent months or [even] years doing that. And there is no doubt that in this [effort] there was difficulty, loss of time, and great expenditures. As for now, printing spreads books at the lowest of prices, so it made it easy for poor people to obtain them. And there is the greatest virtue in disseminating knowledge, culturing minds, and spreading morals. Th[is] reading investigates the history of [printing’s] invention as it relates to Europe, and how it entered the east and spread within it.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ For more on Jurjī Zaīdān, refer to: Philipp, Thomas. *Ĝurġī Zaidān: his life and thought*. Beirut: in Kommission bei F. Steiner, 1979.

²⁰⁷ “Tārīkh at-ṭibā‘a,” September 1897-August 1898, title page.

²⁰⁸ Perhaps Zaīdān wrote it himself.

²⁰⁹ “Tārīkh at-ṭibā‘a,” September 1897-August 1898, p. 252.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

The essay then turned to the history of printing in Europe as Aḥmed Cevdet had done before.²¹¹

Although little distinguished Zaīdān's essay from that of Aḥmed Cevdet at first, an important distinction arose between them through the former's concern for "Arabic printing," or charting the rise of printing across the Muslim world.²¹² Zaīdān's piece plotted the origins of presses temporally for the most part, according to the regions in which they arose. It moved from Arabic presses in Europe to those in Istanbul, Lebanon, Syria, Jerusalem, Egypt, Tunis, Mecca, and India,²¹³ for "the lands of India, although they are not Arab, the Indians use Arabic letters for writing in their tongue."²¹⁴ This essay therefore began the historiographical tradition of fusing all instances of Islamicate printing together, in the manner that we first encountered under de Guignes' effort to trace the development of oriental typefaces across Europe. Zaīdān's essay thereby provided his Arabic readers with the same type of history that Europeans had reserved for their own history of printing.

Because Zaīdān's piece relied upon Aḥmed Cevdet's writing, it too made no mention of the ban. Nonetheless, Zaīdān's essay inspired the ban's entrance into the Ottoman historiographical tradition. In 1900, Lūīs Šaikhū (1859-1927), the famous Jesuit

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 252.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 253-254.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Catholic priest in Beirut, took aim at the essay.²¹⁵ Šaikhū's religious training had brought him from his hometown of Mardin to monasteries and cities in present-day Lebanon. He also spent the greater part of a decade living in France and Austria. After these moves, Šaikhū began publishing his "Catholic journal (*majalla*)" *al-Mašriq*, or *The Orient*, from Beirut in 1898.

Between 1900-1902, Šaikhū penned and published seventeen installments of an essay entitled "The History of the art of printing in the Orient."²¹⁶ Each essay covered oriental printing as it arose from a particular part of the world in time, ranging from places like Europe, Istanbul, Beirut, and Basra.²¹⁷ Within these locations, Šaikhū focused upon printing amongst particular groups, like Catholic printing in the Orient or Syrian printing in Beirut.²¹⁸ If Šaikhū's work appeared to be a more detailed version of Zaīdān's essay, that is because Šaikhū intended for it to be just that. He opened his series with the

²¹⁵ For more on Lūis Šaikhū and his work, refer to: Hechaīmé, Camille. *Bibliographie analytique du Père Louis Cheikho: avec introduction et index*. Beyrouth: Dar el-Machreq, 1978. For a description of his working style by a contemporary, refer to: Kratchkovsky, I. Y and Tatiana Minorsky (trans.). *Among Arabic manuscripts. Memories of libraries and men*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1953, pp. 15-16 & 29-30.

²¹⁶ Šaikhū, Lūis. "Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā'a fī al-mašriq." *Al-Mašriq*. Bairūt: Maṭba'a al-Kāthūlīkīya lil-ābā' al-Yasū'īyīn, year 3, issues 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22; year 4, issues 7, 10, 11, 19; and year 5, issues 2, 9, 18, January 1900-November 1902.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, "Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā'a fī al-mašriq." Year 3, Issue 2, 15 January 1900, pp. 78-85; "Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā'a fī al-mašriq: al-Istāna." Year 3, Issue 4, 15 February 1900, pp. 174-180; "Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā'a fī al-mašriq: Bairūt." Year 3, Issue 11, 1 June 1900, pp. 501-508; and "Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā'a fī al-mašriq: al-maṭābi' fī al-Jazīra wa al-'Irāq." Year 5, Issue 18, 15 September 1902, pp. 840-844, p. 844.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, "Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā'a fī al-mašriq: maṭba'atnā al-Kāthūlīkīya." Year 3, Issue 15, 1 August 1900, pp. 706-716; and "Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā'a fī al-mašriq: al-maṭba'atān as-Sūriya wa al-'umūmiya." Year 3, Issue 21, 1 November 1900, pp. 998-1003.

following remark:

It was three years ago that the owner of al-Hilāl [*i.e.*, Zaīdān] printed in his journal an article on the invention of printing and its history in Europe which ended with a discussion of the history of Arabic printing. This section on Arabic printings, despite its benefits, does not exceed three pages and does not sufficiently cover the topic. Not to mention that its learned author gathered in it the good and the bad [*i.e.*, his work included some errors] (*al-ghathth wa al-samin*). So we have decided to return to this research and to establish everything that we can possibly gather about the history of oriental printing.²¹⁹

Šaikhū set out to surpass Zaīdān’s essay by furnishing Ottoman printing with a comprehensive map of oriental typography’s passage through time.

His work outstripped Zaīdān’s piece in breadth and depth. His first essay began with innovations in printing made by the Chaldeans and the Chinese, and he argued that the Andalusians knew about lithography.²²⁰ “However,” he wrote, “this art was difficult to pursue and required a lot of time.”²²¹ Šaikhū argued that Gutenberg’s invention simplified the printing process, and he concluded his essay with a survey of oriental printing in Europe drawn from European sources.²²²

The Ottoman printing ban was transmitted from French into Arabic scholarship at the start of Šaikhū’s next essay, which focused on printing in Constantinople. So far as I can tell, this is the earliest account of Selīm I and Bāyezīd II’s firmans to be published by an Ottoman:

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, “Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā‘a fī al-mašriq.” 15 January 1900, p. 79.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²²² *Ibid.*, pp. 79-85.

In our previous article on the history of the discovery of printing and the spread of this art in Europe, we pointed out what the learned orientalists printed of the great oriental tradition (*at-ta'rif*), especially of Arabic, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Today, we resume the discussion of this beneficial subject by researching the entrance of printing into the Orient:

Constantinople had arrived to this noble craft before other capitals of the orient. But the great sultans of the family of Osman did not look upon printings with favor immediately, for they were afraid that extremists (*aṣḥāb al-ghāyāt*) would take up (*ya'amadu ilā*) religious books, so they misrepresented [printings] and slandered them by falsifying [the truth]. And that is what brought Sultan Bāyezīd II in the year of 1485 to produce an imperial ordinance (*ḥakamin 'ālīn*) in which he forbade (*nahy*) his subjects (*ra'āyāhu*) from consuming (*ittikhādh*) printings. And Sultan Salīm I, the warrior, renewed the ordinance of his father in the year 1515. However this ordinance did not stand except for temporarily, and printing spread throughout the Porte by the permission of the rulers.²²³

Šaikhū's discussion of the ban engaged with two familiar themes. Firstly, he echoed Aḥmed Cevdet's point that religious extremists delayed the development of Ottoman printing during Müteferrika's lifetime. Šaikhū, however, situated the extremists in the time of Bāyezīd II. Secondly, Šaikhū noted that the sultanic firmans forbade Ottomans from "consuming printings" in wording that conjured Thévet's account of the ban. Šaikhū did not cite Thévet directly. He did, however, reference de Guignes's essay to uphold his claims about Bāyezīd II and Selīm I.²²⁴ It therefore appears that word of the ban flowed from Thévet to de Guignes to Šaikhū over a period a three centuries.

Perplexingly, however, Šaikhū cited Aḥmed Cevdet's "Digression" within his

²²³ *Ibid.*, "Tārīkh fann aṭ-ṭibā'a fī al-mašriq: al-Istāna." 15 February 1900, pp. 177 & 179.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

discussion of Mütferrika.²²⁵ This is interesting given that Aḥmed Cevdet's account of Ottoman printing conflicted with that of de Guignes. Aḥmed Cevdet noted that Ottomans appreciated printing from the moment that they encountered it. By contrast, de Guignes claimed that Ottomans were forbidden from consuming printed texts initially. The inconsistency between de Guignes and Aḥmed Cevdet's accounts left Šaikhū with a choice. He could have relied upon one work to the exclusion of the other. Or, he could have noted the inconsistencies between them. Instead, Šaikhū cobbled together pieces from both texts. He opened his narrative of Ottoman printing with de Guignes's report of the ban, which he elaborated upon with Aḥmed Cevdet's portrayal of Mütferrika.

Šaikhū forced two incompatible narratives together by using a European account of Ottoman printing to foreground an Ottoman account of Ottoman printing. Both traditions centered around texts and their ability to shape society, and the Ottoman tradition grew from the European tradition directly. Yet these connections were undermined by the premise upon which the European scholarship rested. Most European scholars structured their views about Ottoman printing around the idea that the Ottomans were backwards for not printing enough. They saw the greatness of European civilization through this marker, and maker, of Ottoman weakness. When Ottomans wrote on Ottoman printing, they too asserted their societal greatness. But the only counterpart from which they could distinguish their society was its pre-printing past.

Since Ottoman scholars had not yet written their own history of Ottoman printing, they looked to European scholars for their blueprint. They also turned to Europeans for

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177. Also refer to: Aḥmad Jawdat Paša, 1890; and Aḥmed Cevdet Paša, 1853-1883.

information about Arabic typography and its role in Ottoman society. This led Ottoman scholars to structure their writings around a European paradigm, and to admit certain ‘facts’ from the European tradition into their own.

Šaikhū’s essay spread the European tradition of the ban to Ottoman scholarship. Because the rumor belonged to both traditions by the end of the nineteenth century, it was able to pass as fact in the first histories written of the modern Middle East.

c. *The Ban’s Establishment Among Historians of the Modern Middle East During the Twentieth Century.*

The mid-twentieth century marked the rise of the historical subfields of Middle Eastern history, Turkish nationalist history, and Egyptian nationalist history.²²⁶ Historians of these subfields used printing as an indicator of Ottoman backwardness and nationalist renaissance because printing hardly occurred during the Ottoman Empire’s apex, but took off during its fall. Their writings therefore modified and stabilized the ideas about Ottoman printing that developed among early modern European scholars, allowing contemporary scholars to circulate the ahistorical perspectives on Ottoman printing with which I began this chapter.

Bernard Lewis (b. 1916) was the first historian of the Middle East to write in

²²⁶ For an overview of the history of Middle Eastern Studies, refer to: Mitchell, Timothy. “The Middle East in the past and future of social science.” *The Politics of knowledge. Area studies and the disciplines*, edited by David Szanton. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, pp. 74-118. For overviews of Turkish and Egyptian nationalist history, refer to: Akturk, Ahmet Serdar. “Arabs in Kemalist Turkish historiography.” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 46:5, (2010), pp. 633-653; and Di-Capua, Yoav. ““Jabarti of the 20th century”: the national epic of ‘Abd al-Rahm al-Rafi‘i and other Egyptian histories.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Aug., 2004), pp. 429-450.

English.²²⁷ Before Lewis, several western scholars of the Islamic world produced work that is considered part of the historical corpus. However, they did not count themselves as historians during their lifetimes. For example, Hamilton A. R. Gibb (1895-1971) described himself as a philologist, a specialization which he considered to be separate from the formal training required of historians.²²⁸ Accordingly, Lewis was one of the first scholars to claim to be a professional historian of the Middle East.²²⁹ He could do so because he studied at the University of London as an Arabist under Gibb, and as an historian.²³⁰

Lewis's mid-century scholarship played an important role in Middle Eastern history in English.²³¹ His importance within the English tradition soon followed to the Turkish and Arabic traditions. Lewis's seminal book, *The Emergence of modern Turkey*,²³² has informed Ottoman and Middle Eastern historiography since its 1961 publication.²³³ This impact is exhibited by the seven English editions of *The Emergence*

²²⁷ Lewis, Bernard. *Notes on a century: reflections of a Middle East historian*. New York: Viking, 2012, p. 80.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86. See also: Mitchell, 2004, pp. 82 & 113.

²³⁰ Lewis, 2012, p. 28.

²³¹ Bulliet, Richard W. *The Case for Islamo-Christian civilization*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, pp. 47-55.

²³² Lewis, 1961.

²³³ Bulliet, 2004, p. 50.

published since 1961,²³⁴ and the nine Turkish editions of the book published since 1970.²³⁵ To my knowledge, *The Emergence* has never been printed in Arabic. However in 1950, eleven years before he published *The Emergence*, Lewis put forth a book entitled *The Arabs in history*.²³⁶ *The Arabs in history* boasts twenty-two English editions,²³⁷ two Turkish editions beginning from 2006,²³⁸ and an Arabic edition from 1954.²³⁹ Lewis used *The Arabs in history* to draw out similar themes in *The Emergence*. For example, the two books share a chapter entitled “The Impact of the West.”²⁴⁰

It is in “The Impact of the West” chapter in *The Arabs in history* that Lewis first proclaimed that “the Ottoman Sultāns for long banned printing in Arabic or Turkish.”²⁴¹

²³⁴ These editions were issued by Oxford University Press in: 1961; 1962; 1965; 1968; 1976; 1979; and 2002.

²³⁵ These editions were published under the title *Modern Türkiyenin dogusu*, and issued by Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi in: 1970; 1984; 1988; 1991; 1993; and 2000; and by Arkadas in: 2008; 2009; and 2011.

²³⁶ Lewis, Bernard. *The Arabs in history*. New York: Hutchinson’s University Library, 1950.

²³⁷ These editions were issued by Hutchinson’s University Library in: 1950; 1954; 1956; 1958; 1962; 1964; 1966; 1968; 1970; 1975; 1977; 1981; 1984; and 1985; Arrow Books in 1958; Harper & Row in: 1960; 1966; 1967; 1969 and 1976; and Oxford University Press in: 1993 and 2002.

²³⁸ These editions were published under the titles *Uygarlik tarihinde Araplar* and *Tarihte Araplar*, and issued by Pegasus Yayinlari in 2006 and Agaç Kitabevi Yayinlari in 2009.

²³⁹ Lewis, Bernard. *Al-‘Arab fī at-tārīkh*. Bairūt: Dar al-‘Ilm lil-Malayīn, 1954.

²⁴⁰ Lewis, 1950, pp. 164-178; and Lewis, 1961, pp. 40-72.

²⁴¹ Lewis, 1950, p. 172.

Although this statement followed in the tradition that was established by Thévet, Lewis fixed the idea of the ban within twentieth century English and Arabic scholarship. As Lewis himself remarked in the preface to his 2002 English edition, “the Arabic version was made by two distinguished Arab historians and was praised by such eminent Arab scholars as Shafiq Ghorbal in Egypt.”²⁴² Indeed, Shafiq Ghorbal (1894-1961) was Egypt’s preeminent historian during the first half of the twentieth century.²⁴³

Due to Lewis’s authority in English historiography and Ghorbal’s authority in Arabic historiography, the ban entered mid-twentieth century scholarship as fact. Indeed, four years after the Arabic publication of *The Arabs in history*, Khalīl Ṣābāt’s (1919-2001) *History of printing in the Arab east* was published.²⁴⁴ The opening page of Ṣābāt’s first chapter maintained: “Sultan Bāyezīd II worried that his Muslim subjects would avail themselves of this new invention [*i.e.*, printing], so he had no choice but to issue in the year of 1485 a command that forbade non-Jews from using Gutenberg’s technique. When Sultan Selīm I came to the throne he decided to renew in year 1515 the command of his father with regard to the printing press, out of fear that people forgot [the command] as time passed.”²⁴⁵

Before I turn to Lewis’s re-release and further stabilization of the ban in English

²⁴² Lewis, Bernard. *The Arabs in history*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, Preface.

²⁴³ Marsot, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid. “State of national scholarship: Egyptian historical research and writing on Egypt in the 20th century.” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (May 1, 1973), pp. 1-15, p. 6.

²⁴⁴ Ṣābāt, 1958.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

and Turkish historiography through *The Emergence*, let me explain why Lewis's writings appealed to Turkish and Egyptian nationalist historians. In *The Emergence*, Lewis studied the "streams of influence that have gone to make modern Turkey."²⁴⁶ Because he found the Republic's strengths in its redress of Ottoman failings, he compared Turkey to Europe and contrasted it to the Ottoman Empire. For example, Lewis opened *The Emergence* with chapters entitled "The Decline of the Ottoman Empire" and "The Impact of the West."²⁴⁷ His comparison of civilizations for their sources of prosperity and decay stemmed from Gibb and Harold Bowen's (1896-1959) *Islamic society and the west: a study of the impact of western civilization on Moslem culture in the Near East*.²⁴⁸ In turn, Gibb and Bowen had relied on Arnold J. Toynbee's (1889-1975) *A study of history*.²⁴⁹ Lewis's work therefore aligned with the Turkish nationalist narrative, which jettisoned imperial history in the attempt to complement the state's projection of itself as western and modern.²⁵⁰ Kemalists used Europe to represent modernity, and the Ottomans to represent traditionalism. Hence Lewis's claim that the Ottomans banned printing suited

²⁴⁶ Lewis, 1961, p. 3.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-39 & 40-72.

²⁴⁸ Gibb, H. A. R. and Harold Bowen. *Islamic society and the west: a study of the impact of western civilization on Moslem culture in the Near East*. London: Oxford University Press, 1950-1957.

²⁴⁹ Toynbee, Arnold. *A study of history*. London: Oxford University Press, 1934-1961.

²⁵⁰ Zürcher, Erik Jan. *Turkey: a modern history*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998, pp. 194-203.

Turkish nationalist historiography.²⁵¹

This claim, and the general Kemalist disavowal of their Ottoman past, also accommodated post-World War I Egyptian nationalist historiography. Indeed, Shafiq Ghorbal counted among Toynbee's students.²⁵² Egyptian nationalist historiography portrayed the Ottoman possession of Egypt from 1517-1918 as four centuries of stagnation that defiant local rulers managed to reverse. Jamāl ad-Dīn aš-Šayyāl (1911-1967), one of Egypt's great nationalist historians, espoused this line of thought when he wrote: "The Islamic Middle East had witnessed a fundamental change at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Ottoman Turks succeeded in eliminating the Mamluk state in Egypt and Syria (*aš-šām*)...perhaps this explains the general recession in scholarship (*al-ḥaraka al-‘ilmīya*) – particularly historical composition – in Egypt throughout the three centuries in which it was subjected to Ottoman rule... This noticeable void continued until the eighteenth century approached its end, when an attempt for independence and separation from the Ottoman state began in Egypt... which facilitated this shift towards a scholarly renaissance..."²⁵³ The Egyptian nationalist tradition depicted Meḥmed ‘Alī's rule as a starting point for narrating Egyptian

²⁵¹ Nonetheless, Turkish scholars like Selim Nüzhet Gerçek (1891-1945) and Osman Ersoy (1923-2008) questioned the ban in their respective writings from 1939 and 1959 (Osborn, J. R. "The Type of calligraphy: writing, print, and technologies of the Arabic alphabet." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California San Diego, 2008, p. 158).

²⁵² Marsot, 1973, p. 6.

²⁵³ Šayyāl, Jamāl ad-Dīn. *At-Tārīkh wa al-mu'arrikhūn fī Miṣr fī al-qarn at-tāsi 'ašar*. Al-Qāhira: Maktabat an-Nahḍa al-Miṣrīya, 1958, pp. 4-8.

independence from foreign overlordship.²⁵⁴ Since Meḥmed ‘Alī loosened the Porte’s control over Egypt, dismantled Ottoman institutions, and launched modern systems like printing, he was invoked as the rejuvenator of Egypt’s sovereign destiny.²⁵⁵

Egyptian nationalist historians used Meḥmed ‘Alī’s printing to demonstrate that an intellectual renaissance arose after Egypt’s independence from the Ottomans. Another seminal historian of modern Egypt, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ar-Rāfi‘ī (1889-1966), underscored the links between renaissance and printing when he wrote: “To speak about printing brings [us] to the intellectual renaissance (*an-nahḍa al-‘ilmīya*), for [printing] is one of the most important causes of this renaissance since it is the operative vehicle for spreading information and learning, and Muḥammad ‘Alī did not fail to direct his attention to [printing]...for he decided then to establish the Būlāq Press, that noble institution that remains standing today as a witness to Muḥammad ‘Alī’s execution of the intellectual renaissance from amongst his glorious services [to Egypt].”²⁵⁶ Thus Egyptian nationalist historiography, Turkish nationalist historiography, and Lewis’s work on the modern Middle East aligned through the idea that the Ottomans had hindered societal progress. The harmony of these three traditions permitted Lewis’s claims about the Ottoman printing ban to go unchecked.

²⁵⁴ This narrative endured throughout the twentieth century. See for example: Marsot, Afif Lufti Sayyid. *A short history of modern Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

²⁵⁵ Toledano, Ehud R. “Mehmet Ali Paşa or Muhammad Ali Basha? An historiographic appraisal in the wake of a recent book.” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4, (Oct., 1985), pp. 141-159.

²⁵⁶ Rāfi‘ī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān. *‘Aşr Muḥammad ‘Alī*. Al-Qāhira: Maktabat an-Nahḍa al-Mişrīya, 1951, p. 569.

Lewis treated Ottoman printing with greater detail in *The Emergence* than he did in *The Arabs in history*, although this treatment was still brief. He invoked printing to support his wider argument, suggesting that printing was an important European innovation that the Ottomans failed to adopt. In other words, printing was an “impact of the west” whose absence within the empire contributed to the Ottoman “decline.” Lewis cited two early modern European accounts of Ottoman printing to justify his point. These were the writings of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1522-1592), a Hapsburg ambassador to Istanbul whose *Turkish letters* was published in 1581,²⁵⁷ and Nicolas de Nicolay (1517-1583), a French surveyor for King Henry II whose *Navigations, wanderings and voyages made in Turkey* was published in 1577.²⁵⁸ Both men lived in the empire during the 1550s.

Like Lewis, Busbecq and Nicolay were intrigued by the European innovations that the Ottomans adopted, and those that they did not. Lewis quoted from Busbecq that:

No nation in the world has shown greater readiness than the Turks to avail themselves of the useful inventions of foreigners, as is proved by their employment of cannons and mortars, and many other things invented by Christians. They cannot, however, be induced as yet to use printing, or to establish public clocks, because they think that the Scriptures, that is, their sacred books – would no longer be *scriptures* if they were *printed*, and that, if public clocks were introduced, the authority of their muezzins and their ancient rites would be thereby impaired.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Busbecq, Ogier Ghislain De. *Augerii Gisleinii Busbequii D. legationis Turcicae epistolae quatuor quarum priores duae ante aliquot annos in lucem prodierunt sub nomine Itenerum Constantinopolitani et Amasiani*. Antverpiae: Plantin, 1581.

²⁵⁸ Nicolay, Nicolas de. *Les Navigations peregrinations et voyages, faicts en la Turquie*. En Anvers: par Guillaume Silvius, 1577.

²⁵⁹ Lewis, 1961, p. 41.

Busbecq described the European technologies that the Ottomans employed accurately. However, he suggested that the Ottomans were averse to printing and mechanical time telling because of the threat that these innovations posed to Islamic tradition.

Lewis could have challenged Busbecq's account by arguing that the Ottoman preference for some western technologies over others was governed by practical considerations. Cannons and mortars were novel and useful to the Ottomans. But printing and public clocks were novel means of accomplishing tasks that manuscript copyists and public sundials satisfied already. Or, Lewis could have probed the validity of Busbecq's claim that presses and clocks undermined Islamic authority. Instead, he elaborated upon Busbecq's account to conclude: "Firearms could be accepted, since they would be of service in the Holy War for Islam against the infidels; printing and clocks could not be accepted, since they served no such purpose, and might flaw the social fabric of Islam."²⁶⁰

Lewis next affirmed and expounded upon the Ottoman-Islamic aversion to printing that he conjured through Busbecq. Under Sultan Bāyezīd II, Lewis noted, Iberian Jewish immigrants to the Ottoman Empire could print "on condition that they did not print any books in Turkish or Arabic, and confined themselves to Hebrew and European languages."²⁶¹ He then invoked Nicolay's account in a footnote to bolster this claim, and Busbecq's before it:

Moreover the [Jews] have amongst themselves artisans in all the most

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

excellent arts and crafts, especially the Marranos who have recently been banished and chased from Spain and Portugal, to which is the great detriment and shame of Christianity since they teach to the Turkish many inventions, devices, and machines of war, like making artillery, arquebuses, cannon powder, bullets, and other weapons. Similarly they set up printing, which had never before been seen in these regions: by these means, in fine characters they highlighted several books in various languages: Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, and similarly Hebrew, which is natural to them. But in neither Turkish nor in Arabic, they are not permitted to print.²⁶²

The Busbecq and Nicolay quotes that Lewis chose to employ are striking for their lack of reference to manuscript production, and their disregard for printing's practical purpose: the reproduction of identical versions of one text. These lapses aligned with the technologically determinizing understanding of printing that arose during the twentieth century.²⁶³

But while the contours of Nicolay and Busbecq's accounts were similar, they conflicted in detail. Nicolay argued that Ottoman printing appeared in five languages, but neither Arabic nor Turkish for lack of permission. Hence to Nicolay, the language of the printing determined its permissibility. But Busbecq stated that printing altogether "cannot...be induced" due to Islamic mores. Their assessments of Ottoman printing therefore differed, even though Nicolay's account could support Busbecq's interpretation that Ottoman Christians and Jews were permitted to print. Their explanations for these outcomes differed too, as Nicolay did not suggest that religion caused printing's marginalization.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

²⁶³ See for example: McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg galaxy – the making of typographic man*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1962.

Lewis did not detect the inconsistencies between Busbecq and Nicolay's accounts. Instead, he fused them together and embellished their details. Lewis cited Nicolay's quote to substantiate Busbecq's claim that the Ottomans objected to printing, and concluded from them that Bāyezīd II issued "the ban on printing in Turkish or Arabic."²⁶⁴ He wrote that "the most important technical innovation from Europe outside the military field was undoubtedly printing,"²⁶⁵ and implied that the empire was destined to collapse because of its dismissiveness towards western technology: "Though clever with their hands in making useful devices like guns, clocks, and printing presses, the Europeans were still benighted and barbarous infidels, whose history, philosophy, science, and literature, if indeed they existed at all, could hold nothing of value for the people of the universal Islamic Empire."²⁶⁶

Mid-twentieth-century Turkish historians followed Lewis's lead in using early modern European accounts of Ottoman printing to reflect their interest in Ottoman collapse. Serif Mardin, for example, authored a paper entitled "Some notes on an early phase in the modernization of communications in Turkey."²⁶⁷ In it, Mardin argued that an inchoate form of "national consciousness" arose through "changes in social

²⁶⁴ Lewis, 1961, pp. 41 & 50.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁶⁷ Mardin, Serif. "Some notes on an early phase in the modernization of communications in Turkey." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Apr., 1961), pp. 250-271.

communications” in the empire.²⁶⁸ He posited that “a communications crisis of some importance existed in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century, which had been building up for some time...”.²⁶⁹ One of the examples Mardin invoked was the state of printing in the Empire. He quoted an English diplomat, Paul Rycaut (1629-1700), who expounded upon the differences between the “virtue of the Sword” and pen in the Ottoman court.²⁷⁰ Although Rycaut’s account concerned the state of seventeenth-century Ottoman scholarship, Mardin depicted it as a prescient vision of the empire’s collapse:

It is indeed true that there existed both among the *Ulema* and the “men of the pen” a fear that the masses would begin to meddle in questions which were beyond their understanding.

In the seventeenth century the British diplomat Rycaut had quite sagaciously established the connection between this attitude and the state of printing in the Ottoman Empire, stating:

“The art of Printing...is absolutely prohibited amongst them because it may give a beginning of that subtlety of learning which is inconsistent as well as dangerous to...their government...”²⁷¹

The ban, and the sense of that printing played a role in imperial decline, cycled through Turkish nationalist history.

The ahistorical consensus on printing amongst important historians of the

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 257; and Rycaut, Paul, Sir. *The Present state of the Ottoman Empire. Containing the maxims of the Turkish politie, the most material points of the Mahometan religion, their sects and heresies, their convents and religious votaries, their military discipline, with an exact computation of their forces both by land and sea. Illustrated with divers pieces of sculpture, representing the variety of habits amongst the Turks.* London: Printed for Charles Brome, 1686, p. 55.

²⁷¹ Mardin, 1961, p. 257.

Ottoman and post-Ottoman Middle East cast a long shadow over subsequent scholarship. In 1985, Waḥīd Qaddūra authored a careful study of Ottoman printing entitled *The Debut of Arabic printing in Istanbul and Syria: evolution of the cultural environment*.²⁷² When Qaddūra addressed the firmans of Selīm I and Bāyezīd II, he probed the validity of Thévet’s account. Remarkably, however, he questioned the account’s details over its crux. Qaddūra found Thévet’s contention that the Ottomans banned printing to be correct, but he found it strange that Thévet neglected to specify that Ottoman Jews were exempted from the ban on printing.²⁷³ We encountered the notion that the Ottomans banned all printing, except for Jewish printing, under Lewis. Lewis had relied on Nicolay for this intelligence. Perhaps not coincidentally, Qaddūra cited *The Emergence* in the bibliography of his book.²⁷⁴ It appears that Lewis’s stature encouraged Qaddūra to accept the underlying premise of Thévet’s claim. Instead, the inconsistency between Thévet and Lewis’s accounts should have motivated Qaddūra to probe both of these sources.

Since scholars who specialized on Ottoman printing ascribed such weight to the ban, it follows that non-specialist scholars did not question the soundness of their claims.

d. The Ban May Be Slowly Dying, But Scholars of Ottoman Printing Are Still “Waiting For Godot.”

²⁷² Gdoura, 1985.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

I close this chapter with my sense of where scholarship on Ottoman printing now stands. My main conclusion is that while several scholars have begun interrogating the ban, they continue to explore Ottoman printing from the same framework which supported the ban's rise.

In 2014, Orlin Sabev, an historian of Ottoman Printing in eighteenth century Istanbul, published a paper entitled: "Waiting for Godot: the formation of Ottoman print culture."²⁷⁵ His title was not intended to be ironic.²⁷⁶ Sabev guided his readership towards the Eurocentric themes that have propelled the topic from the fifteenth century:

As for the transition from scribal to print culture in the Turkish-Muslim segment of Ottoman society, its long print revolution or evolution, as you like, was preceded by a long delay or wait. Printing in western Europe began in the mid-fifteenth century, and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects such as Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Orthodox Slavs, Arabic- or Turkic-speaking Christians established their own printing presses to print predominantly religious texts during the late fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries; but the first Ottoman Muslim printing enterprise was launched only in the third decade of the eighteenth century.

How can we explain such a delay?²⁷⁷

Despite these ahistorical lines of inquiry, Sabev sought to address the two main problems that he saw facing scholarship on Ottoman printing. Scholars had yet to agree whether

²⁷⁵ Sabev, Orlin (Orhan Salih). "Waiting for Godot: the formation of Ottoman print culture." *Historical aspects of printing and publishing in languages of the Middle East: papers from the third symposium on the history of printing and publishing in the languages and countries of the Middle East, University of Leipzig, September 2008*, (Ed. Geoffrey Roper). Boston: Brill, 2014, pp. 101-120.

²⁷⁶ Refer to the passages on Godot on: *Ibid.*, pp. 115 & 116.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

print was an agent of change, and when Ottoman print culture set in.²⁷⁸

With regard to the first issue, Sabev argued along a modified version of the paradigm laid out by Elizabeth Eisenstein's 1979 *The Printing press as an agent of change*.²⁷⁹ He found that "İbrahim Müteferrika was an "agent of change," though not an "agent of *immediate* change."²⁸⁰ Sabev's investigation of this delay questioned several explanations which scholars have proposed over the centuries.²⁸¹ He repudiated the ban within this survey: "In his book on Turkish literature, printed in 1688, Giovanni Donado asserts that the Ottoman sultans banned printing... There is, however, no documentary evidence available so far to confirm the allegations that the Ottomans were negatively inclined toward printing."²⁸² But despite Sabev's challenge to the ban, he continued to search for the causes of the "delay" in Ottoman printing.

Scholars of Ottoman printing have begun to have reservations about the veracity of the ban. Some have avoided mentioning it within their writing, out of the growing sense of its inaccuracy. Others have questioned the ban's existence outright, albeit as an

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

²⁷⁹ Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing press as an agent of change: communications and cultural transformations in early modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

²⁸⁰ Sabev, 2014, p. 105.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113 & 116.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 110.

aside folded into their wider work.²⁸³ But it is not enough to cast doubt on the veracity of a ‘fact’ which reflected and informed scholarship on Ottoman printing over several centuries. Especially given that scholars continue to posit the same question which gave rise to the ban in the sixteenth century, namely: “if the Ottoman state knew about the new technology [*i.e.*, printing] shortly after its invention, why did it not attempt to benefit from it?”²⁸⁴

With scores of able copyists throughout Istanbul and other imperial cities, a more sound question presents itself: why print in the first place? As the Ottoman chronicler İbrahim Peçevî (1574-1649) noted when he wrote on “The Ability of the unbelievers to write by printing”:

The invention of printing by the unbelievers is a very strange art, and verily an unusual invention...it was devised in the year fourteen hundred forty in Mainz by Aywān Kūtanbark [*i.e.*, Johannes Gutenberg]. Since that time on all the books by the unbelievers are produced by this method. When one intends to print a book it is as hard as handwriting to arrange the types in lines. But once arranged it is easier to print one thousand copies faster than copying them by hand.²⁸⁵

The purpose for printing was to copy texts faster than one could if they copied them by hand. Indeed, the origins of the Cairene printing industry rested upon the need for multiple copies of single texts.

The focus of this dissertation is the way in which the people of one Ottoman city

²⁸³ See also for example: Sabev, “Formation,” 2007, p. 313; Osborn, 2008, pp. 158-162; and Ayalon, 2010, p. 74.

²⁸⁴ Sābān, Suhayl. *Ibrāhīm Mutafarriqa wa juhūduhu fī inšā’ al-maṭba‘a al-‘Arabīya wa maṭbū‘āthu*. Ar-Riyād: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭanīya, 1995, p. 25.

²⁸⁵ Peçevî, İbrahim. *Tarih-i Peçevî*. İstanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1866, p. 107.

incorporated printing into their manuscript culture. Since the local manuscript industry is Ottoman Cairene printing's practical counterpoint, to understand why Cairenes began printing, my next chapter examines their tradition of producing texts by hand.

CHAPTER THREE. Local Manuscript Culture and European Print Culture during the French Invasion of Ottoman Cairo.

This chapter examines Cairenes' encounter with printing during the French invasion of Egypt (1798-1801), and it does so from the perspective of Cairo's manuscript culture. I use contemporary accounts and texts to describe the city's manuscript industry during the long eighteenth century to demonstrate its extent and the unique ways in which it functioned. Doing so shows how Cairenes copied texts without printing, and how their manuscript tradition influenced their approach to printing later on.¹

The French exposed Cairenes to Arabic typography *en masse* for the first time. But French printings did not impact Cairene textual production fundamentally, or elicit comment from Cairenes about the medium employed to produce them so much as for the message they carried and the way they were deployed. I establish this point by examining Cairenes' descriptions² and handwritten renderings of the French printings in Egypt. I then contrast Cairenes' accounts to contemporary French accounts of their printing in Egypt. French accounts claimed that the introduction of printing to Egypt initiated a civilizing transformation and that Egyptians appreciated this meaning of printing. The distinction between these accounts is important due to the dominant role played by the French understanding of printing within English and Arabic historiography.

¹ Refer to chapters four and five for more on this topic.

² For these descriptions, I rely on contemporary manuscripts and their later printed editions. This is due to the fact that manuscript texts were never fixed, and the difficulty of establishing manuscript stemmata and printed manuscript stemmata within the Middle Eastern philological tradition. For a discussion of this latter issue, refer to: Witkam, Jan Just. "Establishing the stemma. Fact or fiction?." *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, vol. 3, 1988, pp. 88-101.

Nonetheless, French printing did shape the development of Cairene printing. I therefore conclude this chapter by examining the aspects of French printing which influenced the implementation of governmental printing during the 1820s under the rule of Mehmed ‘Alī (r. 1805-1848), the Ottoman governor of Egypt.

A. Manuscript Writing in Cairo during the Long Eighteenth Century.

The measures and definitions of literacy in bygone societies are difficult to determine.³ Since the rate of literacy in Egypt was projected at 4.84% in 1897,⁴ it is likely a smaller percentage of Egyptians knew how to read and write during the preceding century. Still, I assume that the literacy rate among Cairenes surpassed the province-wide average. Moreover, writing held a prominent place in Cairo’s function, decoration, and culture generally. Even if it was not digested for its literal content, its impact extended to all of the city’s inhabitants, ranging from the rich to the poor and the learned to the unlettered. In what follows, I flesh out the ways in which Cairenes used writing in quantities and fashions that were sufficient to them.

Before the 1820s, Cairenes produced most of their writing in manuscript form.⁵

³ For a critique studying literacy in early modern England, refer to: Thomas, Keith. “The Meaning of literacy in early modern England.” *The Written word. Literacy in transition*, edited by Gerd Baumann. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, pp. 97-132.

⁴ An 1897 census calculated that 436,193 men and 35,199 women of a total population of 9,734,405 people knew how to read and write (*Annuaire statistique de l’Egypte. 1914. 6me année. Ministère des Finances, Département de la Statistique Générale*. Le Caire: Imprimerie Nationale, 1914, pp. 24 & 21).

⁵ A few Jewish presses operated in Cairo from the early modern era. Refer to chapter two.

Graffiti on ruins, inscriptions upon dishware, and letters scraped onto whitewashed wooden boards by schoolchildren attest to the many substrates that Egyptians wrote upon. The Swiss orientalist Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784-1817) even noted perishable writing surfaces for the poor in his book of Cairene proverbs:

It is written upon the cucumber leaf, “He who watches during the night sleeps during the day.”

[Meaning that] he who passes the night in revelry is unfit for business during the day. “It is written upon the cucumber leaf,” signifies that it is written where even the meanest people may read it, as cucumbers are very cheap and common in Egypt...⁶

Cairenes also painted talismans onto porticos and wooden shop shutters.

Of all the surfaces that Cairenes wrote upon, paper supplanted papyrus to become the dominant substrate for literary, bureaucratic, and legal compositions from the eleventh century onwards.⁷ This indicates that Cairenes recognized paper’s advantages over papyrus, like its portability and its ability to be supplemented with more sheets for writing upon. It also suggests that Cairenes could acquire paper more easily than papyrus. Egyptians produced their own paper occasionally,⁸ but they tended to import

⁶ Burckhardt, J.L. *Arabic proverbs: the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians illustrated from their proverbial sayings current at Cairo; translated and explained by the late John Lewis Burckhardt*. London: Curzon Press, 1984, p. 232.

The Dutch Orientalist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) also recorded this proverb in his notes from the early 1900s (C. Snouck Hurgonje’s collection of 1497 proverbs in the Egyptian vernacular. Or. 7063, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, p. 1281).

⁷ Humphreys, R. Stephen. *Islamic history: a framework for inquiry*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 41.

paper from other eastern and western cities from at least the sixteenth century.⁹

By the eighteenth-century, most Cairene paper came from Italian and French papermakers.¹⁰ Egyptians acquired so much paper from Europe that paper formed the second largest European import to the Middle East after cloth.¹¹ European paper was transported across the Mediterranean to the Nile, and then to the port of Būlāq. From Būlāq, some of it was delivered to greater Cairo while the rest was transported southwards to the Sudan and eastwards into Arabia.¹² Of the paper delivered to Cairo, Cairenes purchased the commodity from European traders by the ream, *rizma*, the five-sheet folio quire, *‘ašara* or *kurrāsa*, and the quire, *dasta*, *kaff*, or *waraq*.¹³

Several guilds supported the Cairene paper industry from at least the seventeenth century. Members of each guild elected their leader, the *šaiikh aṭ-ṭā’ifa*, from among their

⁸ Nelly Hanna noted that Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Khafājī’s (1571/2-1659) *Kitāb Rayḥānat al-alibbā wa zahrāt al-ḥayāh ad-dunyā* mentioned a Cairene papermakers’ guild. Hanna also speculated about the existence of a local Cairene papermaking industry around 1650 (Hanna, Nelly. *Artisan entrepreneurs in Cairo and early-modern capitalism (1600-1800)*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011, pp. 50 & 88).

⁹ Hanna, Nelly. *In praise of books: a cultural history of Cairo’s middle class, 16th-18th century*. Syracuse University Press, 2003, pp. 86-88.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹¹ Walz, Terence. “The Paper trade of Egypt and the Sudan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its re-export to the *Bilād as-Sūdān*.” *The Trans-Saharan book trade: manuscript culture, Arabic literacy and intellectual history in Muslim Africa*, edited by G. Kratli and Ghislaine Lydon. Boston: Brill, 2011, pp. 73-107, p. 73.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

ranks, and a Cairene judge, or *qādī*, certified the *šaiḫ*'s appointment.¹⁴ Paper polishers or glazers, *aṣ-ṣaqqālūn*,¹⁵ formed one guild. Another was that of booksellers known alternately as *tā'ifat aṣ-ṣahāfiyīn*, the booksellers' guild, *at-tujjār fī al-kutub*, the traders in books, *al-kutubiyūn*, the bookdealers, and *aṣḥāb al-maktabāt*, the owners of libraries.¹⁶ According to Evliya Çelebi (1611- after 1683), the famous Istanbulite travel-writer who lived in Cairo for several years, this guild amounted to “thirty men [spread out across] twenty libraries, and their patron saint (*šaiḫuhum*) is ‘Abdallah al-Yatīm, who is buried in Wādī Harq in Ethiopia and whose tomb is visited by the elite and the masses.”¹⁷ Stationers, *al-warrāqūn*, formed another guild “who amount to seventy-eight people in fifty shops (*ḥānūtā*).”¹⁸ There was also the guild of the thirty paper-stampers, *yukhattamūn al-waraq*, who made decorative papers in eleven shops.¹⁹ These colorful

¹⁴ ‘Uthmān, Nāṣir. “Tā’ifat aṣ-ṣahāfiyīn fī al-qarn as-sābi‘ ‘aṣr.” *Aṭ-Ṭawā’if al-miḥanīya wa al-ijtimā’īya fī Miṣr fī al-‘aṣr al-‘Uthmānī*, taḥrīr Nāṣir Ibrāhīm, iṣrāf Ra’ūf ‘Abbās. Al-Qāhira: Markaz al-Buḥūth wa ad-Dirāsāt al-Ijtimā’īya, Kullīyat al-Ādāb - Jāmi‘at al-Qāhira: al-Jam‘īya al-Miṣrīya lil-Dirāsāt al-Tārīkhīya, 2003, pp. 61-68, p. 62.

¹⁵ Hanna, 2011, p. 88.

¹⁶ ‘Uthmān, 2003, p. 61; Hanna, 2011, p. 93; and Evliya Çelebi. *Siyāḥatnāma Miṣr*, tarjamat Muḥammad ‘Alī ‘Awnī; taḥqīq ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām, Aḥmad al-Sa‘īd Sulaymān; taqḍīm wa murāja‘at Aḥmad Fu’ād Mutawallī. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Kutub wa al-Wathā’iq al-Qawmīya, al-Idāra al-Markazīya lil-Marākiz al-‘Ilmīya, Markaz Tārīkh Miṣr al-Mu‘āṣir, 2003, p. 476.

¹⁷ Evliya Çelebi, 2003, p. 476.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

papers were used for book boxes, known as *zarf*.²⁰ They were also incorporated into the work of the bookbinders' guild, *al-mujallidūn*,²¹ who used them for book covers²² and “who amount to one hundred forty people who ply their craft in forty-eight stores.”²³ Of the bookbinders, one European visitor to Cairo wrote in 1831 that “these skilled workers [spent] day and night making the cases that would contain the books, and gave volumes their envelop and cover of sheepskin; the books that leave their hands open with great facility; they don't have any gilding, [or] much sparkle, but they protect against the ravages of time, and above all else the dust...”²⁴ There was even a guild of blotter makers, *ar-rammālūn*, comprised of forty men and forty shops.²⁵ Although the city was home to professional calligraphers who trained for diplomas, these men did not form a

²⁰ Refer to examples of decorated paper book boxes in: Burckhardt papers. Add. 274, Add. 275, & Add. 276, Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge, UK; and references to them in: *Fihrist al-kutub al-mukallaḡa ‘an al-marḡūm Ilḡāmī Bāšā al-muḡtaḡā bay‘uhā fī al-mazād al-‘āmm*. Būlāḡ: al-Maḡba‘a al-mīrīya bi-Būlāḡ, 1861, pp. 11 & 18.

²¹ Nuṣayr, ‘Āyida Ibrāḡīm. *Ḥarakat naṣr al-kutub fī Miṣr fī al-qarn at-tāsi ‘aṣar*. Al-Qāhira: al-Hay‘a al-Miṣrīya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, p. 387.

²² For an example of marbled paper book covers, refer to: Suyūḡī, Jamal ad-Dīn. *Lubb al-lubāb*. N.p., n.d. Or. 3056, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

²³ Evliya Çelebi, 2003, p. 476.

²⁴ Michaud, M. et M. Poujoulat. *Correspondance d’Orient (1830-1831)*. Brussels: N.-J. Gregoir, V. Wouters et Ce., 1841, vol. VII, p. 85.

²⁵ Evliya Çelebi, 2003, p. 476.

guild.²⁶

The guilds that revolved around paper inhabited a particular part of Cairo's central market, Khān al-Khalīlī. They occupied a stretch known alternately as Sūq al-Kutub,²⁷ the market of books, Sūq al-Kutubīya,²⁸ the market of booksellers, and Sūq al-Warrāqīn,²⁹ the stationers' market. This cluster appears to have moved from one street to another over several centuries.³⁰ It settled on al-Ašrāfiya Street by the eighteenth century, just beyond al-Warrāqīn Street,³¹ which must have been an earlier site for stationers. Nonetheless, it hovered around al-Azhar mosque, the preeminent home of religious learning in the Islamic world and the base for Cairo's most learned and prolific scholars.

The location of these guilds suggests that guildmembers prioritized their

²⁶ Gacek, Adam. "The diploma of the Egyptian calligrapher Ḥasan al-Ruḥḍī." *Manuscripts of the Middle East*. Leiden: Ter Lugt Press, 1989, vol. 4, pp. 44-55.

²⁷ Hanna, 2011, p. 93.

²⁸ Jomard, M. "Description abrégée de la ville et de la citadelle du Kaire, suivie de l'explication du plan de cette ville et de ses environs, et contenant des renseignements sur sa distribution, ses monuments, sa population, son commerce et son industrie." *Description de l'Égypte, ou, recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée Française*, État Moderne Vol. II, IIeme partie. Paris: De l'Imprimerie impériale, 1809-1822 [i.e. 1828], pp. 579-777, p. 722.

²⁹ Raymond, André. *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*. Le Caire: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1999, vol. 1, p. 343, vol. 2, p. 426.

³⁰ Today, the Khān al-Khalīlī street devoted to stationers is Ḥārat aṣ-Ṣanādīqiya.

³¹ 'Alī Mubārak. *Al-Khiṭaṭ at-Tawfīqiya al-jadīda li-Miṣr al-Qāhira wa mudunihā wa bilādihā al-qadīma wa ṣahīra*. Būlāq: Miṣr: al-Maṭba'a al-Kubrā al-Amīriya, 1886-89, vol. 3, p. 32.

consumers over the inconvenience of transporting paper to the center of town. Donkeys carried paper overland for two miles to reach al-Ašrāfiya Street from Būlāq. This operation required traveling one mile over a “straight and wide” road “bounded on the east by extensive mounds of rubbish; behind which lies the capital, nearly concealed by them;”³² crossing a bridge called “Ckhuntar’at el-Leymoo’n,”³³ entering the city through Bāb al-Ḥadīd gate; and then navigating Cairo’s hectic streets for the second mile. The hassles of the second leg of the journey compounded the smells of the first leg, as described by the English Arabist Edward Lane (1801-1876):

The streets are unpaved; and very narrow: generally from five to ten feet wide. Some are even less than four feet in width...In most parts the width is scarcely more than is sufficient for two loaded camels to pass each other; while in some parts only one camel can proceed at a time; and hence much inconvenience is often occasioned to the passengers; though there are no carriages to be encountered but those of the Ba’sha [*i.e.*, Meḥmed ‘Alī] and of another grandee, which are seldom seen in the streets. All burdens are borne by camels if too heavy for asses...The great thoroughfare streets, being often half obstructed by these animals, and generally crowded with passengers, some on foot, and others riding, present striking scenes of bustle and confusion; particularly when two long trains of camels happen to meet each other where there is barely room enough for them to pass; which is often the case.³⁴

Most aspects of Cairene manuscript production revolved around al-Ašrāfiya Street during the eighteenth century. Even the ink makers’ guild, *al-ḥabbārūn*, was based

³² Edward Lane, *Description of Egypt: notes and views in Egypt and Nubia during the years 1825-1828*. Add MS 34080, British Library, UK, p. 152.

³³ Edward Lane. Add MS 34083: 1825-1828, British Library, UK, p. 13.

³⁴ Add MS 34080, p. 152.

steps away by the al-Ḥusayn mosque.³⁵ In the mid-1600s, Evliya Çelebi found that the inkmakers amounted to six men in three stores, “but [that] their [Cairene] ink is not like the ink of the Turks, as they do not pound [the ink] but rather, make it by boiling it on the fire.”³⁶ His distinction between Cairene and Istanbulite inks is borne out in a late-nineteenth or early twentieth century recipe for the latter, which called for the ingredients “to be placed in a stone mortar and continually pounded until the ink becomes just right.”³⁷ Al-Ašrāfiya hosted “...bookbinders, makers of book covers and pasteboards; these men also sell manuscripts, and there are no other booksellers besides them in Cairo: one sometimes finds, for almost nothing, rare and precious works which, in the libraries of Europe, one would be happy to procure for the price of gold.”³⁸ It also featured auctions in which criers called out titles from the estates of the deceased on Monday and Thursday mornings.³⁹

But book buyers need not have ventured to Khān al-Khalīlī to learn of available titles. They could ascertain such information by exchanging letters with Khān al-

³⁵ Jomard, 1809-1822 [i.e. 1828], p. 714.

³⁶ Evliya Çelebi, 2003, p. 476.

³⁷ Papers of varied contents. Or. 18.098, Div. 1-4: 007, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

³⁸ Jomard, 1809-1822 [i.e. 1828], p. 722.

³⁹ Poole, Stanley Lane. *Life of Edward William Lane*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1877, p. 68.

Khalīlī's booksellers. Yusūf Ibn Muḥammad aš-Šīrbīnī's (d. 1687) satire of rural Egyptians, for example, poked fun at a peasant who dispatched a request for a book. The peasant wrote a letter stating that he had forgotten which text he desired altogether. But he dispatched his note to Cairo anyway via an itinerant food vendor.⁴⁰ The practice that aš-Šīrbīnī lampooned is corroborated through the surviving portion of a bookseller's letter to a client.⁴¹ The bookseller listed the new titles in his inventory that he acquired after a collector's death, and assured his client that he could deliver any of the books once the client posted his order. The manuscripts must have been of varying quality however, since the bookseller boasted that his *Tarīkh Ibn Khalkān*, or *The History of Ibn Khalkān*, had been "copied with the utmost accuracy."⁴²

The quantity of Cairenes' written output during the eighteenth century was considerable. The historian Nelly Hanna argues that contemporary probate records and present-day library catalogues demonstrate that the number of manuscripts copied during the eighteenth century surpassed all other centuries.⁴³ Between 1730-1740, for example, Hanna counted 190 private libraries and 5,991 books registered in probate alone as compared to 73 libraries and 2,427 books between 1600-1610.⁴⁴ One should note the

⁴⁰ Aš-Šīrbīnī, Yusūf Ibn Muḥammad. *Hazz al-quḥūf fī šārḥ qaṣīd Abī Šādūf*. N.p., s.n., n.d., p. 45.

⁴¹ Anonymous. MS Arab e 38, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, UK.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Hanna, 2011, pp. 83-86.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

greater potential for eighteenth century works to survive beyond works from previous centuries. Even so, however, the historian Daniel Crecelius cautioned that certain history titles circulated in great numbers during the eighteenth century even if not so now.⁴⁵ Records from the first half of the nineteenth century corroborate these findings by suggesting that Cairenes could access a wide array of texts through libraries. For example, an 1816 “catalogue of books” that Burckhardt compiled from “the public library of the Mosque el Azhar at Cairo” recorded 175 titles.⁴⁶ When a scholar found al-Azhar’s holdings insufficient, he might visit the library of the nearby Ašrafiya mosque for more texts.⁴⁷ Or he might access the libraries of other scholars, mosques, hospitals, and pious endowments.⁴⁸

The Khān al-Khalīlī booksellers counted only eight in number by the 1830s.⁴⁹ But Cairenes had other ways of acquiring texts despite so few booksellers. Many Cairenes who desired texts either copied them themselves, or commissioned someone else to copy them. Cairene copyists did not identify themselves as specialized

⁴⁵ Crecelius, Daniel (ed.). *Eighteenth century Egypt: the Arabic manuscript sources*. California: Regina Books, 1990, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶ J. L. Burckhardt papers. Add MS 30240 A, British Library, UK, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁷ Alī Mubārak, 1886-89, p. 57.

⁴⁸ Yūsufī, Mušīra Jamāl. *Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya: sīra wa masīra, 1870-2008*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Kutub wa al-Wathā’iq al-Qawmīya, 2009, p. 15.

⁴⁹ Lane, Edward William. *An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians: written in Egypt during the years 1833-1835*. London: East-West Publications, 1978, pp. 210-211.

professionals: they were students, teachers, and literate artisans who subsidized their wages with piecemeal earnings on the side.⁵⁰ Despite the significance of their output to scholarship, most remain absent from the historical record. One reason for their inconspicuousness stems from the irregular nature of their work. Cairene copyists did not form a guild, unlike local stationers.⁵¹ They therefore did not feature in Cairene court records systematically or leave physical traces upon the city by building up spaces that were particular to their work. Moreover, copyists scarcely recorded information about themselves in the colophons of the writings they reproduced.⁵²

As readers and writers, if not students and teachers, copyists worked for personal consumption already. It follows that they could be hired out for this task too. Lane recorded many details of Cairene life that escaped description by locals and other foreigners. His writings may have addressed textual production because he apprenticed for his brother Richard James Lane (1800-1872), the London based printer and engraver, before he traveled to Cairo. Lane observed that Cairene students and teachers “receive

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 212; and Michaud, 1841, pp. 84-85.

⁵¹ No documentary evidence suggests that a guild of copyists existed in Cairo. Indeed, early modern descriptions of Cairene guilds noticeably lack mention of a copyists’ guild. For example, Evliya Çelebi provided an extensive discussion of Cairo’s guilds in his *Seyâhatnâme*, or *Book of travels*. Of his lack of reference to a copyists’ guild, Suraiya Faroqhi writes: “Remarkably, his only reference to the scribes, who after all copied out the texts sold in the booksellers’ shops, concerned not the producers of these books at all, but rather the writers of petitions. Perhaps Evliya regarded copying not as a trade but rather as an avocation for literate people who mostly made their living elsewhere” (Faroqhi, Suraiya. *Travels and artisans in the Ottoman Empire: employment and mobility in the early modern era*. I.B. Tauris, 2014, p. 66).

⁵² See for example: Suyūfī, *Lubb al-lubāb*, Or. 3056, Special Collections, p. 83.

no salaries. Unless they inherit property, or have relations to maintain them, they have no regular means of subsistence but teaching in private houses, copying books, etc.”⁵³

Literate Cairenes copied for pay to get by, particularly the city’s religious scholars, or *‘ulamā*.⁵⁴ They worked on order, and rarely tried to anticipate public demand by copying texts without being hired first.⁵⁵ A notable exception to this was the astrologer and occasional copyist Ramaḍān ibn Ṣāliḥ as-Safaṭī al-Khawānikī (d. 1745), who produced multiple versions of the same page when he copied a text.⁵⁶

Customarily, commissioners of manuscripts supplied their copyists with the texts that they wanted copied.⁵⁷ Then the copyist and commissioner brokered the terms of the project. This required the commissioner to set their expectations for the end product, and the copyist to bargain their wage accordingly. Lane recorded that for three Cairene piasters, or seven pence English, in the 1830s one could order “...a *karras* of twenty pages, quarto size, with about twenty-five lines to a page, in an ordinary hand...but more if in an elegant hand, and about double the sum if with the vowel points, etc.”⁵⁸ Once the copyist and commissioner struck their deal, they took a binding oath, *yamīn mughallaz*, to

⁵³ Lane, 1978, p. 212.

⁵⁴ Raymond, 1999, vol. 2, p. 426.

⁵⁵ ‘Uthmān, 2003, p. 62.

⁵⁶ Hanna, 2003, p. 90.

⁵⁷ ‘Uthmān, 2003, p. 62.

⁵⁸ Lane, 1978, pp. 210-211.

ensure the realization of their arrangement.⁵⁹ This oath protected the aggrieved person theoretically, if either party deviated from their commitment.

Lane described what the act of copying in Cairo looked like during his stay from 1833-1835:

The paper is thick and glazed: it is mostly imported from Venice, and glazed in Egypt. The ink is very thick and gummy. Reeds are used instead of pens, and they suit the Arabic character much better. The Arab, in writing, places the paper upon his knee, or upon the palm of his left hand, or upon what is called a “*misned’eh*,” composed of a dozen or more pieces of paper attached together at the four corners, and resembling a thin book, which he rests on his knee. His ink and pens are contained in a receptacle called “*dawayeh*,” ...together with the penknife and an ivory instrument (“*mikattah*”) upon which the pen is laid to be nibbed. He rules his paper by laying under it a piece of pasteboard with strings strained and glued across it (called a “*mistar’ah*”), and slightly pressing it over each string. Scissors are included among the apparatus of a writer; they are used for cutting the paper, a torn edge being considered as unbecoming.⁶⁰

Lane’s remarks are significant because they recorded a custom that faded over the century as Cairenes incorporated western tools and techniques into their production of writing.⁶¹ Moreover, Cairenes printed books more frequently than they copied them by

⁵⁹ ‘Uthmān, 2003, p. 62.

⁶⁰ Lane, 1978, pp. 210-211.

⁶¹ For an example of western tools, refer to the import of pencils to Cairo from Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century. (Compare the following two texts: Wilkinson, John Gardner. *Hand-book for travellers in Egypt: including descriptions of the course of the Nile to the second cataract, Alexandria, Cairo, the pyramids, and Thebes, the overland transit to India, the peninsula of Mount Sinai, the oases, &c.* London: J. Murray, 1847, p. 4; and “Bazaaring in Cairo.” *Young folk pictorial tour of the world.* New York: Hurst and Company, 1892, third page of chapter. See also the marginalia done in pencil in the printed copies of: Baqlī, Muḥammad ‘Alī. *Kitāb Ghurar an-najāh fī a’-māl al-jirāh.* Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at Būlāq, 1847, volume 2. HOLLIS number: 002063631, Widener Library, Harvard University; Lacroix, Silvestre François. *Hadhā Kitāb tahdhib al-‘ibārāt fī fann akhdh al-masāhāt.* Būlāq: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā‘a al-‘Āmira, 1844. HOLLIS number: 002783373, Widener Library, Harvard University; and

hand by the century's end.⁶²

But before the advent of Cairene printing, copyists maintained their own method for expediting the reproduction of texts. This system was akin to the European *pecia*, which university stationers in Paris and Bologna developed to facilitate students' ability to copy a single book at once in the thirteenth century.⁶³ *Pecia*, or piece in Latin, denoted the stationers' practice of renting separate portions of a text to multiple students at the same time. The Arabist Franz Rosenthal (1914-2003) argued that the *pecia* system for manuscript copying never existed in the Middle East:

In the East...there never was a lack of skilled scribes which might have stimulated the establishment of an institution like the *pecia*. Only under special circumstances, for instance, if a work was as large as Ibn 'Asâkir's *History of Damascus* which filled eighty volumes, it was considered advisable to divide the task of copying the whole among various scribes. In this particular case, ten scribes were selected, and each of them finished his portion in the short period of two years.⁶⁴

However, many Cairene manuscripts embodied the *pecia* insofar as their constituent

Rinū. *Kashf an-niqāb 'an 'ilm al-hisāb*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba'at Būlāq, 1853. HOLLIS number: 002063615, Widener Library, Harvard University). For an example of western techniques, refer to "young men of business in the cities...adopting our mode of dating" letters at the top of the document's page, as opposed to the bottom, as mentioned in: Thomson, W. M. *The Land of the book; or, biblical illustrations drawn from the manners and customs, the scenes and scenery of the holy land*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859, vol. 1, p. 188.

⁶² Refer to chapter five for more on this topic.

⁶³ For more on the *pecia* system, refer to: Destrez, Jean. *La Pecia dans les manuscrits universitaires du XIIIe et du XIVe siècle*. Paris: Jacques Vautrain, 1935.

⁶⁴ Rosenthal, Franz. *The Technique and approach of Muslim scholarship*. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947, pp. 2.

quires were left unsewn within bookbindings.⁶⁵ Texts were kept unbound so that several people could copy a given book at once, as Lane reported:

The leaves of the books are seldom sewed together, but they are usually enclosed in a cover bound with leather. Five sheets, or double leaves, are commonly placed together, one within another, composing what is called a “*karras*”. The leaves are thus arranged in small parcels, without being sewed, in order that one book may be of use to a number of persons at the same time, each taking a *karras*.⁶⁶

Local customs for copying thereby influenced the materiality of Cairene manuscripts.

Despite the benefit that unsewn manuscripts provided to copyists, such texts inconvenienced generations of bookowners. Baedeker’s 1878 travel guide to Egypt admonished European tourists that “many [books] are sold in loose sheets, in which case the purchaser should see that the work is complete, as gaps are of frequent occurrence.”⁶⁷ But European collectors assumed the problem that first afflicted Cairene manuscript owners, as the quires that they lent out for copying could be lost, stolen, damaged, or unreturned. Al-Azhar upheld that “any student of a *riwak* [or arcade] may borrow a book, or portion of one,”⁶⁸ but students could abuse this policy as noted by the philologist

⁶⁵ This practice continued with printings into the nineteenth century. See for example: Najjārī, Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad. *Anẓar al-‘uqūd ‘alā bahjat al-wadūd fī faḍl ašraf mawlūd*. Al-Qāhira: s.n., 1866. 820 G 22, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; and Maghribī, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq. *Ḥāšiya ‘alā Šarḥ Šams ad-Dīn ar-Ramlī lil-Minhāj*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Āmira, 1875. HOLLIS number: 003185371, Widener Library, Harvard University.

⁶⁶ Lane, 1978, pp. 210-211.

⁶⁷ Baedeker, Karl (ed.). *Egypt. Handbook for travellers, part first: Lower Egypt, with the Fayum and the Peninsula of Sinai*. London: Dulau and Co., 1878, p. 253.

⁶⁸ Lane, Edward William and Stanley Lane-Poole (ed.). *Cairo fifty years ago*. London: John Murray, 1896, p. 80.

Johannes Pedersen (1883-1977): “in the al-Azhar mosque fifty years ago [*i.e.* 1896] the sheets could often be seen lying unbound inside the covers, and sometimes they would be lent out singly to the students, which of course was far from conducive to the book’s preservation.”⁶⁹ Students also took advantage of private lenders, as the Cairene chronicler ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (1753-1825) lamented with regard to those who descended upon the home library of his father, Ḥasan al-Jabartī:

He was liberal in lending out books or fascicles of books to students, which was the reason for the damage, ruin, or loss of many of them... Students used to come to that room and take or exchange books without asking permission. Some of them would take a book and not return it. Sometimes a single fascicle would get lost; sometimes the borrower would travel and leave the book somewhere; sometimes the final leaves of a book would be lost; sometimes two or three students would use a single copy of a book, causing great wear. Every year there was much damage and loss, especially to the ends of the books, out of negligence, for most people are by nature careless.⁷⁰

Extant sources uphold ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Jabartī’s depiction of his father’s generosity. A surviving quire of Ḥasan al-Jabartī’s (d. 1774) *Tārīkh al-mizwula*, or *History of the sundial*, states that two students copied it in al-Azhar mosque and the mausoleum of al-Imām aš-Šāfi‘ī in 1749/50 and 1754/5.⁷¹

Several professionalized groups of Cairenes composed formal texts that transcended the genre of the book. Books on jurisprudence reference the production of

⁶⁹ Pedersen, Johannes and Geoffrey French (trans.). *The Arabic book*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 129-130.

⁷⁰ Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān and Jane Hathaway (ed.). *Al-Jabartī’s History of Egypt*. New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009, p. 121.

⁷¹ Jabartī, Ḥasan. *Tārīkh al-mizwula*. Cod. Or. 22.312, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, p. 1.

ephemeral texts by jurists, like contracts dating back to the tenth century.⁷² They also mention Cairene *šuhūd*, or public notaries, who drew up deeds for pious endowments, marriages, and exchanges of labor and goods.⁷³ Local chronicles and European travelogues describe Coptic scribes during the eighteenth century, whose communal literacy allowed them to dominate the administrations of Egypt's Ottoman governors.⁷⁴ The traveler Alexandro Bucciatti (born c. 1772) detailed the appearance of their work:

The system of bookkeeping used by them was just what was wanted to defraud the parties interested, -- as, either for their own interest or for a moment only, they could remove intervening sheets of their accounts and substitute others as might suit them --- these registers were simply an agglomeration of sheets of paper, unbound, detached from one another, simply held one to another by a cotton cord run through a hole in the middle, the extremities of cord were tied round pieces of cardboard covered with reddened goatskin. The cord was much longer than was at all necessary, and the surplus served to tie the collection of sheets in a bundle. Each sheet was about six inches wide and 16 to 18 high -- the sheets which the clerk wrote today, he could change tomorrow, or after some time, just as it suited him, and this without his having the slightest fear of being discovered --- the handwriting was without points so that it was extremely difficult for anyone, not a Copt, to understand what was written, and even in writing figures, they had a special manner of writing, difficult for others to understand.⁷⁵

⁷² See for example: Ṭaḥāwī, Abu Jafar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad and Jeanette A. Wakin (ed.). *The Function of documents in Islamic law: the chapters on sales from Ṭaḥāwī's Kitāb aš-šurūṭ al-kabīr*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972.

⁷³ Humphreys, 1991, pp. 221 & 219.

⁷⁴ See for example: Rajabī, Khalīl ibn Aḥmad. *Tārīkh al-wazīr Muḥammad 'Alī Bāšā, taḥrīrūn Dānyāl Krišīliyūs, Ḥamza 'Abd al-'Azīz Badr, Muḥammad Ḥusām ad-Dīn Ismā'īl*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Āfāq al-'Arabīya, 1997, pp. 210-211; and Browne, William George. *Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria, from the year 1792 to 1798*. London: T. Cadell junior and W. Davies, Strand; and T. N. Longman and O. Rees, Paternoster-Row, 1799, p. 54.

⁷⁵ Alexandro Bucciatti collection, GB165-0416, Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, UK, pp. 110-111.

Finally, Ottoman travelogues noted public scribes who drafted petitions and letters for the illiterate from at least the seventeenth century, called public scribes and scribes of petitions formally, *kuttāb al-‘amma* and *kuttāb aṭ-ṭalabāt*, and staters of case colloquially, *‘arduḥālīyīn*.⁷⁶ These *‘arduḥālīyīn* formed a guild, and Evliya Çelebi remarked that “they amount to forty-five men in forty-five stores, amongst whom are Turkish men who are quick with the pen [*sarī‘iū al-qalam*].”⁷⁷ In the first half of the nineteenth century, many Copts served as *‘arduḥālīyīn*.⁷⁸ They earned middling incomes and lived in districts that radiated around al-Azhar, namely ‘Ābidīn, al-Mūskī, and Ḥārat an-Naṣāra.⁷⁹ Their locations derived from the places that supported their work like Cairo’s main courts and the stationers’ market.

Other Cairenes composed unofficial documents for private consumption. The Jewish merchant community, and most likely the Muslim merchant community too, maintained accounts and corresponded to keep abreast of conditions and prices from the

⁷⁶ Evliya Çelebi, 2003, p. 476.

‘Arduḥālīyīn can be recalled by Cairenes through to the 1980s (Hanna, Nelly. Personal conversation, Harvard University, 26 October 2012).

⁷⁷ Evliya Çelebi, 2003, p. 476.

⁷⁸ Fargues, Philippe. “Family and household in mid-nineteenth-century Cairo.” *Family history in the Middle East: household, property, and gender*, edited by Beshara Doumani. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, pp. 23-50, p. 30.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

eleventh century.⁸⁰ Other Cairenes doodled, jotted down recipes, and created paper talismans.⁸¹ This latter habit bemused Mīkhā'il Mišāqa (1880-1888/9), a Christian native of Mount Lebanon, when he visited with his extended family in Egypt around 1820:

In Egypt the plague lasted for about five months every year... Those who feared for their lives would hole up during this period in their houses, taking various means of precaution... Stuck above the door to my uncle's house and the doors of his rooms I found pieces of paper on which was written "Mary conceived immaculately." I asked about them and was told, "They keep the plague from entering a place where they are put over the door."⁸²

Talismanic practices were also exhibited by Muslim Cairenes, who kept paper amulets near their bodies. The afflicted swallowed Qur'ānic verses "like medication for the sick,"⁸³ and women incorporated inscribed paper charms into their jewelry for protection against bad luck. The Egyptologist Robert Hay (1799-1863) sketched and described "a set of gold cases each containing some small extract from the Koran by way of a charm

⁸⁰ Gully, Adrian. *The Culture of letter-writing in pre-modern Islamic society*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, p. 171.

⁸¹ For examples of Cairene ephemera, refer to studies of the Cairo Geniza based upon the discarded documents that Jewish Cairenes stored from the thirteenth to nineteenth centuries. See: Goitein, S.D. *A Mediterranean society: the Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967-1993; and Goitein, S.D. "The Documents of the Geniza as a source for Islamic social history." *Studies in Islamic history and institutions*. Boston: Brill, 2010, pp. 279-294.

⁸² Mišāqa, Mīkhā'il and W. M. Thackston, Jr. (trans.). *Murder, mayhem, pillage and plunder: the history of Lebanon in the 18th and 19th centuries*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988, p. 103.

⁸³ Perron, M. A. "Lettre sur les écoles et l'imprimerie du pacha d'Égypte." *Journal Asiatique: ou recueil de mémoires, d'extraits et de notices relatifs à l'histoire, à la philosophie, aux sciences, à la littérature et aux langues des peuples orientaux*. Quatrième Série, Tome II, Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1843, pp. 5-23, p. 16.

These are worn by the ladies of Cairo, some are set with precious stones They open at the end, except the centre one which opens at the top by a sliding lid, and the paper is put in the form of a small roll.”⁸⁴

Unsurprisingly, Cairenes found several applications for handwriting before the advent of printing. Their manuscript customs impacted and endured alongside Cairene printing, as I demonstrate in chapters four and five. But they also influenced the ways in which Cairenes processed their exposure to European print culture during the French invasion of Egypt.

B. French Printing during the Egyptian Campaign, 1798-1801.

i. The Egyptian Campaign in Historiography.

The Cairene view of French printing in Egypt should be appreciated as part of the wider historiography surrounding the French invasion. The year of the invasion, 1798, represents a milestone in the field of modern Middle Eastern history as it is used to distinguish between the early modern and modern periods.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, scholars debate the implications of this temporal divide.⁸⁶ The events of 1798 swept Egypt into the international forces that impacted the province’s subsequent political, economic, and

⁸⁴ Robert Hay papers. Add MS 29848: 19th century, British Library, UK, p. 6.

⁸⁵ See for example: Hourani, Albert. *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

⁸⁶ See for example: Ze'evi, Dror. “Back to Napoleon: thoughts on the beginning of the new era in the Middle East.” *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 19/1, 2004, pp. 73-94.

cultural history.⁸⁷ But they also marked a traumatic and unexpected intrusion into the lives of Egyptians that is often neglected in the historiography.⁸⁸

Egyptian nationalist historians portrayed 1798 as a positive force on balance since the French undermined the Ottoman-Mamlūk control over Egypt, laying the ground for Meḥmed ‘Alī’s rule. Of the French and their impact, Shafik Ghorbal (1894-1961) wrote:

Thus conclude the years of a process of transition which began with the French Invasion in 1798. Mehemet Ali had established his power in Egypt and was henceforth free to turn the country into a vast personal estate. But in the exploitation – ill or well – of the estate, the inhabitants were transformed...Mehemet Ali made modern Egypt. The years, moreover, marked the end of the isolation of the Egypt of the Mamelukes. The country was opened to European influences and enterprise.⁸⁹

The cautious positiveness that Egyptian scholars like Ghorbal ascribed to 1798 grew bolder after the state rejected foreign influence during the 1950s under the presidency of Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956-1970). Nationalist historians came to see 1798 as crucial to precipitating the end of foreign overlordship.⁹⁰ This view was celebrated in 1998 when

⁸⁷ Gelvin, James. *The Modern Middle East: a history*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 47-68.

⁸⁸ Cole, Juan. *Napoleon’s Egypt: invading the Middle East*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

⁸⁹ Ghorbal, Shafik. *The Beginnings of the Egyptian question and the rise of Mehemet Ali: a study in the diplomacy of the Napoleonic era based on researches in the British and French archives*. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1928, p. 284.

⁹⁰ This view continued into the 1980s, as may be seen through Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot’s (b. 1933) portrayal of the French in *A short history of modern Egypt*. Marsot argued in her preface that “the major theme of this book is the alienation of the population of Egypt from their rulers. Having suffered foreign occupations of various kinds, from the Arab conquest in 639 AD to the British occupation in 1882 which lasted until 1954, Egyptians through the ages have had to cope with alien rulers, or with rulers who were dominated by aliens so that a truly national government could be said to exist

the Egyptian ministries of Foreign Affairs and Culture commemorated the bicentennial anniversary of the French occupation.⁹¹

Western and Egyptian scholars paired the import of 1798 with a positive understanding of printing, and they deployed French campaign printing as a narrative tool.⁹² For example, Pedersen presented French printing in Egypt as a catalyst for Arab modernity and renaissance:

Of greater importance to Arabic literature, of course, has been the impact of the art of book printing within the purely Muslim milieu, especially in Egypt, which since the fall of the caliphate following the capture of Baghdad in 1258 has been the main country for Muslim education. In this, as in all other respects, the Napoleonic conquest of 1798 ushered in the modern age.⁹³

Some western scholars have maintained this assessment of French printing into the twenty-first century.⁹⁴

only after 1952” (Al-Sayyid Marsot, Afaf Lutfi. *A short history of modern Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. vii).

⁹¹ Colla, Elliott. ““Non, non! Si, si!”: commemorating the French occupation of Egypt (1798-1801).” *MLN*, 118:4, (September 2003), pp. 1043-1069.

⁹² As the historian Timothy Mitchell (b. 1955) noted: “It took the Napoleonic occupation to introduce to the Middle East the first Arabic press, and the absence of printing over the preceding centuries has often been cited as evidence of the backwardness and isolation of the Arab world that the French occupation was to shatter” (Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 133).

⁹³ Pedersen, 1984, p. 136.

⁹⁴ See for example the following quote: “amongst the equipment unloaded was the Arabic printing press, which was immediately put into action printing copies of Napoleon’s [(1769-1821)] proclamation to the people of Egypt. An indication of the undeveloped state of Egypt at the time is the fact that this was the first printing press in the country” (Strathern, Paul. *Napoleon in Egypt*. New York: Bantam Books, 2008, pp. 74-75).

Egyptian nationalist historians used French printing to praise the French in spite of their bellicosity. Anouar Louca (1927-2003) found French printing in Egypt “miraculous,” but warned that the printings only served French interests.⁹⁵ Salah el-Din Boustany remarked that “history shows that Bonaparte’s campaign failed where his Imperialistic targets are concerned, but succeeded in stimulating the growth of knowledge that had been so far lying in a culturally stagnant Egypt.”⁹⁶ But while Louca and Boustany qualified their praise for French printing, Amin Sami Wassef (b. 1922) viewed it as the first turning point in Egyptian history since antiquity:

...it is due to the French that the land of the Pharaohs left the torpor that it had been submerged in for many centuries. In effect, because of the French campaign, [Egypt] found itself suddenly in contact with one of the most luminous civilizations of this epoch. It is Bonaparte who gave [Egypt] a catalyst towards progress of which it took advantage; because Egypt is a fertile land, necessarily every seed sown [there] germinates and bears excellent fruits...[The Egyptians] understood the importance of the [printing press], they agreed that there was no intellectual progress, no proper civilization, without printing...⁹⁷

These depictions essentialized printing and the impact of the French campaign.

Since the late 1980s, several scholars of book history have negated the argument

⁹⁵ Louca, Anouar. “La Renaissance Égyptienne et les limites de l’oeuvre de Bonaparte.” *Cahiers d’histoire Égyptienne*, VII: 1, February 1955, pp. 1-21, p. 11.

⁹⁶ Boustany, Salah el-Din. *The Press during the French expedition in Egypt, 1798-1801*. Cairo: al-Arab Bookshop, 1954, p. 29.

⁹⁷ Wassef, Amin Sami. *L’Information et la presse officielle en Égypte jusqu’à la fin de l’occupation Française*. Paris: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1975, pp. 124-125.

that French printing affected Egyptians and their subsequent printing.⁹⁸ As the book historian Geoffrey Roper argued in 2010:

Arabic printing in Egypt began with the presses of the French occupation of 1798-1801...However, these were used only for a relatively insignificant output of proclamations, materials to help the French occupiers to learn Arabic, and a treatise on smallpox. All the equipment was removed when the occupation of Egypt came to an end. The continuous history of Arabic printing in that country, and among Arab Muslims in general, dates from 1822, when the first book emerged from the state press of Muḥammad ‘Alī...⁹⁹

But the conclusion that French printing in Egypt did not influence the development of Cairo’s governmental presses invalidates some important links between the two endeavours. Moreover, it disregards the experiences of Cairenes who lived through these processes. The French invasion exposed Cairenes to Arabic typography for the first time. What the French printed, and what Cairenes made of these printings therefore mattered.

⁹⁸ Refer to the following quotes on Egyptian impressions of printing: “Napoleon, with much fanfare, displayed his printing presses and made use of printed material, yet his machines left no impression on the populace” (Albin, Michael W. “An essay on early printing in the Islamic lands with special relation to Egypt.” *Mélanges Institut Dominicain d’Études Orientales du Caire*, vol. 18, 1988, pp. 335-344, p. 336); and on French publications, which “...ceased to appear consequent to the withdrawal of the French army from Egypt, ...hence their meager impact” (Ra’isniya, Rahim. “Ottoman Empire.” *Periodicals of the Muslim world: an entry from encyclopaedia of the world of Islam*, edited by Gholamali Haddad Adel, Mohammad Jafar Elmi, and Hassan Taromi-Rad. UK: EWI Press Ltd., 2012, p. 198). These quotes reflect the influence of A. Geiss, who wrote in 1907 that: “From 1801, Egypt no longer knew of printing’s benefits and this country remained for twenty-two years without the power of helping itself to this invention which, although having revolutionized the world, had not yet managed...to implant itself in the country which witnessed the origins of the civilized world” (Geiss, Albert. “Histoire de l’imprimerie en Égypte.” *Bulletin de l’Institut Égyptien*, Ser. 5, vol. I (1907), pp. 133-157, pp. 156-157).

⁹⁹ Roper, Geoffrey. “The History of the book in the Muslim world.” *The Oxford companion to the book*, edited by Michael F. Suarez, and S.J. and H.R. Woudhuysen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Vol. 1, pp. 321-339, p. 334.

French printing shaped the Cairene experience of print in five ways. It informed Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government’s preference for printing texts typographically over lithographically.¹⁰⁰ It influenced the government’s understanding of what to print. It impacted the appearance of governmental printings during the 1820s and 1830s. It served as a model for the way in which the governmental presses functioned. And finally, it exposed Egyptians to the European idea that printing catalyzed cultural renaissance.¹⁰¹ I arrive at these conclusions by examining printing as a site for historical analysis, and by disambiguating the Egyptian consumption of French printings from the French consumption of their printings.

ii. French Printing in Egypt.

The French army brought to Egypt two typographic hand-operated presses and two sets of type for printing in Arabic.¹⁰² They also brought fonts for printing in French and Greek.¹⁰³ Finding Arabic fonts proved difficult for the campaign’s leader, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), although he managed to acquire one set from the Papal Propaganda office in Rome and the other from the press of the overthrown French

¹⁰⁰ Refer to chapters four and five for more on this topic.

¹⁰¹ Refer to chapter two for the origins of this idea in Europe and its development among Ottoman scholars, and to chapter six for the establishment of this idea among Egyptian authors during the second half of the nineteenth century.

¹⁰² Ṣābāt, Khalīl. *Tārīkh at-ṭibā‘a fī aš-Šarq al-‘Arabī*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1958, pp. 124 & 123.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

monarchy, *L’Imprimerie Royale*.¹⁰⁴ This latter font once belonged to the French Orientalist François Savary de Brèves (1560–1627).¹⁰⁵ Bonaparte sailed the types, along with his presses, across the Mediterranean with his fleet to serve the French Army. He equipped them with a “substantial provision (*assez bonne provision*)” of paper and ink from Europe.¹⁰⁶ And he ordered that his printers prepare his first Arabic proclamations to Egyptians at sea “onboard *L’Orient*.”¹⁰⁷

Once in Egypt, the French shuffled their presses between Alexandria, Giza, and Cairo.¹⁰⁸ Within Cairo, they moved their presses between the scholarly institute they established in an-Nāṣirīya, L’Institut d’Égypte, their military headquarters in al-

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 121-123.

¹⁰⁵ Bernard, Auguste. “Les Caractères orientaux de Louis XIII.” *Histoire de l’Imprimerie Royale du Louvre*. Paris: L’Imprimerie Impériale, 1867, pp. 40-64.

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous journal, “Depart de Toulon, arrivée, & séjour a Alexandrie.” Papers relating to the French Army in Egypt. Add MS 34942: Jul 1798-Oct 1798, British Library, UK, p. 108.

¹⁰⁷ *Recueil des ordres du jour du général Bonaparte, à l’armée d’Égypte, classés par ordre chronologique du 21 floréal an VI au 6 fructidor an VII 1798*. MFILM FOL- LH4 – 117 (A, 1798), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, France. Refer also to: Lacroix, André. “La Maison des têtes a Valence. L’Imprimerie et la presse Valentinoises.” *Bulletin de la Société (départementale) d’archéologie et de statistique de la Drome*. Valence: Imprimerie de Chenevier et Pessieux, 1881, vol. 15, pp. 81-94, p. 90.

¹⁰⁸ Refer to: 4-LB42-1941, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, France; *Recueil des ordres du jour du général Kléber à l’armée d’Égypte, classés par ordre chronologique du 10 fructidor an VII, au 25 prairial an VIII. – 1799*, p. 272. Fol- LH4 – 117 (B, 1799-1800), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, France; and *Recueil des ordres du jour du général Bonaparte, à l’armée d’Égypte, classés par ordre chronologique du 15 fructidor an VII, au 25 prairial an VIII*. Microfilm M-11573, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, France.

Azbakīya, and the Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn citadel.¹⁰⁹ The French hid their presses during periods of civil unrest so that they would not be damaged. They also moved them in tandem with Bonaparte and his two successors after Bonaparte departed from Egypt in August of 1799. Despite these transfers, the French appear to have been checked by the practical demands of moving heavy typographic equipment across vast distances. They did not bring their presses with them during their excursions up the Nile or their invasions of Jaffa and Acre.

Bonaparte brought printing to Egypt to facilitate the communication of official news. The importance that he ascribed to printing appears through his immediate concern for his presses upon arriving to Egypt. Bonaparte's fleet was forced to land on the western end of Alexandria's harbor, Barj al-Murābiṭ, because it was pursued by the British navy. Once there, the French faced the local population's displeasure at their arrival.¹¹⁰ Bonaparte commanded the disembarkation of his presses in his general orders from Alexandria in July of 1798 despite the exigencies of this landing:

Article I: The State-Major will leave an associate (*adjoint*) in Alexandria to disembark the French, Arabic, and Greek presses.

Article II: These presses will be established in the house of Consul de Venise in such a way that in forty-eight hours from now, one can print in French and Arabic all that can be sent from General Headquarters (*Quartier Général*).

Article III: From the moment that the Arabic press is established, four

¹⁰⁹ Refer to: Microfilm M-11573, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

¹¹⁰ See entry for the date 2 *Muḥarram* 1213 in: Jabartī, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān. '*Ajā'ib al-āthār fī at-tarājim wa al-akhbār*. Cam Qq. 169, Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge, UK.

thousand Arabic proclamations will be printed.¹¹¹

This command was implemented swiftly.¹¹²

One of the presses was installed in Cairo by August of 1798. Its first publication came in the form of Bonaparte's "Order of the day" on the fifteenth of that month, or 28 *Thermidor* Year VI.¹¹³ Because this printing marked the occasion of the first French imprint from Cairo, it inspired feelings of pride and amazement among those who witnessed its production. A notice composed about the family of one of the French printers, Marc Aurel (1775-1834), recounted that: "Monge, Berthollet, Fourier, Dolomieu, and the other savants of the expedition, huddled around [the printer's] case, [and] in a meditation that was almost religious, watched it fixedly, following the progress of [the printer's] work with indescribable interest."¹¹⁴ It went on to describe that: "From the first proof to come out from beneath [this] press, their carriages burst; they snatched [the proof] from Marc Aurel, who was just as emotional as they, to read it, to contemplate it with enthusiasm, as they would have done with something they had never seen before, plus it was dashed off outdoors, in a hurry, still wet, above their heads were repeated cries of 'Long live France' (*vive la France*)."¹¹⁵ I will revisit these French printings from

¹¹¹ Napoléon I^{er}. *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, Tome IV*. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1858-1869, p. 323, Document 2723.

¹¹² Lacroix, 1881, p. 90.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

Cairo and the noteworthy significance that the French ascribed to them below.

1. *French Printing for French Consumption.*

At first, Bonaparte used the presses to produce official texts for the French invasion. He ordered the printing of Arabic proclamations as well as French directives for his troops.¹¹⁶ With time, Bonaparte allowed the presses to be used for the recreational needs of the French army and the scholarly endeavors of the 167 savants that traveled with the army to Egypt.¹¹⁷ The savants were comprised of French scholars of varying age and accomplishment. Bonaparte had recruited them to document his campaign along with the natural, historical, and cultural novelties that Egypt held for the French. The savants printed scholastic papers for dissemination among themselves,¹¹⁸ but they also produced texts for interested French soldiers. Examples of printings from this latter category include the *Courrier de l'Égypte*, a newspaper which sold “for 6 *médins* per issue or thirty issue subscription [at] 150 [*médins*];”¹¹⁹ *La Décade Égyptienne*, a journal concerned with literary and intellectual pursuits that appeared every ten days for 28

¹¹⁶ See for example: MFILM FOL- LH4 – 117 (A, 1798), Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

¹¹⁷ Raḍwān, Abū al-Futūḥ. *Tārīkh Maṭba‘at Būlāq wa lamḥa fī tārīkh at-ṭibā‘a fī buldān aš-Šarq al-Awsaṭ*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-Amīriya, 1953, p. 22.

¹¹⁸ Canivet, R. G. “L’Imprimerie de l’expédition d’Égypte, les journaux et les procès-verbaux de L’Institut (1798-1801).” *Bulletin de l’Institut Égyptien*, Ser. 5, vol. III (1909), 133-57, pp. 1-22, p. 20.

¹¹⁹ *Courrier de l’Égypte*. N. 9. 10 Vendémiaire VII^e. année de la République. Au Kaire: De l’Imprimerie de Marc Aurel, p. 4.

médins;¹²⁰ and almanacs that collated information from the French Republic with Egypt's Coptic and Muslim standards.¹²¹

It is unclear if Egyptians were exposed regularly to these formal French printings intended for French consumption. At least one Ottoman observer of the French campaign had his work printed by the French, however it remains unclear whether he solicited this endorsement or even knew about its occurrence. The author was Niqūlā at-Turk (1763-1828), a chronicler and diplomatic informant for Emir Bašīr aš-Šihāb II (1767-1850), the ruler of Mount Lebanon. At-Turk composed an Arabic ode in honor of Bonaparte's military prowess that was published alongside its French translation in *La Décade Égyptienne*.¹²² The translator of at-Turk's ode, Jean-Joseph Marcel (1776-1854), was both a printer and engineer-savant for the French campaign. Marcel wrote that the ode "had been composed not long after the conquest of Cairo," and that "the pleasure that I took in reading it made me decide to have it translated and published."¹²³ Although he

¹²⁰ *La Décade Égyptienne, journal littéraire et d'économie politique*. Au Kaire: L'Imprimerie Nationale, An VII de la République Française, Tome I, p. 2.

¹²¹ *Annuaire de la République Française calculé pour le méridien du Kaire, l'an IX de l'ère Française (avec un tableau militaire de l'Armée d'Orient, etc.)*. Au Kaire: L'Imprimerie Nationale, 1800; and Raḍwān, 1953, p. 22.

To support such printings, the French may have begun manufacturing their own paper in Egypt (Wassef, 1975, p. 39). But I have not seen any French printings from Egypt that support this conclusion.

¹²² Turk, Niqūlā and J. J. Marcel (trans.). "Ode Arabe sur la conquête de l'Égypte, traduite par le citoyen J. J. Marcel," *La Décade Égyptienne*, pp. 83-96, pp. 86-96.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

encountered at-Turk's ode in manuscript form, neither he nor at-Turk noted how Marcel acquired his copy. Moreover, at-Turk did not indicate that he was aware that the French published him.

Less formal French printings did catch the attention of Cairenes. The French presses produced ephemeral texts like tickets, menus, and personalized stationery for important commanders in addition to learned printings. To my knowledge, none of these objects has been preserved except for the letterheads on high-ranking soldiers' stationery.¹²⁴ But references to them survive in local writings since Egyptians encountered these printings despite not being their target audience. The curiosity demonstrated by Lane with regard to Egyptian manuscript practices was mirrored by al-Jabartī's interest with the ways that the French used printing in Cairo. Al-Jabartī subsumed references to French print culture within his wider observations about French customs. For example, al-Jabartī described paper tickets for admission to French festivals.¹²⁵ He also described French menus at new social institutions, like the

¹²⁴ Add MS 34942, British Library, pp. 165-169.

¹²⁵ Refer to the following quotes: “[The French] constructed some buildings with compartments and places for amusement and licentiousness including all kinds of depravities and unrestricted entertainment, among them drinks and spirits, female singers and European dancers and the like... At its gate sat a man who would take from every person entering ninety *nisf* (*fiḍḍas*) and give him in return a piece of paper which would serve as a certificate allowing him to come and go on that day... This service was not restricted to the French only but was available to anyone who wanted it, whether he be European, Muslim, Copt, Greek, or Jew” (Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān and S. Moreh (editor and translator). *Al-Jabartī's chronicle of the first seven months of the French occupation of Egypt: Muḥarram-Rajab 1213, 15 June-December 1798: Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi-Miṣr*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975, p. 114); and: “[The French] built a place for entertainment (*manzaha*) where women and men gather for entertainment and debauchery (*khalā'a*) at specific times. Only people who have paid a certain sum or who have received authorization and hold a ticket (*waraqā*) can gain entry” (As quoted in:

restaurant:

People opened a number of stores next to their homes where they sold various types of food like unleavened bread, cake, fried fish, meats, roasted chicken, and the like. The Greek Christians opened several stores to sell various drinks, wines, and coffees. Some of the indigenous French (*al-ifranj al-baladīyin*) opened homes (*buyūtan*) where they made different foods and drinks in the same way that they did in their [home] towns. So they sold sheep, chicken, vegetables, fish, honey, sugar, and all the necessities that chefs need for cooking. They made all types of foods and sweets, and they put a sign upon their door to indicate [what they made]. So if a group passed by that place and wanted food, they would enter that place full of seating areas (*majālis*) high and low. Each seating area had its sign with the amount of money that the customer (*al-dākhil*) had to pay. So they would enter whichever seating area they liked. In the middle of it there would a bench made of wood (*dikka min al-khaṣab*) which would be the board upon which they placed their food and around which were chairs...¹²⁶

Al-Jabartī's observations suggest that European print culture contributed to the oddity of the French presence in the Cairene public sphere. European customs like tickets, shop signs on doors, and menus featured as curious details within wider foreign conventions like galas and restaurants. When al-Jabartī encountered these peculiar uses for paper, he found them noteworthy enough to mention but not provocative enough to evoke judgment. The dearth of such references to formal French printings intended for French consumption suggests that Cairenes encountered them rarely. This remained the case even for the local author that the French published, at-Turk.

Ṭaḥṭāwī, Rifā'ā Rāfī' and Daniel L. Newman (trans.). *An imam in Paris: account of a stay in France by an Egyptian cleric (1826-1831) (Takhliṣ al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz aw al-dīwān al-naḥīs bi-Īwān Bārīs)*. London: Saqi Books, 2011, p. 151).

¹²⁶ Jabartī, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān. *Tārīkh 'ajā'ib al-āthār fī at-tarājim wa al-akhbār*. Bairūt: Dār al-Jīl, 1983, vol. 2, pp. 195-196.

2. French Printing for Egyptian Consumption.

Bonaparte used Arabic printings strategically to facilitate his campaign. These printings came in the form of proclamations. They often bore unwelcome news like procedures for taxation and calls for calm after periods of urban revolt.¹²⁷ Indeed, Cairenes first learned about the French invasion through Bonaparte's Arabic proclamations. The four thousand copies of his proclamation that he commanded to be printed from Alexandria were dispatched ahead of the French advance to Cairo, as noted by al-Jabartī:

When the French occupied Alexandria, they wrote an ordinance (*katabūa marsūman*), printed it (*ṭaba 'ūhū*), and sent copies of these [printings] to the lands which they were advancing into to reassure the [local populations]. And this writing (*al-maktūb*) arrived with a group of prisoners that [the French] found in Malta, who came under [the French] auspices, and of which another group of them appeared at Būlāq. This [occurred] before the French arrived a day or two later with several copies [of the printings].¹²⁸

What is noteworthy about al-Jabartī's description is that Egyptians encountered French printings before they encountered the French.

In addition to being the first manifestations of the French invasion, these proclamations marked some of the earliest typographic printings in Cairo. Although two Hebrew typographic presses predated the French press in the sixteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries,¹²⁹ the French printings introduced Cairenes to several novelties.

¹²⁷ See for example: Microfilm M-11573, Bibliothèque Nationale de France; and Fol. LH4. 117 (A, 1799), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, France, p. 50.

¹²⁸ See entry for the date 2 *Muḥarram* 1213 in: Cam Qq. 169, Cambridge University Library.

¹²⁹ Refer to chapter two.

Firstly, their commands were printed in Arabic instead of Hebrew which allowed them to reach a wider audience. Secondly, they were intended to be consumed by a mass readership. The army's notices were addressed to “all of the peoples of Egypt”¹³⁰ and “to the inhabitants of Cairo.”¹³¹ Finally, the French proclamations upheld a European configuration that was new to most Egyptians. Many of them featured a centered

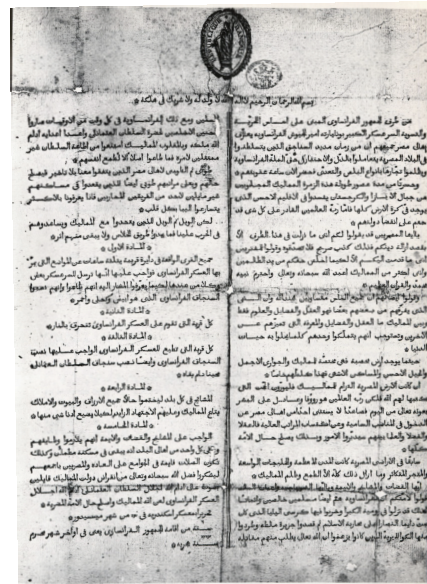


Image 3.1. *The First French printing in Egypt: an Arabic proclamation.*¹³²

engraving of the Marianne at their top, beneath which rested a header. The words of the proclamations flowed in two columns around a lined divide underneath the header. Clauses began after indents and ended with periods in the form of hollowed lozenges with *dammas* inside them. And bibliographical information usually appeared at the

¹³⁰ Add MS 34942, British Library, p. 27.

¹³¹ Microfilm M-11573, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

¹³² Jabartī, 1975, Plate XIII.

bottom of these printings, like the place and year of printing and the name of the press that produced the text.

French records attest to the conspicuousness of these proclamations, as one order of the day commanded that “they be printed in the two languages [Arabic and French], [and] hung (*affichés*) in all of the guardhouses [and] Turkish and French cafes.”¹³³ Indeed, the French printed so many of these proclamations that French soldiers used the paper of their blank versos to compose letters home.¹³⁴ The ubiquitousness of these proclamations is also attested to by British archives which preserve them because they were intercepted by Admiral Horatio’s Nelson’s (1758-1805) men.¹³⁵ Local accounts corroborate the numerousness of these printings. Yet what struck local observers about them most, despite their many novelties, was their content and the ways in which the French distributed them.

iii. First Impressions.

1. Ottoman Impressions of French Printing in Egypt.

Local chroniclers concerned themselves with the content of the messages that the French relayed to them. Accordingly, they copied the French proclamations into their manuscripts directly. For example, al-Jabartī transcribed the printed Arabic of the French

¹³³ Ordre du jour, du 5 Frimaire, an 7. Fol. LH4. 117 (A, 1799), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, p. 67.

¹³⁴ See for example: Add MS 34942, British Library, p. 27.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 27 & 42.

messages “down to the letter (*manqūlan bi-al-ḥarf*).”¹³⁶ Al-Jabartī observed many of these proclamations in the streets, but it is unlikely that he copied them there. He probably accessed the proclamations that he copied through his acquaintance with Isma‘īl ibn Sa‘d al-Khaššāb (d. 1815). Al-Khaššāb ran the archives of the French *dīwān*, or cabinet, under Bonaparte’s second successor in Egypt, Jacques-Francois Menou (1750-1810).¹³⁷ Al-Khaššāb later served under Meḥmed ‘Alī,¹³⁸ which is interesting given that Cairene governmental printings bear an aesthetic resemblance to the French proclamations as I argue below.

Regardless of how al-Jabartī obtained the French proclamations, when he transcribed them he did not reproduce their printed templates. His holographs show that he copied the French messages along the format of contemporary Cairene manuscripts. Despite the novelty of the French proclamations’ European printed aesthetic, al-Jabartī neither commented on the appearance of the French printings nor replicated their formatting.

The images below are al-Jabartī’s rendering of the printed proclamation seen in ‘Image 3.1.’ Despite the identical wording contained in ‘Image 3.1’ and ‘Image 3.2,’

¹³⁶ Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān. *Maḥzar at-taqdīs bi-zawāl dawlat al-Farānsīs*. Cam Qq. 214, Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge, UK, p. 11.

¹³⁷ El-Shayyal, Gamal El-Din. *A history of Egyptian historiography in the nineteenth century*. Egypt: Alexandria University Press, 1962, pp. 14-15.

¹³⁸ Crabbs, Jack A. Jr. *The Writing of history in nineteenth-century Egypt*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984, p. 58.

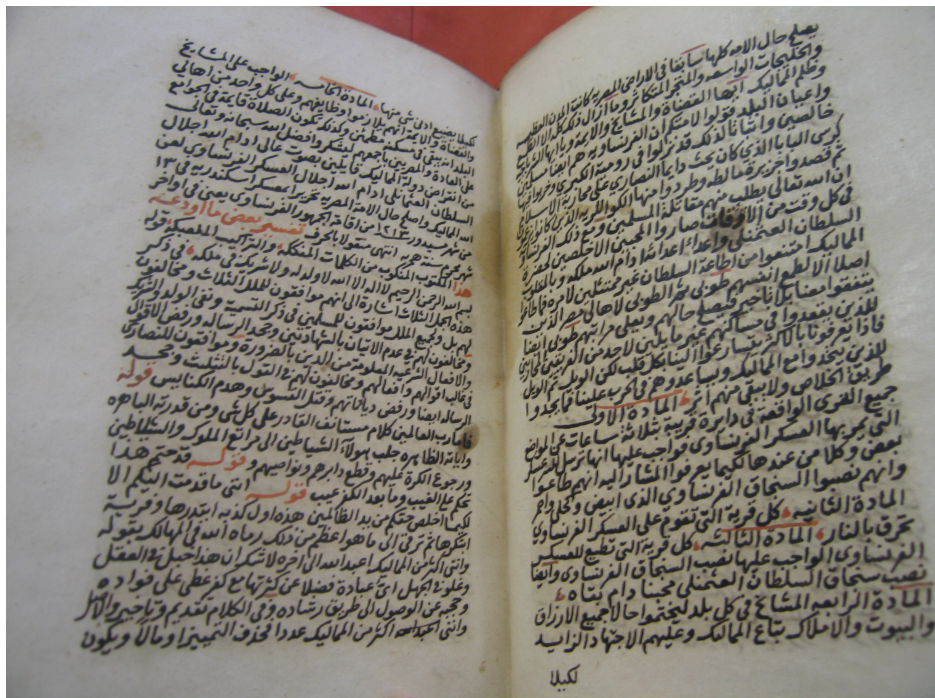


Image 3.2. Al-Jabartī's rendering of the first French proclamation seen in Image 3.1.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Cam Qq. 214, Cambridge University Library, pp. 10 & 11.

stark visual differences emerge from these two texts. Al-Jabartī adapted the appearance of the French proclamation to local custom in his holograph such that the proclamation looks like a Cairene manuscript, replete with catchwords and marginal corrections. He entered his writing in blocks. He did not use indentations, and he did not center significant clauses. Al-Jabartī did away with the Marianne and bicolour layout. He also dispensed with the orientalised periods that the French used in their printings. Al-Jabartī rubricated the keywords of his proclamation in red to grab his readers’ attention. In addition to his use of color, he deployed lines above certain words to highlight their importance. This method of overlining was a Cairene way of accentuating keywords that served the same function as underlining in western custom.

While al-Jabartī did not uphold the visual information that gave the French message its shape, he did convey its worded content to his Cairene audience. He localized some of this as when he refrained from reproducing the Arabic spelling errors that the French had printed.¹⁴⁰ But he tended to reproduce the wording of the proclamations faithfully. For example, he included the bibliographic information that the French wrote at the end of their printings. His transcriptions ended with phrases that

¹⁴⁰ Under their ‘Fifth Article,’ the French misspelled the Arabic word for ‘reassurance’ differently in both issues of their proclamation that I consulted. In one version, they printed the word with a long hamzated ‘*alif*, while in another they mistakenly printed two *hamzas* and the letter *ṣād* instead of *ṭā*’ (refer to: Jabartī, 1975, Plate XIII; and Add MS 34942, British Library, p. 27). It is unclear which issue of the proclamation al-Jabartī copied. Nonetheless, he amended the spelling of ‘reassurance’ to ‘*muṭma’inn*’ (refer to: Cam Qq. 214, Cambridge University Library, p. 11). But he called attention to the French grammatical error that remained: “corrected it [should be] ‘*muṭma’innan*’ because it is a *ḥāl*” (Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān. *Maḥzar at-taqdīs bi-zawāl dawlat al-Farānsīs*. Al-Qāhira: Lajnat al-Bayān al-‘Arabī, 1969, p. 34).

must have seemed awkward if not incomprehensible to his readers, like “written at the Alexandrian military camp, [day] 13 of the month of Messidor, in the [*hijrī*, or Islamic] year 1213 since the establishment of the French Republic (*iqāma lil-jamhūr al-Farānsāwī*).”¹⁴¹

When al-Jabartī commented on the French proclamations, he barely remarked on the mode in which they were produced or the distinctive layout that they bore. This disinterest with the fact that the French printed and with the way that their printings appeared stands out in comparison to al-Jabartī’s treatment of how the French used their proclamations. He noted the curious ways that the French publicized their printings to Cairenes repeatedly:

On that day the French had the Shaykhs write a report to the Sultan and another to the Sharif of Mekka. Then they printed a number of copies of these letters and posted them in the streets and at crossroads...

[The French] had a number of rolls written out containing the stipulations and orders which have been referred to previously, sending some copies to the grandees and posting others at crossroads in streets, and at the gates of the mosques...

All these measures were applied so that the odours of the plague might disappear from the clothes. To this effect they wrote out announcements and posted them on the walls of the market-places, as was their custom.

On that day they wrote notices and posted them in the market-places proclaiming an amnesty, warning against stirring up riots and stating that the Muslims who had been killed were an equal compensation for the French who had been killed...

This month began on Saturday. On that day the French sent a number of notices throughout the country and posted up some in the market-places and alleys written by the French through the mouth of the Shaykhs, its contents being as follows...

¹⁴¹ Cam Qq. 214, Cambridge University Library, p. 11.

On that day [the French] also wrote a number of notices and sent some copies to the country and posted up others in the quarters and markets, also written through (the mouth of) the Shaykhs. However the text of this notice exceeds the former. It was worded as follows...

On the twentieth they printed a number of notices which they posted up in the market-places, the content being...

[The French message] was translated, ... written on a large scroll (*tūmāran kabīran*), and from it were printed many copies, of which several copies were sent to the local notables, and several were pasted up in the markets, as was [the French] custom (*min al-‘āda*)...

...the [French] wrote some papers, printed them, and pasted them up in the markets (*laṣāqūhā bi-al-aswāq*)...

And when that scroll (*dhālik at-tūmār*) comprising the peace agreement and conditions arrived, [the French] translated it into Arabic and printed many copies of it, some of which they directed towards the prominent [local] people, and others they hung in the markets and streets...and this is a copy of the conditions...¹⁴²

As is illustrated by the repetitiousness of these quotes, al-Jabartī frequently noted that the proclamations were printed. But he had little to say about the act of printing itself. Time and again, he detailed the French habit for pasting their messages on the walls of heavily frequented urban areas. He even marveled at the French use of a hot air balloon, *naḥr markaban*, to disseminate proclamations.¹⁴³ To al-Jabartī, it was not particularly

¹⁴² Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān and Smuel Moreh and Robert L. Tignor (trans.). *Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi Miṣr; Napoleon in Egypt: al-Jabartī's chronicle of the first seven months of the French occupation, 1798*. Princeton: M. Wiener, 1993, pp. 72, 75, 81, 100, 101, 103, & 106; Cam Qq. 214, Cambridge University Library, p. 35; and the entries for the date 19 *Muḥarram* 1214 & 22 *Ša‘bān* 1214 in: Cam Qq. 169, Cambridge University Library.

¹⁴³ Jabartī, 1983, vol. 2, p. 230.

interesting that the French printed. What bemused him was what the French did with their printings.

Al-Jabartī neither described the act of printing, nor compared its advantages and disadvantages to manuscript production. When he wrote of the proclamations, he moved between the words ‘printings’ and ‘writings.’ The conflation of these two words suggests that al-Jabartī cared little for how the French made these statements. Rather, he focused on what the statements required of Egyptians and what the French did with them physically. Papering Cairo’s walls and distributing tickets to festivals struck al-Jabartī as noteworthy. Printing in and of itself did not apparently.

Moreover, al-Jabartī did not use printing as a cause for criticizing the French. He recycled his material on the French in Egypt under three different manuscript titles: *‘Ajā’ib al-āthār fī at-tarājim wa al-akhbār; Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi Miṣr;* and *Maḥzar at-taqdīs bi-zawāl dawlat al-Farānsīs.*¹⁴⁴ For the first of these books, *The Wonders of the past from biographies and news*, al-Jabartī composed a traditional chronicle that spanned the periods before and after the French invasion. For the second, *The History of the period of the French in Egypt*, al-Jabartī excised the French period from the previous chronicle and packaged it as a discrete book. For the third, *The Occasion of veneration with the expulsion of the French nation*, al-Jabartī revised his previous book to slander the French and celebrate their departure. The shifting tones of al-Jabartī’s titles evince how he repurposed his work to correspond with Cairo’s changing

¹⁴⁴ For printings of these books, refer to: Jabartī, 1983; Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān. *Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi Miṣr*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jāmi‘ī, 2000; and al-Jabartī, 1969.

leadership. But despite the faults that al-Jabartī increasingly found with the French, printing did not feature as one. Al-Jabartī’s references to French printings remained consistent across the three iterations of his chronicle.

The same cannot be said for al-Jabartī’s opinion of the wording and aims of the French printings. In entries in *Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs* where al-Jabartī showed disdain for the French, he berated their Arabic composition. For example, he lampooned the French imposition of a tax on Egyptians by insulting their writing:

The French had a large roll written concerning the new Diwan and sent copies of it to the notables. Other copies were posted at crossroads, at entrances to lanes, and on the doors of mosques. Within the text they inserted stipulations and in their contents were others. These were sub-stipulations formulated in their stupid idiom and crude [linguistic] style, and all of them dedicated to one purpose, namely robbing people of their money by devious means and despoiling them of their real estate, inherited property and the like.¹⁴⁵

Al-Jabartī resented the French writing style, and the inferior way in which the French translated their commands into Arabic. But his objections to French writings grew more aggressive in *Mazhar at-taqdīs*, in which al-Jabartī lambasted Bonaparte’s first proclamation over several pages.¹⁴⁶ He mocked French errors in Islamic theology, Arabic terminology, and spelling as he combed over the proclamation line by line to highlight the extent of French ignorance and hypocrisy. He chastised Bonaparte’s audacious claims to religion: “[Bonaparte] said ‘Verily I am more worshipful of God than the Mamlūks and so forth,’ [but] no doubt this is a madness in thinking, and an

¹⁴⁵ Jabartī, 1993, p. 67.

¹⁴⁶ Jabartī, 1969, pp. 28-35.

exaggeration made out of ignorance, what worshipfulness [has he]?”¹⁴⁷ Again, however, al-Jabartī did not deploy printing as a rhetorical example of French despotism or oppression. Had the act of printing been un-Islamic, vulgar, or taboo to Cairenes, I expect that al-Jabartī would have used printing to slander the French.¹⁴⁸

Alexandro Bucciante (born c. 1772) corroborated al-Jabartī’s critique of the French printings. Bucciante arrived to Egypt in January of 1795 under the protection of his uncle, George F. Bucciante, who acted as British Consul in 1798. He kept a journal of his observations from 1796-1801 that he wrote up in 1847 to qualify reports about Meḥmed ‘Alī that had emerged among Europeans through “inexact sources, impure basis, from party spirit; which departed from the historical exactness and truth which the Public had a right to expect.”¹⁴⁹ The timing of Bucciante’s journey poised him to observe the changes brought by the French invasion and to assess their impact. In Bucciante’s critique of the campaign’s failure, he zeroed in on Bonaparte’s proclamations:

But under one head, in homage to the truth, we cannot refrain from saying,

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁴⁸ Sarah Mirza comes to the same conclusion in her assessment of al-Jabartī’s visit to the library of the French Institute (Mirza, Sarah. “Printing and the abuse of texts in al-Ġabartī’s History of Egypt.” *Historical aspects of printing and publishing in languages of the Middle East: papers from the third symposium on the history of printing and publishing in the languages and countries of the Middle East, University of Leipzig, September 2008*, edited by Geoffrey Roper. Boston: Brill, 2014, pp. 121-127, p. 125.

¹⁴⁹ GB165-0416, Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony’s College, pp. 1-2.

that an unbiased observer practised in the Oriental character cannot but be astonished to see how in error Gen Buonaparte always was, in his estimation of the Oriental! The frequent Official proclamations which he published to the Mahomedan population caused a feeling of desolation: --- When he first landed in Egypt his proclamation described him as the destroyer of the Cross! -- He thought that by using such terms he would gain the good will of the Musselmen and obtain their favorable consideration -- later, he announced himself as the “Friend of the Prophet!” and on another occasion as “The man predestined and specially charged by the divinity to sustain and cause to gain new splendour, -- United Mohamedanism--!”

Instead of uttering such untruthful statements, which all have the ring of Charlatanism, he would have done better and obtained better credence had he just adhered to the simple truth, his proclamations, instead of being derided and sneered at by the masses, would have been listened to with interest and he would in the course of time have been listened to with veneration and respect.¹⁵⁰

Buccianti echoed al-Jabartī’s condemnation of the French messages, but he extended this outrage to all Egyptians. According to Buccianti, “the masses” received Bonaparte’s claims with contempt.

Indeed, Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī (1777-1800), the assassin of Bonaparte’s successor as commander of the French forces in Egypt, Jean Baptiste Kléber (1753-1800), was rumored to have found inspiration in the proclamations’ heretical contents.¹⁵¹ The shock of Kléber’s murder compelled the French to take extra-ordinary measures in bringing Sulaymān and his co-conspirators to justice. The French collated the official documentation surrounding Sulaymān’s trial, including testimonies, interrogations, and the court’s final judgment. At the end of the trial, they ordered “that this notice and its supporting statements are to be printed in five-hundred copies, and translated from the

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

French language to Arabic and Turkish to be pasted up (*li-tazlīqihā*) in all of the places and towns in the land of Egypt...”.¹⁵² The two hundred sixty pages that comprise this printing are distinctive insofar as the French used the same text to target French soldiers, Arabic speaking Egyptians, and Turkish speaking Egyptians.

Sulaymān hailed from Aleppo, as is indicated by his moniker al-Ḥalabī, or the Aleppine. Before he murdered Kléber, he supported himself in Cairo as a public scribe. Sulaymān’s testimony to the French suggests that he took up this itinerant profession easily upon his arrival. Some days he had so many people to write for that he could not recall their names. Other days, he found no work.¹⁵³ Sulaymān may not have been skilled at his job, since he spent some of his time in Cairo studying to read and write from an elderly teacher.¹⁵⁴ His clientele came from the working class, like one Muḥammad Maghribī al-Suwīs, a licorice root vendor,¹⁵⁵ who may not have recognized Sulaymān’s deficiencies. The rumored motivation for Sulaymān’s violence, his work as a writer, and the printed French response to his crime show how the worlds of Cairene manuscript culture and French print culture collided under the French occupation.

Not all local observers took offense with the contents of the French proclamations. In at-Turk’s chronicle, *Mudhakkirāt*, or *Memoirs*, he related the French

¹⁵² *Majma‘ at-taḥrīrāt al-muta‘alliqa ilā mā jarī bi-i‘lām wa muḥākamat Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī qātil Ṣārī ‘Askar Kilihbir*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Jamhūr al-Faransāwī, VIII^e année de la République, (1800), p. 72.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

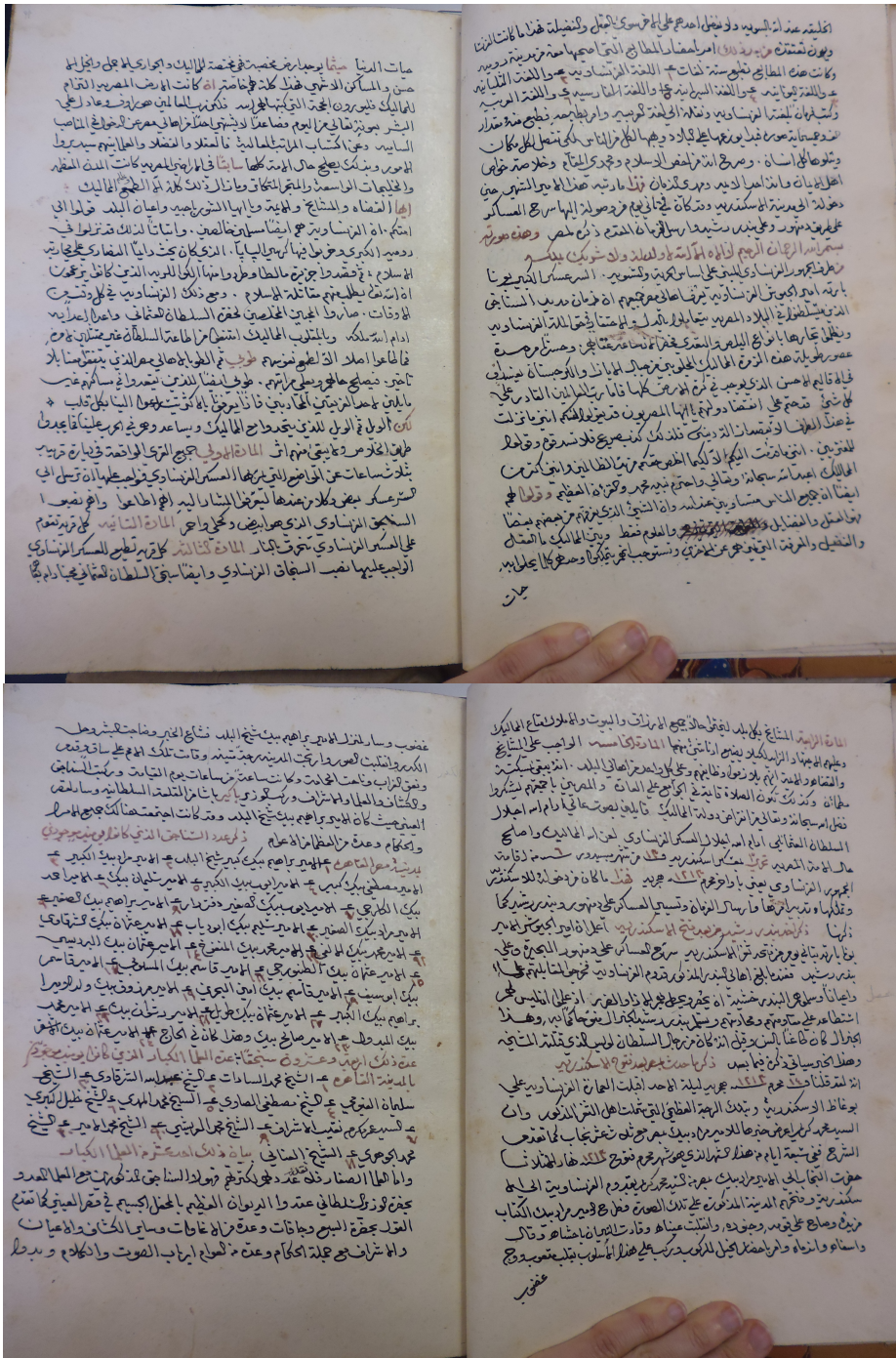


Image 3.3. At-Turk's rendering of the first French proclamation seen in Image 3.1.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Turk, Niqūlā Ibn Yūsuf. *Mudhakkirāt Niqūlā at-Turk*. Cam Qq. 7, Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge, UK, pp. 6 & 7.

proclamations without passing judgment on them. Manuscript copies of at-Turk's chronicle recorded the content of the French proclamations according to local standards of formatting, like al-Jabartī's holographs. For example, one represented the first French proclamation by rubricating in red the keywords that the French had centered. Its page openings were formatted in two rectangular blocks of text, between which were placed small catchwords. The copyist who produced this manuscript dispensed with the columns, indentations, lozenges, and Marianne that the French had printed, and instead worked in the style of Cairene manuscripts.

At-Turk did not express contempt for the French, but like al-Jabartī he commented on what the French did with their printings. For example, he noted that Bonaparte "wrote a proclamation (*fīrmānan*) in the French language, and sent it to the *dīwān* to be translated into the Arabic language...for all of the Egyptian lands (*li-sā'ir al-aqālīm al-Miṣrīya*). [The French] brought [the translated proclamation] to the Arabic printing press (*yaqdamūhū li-maṭba'a al-'Arabīya*) and hung [the printings] along the walls of the streets (*yalaqūhū 'alā hīṭān aš-šawāri'*) for distribution in town and city (*al-bādiya wa al-ḥādira*)."¹⁵⁷ The French custom of posting writings in the public sphere impressed at-Turk in the same way that it had impressed al-Jabartī.

Despite this similarity between al-Jabartī and at-Turk's accounts of French printing, the latter provided a fuller explanation of how the French used their printings, and what they sought to accomplish. At-Turk wrote of Bonaparte's printing regime in Cairo:

So [Bonaparte] entered his chamber and showed [his deputies] his writing

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

(*kitābathū*) and said to them, “translate this from the French language to the Arabic language and print it and hang it up (*iṭba ‘ūhā wa ‘allaqūhā*) in the streets of the city so that all of the people of Cairo can look over it and grasp that Bonaparte is good, and is not yet dead, because many territories remain for him to take, to open, and to raid.” So they took [the writing] from him and called for his victory and everlasting glory. Then they translated [the writing] from French into Arabic and sent it to the press, and printed it in Arabic and hung it upon the walls of the city’s streets for all the people of Cairo (*jamī‘ ahl Miṣr*) to see, and to know that Bonaparte is good and had not died because he has many more raids yet. This was what the French did with all of their news that they wanted to spread and disseminate (*iṣā‘ atuhā wa at-takhbīr*) to all of the people of Egypt (*Miṣr*). So [to accomplish this,] they would present [the news] for translating from French to Arabic, then submit [the translation] to the printing press, which differed from handwritten orders (*wa tatafaraqu ‘alā hikām al-khaṭūf*), and the aforementioned [deputies] would [then] hang them upon the walls of the streets.

[Bonaparte] had brought with him great printing presses (*maṭābi‘ ‘aẓīma*) from Paris and from Rome [that printed] in five languages: Arabic, French, Italian, Greek and Syriac, and [the French] in Cairo cast Farsi letters in order to print Turkish books and papers. [Bonaparte] brought Roman people from Rome with him who had printed in all of these letters.¹⁵⁸

At-Turk detailed the way in which the French printed in Arabic. First, they wrote their messages by hand in French. Then they translated their messages into Arabic, again by hand. Finally, they printed these texts and put them up in public places. The process of creating these messages and bringing them to Cairenes’ attention interested at-Turk more than the fact that they were printed. Although he noted the difference between printing and handwriting, he said nothing of how typographic presses functioned or what they accomplished. Nor did he pass judgment on printing. Rather, at-Turk represented printing as an idiosyncratic French practice that drew on the familiar act of handwriting.

¹⁵⁸ Turk, Niqūlā ibn Yūsuf. *Mudhakkirāt Niqūlā Turk*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at al-Ma‘had al-Faransī lil-Āthār aš-Šarqīya, 1950, p. 49.

Local reactions to French printing were qualified, subtle, and framed from a manuscript worldview. French witnesses tell a different story about the impact that their printings had upon Egyptians.

2. *French Impressions of their Own Printing in Egypt.*

When Bonaparte's savants returned from Egypt to France, they spent two decades processing the information that they had collected to produce their monumental *Description de l'Égypte* over twenty-three volumes.¹⁵⁹ Their work catalogued Egyptian history, flora, fauna, architecture, and culture in an extravagant typographic execution that made the *Description* a marvel of technical artistry. One of the *Description*'s many engravings depicted the circulation of the French proclamations. It was entitled "Le Marin d'Alexandrie," or "The Mariner of Alexandria," and was intended to represent a traditional local "costume" and occupation.¹⁶⁰ The engraving showed the mariner resting in a shelter by the sea. He sat with his pipe and *manqala* board beside a French proclamation. Although the words of the proclamation are indiscernible, it is possible to

¹⁵⁹ *Description de l'Égypte, ou, recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française.* Paris: De l'Imprimerie impériale, 1809-1822, 23 vols.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*



Image 3.4. *A French engraving of a mariner in Alexandria sitting beside a French proclamation, beside the proclamation in detail.*¹⁶¹

distinguish the document through its Marianne and formatting. So far as I am aware, this engraving is the first image to depict print culture in Egypt. It therefore documents an encounter between two traditions for writing from the French perspective.

It is surprising that the engraver featured the proclamation in an otherwise Egyptian setting because the *Description* set out to document Egyptianness. The *Description*'s other engravings of local custom did not reflect foreign influence. It follows that this engraving may represent the mariner as he was sketched *in situ*. This view is corroborated by the detail of the “Au Kaire” imprint at the bottom of the

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* État Moderne, Vol. II, planches, costumes et portraits, pl. d: 2.

proclamation, which also demonstrates that printings from Cairo reached Alexandrians. The proclamation's appearance in this conventional scene is important because it ascribes a timeless quality to the novel French act of papering Egypt's cities. In this sense, the engraving depicts the French expectation for their print culture to take root in Egypt.

As the description of Marc Aurel's first printing in Egypt stated, French printing in Egypt inspired "almost religious" feelings among the French.¹⁶² Contemporaries emphasized the power of typography, its ability to transform society, and their pride in being able to bring printing to Egypt. The French also projected these ideas onto Egyptians, whom they argued were impressed by the act of printing. Indeed, the French attempted to teach Egyptians to associate printing with broad civilizational progress.

In February 1801, the *Courier de l'Égypte* published an account of Egyptians visiting the French printing press in Cairo.¹⁶³ The account comprised nearly one quarter of the newspaper that week even though it appeared towards the end. It was preceded by an announcement of candidates for the French Senate, the French version of a proclamation issued to Egyptians, news from Europe, and local propaganda. Of the latter, French soldiers learned that "Ma'allem Yacoub [Ya'qūb Ḥanna, (1745-1801)], commander general of the Coptic legions gave on the 19th of this month for the General in Chief, generals, and principal officers of the army, a magnificent dinner which was followed by the performance of an Arab comedy."¹⁶⁴ They also received the plot

¹⁶² Lacroix, 1881, p. 90.

¹⁶³ *Courier de l'Égypte*. N. 102. Le 24 Pluioise, IX^e. année de la République. Au Kaire: De l'Imprimerie Nationale, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

summary of the opera “*Valere en Italie*” that two “*citoyens*” were composing in Egypt, and news of a commission established to study the pyramids of Giza.¹⁶⁵ The *Courier*’s writers continued their list of French cultural successes in Egypt with a description of the army’s press in Cairo.

Like most of the pieces that came before it, the *Courier*’s account of the press was written anonymously and began without a title. A black bar separated word of the French excavation of the pyramids from coverage of the impact of the French printing presses in Egypt. Together, these stories suggested French exceptionalism. In the first, the French worked to unearth Egypt’s ancient civilization for the world. In the second, the French ushered Egypt into the world of European civilization through printing:

Of everything that excited the astonishment and admiration of the inhabitants of Egypt, since our arrival to their country, one of the things that has struck them the most, and that has all the more made an impression on them, because it was totally new to them, is the art of printing. Last year the principal members of the divan, among others, the cheykh *êl-Mohdy* [Muḥammad al-Mahdī (1737-1815)], *êl-Fayoumy* [Sulaymān al-Fayyūmī], *ês-Saouy* [Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣawī], etc., came several times to the national press (*l’imprimerie nationale*), and saw with a pleasure that was mixed with surprise (such were their expressions) the execution of the diverse procedures that are employed for printing, either in French, or different oriental languages.

The cheykh *Mohammed êl-Fâsy* [Muḥammad al-Fāsī], who had seen the printing press of Constantinople, and several Syrians who knew the press established in the Maronite convent of Kiesrouan,¹⁶⁶ part of the mountains that compose the Anti-Lebanon, were equally astonished by the rapidity and the precision with which the French workmen executed those operations and movements which, judging from their testimony, do not work except with (*ne se font qu’avec*) much clumsiness and slowness in the two printing presses that we have just mentioned, which are the only two typographic establishments in the Orient.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁶⁶ I could not determine which press the French are referring to here. Perhaps it is the Maronite press at Qozhaya.

The cheykh *êl-Bekry* [Khalîl al-Bakrî (d. 1808)] who had not yet seen the national press, visited this establishment a few days ago. After having satisfied his curiosity like the others, he asked for some details and explanations on this art of printing.

Among other questions, he asked whether France possessed many printing presses; whether they existed in large numbers in the other parts of Europe; in which countries they were in greatest number, etc. Once they had satisfied all of these questions, he inquired again whether there were typographic establishments in Russia, and seemed much astonished by the response that was made to him that this state had not begun to really police itself and make itself civilized (*cet état n'avait commencé à se policer réellement et à se civiliser*), until printing had been introduced there. He therefore asked what influence printing could have on the civilization of a people, and seemed to understand and savor the reasons which were given to him, above all those being, 1.° the ease of multiplying and circulating a very large number of copies of good works, which as manuscripts, cannot be known to more than a few people; 2.° of the impossibility that all of these copies may be lost or be totally eliminated by any kind of event, which can happen to the best manuscripts. He therefore said that a large number of good Arabic books existed whose publication would be infinitely useful in this country, wherein most of them have been ignored, and that he sincerely desires that they can be spread by way of printing. He withdrew saying that all of the sciences come from God, and that when God desired it, there was nothing that men could not undertake, and in which they could not succeed.¹⁶⁷

This account paired printing with cultural civilization. Its author found a causal connection between Russia's adoption of printing and its societal advancement. Insofar as printing determined a society's ability to be civilized, the author implied that the French practice of printing had made them advanced long ago. By extension, Egypt's lack of printing kept Egyptians from being civilized.

The author credited France with introducing printing to Egypt to emphasize the advanced state of his nation. Doing so implied that the French were so civilized that they could initiate Egyptians into civilization. He qualified the French contribution to

¹⁶⁷ *Courier de l'Égypte*, N. 102, pp. 3-4.

Egyptian society in the case of the few Egyptians who had encountered Ottoman printing previously in Istanbul and Mount Lebanon. While he conceded that these Egyptians had witnessed printing before, he noted that they had not been exposed to such precise and fast printing as that of the French. This civilizational claim to printing extended into the reasons he gave for printing's utility, namely, the ability to make texts available in abundance and therefore less likely to be lost. But Ottoman writers had articulated these benefits of printing in service to another end. Earlier on in the eighteenth century, the Istanbulite printer İbrahim Müteferrika (1675-1745) explained that printing made texts numerous and impervious to eradication.¹⁶⁸ Instead of viewing printing as a mechanism for civilizing the Ottoman Empire, Müteferrika considered it as a tool for magnifying the empire's existing greatness.¹⁶⁹

To demonstrate that Egyptians understood the power of printing, the author emphasized the awe that French printing inspired in Egyptians. Of all the novelties that the French brought to Egypt, including brasseries, the British imperial fleet, and a hot air balloon, he stressed that printing was “one of the things that has struck [Egyptians] the most.”¹⁷⁰ But he exaggerated, for the French understanding of what shocked Egyptians differed from the way that locals expressed their shock.

¹⁶⁸ Murphy, Christopher M. (trans). “Appendix: Ottoman imperial documents relating to the history of books and printing.” *The Book in the Islamic world: the written word and communication in the Middle East*, edited by George N. Atiyeh. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 283-292, pp. 287-291.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 291-292.

¹⁷⁰ *Courier de l'Égypte*, N. 102, p. 3.

On his visit to the French press, al-Bakrī witnessed the act of printing for the first time. But of greater significance than the act of printing was his exposure to the ideas that the French associated with printing. Al-Bakrī was told that France was great because it possessed many presses, that Russia was not great until it printed, and that Egypt would become great once it printed. Neither the Egyptian nor Russian “states” were nations. The former was a province of the Ottoman Empire, and the latter an empire. Still, the French extended the idea that printing made societies illustrious to all.

This pairing of printing and civilization was a European ideological invention. It resulted from the Enlightenment, insofar as the French recognized themselves as enlightened and searched for the sources of their distinction. From at least the late eighteenth century onwards, Europeans articulated their exceptionality and attributed it to printing.¹⁷¹ A French soldier, for example, inscribed his copy of a book printed from Marcel’s press with the note that “this monument to the power of industry in a barbaric country (*pays barbare*) will only be outdone by a few others (*serait cédé pour peu de chose*) in comparison to its value...”.¹⁷² And in 1881, a French journal proclaimed that through Marc Aurel, “the miraculous (*merveilleux*) art of Gutenberg came to reveal itself to (*venait de se révéler à*) the ancient civilization of Sésotris and the constructors of the pyramids.”¹⁷³ In chapter six, I demonstrate that this vision of exceptionalism through

¹⁷¹ Refer to chapters two and six.

¹⁷² *Fables de Loqman, surnommé le sage*. Cairo: De L’Imprimerie Nationale, An VIII de la République Française (1799 vieux style), 870 F 44, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, note tipped into the front cover.

¹⁷³ Lacroix, 1881, p. 91.

print extended to British, Italian, Dutch, Prussian, German, and American visitors to Egypt. Indeed, the deterministic association between western cultural superiority and printing continues today.¹⁷⁴

This meaning of print had not been expressed to Ottoman Egyptians until the French invasion. Contrary to al-Bakrī's reported wish that Cairenes disseminate their texts through printing, their adoption of the technology was not immediate. French printing in Egypt did impact Cairene manuscript production, however.

C. The Impact of French Printing on Cairene Manuscript Production during and after the Invasion.

The French printings exposed Cairenes to new ways of producing, disseminating, and thinking about their written production. Chief among these novelties, Cairenes could now consider embracing printing over manuscript production. They could adopt European formatting and European writing genres like the newspaper. They could also

¹⁷⁴ This idea was explored formally in the 1979 book by the historian Elizabeth Eisenstein (b. 1923) entitled *The Printing press as an agent of change* (Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing press as an agent of change: communications and cultural transformations in early modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). But it has informed subsequent scholarship beyond book history. For example, the statistician Nate Silver (b. 1978) began his influential book on predictions, *The Signal and the noise*, with the argument that the printing press catalyzed western intellectual, political, and economic hegemony. He writes: "The original revolution in information technology came not with the microchip, but with the printing press. Johannes Gutenberg's invention in 1440 made information available to the masses, and the explosion of ideas it produced had unintended consequences and unpredictable effects. It was a spark for the Industrial Revolution in 1775, a tipping point in which civilization suddenly went from having made almost no scientific or economic progress for most of its existence to the exponential rates of growth and change that are familiar to us today. It set in motion the events that would produce the European Enlightenment and the founding of the American Republic" (Silver, Nate. *The Signal and the noise: why so many predications fail, but some don't*. New York: Penguin Press, 2012, p. 1).

choose to employ the European style for posting their compositions, and to espouse the idea that their reliance on manuscripts precluded them from being civilized. All of these aspects of western printing came to impact Egyptian printing over the following century. But during the French occupation, the French influenced local manuscript production in two particular ways. Locals began engaging with the French presence through handwritten texts, and they circulated these messages in public.

Egyptians of European origin adopted the French method for displaying writings in the public sphere. The European inhabitants of Egypt, whose numbers grew into the nineteenth century, particularly in Alexandria,¹⁷⁵ began capitalizing on the French presence by opening taverns and restaurants with placards and menus according to al-Jabartī.¹⁷⁶ Although these European Egyptians produced their advertisements by hand, the content and application of their signs derived from European print cultural practices. Their actions were motivated by their desire to entice French soldiers into consuming their wares.

Al-Jabartī does not suggest that Ottoman Egyptians participated in this practice. Ottoman Egyptians appear to have limited their exercise of European print culture to writing proclamations of their own. Contemporary French sources referred to these

¹⁷⁵ For more on this community, refer to: Khuri-Makdisi, Ilham. *The Eastern Mediterranean and the making of global radicalism, 1860-1914*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

I address the nature of their typographic endeavours in chapter five.

¹⁷⁶ Jabartī, 1983, pp. 195-196.

writings as “*firman*s,”¹⁷⁷ which suggests that their inspiration derived from the Ottoman method for disseminating official news as much as these writings engaged with French influence.¹⁷⁸ Locals forged these firmans in the name of the Porte and other provincial authorities to undermine the French as early as three months after the invasion’s start.

The existence of these firmans reaches us through French accounts. On 7 October, 1798, the French issued a proclamation from Cairo in response to the fact that several Egyptian dignitaries “had handed in different originals of firmans” to Bonaparte.¹⁷⁹ The firmans claimed that they were composed by Ottoman authorities from Egypt, Syria, and Istanbul.¹⁸⁰ But, the French noted, “they have been fabricated by the men of Ibrahim-Bey [1735-1817],” a Mamlūk authority in Cairo whom the French had displaced.¹⁸¹

The French claimed that the firmans had been issued to “stir up the people (*soulever le peuple*)” with rumors that the Ottomans would march against the French, and that the English had taken Alexandria.¹⁸² It debunked these firmans as forgeries by

¹⁷⁷ Fol. LH4. 117 (A, 1799), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, p. 50.

¹⁷⁸ Ottoman sultans employed firmans to administer the empire. Firmans fell outside the purview of the religious establishment because they covered topics of military and civil administration that religious doctrine did not cover. (Huart, Clément. “Fermān.” *E.J. Brill’s first Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913-1936*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993, pp. 95-96).

¹⁷⁹ Fol. LH4. 117 (A, 1799), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, p. 50.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

noting that “even the least expert men will easily recognize the falsity of these firmans. The Porte always writes in Turkish, and these firmans are in Arabic; they are always signed by four people: these ones are only [signed] by two; finally several essential formalities are missing because those who made them were ignorant (*ceux qui les ont dirigés étaient des ignorans*).”¹⁸³

Significantly, however, it described these handwritten firmans as having “been published (*publier*) against us.”¹⁸⁴ These firmans were composed frequently and circulated quickly despite being written by hand. As Buccianti noted, Egyptians produced “many writings which circulated in Egypt, in which France was represented as being at war with Turkey and exciting the People to arm to resist the destroyers of Islam.”¹⁸⁵

Cairenes disseminated these counterfeit firmans in response to the French proclamations, and in this sense the firmans may be thought of as the incorporation of proclamations into local forms of writing. On 24 October, 1798, for example, the French printed a proclamation in the name of the *dīwān* to condemn the Cairo Revolt, “the object of which was to paralyze as much as possible [these Egyptian writings].”¹⁸⁶ The French called all “Muslims, dwellers in cities and in the frontiers...dwellers of villages, peasants and Arabs, [to] know that Ibrahim-bey and Mourad-bey [1750-1801] have been spreading

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ GB165-0416, Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony’s College, p. 218.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

writings all across Egypt that are intended to incite the people to revolt, and that they are fraudulently and maliciously making it understood that these writings come from his imperial majesty [the Sultan] and some of his viziers.”¹⁸⁷ These notices, in which Cairenes debunked Bonaparte’s claims of service to the Ottoman Empire, were an effort to beat the French at their own game. Cairenes leveraged the French method for disseminating news to challenge French authority, and to counter the French message. But they did so by packaging their writings in traditional formats.

Nonetheless, this cultural borrowing did not supplant traditional Ottoman methods for broadcasting news to the Egyptian public. The Imperial Porte continued its practices of dispatching official firmans to its emissaries and having its announcements read in the *khuṭba*, or weekly mosque sermons. Soon after the Cairenes issued their condemnation of Bonaparte’s invasion, for example, the Porte spread supporting firmans throughout the empire in which “she called all the populations of her vast Empire to exercise a war of extermination against the French.”¹⁸⁸

Nor did this cultural borrowing work one way. Just as the Egyptians adopted aspects of French textual culture, the French incorporated aspects of Ottoman communication into their repertoire. They used the Ottoman method of reading their announcements to the public when, for example, they appointed al-Bakrī to the position of *naqīb al-ašrāf*, or representative of the descendents of the prophet Muḥammed (d.

¹⁸⁷ De Sacy, A. I. Silvestre. *Chrestomathie Arabe, ou extraits de divers écrivains Arabes, tant en prose qu'en vers, à l'usage des élèves de l'École Royale et Spéciale des Langues Orientales Vivantes*. Paris: De l'Imprimerie impériale, 1806, vol. III, p. 289.

¹⁸⁸ GB165-0416, Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony’s College, p. 224.

632), and “proclaimed [it] by the public criers.”¹⁸⁹ Moreover, the French used muezzins’ calls to prayer to disseminate their notifications to the Egyptian public.¹⁹⁰ They also imitated the Porte’s practice of dispatching messages to local dignitaries to ensure their consumption.¹⁹¹ When the French printed their proclamations, they sent a portion of them to the Cairene elite who remained in their favor.¹⁹² These proclamations were printed on paper that was smaller than that used for the proclamations which were posted publicly.¹⁹³

The limited French influence upon Egyptian manuscript writing outlasted the occupation, even though the French took their presses with them upon their departure. When Egypt returned to the Ottoman fold, local rulers posted handwritten orders in the streets of Cairo.¹⁹⁴ But domestic political upheaval followed the French campaign, and writing suffered in general. Cairo’s traditional powerbrokers, the Mamlūks and the Porte’s designated governor, dispersed and had their authority undermined through the French invasion. Three governors of Egypt served during the four years between the

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

¹⁹⁰ Napoléon I^{er}. *Campagnes d’Égypte et de Syrie*. Paris: Au Comptoir des Imprimeurs-Unis, 1847, vol. II, p. 113.

¹⁹¹ Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān and Alexandre Cardin (trans.). *Journal d’Abdurrahman Gabarti, pendant l’occupation Française en Égypte: suivi d’un précis de la même campagne, par Mou’Allem Nicolas el-Turki*. Paris: Chez l’Éditeur, 1838, p. 51.

¹⁹² Cam Qq. 214, Cambridge University Library, p. 35.

¹⁹³ Boustany, 1954, p. 15.

¹⁹⁴ Jabartī, 1838, p. 256.

French departure and Meḥmed ‘Alī’s appointment as governor in 1805.¹⁹⁵

Meḥmed ‘Alī capitalized on the local power vacuum. However, his ascent continued to mark an unstable period for Cairo. The local economy struggled such that its effects on Cairene learning could be detected into the 1820s. Lane noted that “learning was in a much more flourishing state in Cairo before the entrance of the French army than it has been in later years. It suffered severely from this invasion, not through direct oppression, but in consequence of the panic which this event occasioned and the troubles by which it was followed.”¹⁹⁶ Yet in the aftermath of the French departure, handwriting again dominated the city’s written output. Remarkably then, when Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government started printing in the 1820s, facets of French influence resurfaced.

D. French Printing’s Influence upon Governmental Printing under Meḥmed ‘Alī.

In chapter four, I examine the origins and trajectory of Cairene governmental printing under Meḥmed ‘Alī in detail. My present interest lies in delineating how French printing impacted governmental printing. Practically speaking, French printings influenced those of Meḥmed ‘Alī in four ways: technologically, formally, aesthetically, and organizationally. These commonalities represent more than just a similar approach to printing. Rather, they suggest that Ottoman Egyptians’ exposure to French printing informed the adoption of the technology by Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state.

It is worth noting that Meḥmed ‘Alī appears to have been impressed by

¹⁹⁵ Fahmy, Khaled. *Mehmed Ali: from Ottoman governor to ruler of Egypt*. UK: Oneworld Publications, 2009, p. 27.

¹⁹⁶ Lane, 1978, p. 214.

Bonaparte. He took up residence in the Azbākiya home that Bonaparte occupied during his French campaign, after the latter confiscated it from the Mamlūk Muḥammad Bey al-Alfī (d. 1807).¹⁹⁷ His government employed Bonaparte’s former soldiers and staff who remained in Egypt.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, he sought updates on Bonaparte and stories about his life. According to a French consular report of 1818, Meḥmed ‘Alī asked French emissaries about Bonaparte’s escape from Elba and followed news of Bonaparte in the English papers.¹⁹⁹ In 1831, Meḥmed ‘Alī commanded the Turkish translation of *Extraits du mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, which he printed in 2,000 copies under the title *Tarih-i Bünāpārta*, or *The History of Bonaparte*.²⁰⁰ He had this text supplemented with two other biographies of Bonaparte printed in 1833 and 1844/1845.²⁰¹ In his later years, Meḥmed ‘Alī even placed the year of his birth at 1769, “to remind his eager listeners that

¹⁹⁷ Turk, 1950, p. 122.

¹⁹⁸ The most famous of whom was Colonel Joseph Antheime Sève (1788-1860), known locally as Sulaymān Bāšā al-Farānsāwī (Vingtrinier, Aimé. *Soliman-Pacha – Colonel Sève – généralissime des armées Égyptiennes ou histoire des guerres de l’Égypte de 1820 a 1860*. Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot et Cie, 1886). Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state also absorbed British soldiers. See for example: Thompson, Jason. “Osman Effendi: a Scottish convert to Islam in early nineteenth-century Egypt.” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring, 1994), pp. 99-123.

¹⁹⁹ Driault, Edouard. *La Formation de l’empire de Mohamed Aly de l’Arabie au Soudan (1924-1823): correspondance des consuls de France en Égypte*. Caire: Imprimerie de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, pour la Société royale de géographie d’Égypte, 1927, p. 97.

²⁰⁰ Hsu, Cheng-Hsiang. “The First thirty years of Arabic printing in Egypt, 1238-1267 (1822-1851): a bibliographical study with a checklist by title of Arabic printed works.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1985. Vol. 2, pp. 519-520.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 522.

it was also the year in which Napoleon and Wellington were born...”²⁰² This interest in Bonaparte’s example manifested itself in the printing done by Mehmed ‘Alī’s state.

The French example may have informed the state’s preference for typography over lithography.²⁰³ Lithography was more suitable than typography to printing in cursive scripts, and enjoyed enormous popularity in India for its ability to harness scribal workforces.²⁰⁴ While Mehmed ‘Alī’s government purchased both typographic and lithographic presses from Europe, extant printings and contemporary accounts suggest that their presses relegated lithography to the production of drawings instead of texts. The British traveler Sarah Gascoyne Lushington (d. 1839) wrote of her visit to the governmental press at Būlāq: “I saw printing in all its branches...the works already printed [included]...some work on military and naval tactics, with lithographic plates.”²⁰⁵ Lane also noted the application of lithography to non-textual content: “A printing-office has also been established at Boo’la’ck, by the present viceroy. Many works on military & naval tactics, & others on Arabic grammar, poetry, letter-writing, geometry, astronomy, surgery, & c. have issued from this press. The printing-office contains

²⁰² Fahmy, 2009, p. 2.

²⁰³ Refer to chapter five for an analysis of these two technologies within the Cairene context.

²⁰⁴ Proudfoot, Ian. “Mass producing Hourī’s moles, or aesthetics and choice of technology in early Muslim book printing.” *Islam: essays on scripture, thought and society: a festschrift in honour of Anthony H. Johns*, edited by Peter G. Riddell and Tony Street. New York: Brill, 1997, pp. 161-184.

²⁰⁵ Lushington, Sarah Gascoyne. *Narrative of a journey from Calcutta to Europe by way of Egypt, in the years 1827 and 1828*. London: John Murray, 1829, pp. 168-169.

several lithographic presses, which are used for printing proclamations, tables illustrative of military & naval tactics, &c.”²⁰⁶

Mehmed ‘Alī’s personal preference for typography is apparent through his extant orders. His commands to subordinates distinguished typography from lithography, and reflected a bias towards the former. He issued statements about typographic printing frequently,²⁰⁷ which he described in cumbersome ways like “the great craft that is printing books through the creation of Frankish and Arabic letters (*bi-ikhtirā’ ḥurūf*).”²⁰⁸ Less often, he referred to the government’s lithographers with titles like *rassām al-baṣamkhāna*, or draftsman of the printing press.²⁰⁹ Such descriptions indicate that Mehmed ‘Alī understood how typography and lithography functioned. Yet neither he nor the state’s pressworkers seem to have valued lithography’s natural advantages over typography in the Cairene context.

The very genres that the state produced during the first two decades of its printing operation also bear strong similarity to the French printings in Egypt. In addition to

²⁰⁶ Add MS 34080, British Library, p. 150.

²⁰⁷ See for example: Sāmī, Amīn. *Taqwīm an-Nīl wa asmā’ man tawallū amr Miṣr wa muddat ḥukmihim ‘alayhā wa mulāḥazāt tārikhīya ‘an aḥwāl al-Khilāfa al-‘amma wa šu’ūn Miṣr al-khāsa ‘an al-mudda al-munḥasira bayna as-sana al-ūlā wa sana 1333 al-hijrīya, (622-1915 milādīya)*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-Amīrīya, 1915-1936, vol. 2, pp. 578-580 & 589.

²⁰⁸ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 47.

²⁰⁹ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 580.

books, the government printed almanacs,²¹⁰ announcements,²¹¹ and an official gazette along the French model. The gazette was entitled *al-Waqā'i al-Miṣrīya*, or *Egyptian events*, and it was referred to as a “*jurnāl*” from the French cognate, *journal*.²¹² *Al-Waqā'i al-Miṣrīya* did not feature essays. Rather, it was composed of announcements and dispatches from on high. As Bonaparte had done with his official printings for his soldiers, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state used *al-Waqā'i al-Miṣrīya* to circulate bureaucratic information to governmental servants.

But the most striking indication of French influence on governmental printings

²¹⁰ The state commissioned Bonaparte’s cartographer during the Egyptian expedition, Edme François Jomard (1777-1862), to compose these almanacs (Ṭaḥṭāwī, 2011, pp. 374-377). Although they were intended for Egyptian consumers, Lane’s description of the Egyptian almanacs suggests their European inspiration: “A pocket almanac is annually printed at the government-press at Boulak. It comprises the period of a solar year, commencing and terminating with the vernal equinox; and gives, for every day, the day of the week, and of the Mahommadan, Coptic, Syrian, and European months, together with the sun’s place in the zodiac, and the time of sunrise, noon, and the [afternoon]. It is prefaced with a summary of the principal eras and feast-days of the Muslims, Copts, and others, and remarks and notices relating to the seasons. Subjoined to it is a calendar containing physical, agricultural, and other notices for every day in the year, mentioning eclipses etc., and comprising much matter suited to the superstitions of the people. It is the work of Yaḥyā Efendee, originally a Christian priest of Syria, but now a Muslim” (Lane, 1978, p. 222). Because of their familiar layouts, European visitors to Cairo during the 1830s found them useful. The British author James Augustus St. John (1795-1895) found the Egyptian almanac of 1833 so helpful that he included its English translation in his book *Egypt, and Mohammed Ali* (St. John, James Augustus. *Egypt, and Mohammed Ali; or, travels in the valley of the Nile*. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, Paternoster-row, 1834, Volume II, pp. 582-588).

²¹¹ Add MS 34080, British Library, p. 150. See for example: FO 78/323, The National Archives, Kew, UK, p. 82.

²¹² Refer, for example, to the communications sent by Meḥmed ‘Alī’s son, Ibrāhīm (d. 1849) (Uncataloged letter dated 22 Ša‘bān 1251, or 1835. Letters of Mısırlı Ibrahim Pasha to Menlikli Ahmed Pasha, Governor of Adana. GB-0033-HIL-IP, Palace Green Library, Durham University, UK).

comes from the latter's appearance. Although twenty years stood between the French departure and the start of governmental printing, some of the Cairene output bore an uncanny resemblance to the French publications. *Al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīya*, for example, was formatted like a French proclamation. Its text appeared in two columns beneath a flowerpot that served the role of the French Marianne. It too purveyed two languages, in

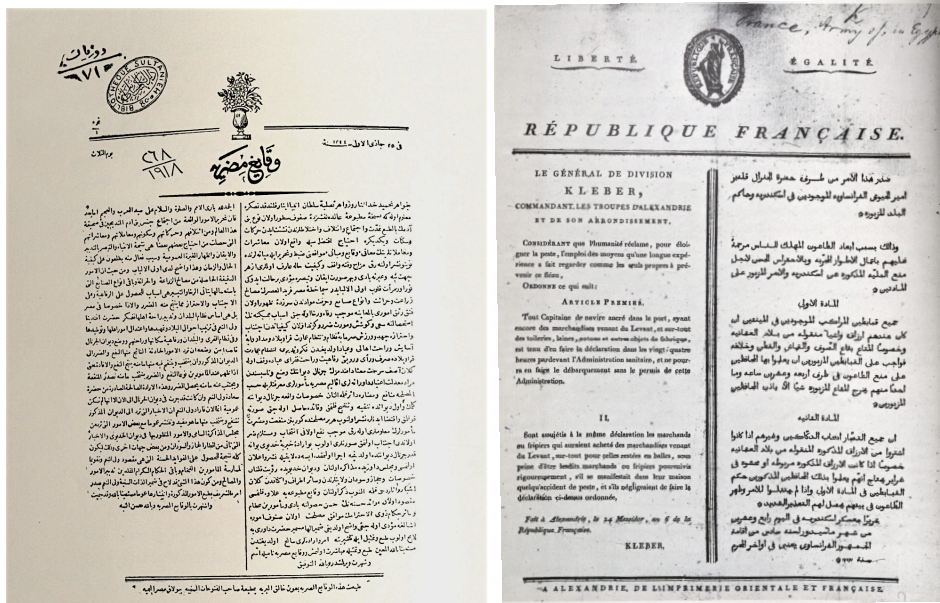


Image 3.5. The first edition of *al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīya*, printed in 1828, beside a French proclamation from 1798.²¹³

this case Ottoman and Arabic rather than Arabic and French. And at the very bottom of its text it offered its place of printing, albeit in a local fashion: “This *al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīya* was printed by the help of the creator of the land [*i.e.*, God] at the printing press of the possessor of exalted conquests [*i.e.*, Meḥmed ‘Alī] in Būlāq, Cairo the this protected.”²¹⁴ French formatting impacted Egyptian printings early on, and this

²¹³ Raḍwān, 1953, Image 27; and Jabartī, 1975, Plate XIV.

²¹⁴ Raḍwān, 1953, Image 27.

borrowing should be appreciated as intentional. Egyptian printings did not look European because such aesthetics were natural to typography. Instead, the governmental presses made printings to look the way that Cairenes had been conditioned to expect of print under the French.

The French also influenced the operational practices of the state's printing regime. Neither Bonaparte nor Meḥmed 'Alī brought printing to Egypt for profit, but rather, to facilitate their respective agendas. Bonaparte printed to enable his occupation, while Meḥmed 'Alī printed to train his military along European lines. Accordingly, both rulers commandeered their presses. Bonaparte dictated the nature, language, quality, quantity, and distribution of his printings.²¹⁵ Meḥmed 'Alī engaged with these concerns too. In 1830, for example, he ordered the speedy translation of a French military book that he wanted printed for his son, Ibrāhīm (d. 1849):

We have learned from your communication [about] the matter of our son, the head of the army (*sar 'askar bāšā*), coming to the representative with a special French book for organizing and improving the army, and [to publish it,] it is necessary to gather up the translators, undo the binding of the aforementioned book, and give each translator a quire of it to facilitate its translation in the soonest time.²¹⁶

He also monitored the performance of his printers. In 1832, he warned one of his

²¹⁵ For example, on 29 August 1798, Bonaparte mailed the first copy of Cairo's *Courier* to Kléber in Alexandria with the following command: "If you still have a functioning Arabic printing press, print in this language the article about the festival of the Prophet, and have it circulated (*répandre*) all over the Levant. Send me 400 copies" (Napoléon I^{er}, 1858-69, pp. 433-434). Additionally, Bonaparte fired Aurel because he found his printwork sloppy. When Aurel left Egypt, he ceded his press to the French government (Lacroix, 1881, p. 91).

²¹⁶ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 48. For another instance of Meḥmed 'Alī commanding the printing of a military book for Ibrāhīm in 1832, refer to: El-Shayyal, 1962, p. 21.

pressmen that his contract would be voided if he did not accomplish what was expected of him.²¹⁷ Moreover, Meḥmed ‘Alī emulated Bonaparte’s placement of presses, locating one of them in the Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn citadel that he came to inhabit when in Cairo.²¹⁸

A human element connected the French and Egyptian presses, too. Two early figures in the government’s printing presses, Niqūlā al-Masābkī and the priest Anton Rafā’īl az-Zakhūr, first worked for Bonaparte. Al-Masābkī, whose name literally means ‘the founder,’ served as a copy reader for *L’Imprimerie Orientale et Française* under Marcel’s direction.²¹⁹ According to French records, he also worked as an overseer for their press, or *prote*, for the monthly salary of 135 *livres*.²²⁰ He later reprised this role when he became the *nāzīr*, or overseer, at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s press at Būlāq.²²¹ And az-Zakhūr may have been one of the first locals to read Bonaparte’s proclamation. An intercepted French letter recorded that “a Maronite priest from Damascus... was charged with reading and commenting on the proclamation” to several locals who were invited to board the *L’Orient* the night before the French disembarkation.²²² Az-Zakhūr

²¹⁷ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 580.

²¹⁸ *La Contemporaine en Égypte pour faire suite aux souvenirs d’une femme sur les principaux personnages de la République, du Consulat, de l’Empire, et de la Restauration*. Paris: Chez Ladvocat, 1831, vol. iv, pp. 293-294.

²¹⁹ Boustany, 1954, p. 9.

²²⁰ Canivet, 1909, p. 5.

²²¹ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 61.

²²² Canivet, 1909, p. 9.

subsequently studied alongside the savants at the Institut d'Égypte and served on Menou's *dīwān*. He spent 1803-1816 in France, where he worked as oriental manuscripts librarian²²³ and professor of Arabic at the École des Langues Orientales Vivantes.²²⁴ He then returned to Egypt to teach engineering and translate French and Italian books for Mehmed 'Alī's state presses.²²⁵ Since the French employed five literate local boys as compositors, and five others as workers at their press in Cairo,²²⁶ the links between French and Egyptian typographic printing presumably extended even further.²²⁷

Finally, the French notion that presses had names also influenced the Egyptian printing tradition. As I discuss in chapter five, private Cairene presses began setting fixed names for themselves towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century. But before then, they and the governmental presses that preceded them adopted the French precedent of using fluid press names. According to the bibliographic information that the French

²²³ Brocchi, G. B. *Giornale delle osservazioni fatte ne' viaggi in Egitto, nella Siria e nella Nubia*. Bassano: Presso A. Roberti tip. ed editore, 1841, p. 173.

²²⁴ Reinaud, M. "Notice des ouvrages Arabes, Persans, Turcs et Français imprimés en Égypte." *Nouveau Journal Asiatique, ou recueil des mémoires, d'extraits et de notices relatifs à l'histoire, à la philosophie, aux langues et à la littérature des peuples orientaux*, vol. VIII, (1831), pp. 333-344, p. 342.

²²⁵ Crabbs, 1984, p. 185.

²²⁶ Canivet, 1909, p. 12.

²²⁷ A printed "Order of the day" issued by Kléber to his troops in Cairo in September of 1799 addressed the management and staffing of the press. Notably, local pressworkers, or "*ouvriers du pays*" were distinguished from European pressworkers and were paid significantly less for their labor (Fol- LH4 – 117 (B, 1799-1800), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, p. 187).

included in their printings, their two presses functioned under various names like *L’Imprimerie Orientale et Française*, *L’Imprimerie de Marc Aurel*, *Imprimeur de l’armée au quartier des Français*, *L’Imprimerie Nationale*, and *Maṭba‘at al-Jamhūr al-Faransāwī*.²²⁸ Similarly, the names for Meḥmed ‘Alī’s governmental presses varied between printings. With regard to the press at Būlāq, for example, one of its first printed books referred to the press in a eulogizing line of poetry at the book’s end: “glory is in printing [this book] in Būlāq.”²²⁹ In another incunabulum, an Italian-Arabic dictionary, two different names for the press appeared on separate title pages. The Italian title page referred to the press at Būlāq as “Bolacco from the royal press,” while the Arabic title page proclaimed “the printing was completed at Būlāq at the press of the master of good fortune (*ṣāhib as-sa‘āda*).”²³⁰ Yet another book ended with a colophon that stated “this history was printed at the press of the master of dazzling victories (*ṣāhib al-futūḥāt al-*

²²⁸ These names translate to: The Oriental and French Press, The Press of Marc Aurel, Printer of the army at the French quarter, The National Press, and The Press of the French Republic. Examples of them may be found in: Marcel, Jean Jacques. *Exercices de lecture d’Arabe littéral, à l’usage de ceux qui commencent l’étude de cette langue*. Alexandrie: De l’Imprimerie orientale et Française, 1798; Au quartier-général d’Alexandrie, le 18 messidor an VI... Bonaparte, membre de l’Institut national, général en chef, au Directoire exécutif. Au Caire, de l’imprimerie de Marc Aurel, imprimeur de l’armée. FRBNF31003656, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, France; *La Décade Egyptienne*, An VII de la République Française; and *Majma‘ at-taḥrīrāt*, An VIII.

²²⁹ Macquer, Pierre Joseph and al-Qiss Rāfā’il Rāhib (trans.). *Ṣinā‘at ṣībāgh al-ḥarīr*. Būlāq: bi-maṭba‘a tamajadu lil-wazīr, 1823, p. 118.

²³⁰ *Dizionario Italiano e Arabo: che contiene in succinto tutti i vocaboli che sono più in uso e più necessari per imparare a parlare le due lingue correttamente*. Bolacco: Stamperia Reale, 1822, title pages.

bāhira) at Būlāq Egypt Cairo (*bi-bulāq miṣr al-qāhira*).²³¹

There are limits to the impact that French printing wielded upon locals. However, Cairenes' first mass exposure to Arabic printing shaped their approach to implementing the technology. The details of this influence highlight the nuanced development of printing within the Ottoman Cairene context. And they belie the historiographical portrayal of early Egyptian printing as either an endorsement or condemnation of the French invasion. I now turn to the origins of governmental printing in Cairo, which I analyze from the vantage of Cairo's manuscript tradition. Cairene manuscript production preceded, coincided with, and outlasted the French invasion. The ways in which the governmental presses harnessed the city's manuscript industry secured the development of Cairene printing throughout the nineteenth century.

²³¹ *Moskov diyarında mukim bulunan Kastera nam Fransa elçisinin Moskov devleti hakkında cem ettiği tarihin tercümesidir*. Būlāq: bi-maṭba'at šāhib al-futūhāt al-bāhira, 1830, p. 225.

CHAPTER FOUR. Manuscript Elements of Governmental Printing under Meḥmed ‘Alī, 1820-1849.

The adoption of printing by Meḥmed ‘Alī’s (r. 1805-1848) government has been described as an intellectual turning point in Ottoman Egypt, under the supposition that technological determinism generated this change.¹ This chapter challenges this narrative by arguing that governmental printing thrived due to its links with the Cairene manuscript industry. I explore how Meḥmed ‘Alī’s governmental printing worked and what made it distinctive. But I do so from the vantage of Cairo’s manuscript culture.

I pair contemporary accounts with formal and ephemeral printings argue that two governmental practices in particular secured the development of Cairene printing throughout the nineteenth century. These are: the *multazim*, or contractor, system, by which the government allowed subjects to commission privately funded printings from its presses during the mid-1830s; and the sale of governmental printings from a bookshop in Cairo’s manuscript market in Khān al-Khalīlī from at least 1833. The importance of these two practices derives from their participatory nature, as they allowed Cairenes to engage with printing according to longstanding manuscript custom. The *multazim* system

¹ Refer for example to: Pedersen, Johannes and Geoffrey French (trans.). *The Arabic book*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 137-138; Raḍwān, Abū al-Futūḥ. *Tārīkh Maṭba‘at Būlāq wa lamḥa fī tārīkh at-tibā‘a fī buldān aš-Šarq al-Awsaṭ*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-Amīrīya, 1953, pp. 34-35; Abu Lughod, Ibrahim. *The Arab rediscovery of Europe: a study in cultural encounters*. Saqi Books, 2011, p. 164; Albin, Michael W. “An essay on early printing in the Islamic lands with special relation to Egypt.” *Mélanges de l’Institut Dominicain d’Études Orientales du Caire*, 18, (1988), pp. 335-344, p. 339; ‘Azab, Khālīd Muḥammad and Aḥmad Maṣṣūr. *Al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī al-maṭbū‘: min al-judhūr ilā maṭba‘at Būlāq*. Al-Qāhira: ad-Dār al-Miṣrīya al-Lubnānīya, 2008, pp. 10-11; and Roper, Geoffrey. “The History of the book in the Muslim world.” *The Oxford companion to the book*, edited by Michael F. Suarez, and S.J. and H.R. Woudhuysen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Vol. 1, pp. 321-339, p. 334.

drew from Cairo's manuscript tradition for commissioning texts, as the government assumed the role of the copyist for hire by offering to print texts that wealthy locals ordered. And the vending of governmental printings from Khān al-Khalīlī folded print into Cairenes' domain for trading manuscripts.

These practices laid the ground for Cairo's mainstream private printing industry, as the government's actions were neither strictly private nor governmental, but an amalgamation of manuscript custom and printing practice. They also helped to solidify and sustain Cairene printing, allowing it to endure in a lasting way that had not characterized previous Ottoman printing endeavors. In this sense, the cause for Cairene printing's unprecedented persistence actually derived from the very manuscript industry that the historiography on printing has overlooked.

A. A Comment on the Sources.

Cairene sources on governmental printing tended to hail from the government itself. The lack of local accounts of the pasha's presses is significant in contrast to the numerous European descriptions of the presses. I address these European accounts in chapter six. But as I begin this chapter, I want to underscore this imbalance. Scholars have used the European reports to fill in descriptive holes about the state's presses. Without doubt, these accounts possess important factual content. However, they also purvey facts about the presses within highly normative narratives about progress and decline. When I compartmentalize the factual content of these accounts from the attitudes that they purvey about printing, a stark difference emerges between the European and Egyptian presentations of Cairene governmental printing. While European

visitors depicted state printing as a glorious feat, the state presented its printing as shop work in service to greater bureaucratic causes. This difference is noteworthy because Egyptian and European attitudes towards printing aligned over the course of the nineteenth century.

B. The Crux, from Egyptian Governmental Sources.

Mehmed ‘Alī brought printing to Cairo to implement his wider military reforms.² His utilitarian use of the presses as modernizing state tools, as opposed to promoters of cultural modernity,³ cannot be stated more strongly.⁴

² Raḍwān, 1953, p. 34; and Šayyāl, Jamāl ad-Dīn. *Tārīkh at-tarjama wa al-ḥaraka ath-thaqāfiya fī ‘aṣr Muḥammad ‘Alī*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-fīkr al-‘Arabī, 1951, p. 195.

³ When Ottoman printing is studied broadly, the Egyptian governmental presses are depicted as a steppingstone to an empire-wide print culture. For example, one scholar compared the governmental presses to the private printing industries of early modern Europe and Istanbul, and mid-nineteenth century Lebanon: "...the old aversive attitude to Gutenberg’s invention began to lose ground in the eighteenth century, as a part of broader changes in the Empire’s domestic and international realities. In that century, printing began hesitantly under the government’s auspices in the Ottoman capital. It was followed in the nineteenth century by a more ambitious effort in Muhammad ‘Ali’s Egypt, where a government-owned press turned out several hundred titles within a few decades, with a modest print run and equally modest demand. The real breakthrough occurred only around mid-century, as Christian missionaries, their local pupils, and some other private individuals embarked on a vigorous published endeavor mostly in the Lebanon area” (Ayalon, Ami. “Arab booksellers and bookshops in the age of printing, 1860-1914.” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:1, (2010), pp. 73-93, p. 74).

⁴ This point is well-accepted (See for example: Verdery, R. N. “The Publications of the Bulaq Press under Muḥammad ‘Ali of Egypt.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 91:1, (1971), pp. 129-132, p. 132). Nonetheless, governmental printing has been criticized for its limited scope and popularity. For example, one scholar condemned the apparent lack of textbook consumption amongst Cairenes: “We might expect the elite for which the early books were being printed to devour them as soon as they came off the presses. After all, it was for the young soldiers, officers, doctors, and engineers that the new books were being written and printed. At least *these* young scholars were taking

Ultimately, the senior personnel for Mehmed ‘Alī’s presses came from the governmental fold. This was not the case at first, when few Ottomans knew how to print. The governmental presses therefore drew from Ottoman printers from the French campaign,⁵ and European technicians, such as a German master printer at the governmental press at Būlāq.⁶ From the start, the government also set about training Egyptian subjects to print.⁷ The staff for the presses increasingly drew from this pool of workers, many of whom were sent to Europe for training.⁸ Upon their return to Egypt, these men would train local apprentices in turn.⁹ Hence the staffing of the governmental presses, and the appearance of the printings that they produced, grew increasingly

advantage of the books, weren’t they? Apparently not” (Albin, 1988, p. 337). Two pages later, the same scholar went on to underscore just how removed these texts were intended to be from popular literary practice: “Muhammad Ali could have built a powerful and successful armed force without a printing press, but the printing press could not have prospered without the army. The new enterprise, tied as it was to the Pasha’s New Order did not in its early years have anything like an independent cultural mission” (*Ibid.*, p. 339).

⁵ Refer to chapter three.

⁶ An 1822 account of the press at Būlāq states that: “*Il proto è Tedesco...*” (Brocchi, G. B. *Giornale delle osservazioni fatte ne viaggi in Egitto, nella Siria e nella Nubia*. Bassano: Presso A. Roberti tip. ed editore, 1841, vol. 1, p. 173).

⁷ Refer, for example, to reports of Azharite youths trained to work in the presses from 1815 (Raḍwān, 1953, p. 60).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁹ Refer to the expectation that Artīn Bey teach students to print in: Sāmī, Amīn. *Taqwīm an-Nīl wa asmā’ man tawallū amr Miṣr wa muddat ḥukmihim ‘alayhā wa mulāḥazāt tārikhīya ‘an aḥwāl al-Khilāfa al-‘amma wa šu’ūn Miṣr al-khāsa ‘an al-mudda al-munḥaṣira bayna as-sana al-ūlā wa sana 1333 al-hijrīya, (622-1915 milādīya)*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-Amīrīya, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 580.

Ottoman Cairene over time.¹⁰

Of the trainees sent to Europe, they were not expressly dispatched for the sake of printing. The missions trained students in multiple technical skills from cities like Livorno, Milan, Florence, and Rome from 1816,¹¹ and Paris from 1826.¹² Within these missions, only some students trained in arts related to printing like metal founding, engraving, typography, and lithography.¹³ Those assigned to study these manual crafts tended to be Mamlūk and Egyptian. Their socio-cultural identities were considered lowly in comparison to their Ottoman Turkish counterparts, who learned subjects like engineering, and military and administrative studies.¹⁴

When these students returned to Egypt they were employed within Mehmed ‘Alī’s regime where they were shuffled between governmental assignments. This practice caused students to hold posts that had little to do with their training. But

¹⁰ Compare the European appearance of one of the governmental presses’ first printings to the manuscript-like appearance of its subsequent printings of European texts. See for example: *Dizionario Italiano e Arabo: che contiene in succinto tutti i vocaboli che sono più in uso e più necessari per imparare a parlare le due lingue correttamente*. Bolacco: Dalla Stamperia Reale, 1822; and Perron, A. *Al-Azhār al-badī‘a fī ‘ilm at-ṭabī‘a*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at Ṣāhib as-Sa‘āda al-Khidīwīya allatī bi-Miṣr al-maḥmīya, 1838.

¹¹ Artin Pacha, Yacoub. *L’Instruction publique en Égypte*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890, p. 71.

¹² Newman, Daniel. “The ‘Egyptian’ mission to Europe.” *An imam in Paris: account of a stay in France by an Egyptian cleric (1826-1831) (Takhlīṣ al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz aw al-dīwān al-naḥīs bi-Īwān Bārīs)*, by Rifā‘a Rāfi‘ at-Ṭaḥṭāwī and edited by Daniel L. Newman. London: Saqi Books, 2011, pp. 17-30, pp. 27-28.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 30 & 117-118.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Mehmed ‘Alī’s entire administration functioned in this manner, even at its uppermost echelons. People were reassigned according to need, and this approach reflected Mehmed ‘Alī’s wider style of active management in which he formed the center of governance.¹⁵

This approach to statecraft caused reassignments that may seem surprising.¹⁶ For example, the superintendent, or *katkhudā*, of the governmental press at Būlāq in the 1820s, ‘Uthmān Nūr ad-Dīn (1797-1834),¹⁷ was posted to lead the 1831 Egyptian invasion of Haifa.¹⁸ Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) had done nearly the same thing when he assigned his printer Marc Aurel (1775-1834) as “captain of the national guard of Cairo.”¹⁹ Despite the appearance of a topsy-turvy style of management, in which a

¹⁵ Fahmy, Khaled. *Mehmed Ali: from Ottoman governor to ruler of Egypt*. UK: Oneworld Publications, 2009, pp. 59-60, 89, 99, & 113.

¹⁶ Daniel Newman found them tragic: “one of the saddest examples of this policy was Khalīl Maḥmūd, who after becoming a bookbinder was reduced to selling his services as a tourist guide to visiting Europeans” (Newman, 2011, p. 30). In this case it appears that Khalīl Maḥmūd lost his government employment altogether.

¹⁷ Raḍwān, 1953, pp. 53-57. ‘Uthmān Nūr ad-Dīn moved to Egypt from Kavala to serve in Mehmed ‘Alī’s government. He married into Mehmed ‘Alī’s family via the daughter of Mehmed ‘Alī’s uncle (Lowry, Heath W. and İsmail E. Erünsal. *Remembering one’s roots. Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt’s links to the Macedonian town of Kavala: architectural monuments, inscriptions & documents*. Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2011, p. 8).

¹⁸ Abkārīyūs, Iskandar Bak. *Al-Manāqib al-Ibrāhīmīya wa al-ma’āthir al-khidīwīya*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Wahabīya, 1881, p. 29.

¹⁹ Lacroix, André. “La Maison des têtes a Valence. L’Imprimerie et la presse Valentinoises.” *Bulletin de la Société (départementale) d’Archéologie et de Statistique de la Drome*. Valence: Imprimerie de Chenevier et Pessieux, 1881, vol. 15, pp. 81-94, p. 90.

pressman also served as the Commander of the Navy,²⁰ we should see this as both leaders' utilitarian approach to governing. Throughout Meḥmed 'Alī's rule, which spanned nearly five decades, he rearranged systems according to need.²¹ This flexibility was key to his genius, and to his survival. Although the temporal span of Meḥmed 'Alī's rule gives it a fixed quality, its duration was actually rather miraculous. Meḥmed 'Alī faced the exigencies of consolidating a ravaged Ottoman province, while asserting his right to rule Egypt within the imperial fold.²² And as he solidified his hold on Egypt, he grew to nurture colonial ambitions within an environment of increasing European meddling.²³ The multilayered complexity of these politics caused Meḥmed 'Alī to change his short-term goals substantively and frequently.²⁴ Printing was just one of these stepping-stones in his wider project of governance, not to speak of the careers of the men he had trained to print.

²⁰ Lowry, 2011, p. 8.

²¹ Refer, for example, to the description of Meḥmed 'Alī's governmental restructuring in 1837 in: Fahmy, 2009, p. 89.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

²³ See for example: Bjørkelo, Anders. *Prelude to the Mahdiyya: peasants and traders in the Shendi region, 1821-1885*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 34; and Fahmy, Khaled. *All the pasha's men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt*. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002, pp. 38-75 & 278-305.

²⁴ Refer, for example, to the closing of the state's schools and factories during the 1830s and 1840s (Fahmy, 2002, pp. 13-14); and the evolution of Meḥmed 'Alī's army and military goals in relation to the Porte (Abu-Manneh, Butrus. "Mehmed Ali Paşa and Sultan Mahmud II: the genesis of a conflict." *Turkish Historical Review*, I (2010), pp. 1-24.

Meḥmed ‘Alī’s directives exude his omnipresent approach to governance. They also shed light on his practical concern for his presses. For example, in 1824 he ordered his secretary, *katkhudā al-wālī*, Muḥammad Lāzāūghlī Bey, to commend and reward his engraver of fonts for a job well done:

I observe that the treatise *The Mine*,²⁵ which was printed at the press at Būlāq, is elegant in its script and printing. It is therefore necessary to appoint the appropriate salary to the master engraver, to maintain him at the press (*al-başamkhāna*), and to attach some students to him to experience this handicraft from him and to observe him...²⁶

The treatise that garnered Meḥmed ‘Alī’s praise pertained to military arts. To the extent that Meḥmed ‘Alī focused upon printing, he tended to subsume it within the broader agenda of defensive modernization, or instituting foreign changes for the sake of self-preservation,²⁷ that printing was expected to support. Still, he displayed an attentiveness to and command of nearly every aspect of the printing process.

Noticeably, Meḥmed ‘Alī dwelled upon the appearances of texts rather than their intellectual substance. He did not, for example, extol fair copies’ faithfulness to their original manuscripts or praise them for their accuracy. This was because he was

²⁵ Ṭamānī, Ḥusayn Rifqī. *Lughm risālasī*. Būlāq, 1825/1826.

²⁶ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 579.

²⁷ This term was first coined by the German historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler (1913-2014) in the 1980s. It describes programs of reform that are based upon a local authority’s implementation of foreign innovations to preserve itself in the face of the threat posed by foreign powers that boasted such advantages already (Wehler, Hans-Ulrich. *Deutsche gesellschaftsgeschichte*. Munich: Beck, 1987).

illiterate.²⁸ Had Meḥmed ‘Alī been literate, he surely would have had more to critique. Indeed, the very title page of one of the first books printed by his presses boasts no fewer than five Arabic spelling errors.²⁹ Aside from this, Meḥmed ‘Alī inserted himself into every other stage of print production. He determined the texts for printing, appointed the workers who would realize them, paid said workers when they succeeded, ensured that more like them received proper training, and judged the overall success of their products.

When Meḥmed ‘Alī approved of print work, he rewarded his workers with raises. He also extended societal honors to them, as exhibited in the case of Qāsim al-Kīlānī, who advanced to the rank of effendi after “preparing the molds and sorts (*ābā’ al-ḥurūf wa ummahātihā*) necessary for printing...and letters [in the] *ta’līq* [font]...”³⁰ When Meḥmed ‘Alī found cause for disappointment with the work of his pressmen, he made his opinions felt in the opposite manner. Artīn Bey (1800-1859), an Armenian born in

²⁸ Some note that Meḥmed ‘Alī was illiterate until the age of forty (See for example: Hassan, Hassan. *In the house of Muhammad Ali: a family album 1805-1952*. Cairo: AUC Press, 2010, p. 10; and Fahmy, 2009, p. 102). However, it is unclear if he ever reached competency in reading and writing as noted by a contemporary British observer: “The mere ability to sign his name, he attained to after the age of forty...” (Madden, R. R. *Egypt and Mohammed Ali. Illustrative of the condition of his slaves and subjects, &c. &c.* London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1841, 2nd Edition, p. 36).

²⁹ In order of appearance they are: the use of the letter *ḥā’*, instead of *jīm*, for the word “*al-jārī*”; the missing dots for the *tā’ marbūṭa* of the word “*al-‘āda*”; the missing *yā’* in the word “*aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ*”; the use of the letter *ḥā’*, instead of *khā’*, for the word “*mukhtaṣar*”; and the use of a second *alif* in the word “*alzam*.” Four other spelling errors arise through the use of the letter *yā’* instead of the *alif maqsūra*, and the use of the letter *yā’* instead of the hamzated *alif maqsūra*. But I suspect that these errors were intentional substitutions due to the font’s lack of cast *alif maqsūras* and hamzated *alif maqsūras* (*Dizionario*, 1822, second title page).

³⁰ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 579.

Istanbul who, along with his family, held numerous appointments during the viceroyship, suffered the prospect of such a demotion. After Meḥmed ‘Alī sent Artīn to study in Paris, he installed him as his lithographer at his “central printing press,” or “*al-baṣamkhāna al-wuṣṭā*,” at Būlāq.³¹ In compensation for his work, Artīn received a promotion whereby he would earn 800 *qirṣ* for printing, and 400 *qirṣ* for training others in lithography. But according to Meḥmed ‘Alī, Artīn shirked from his teaching duties. Meḥmed ‘Alī complained to his council, or *majlīs*, that “for a long time he has not taught the students even though it was required through his compensation...and he entered into a contract according to that...for a designated period [of time] in which there was to be benefit and hard work and the obtainment of the goal in the shortest time possible.”³² Apparently Artīn defended himself, claiming to have “carried out a service commensurate with the work of three people and to have taught the students as much as they could be taught.”³³ But Meḥmed ‘Alī condemned Artīn’s explanation as “excuses and fables.”³⁴ He commanded that either Artīn “honor his aforementioned contract...or he gets left with his old salary and a replacement will be appointed in his stead in the event that he does not accept what is stated.”³⁵

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 580.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Governmental printings for governmental use, as opposed to non-governmental use, were generated in two ways that both revolved around Meḥmed ‘Alī. Sometimes he commanded what he wanted brought to press.³⁶ More often, however, the elaborate governmental system that he established in Egypt generated these texts. One of Artīn’s sons, Ya‘qūb Artīn Pasha (1842-1919), wrote a book about the history of public instruction in Egypt that included his father’s educational experience as part of the European mission. According to Ya‘qūb Artīn, when students like his father returned to Egypt, Meḥmed ‘Alī locked them in the citadel for three months until they produced an Ottoman translation of a European text that they had studied. These translations were then printed and “...distributed for the particular use of the teachers and students of the schools for which the original works had been chosen and translated.”³⁷

Other accounts suggest another way for producing governmental texts. If the need for a printed text developed within a school, the teacher himself, who was often a European, either wrote or collated the desired book. The book then had to be translated from a European language into Ottoman or Arabic at the school of translation (*al-madrasa al-‘arīf bi-al-lisānayn*).³⁸ If the text was a technical one, the teacher had to collaborate with the translators over its terminology. The finished translation would then be corrected against the original text, and finally “presented to the department [of education] (*ad-dīwān*), and then his Excellency the Bey [*i.e.*, the head of the department]

³⁶ Abu Lughod, 2011, p. 62; and Fahmy, 2009, p. 102.

³⁷ Artin Pasha, 1890, p. 73.

³⁸ Harāwī, Muḥammad, preface to Perron, 1838, p. 4.

commanded the decision to print from it one thousand books (*asfār*).”³⁹ Mehmed ‘Alī’s governmental system also generated the state’s printings for non-governmental use. This process worked on a commissioning system akin to that for producing manuscripts.⁴⁰ It occurred specifically at one governmental press, as will be discussed in greater detail below. Again in this case, the terms for printing were set by Mehmed ‘Alī’s administration.

Mehmed ‘Alī implemented printing in service to his wider goals. Accordingly, much of our knowledge about his presses is either happenstance or anecdotal. Governmental references to his presses appear in various places; they are not arranged neatly under a common banner. The 1820 fire at the citadel in Cairo, which destroyed most of Mehmed ‘Alī’s records until that point, could explain this lacunae.⁴¹ But it is more likely that the government did not keep a dossier around the topic of printing.

³⁹ *Ibid.* A British observer described the process for printing texts for the medical school similarly: “At the head of each department of the medical science is an European professor, who draws up his daily lesson in French, which is then translated into Arabic by able interpreters, who, from their long employment in the hospital, are themselves tolerably well acquainted with the science. The translations, when completed, are submitted to three learned Sheikhs, who correct grammatical errors, and clothe them with the beauties of the Arabic language; after which they are printed, and delivered to the students” (St. John, James Augustus. *Egypt, and Mohammed Ali; or, travels in the valley of the Nile*. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, Paternoster-row, 1834, vol. 2, p. 402).

⁴⁰ For the process of commissioning manuscripts, refer to chapter three.

⁴¹ Di-Capua, Yoav. *Gatekeepers of the Arab past: historians and history writing in twentieth-century Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, p. 95.

Indeed, the viceroynal family does not appear to have designated files for printing until the 1920s.⁴²

Meḥmed ‘Alī installed his presses in four types of places: some of his new polytechnic schools; his seats of government at Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn citadel in Cairo and Rā’s at-Tīn Palace in Alexandria; two of his administrative departments; and in a building set up amongst the governmental factories of Būlāq. Each of these four categories of presses served a different function, but they all printed for reasons beyond printing for printing’s sake.

i. Printing at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s Schools.

Over the course of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s rule, at least twenty-five state schools were established in Cairo.⁴³ These schools were not replicas of traditional centers for learning. Instead, they were novel institutions to Egypt that differed from one to the next. For example, Meḥmed ‘Alī founded schools of agriculture, infantry, languages and translation, military arts, metallurgy, artillery, cavalry, pharmacy, veterinary studies, administrative studies, medicine, naval studies, music, industrial chemistry, mines, and maternity.⁴⁴ Many of these schools closed during Meḥmed ‘Alī’s lifetime, for reasons

⁴² Rivlin, Helen Anne B. *The Dār al-Wathā’iq in ‘Ābdīn Palace at Cairo as a source for the study of the modernization of Egypt in the nineteenth century*. Leiden, Brill, 1970, pp. 68 & 110.

⁴³ Artin Pacha, 1890, pp. 78-79 & 196-198.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

varying from inadequate funding, staffing, and attendance.⁴⁵ But the impetus behind them remained consistent: Meḥmed ‘Alī founded schools in European subjects to fortify his army.⁴⁶

The prologues to the schools’ textbooks provide explanations for the state’s projects. These books embody Meḥmed ‘Alī’s educational system, and their producers composed their prefaces as though they expected Meḥmed ‘Alī to have them read aloud to him. They therefore represent a valuable source for the official perspective on the state reforms under Meḥmed ‘Alī. For example, the preface to a chemistry book states:

It was necessary for understanding to attain [lost learning], even if from non-Muslims...and so when this knowledge was lost in the lands of Egypt...and the people of Europe were enjoying the great benefits [of it] and derived wonderful advantages...it was desired to bring [this knowledge] to the lands of Egypt, and for its teacher to revive its mention in college, after its extinction...and [Meḥmed ‘Alī] is the one whose state (*bi-dawlatihi*) has made Egypt come to be (*qad adḥat*), to make it a glory to the countries and nations...⁴⁷

Introductory remarks like these were often repetitive in nature, and purveyed in poetry and rhymed prose, or *saj’*. The quote above argued that Meḥmed ‘Alī perceived Egypt at an intellectual loss in comparison to Europe, but that this deficit had not always existed. It indicated the undesirability of relying upon non-Muslims for reform, but noted that

⁴⁵ Fahmy, 2009, pp. 89 & 106-107.

⁴⁶ Hunter, F. Robert. *Egypt under the Khedives, 1805-1879. From household government to modern bureaucracy*. Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press: 1999, p. 17; and Fahmy, 2002, pp. 11-13.

⁴⁷ Tunisī, Muḥammad bin ‘Umr bin Sulaīmān. “Al-Juz’ al-awwal.” *Al-Jawāhir as-sunnīya fī al-a‘māl al-kīmāwīya*, by A. Perron. N.p., s.n., 1842, vol. 1, unnumbered pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

Egypt needed them nonetheless to regain the knowledge that the province had lost. To “revive the mention” of this lost learning, it added that Meḥmed ‘Alī brought foreign teachers to Egypt and established colleges around them. It suggested that Meḥmed ‘Alī did this to place Egypt above, if not on par with, the world’s other powers. The implication was that Meḥmed ‘Alī wanted to make Egypt capable of competing with the European vanguard. Within the context of the Ottoman Empire, this meant not only ensuring the future of Egypt’s role as the preeminent Ottoman province, but also, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s role as Egypt’s governor against challenges from the imperial center.

Meḥmed ‘Alī’s schools were not only novel because they taught European subjects in Egypt. They also taught these subjects in a distinctively European way.⁴⁸ Students now learned from European teachers, who required translators by their side.⁴⁹ They worked from identical printed exercise books filled with uniform drills once the enormous undertaking of writing, translating, printing, and correcting these texts was achieved.⁵⁰ And judging from marginalia in textbooks from this period, Egyptian students may have begun working in pencil.⁵¹

⁴⁸ For more on this topic, and the introduction of European modes of discipline into Egyptian state systems, refer to: Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 34-94.

⁴⁹ Heyworth-Dunne, J. “Printing and translation under Muḥammad ‘Alī of Egypt. The Foundation of modern Arabic.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 3 (Jul., 1940), pp. 325-349, p. 340.

⁵⁰ At-Tunisī, “Al-Juz’ al-awwal” in Perron, 1842, unnumbered pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

⁵¹ Refer, for example, to the following copies of: Baqlī, Muḥammad ‘Alī. *Kitāb Ghurar an-najāh fī a’-māl al-jirāh*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at Būlāq, 1847, volume 2. HOLLIS number: 002063631, Widener Library, Harvard University; Lacroix, Silvestre François.

Of all the schools that Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state founded in and around Cairo, only three were equipped with presses. These were the schools of medicine, artillery, and engineering.⁵² That only three schools were outfitted with presses suggests three points. Firstly, printing was not an insignificant undertaking. It was expensive to acquire typographic and lithographic presses from Europe,⁵³ and challenging to train staff to run them and to produce texts. Secondly, medicine, artillery, and engineering were special in comparison to the other schools. This was likely because these subjects held particular importance for Meḥmed ‘Alī’s military overhaul, and because they required exacting texts, charts, and diagrams that benefited from reproduction via printing instead of hand copying. It should also be kept in mind that these three subjects were the preserve of European technocrats in Egypt.⁵⁴ Expert foreigners in Meḥmed ‘Alī’s employ demanded new equipment and protocol to enable their work, including presses.⁵⁵ Perhaps the state

Hadhā Kitāb tahdhib al-‘ibārāt fī fann akhdh al-masāhāt. Būlāq: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā‘a al-‘Āmira, 1844. HOLLIS number: 002783373, Widener Library, Harvard University; and Rinū. *Kašf an-niqāb ‘an ‘ilm al-ḥisāb.* Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at Būlāq, 1853. HOLLIS number: 002063615, Widener Library, Harvard University.

⁵² Raḍwān, 1953, p. 70.

⁵³ For the cost of typographic presses acquired by the state from France in the late 1820s, refer to: *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁵⁴ Refer, for example, to Antoine-Barthélemy Clot’s (1793-1868) thirty year service to Meḥmed ‘Alī as the director of his program for medicine and health (Fahmy, Khaled. “Women, medicine, and power in nineteenth-century Egypt.” *Remaking women. Feminism and modernity in the Middle East*, edited by Lila Abu-Lughod. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 35-72).

⁵⁵ Refer, for example, to the personal role of the head of the artillery school, Don Antonio de Seguera, in facilitating the purchase of his school’s printing equipment (Hsu, Cheng-

heeded the calls of technocrats in these three forums because of the importance that their work played to the preservation and function of the military. Finally, the schools that boasted presses used them as appendages to their educational missions, instead of as fixtures. Printing was not functionally or intellectually integral to any one of these schools. For almost every subject in which Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government trained students in Europe, a corresponding specialty school was established in Egypt.⁵⁶ Yet noticeably, printing did not garner such exclusive scholastic attention or focus. Printing was blended into the state’s wider scholastic agenda. It did not receive an educational base of its own in the form of a school for printing.

ii. Printing at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s Residencies.

Like the school presses, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s presses at Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn citadel and Rā’s at-Tīn palace served auxiliary roles. They supported Meḥmed ‘Alī’s administrative agenda at the operative and symbolic seats of his government.

At the citadel, Meḥmed ‘Alī met with foreign dignitaries, constructed his family mosque, preserved Egypt’s records,⁵⁷ and punched coins from the mint.⁵⁸ Accordingly,

Hsiang. “The First thirty years of Arabic printing in Egypt, 1238-1267 (1822-1851): a bibliographical study with a checklist by title of Arabic printed works.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1985, vol. 1, p. 49).

⁵⁶ Artin Pacha, 1890, pp. 72.

⁵⁷ Deny, Jean. *Sommaire des archives Turques du Caire*. Cairo: Impr. de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire, pour la Société Royale de Géographie d’Égypte, 1930.

⁵⁸ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 584.

the citadel press produced governmental texts like Meḥmed ‘Alī’s gazette, *al-Waqā’i‘ al-Miṣrīya*, or *Egyptian events*,⁵⁹ and administrative notebooks and paperwork for Meḥmed ‘Alī’s Khedivial Divan, *ad-Dīwān al-Khidīwī*. A European traveler described this press in 1831: “In one room of the citadel of Cairo, there are superb European presses, skilled compositors; in another room, master printers (*des protes*), copyists; in a third, the authors of articles, the translators of European articles which they introduce to Cairo; heaps of journals, bundles of papers; stores of ink; in the end, all of the complicated paraphernalia of our big and beautiful presses of Paris.”⁶⁰

The press at Rā’s at-Tīn, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s preferred residence, produced books that he wanted printed for his personal entertainment.⁶¹ It also printed the government’s official paper in French, *Le Moniteur Egyptien*, from 1833.⁶² Finally, it likely printed the governmental fliers that circulated around Alexandria from the 1830s onwards.⁶³ An example of these printings is an 1837 notification about speculating in grain, which was

⁵⁹ Poole, Sophia Lane. *The Englishwoman in Egypt: letters from Cairo, written during a residence there in 1842, 3, & 4*. London: Charles Knight and Co., 1844. Vol. I, pp. 229-331.

⁶⁰ *La Contemporaine en Égypte pour faire suite aux souvenirs d’une femme sur les principaux personnages de la République, du Consulat, de l’Empire, et de la Restauration*. Paris: Chez Ladvocat, 1831, vol. iv, pp. 293-294.

⁶¹ Hsu, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 44-45.

⁶² Šayyāl, 1951, p. 201.

⁶³ Neroutsos, Tassos Dēmētrios. *Aperçu historique de l’organisation de l’intendance générale sanitaire d’Égypte séant à Alexandrie: depuis sa fondation en 1831, sous le règne du grand vice-roi Méhémet-Aly, jusqu’à la fin du règne du khédivé Ismail en 1879*. Alexandrie: F. A. Mourès, 1880, p. 36.

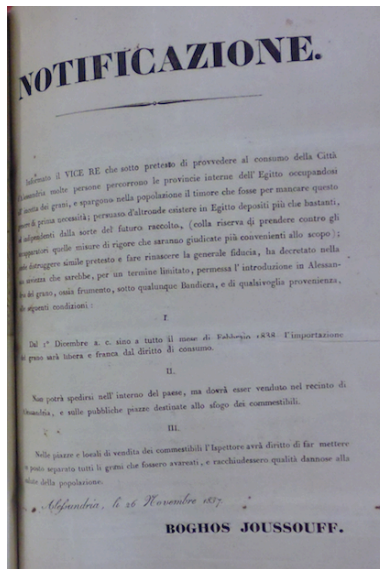


Image 4.1. *Governmental notice printed in Italian at Alexandria, 26 November 1837.*⁶⁴

promulgated in Italian. It appeared on behalf of Meḥmed ‘Alī in the name of his trusted secretary, Boghos Bey (1775-1844). Rumors about grain costs and shortages circulated amongst the European community of Alexandria in privately printed newspapers, and had prompted governmental intervention.⁶⁵ Hence the state’s distribution of printed circulars in Italian indicates that it combatted hearsay in a fashion that mirrored the news’ spread.

Meḥmed ‘Alī’s residential presses served the state’s immediate official needs, and his own unofficial needs.

iii. Printing at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s Administrative Departments.

⁶⁴ FO 78/323, The National Archives, Kew, UK, p. 82.

⁶⁵ Most notably in *L’Echo des pyramides* in 1827 (Sadgrove, Philip. “The Development of the Arabic periodical press and its role in the literary life of Egypt (1798-1882).” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1983, p. 50).

Presses were also established at two of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s administrative departments, or *dawāwīn*. His Department of Military Affairs, *Dīwān al-Jihādīya*, had a press from as early as 1832 and as late as 1835/1836.⁶⁶ And his Department of Education and Public Works, or *Dīwān al-Madāris*, had a press sometime beginning from 1837-1840 until 1854.⁶⁷ Indeed, this latter department was nominally put in charge of managing Meḥmed ‘Alī’s presses,⁶⁸ although Meḥmed ‘Alī appears to have maintained practical control over them. These two administrative presses printed governmental paperwork and books.⁶⁹ I could not ascertain where Meḥmed ‘Alī located the *Dīwān al-Jihādīya* press, however, he placed the *Dīwān al-Madāris* in al-Azbakīya.⁷⁰

Numerous administrative departments, or *majālis* and *dawāwīn*, came and went during the 1820s-1840s, for Meḥmed ‘Alī reorganized his government several times over the course of his rule.⁷¹ But as with Meḥmed ‘Alī’s schools, only select departments were outfitted with presses. It is therefore telling that the military and education departments hosted presses. For this underscores the state’s prioritization of the army

⁶⁶ Hsu, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 53-54.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 56 & 55.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁶⁹ Šayyāl, 1951, p. 201.

⁷⁰ Hsu, vol. 1, p. 56.

⁷¹ Marsot, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid. *Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 104-109.

and the schools established to train conscripts. Moreover, it suggests that these two departments would be better served by printing than other departments.

iv. Printing at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s Press at Būlāq.

1. A Historiographical Note.

Every scholar of modern Egypt knows ‘The Būlāq Press.’ Indeed, many of their sources from the nineteenth century were created there. But until the end of the nineteenth century, there was really no such thing as the monolithic Būlāq Press. Rather, there was the press at Būlāq that functioned under tens of names,⁷² judging from references to it in its printed productions. While one of those names was indeed “the Būlāq Press,”⁷³ this term occurred in the printings rarely. The press featured more reliably under a number of constructions that contained “*bi-Būlāq*,” or “at Būlāq” at their end. Contemporary Egyptian sources used “the press at Būlāq” as a modifier to distinguish it from the state’s other presses in a matter of fact way. For example, Meḥmed ‘Alī referenced the press at Būlāq when he assigned an employee there,⁷⁴ or

⁷² For a breakdown of the names assigned to the press between 1820 and 1883, refer to: İhsanoğlu, Ekmeleddin. *The Turks in Egypt and their cultural legacy*, translated by Humphrey Davies. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012, pp. 325-326. And for a list of the names assigned the press between 1880 and the mid-twentieth century, refer to: Raḍwān, 1953, p. 115.

⁷³ See for example: Kara Çelebizade, Abdūlaziz. *Sūleyman-name*. Būlāq: Matbaa-i Bulak, 1832, p. 230.

⁷⁴ See for example: Raḍwān, 1953, p. 115.

commanded the manufacture of particular fonts there.⁷⁵ He used Būlāq as a means of specificity for, rather than generalization about, governmental printing.

Although this semantic distinction may seem fine, it is an important one because Būlāq has garnered the lion's share of attention paid to Egyptian printing by western and Egyptian scholars. 'The Būlāq Press' has long been a symbol for the *Nahḍa*, or the cultural renaissance ascribed to nineteenth century Egypt.⁷⁶ And today, for example, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina's Būlāq Press Museum marks the only printing museum in all of Egypt.⁷⁷ This narrowed interest in Būlāq first began through the writings of European visitors to the press⁷⁸ and orientalists who listed the works printed there.⁷⁹ In the Arabic historiographical tradition, Būlāq's preeminence above the other presses began with Abū al-Futūḥ Raḍwān's incomparable book published in 1953, *The History of the Būlāq Press*

⁷⁵ See for example: Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 578.

⁷⁶ Albin, 1988, p. 339.

⁷⁷ Refer to: <http://www.bibalex.org/bulaqpress/ar/Bulaq.htm>; and Mansour, Ahmed. "The Bulaq Press Museum in Bibliotheca Alexandrina." *Historical aspects of printing and publishing in languages of the Middle East: papers from the third symposium on the history of printing and publishing in the languages and countries of the Middle East, University of Leipzig, September 2008*, edited by Geoffrey Roper. Boston: Brill, 2014, pp. 287-315.

⁷⁸ See for example: Brocchi, 1841, pp. 172-173.

⁷⁹ See for example: Reinaud, M. "Notice des ouvrages Arabes, Persans, Turcs et Français, imprimés en Egypte." *Journal Asiatique*, Série 2, Tome VIII, 1831, pp. 333-344. For more on the European effort to collate books published at Būlāq from afar, refer to: Verdery, 1971, pp. 129-132.

and its significance in the history of printing in the countries of the Middle East.

Thereafter, the English and Arabic traditions drew from Raḍwān's work.⁸⁰

Raḍwān cautioned readers against conflating Būlāq with an intellectual renaissance that Meḥmed 'Alī preconceived.⁸¹ But he argued that the Būlāq Press catalyzed an intellectual renaissance, even if Meḥmed 'Alī had not intended for this outcome. He wrote: "The importance of this history [of the Būlāq Press] follows clearly from [the fact] that the Būlāq Press – without any exaggeration or hyperbole – is the basis of the intellectual revival (*al-ba'th al-fikrī*) which was undertaken by Egypt's renaissance (*nahḍa*) during the modern era. The Būlāq Press assumed the greatest share of this task..."⁸² Although Raḍwān distinguished between the purpose behind the press's foundation and its impact later on, he did not question Būlāq's monopolization of this final assessment to the exclusion of the government's other presses.

The historiographical obsession with Būlāq is not unjustifiable. The press at Būlāq was the only place devoted to the production of print exclusively. Furthermore, its governmental offshoot survives today, albeit under a different name and location.⁸³ Finally, the press at Būlāq produced the majority of our extant texts, attracted the most contemporary descriptions from Europeans, and by virtue of its long-lasting operation,

⁸⁰ See for example: Abu Lughod, 1963, p. 179; Albin, 1988, p. 339; and 'Azab, 2008, p. 363.

⁸¹ Raḍwān, 1953, pp. 34-35; and Albin, 1988, p. 339.

⁸² Raḍwān, 1953, p. v.

⁸³ 'Azab, 2008, p. 10; and Mansour, 2014, pp. 290 & 296.

received the most focus in official records. The press at Būlāq will therefore continue to dominate any discussion of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s printing. But I believe that analyses of Būlāq should give way to the understanding that for the first half of the nineteenth century, the government treated the press at Būlāq as one of many. To uphold this point, I refer to the press as ‘the press at Būlāq.’

2. *Resituating the Press at Būlāq within Time.*

a. *The Gist of the Press at Būlāq.*

The press at Būlāq served Meḥmed ‘Alī’s wider goals, just as the scholastic, residential, and ministry presses did. But while Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government tacked these latter presses on to compounds with broader agendas, it established the press at Būlāq for the exclusive purpose of printing. The press was conceived of as a printing factory judging from its location.

The press at Būlāq was founded sometime in or around 1820.⁸⁴ At the time, Būlāq was considered an outskirts of Cairo as it lies three miles northwest of the heart of the city. Despite not having been esteemed as part of Cairo proper, Būlāq supported Cairo in crucial ways from the early Ottoman period onward. Būlāq served as Cairo’s main port for Mediterranean trade due to its position alongside the Nile during the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries,⁸⁵ and it was used as the main site for state manufactories

⁸⁴ Raḍwān attempted to establish the date of the press’s origins from its first conception, to its original building site, to its first publication (Raḍwān, 1953, pp. 44-45).

⁸⁵ Refer to: Hanna, Nelly. *An urban history of Būlāq in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods*. Le Caire: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1983.

under Meḥmed ‘Alī’s rule from the start of the nineteenth century. Today, Būlāq is the place to go when you need particular mechanical parts and the determination of expert machinists who can and will fix anything.

Despite the changes in Būlāq’s applications, its orientation has always been a functional one. When I went searching for the old printing site in August of 2012, some local mechanics told me that the government had razed it in the 1990s to construct the World Trade Center office building, or *Markaz at-Tijārī al-‘Ālamī*, with views of the river. They pointed to the gentrified high-rise along the waterline that now stands in stark contrast to the well-worn workshops it neighbors. When I expressed disbelief over the government’s destruction of the historic press at Būlāq, the mechanics could hardly believe my nostalgia for the past. One said that it had not been used for ages, and that the tall new building was nice. Another added that I could easily find printed books all over Cairo anyhow. To my surprise, I left this exchange heartened: the pragmatic ethos of Būlāq continues to prevail over the ever-changing operations that it has hosted. And Meḥmed ‘Alī’s factories formed one such link in the utilitarianism that Cairenes have long applied to Būlāq.

The press at Būlāq was established on the site of an old shipyard, alongside an arsenal, a foundry, a broadcloth factory, and an engineering workshop.⁸⁶ It was poised for work rather than for show. In the 1820s, an Italian visitor noted that it was “situated in a very comfortable and wide place” with a “very spacious ground room.”⁸⁷ One half-

⁸⁶ Raḍwān, 1953, pp. 73-74.

⁸⁷ Brocchi, 1841, pp. 173-174.

century later, the Baedeker guide underscored the functionality of the “government printing office” and some of the remaining factories by warning that “none of which establishments will interest ordinary travellers.”⁸⁸ The state employed an estimated thirty workers at the press at Būlāq, including a superintendent, an overseer, typesetters, pressmen, correctors, binders, paper carriers, a guard, and a water boy.⁸⁹ These men produced textbooks for the government’s schools, both those that lacked their own presses and those that had presses, and some of the laws that Meḥmed ‘Alī set for his territories. They also produced governmental papers there, like official letterheads for *hujja*, or deeds, from at least as early as 1845.⁹⁰ Scribes still determined the content of these *hujjas*. But these documents mark governmental printing’s entrance into what was once the exclusive domain of scribes, creating hybrid forms of officialdom that lasted throughout the nineteenth century. Contemporaries noted this shift in textual protocol,⁹¹ but it has received little attention from scholars.⁹² The *hujjas*’ reliance upon handwriting

⁸⁸ Baedeker, Karl (Ed.). *Egypt. Handbook for travellers, part first: Lower Egypt, with the Fayum and the Peninsula of Sinai*. London: Dulau and Co., 1878, p. 292.

⁸⁹ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 61.

⁹⁰ The *hujja* do not list their place of printing, however, their typefaces match those used by the press at Būlāq. For example, compare the ornamental typefaces from Image 4.2 to those used in: Ibn Khaldūn, Abd ar-Raḥmān. *Kitāb al-‘ibar wa dīwān al-mubtada’ wa al-khabar fī ayyām al-‘Arab wa al-‘ajam wa al-barbar wa man ‘āṣarahīm min dhawī as-sultān al-akbar*. Būlāq: s.n., 1857, vol. 1, p. 9.

⁹¹ For example, the British orientalist Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890) wrote: “...we all rode on away to the citadel, and waited in a mosque till the office hour struck. When the doors were opened we went into the “Divan,” and sat patiently...The officials were two in number...the other was a stout young clerk...My name and other essentials were required, and no objections were offered...The clerk filled up a printed paper in the Turkish language, apparently borrowed from the European method for spoiling the

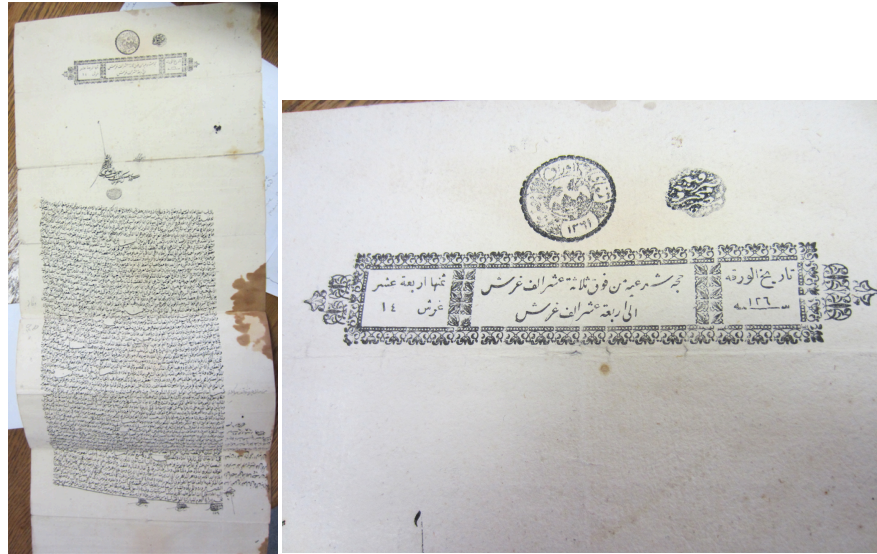


Image 4.2. A governmental *hujja* printed in 1845 and drawn up by a scribe in 1861 to document a business agreement, beside the detail of its printed letterhead.⁹³

demonstrates that governmental printing during Mehmed ‘Alī’s rule did not displace traditional forms of manuscript production.

The press at Būlāq’s location along the Nile acknowledged the functionality required of printing. Būlāq provided the press with the space that it needed to operate. It

traveller; certified me, ...described my person, and, in exchanged for five piastres, handed me the document” (Burton, Richard F. *Personal narrative of a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina*. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1874, vol. 1, pp. 123-124).

⁹² There are some exceptions to this. One historian noted that the governmental census of 1868 recorded thirty-five members of the guild of petition writers, of whom “all wrote on stamped government paper, at three piasters per sheet” (Chalcraft, John. “Engaging the state: peasants and petitions in Egypt on the eve of colonial rule.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), pp. 303-325, pp. 306-307). Another observed of handwritten contracts that their “‘heading’ is stamped on the paper and indicates that such paper could be bought for the purpose of setting up contracts” (Bjørkelo, 1989, p. 168).

⁹³ *Hujja*, 1861. Collection of Cairene *hujja* from the nineteenth century, Dr. Mohammed B. Alwan, Belmont, Massachusetts.

also imparted an industrial tinge to the press, one that helps to illuminate Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state’s assessment of printing. The government did not, for example, opt to make a symbol out of the press by situating it in a more upscale or conspicuous part of Cairo. It instead enabled the press to import European paper and printers’ ink from Livorno with ease by locating it on the banks of Būlāq,⁹⁴ until such ink began to be produced in Cairo from at least 1822.

In theory, the press could have been used to export its finished printings on the Nile. However, in practice, it appears that the acquisition of European paper motivated the decision behind the press’s location more than the opportunity for exporting finished printings. Few records suggest that printings were dispatched up the Nile or down to the Mediterranean.⁹⁵ And from what I have seen, the press printed on European paper exclusively during this period. The state attempted to establish a papermaking factory, or *kāghidkhāna*, in central Cairo,⁹⁶ but this endeavor ultimately failed. The ill-fated factory was located in al-Ḥusaynīa, near the al-Ḥusayn mosque that catered to Cairo’s

⁹⁴ Brocchi, 1841, pp. 172-173.

⁹⁵ A notable exception to this is a reference to the shifting winds in the market for books between Cairo and Istanbul in the late 1830s and early 1840s with the “establishment of three presses in Constantinople” (Perron, Nicholas. “Lettre sur les écoles et l’imprimerie du pacha d’Égypte.” *Journal Asiatique, ou recueil de mémoires, d’extraits et de notices relatifs à l’histoire, à la philosophie, aux langues et à la littérature des peuples orientaux*. Paris: À L’Imprimerie Royale, Quatrième série, Tome II, July-August, 1843, pp. 5-23, pp. 22-23). This suggests that books printed at the press at Būlāq were exported to Istanbul.

⁹⁶ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 584; and Nuṣayr, ‘Āyida Ibrāhīm. *Ḥarakat naṣr al-kutub fī Miṣr fī al-qarn at-tāsi ‘aṣar*. Al-Qāhira: al-Hay’a al-Miṣrīya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, 1990, pp. 373-375.

manuscript industry.⁹⁷ This landlocked choice of locale either reflected a grave oversight in the government's plans for the paper factory, or the government's intention for domestically paper produced to service the city's manuscript industry.

Returning to Būlāq, Meḥmed 'Alī used the press's location for its human capital and manmade conveniences, too. The government ordered five separate fonts from Milan: two different sized fonts in the Latin script, both with uppercase, lowercase, and italic characters; and three different sized fonts in Arabic *naskhī*, the common calligraphic style for writing, all without accents.⁹⁸ But the appearance of the Arabic fonts displeased Meḥmed 'Alī. So he endeavoured to have new fonts cast in Cairo, in the even more ambitious calligraphic styles of *daqīq* and *ta'īq*.⁹⁹

Meḥmed 'Alī called upon the skilled workers whom he employed at Būlāq to accomplish this task. In one command, he ordered European artillerymen from the foundry to try their hand.¹⁰⁰ In another, he informed his secretary Muḥammad Lāzāūghlī Bey that there was “a person present in Cairo with knowledge and awareness of several languages, and with good handwriting.”¹⁰¹ Meḥmed 'Alī demanded that Muḥammad Lāzāūghlī find this man, install him to teach Farsi and calligraphy at the polytechnic at

⁹⁷ Refer to chapter three.

⁹⁸ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 88.

⁹⁹ Ṣābāt, Khalīl. *Tārīkh at-ṭibā'a fī aš-Šarq al-'Arabī*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1958, pp. 145-148.

¹⁰⁰ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 96.

¹⁰¹ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 578.

Būlāq, and added in a postscript that: “it is also necessary to appoint the aforementioned [man] to work on a set-up for the production of printing letters [*i.e.*, typographic sorts] for the books determined for print at Būlāq, and that the lines of the books be in his script.”¹⁰² This man turned out to be the calligrapher-poet, Mīrzā Sinkalākh al-Khurāsānī (d. 1877), who engraved tombstones for Meḥmed ‘Alī’s family members in Cairo.¹⁰³ Not much is known about Sinkalākh, although he did accomplish his task of creating typefaces for the press at Būlāq. His work can be admired in printings from the press.¹⁰⁴ Printing also helped to preserve a twenty-one page Ottoman translation of a poem that Sinkalākh wrote in praise of Izmir, *Tercüme-i Kaside-i Senklâh der medh-i İzmir*, which a certain ‘Amīn Effendi al-Izmīrī commissioned for publication at the press in 1845, presumably on account of his devotion to his native city.¹⁰⁵

Meḥmed ‘Alī’s desire to use Sinkalākh’s handwriting for typefaces demonstrates that governmental printing did not depend upon European-trained technocrats exclusively. It drew from Cairo’s manuscript culture too. This reliance extended to the

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Geiss, Albert M. “Histoire de l’imprimerie en Égypte: II: introduction definitive.” *Bulletin de l’Institut Égyptien*, sér. 5, 2, (1908), pp. 195-220, p. 207.

¹⁰⁴ See for example: Ṭamānī, 1825/1826; as referenced in: Şābāt, 1958, p. 145.

¹⁰⁵ Senklâh-i Horasanî. *Tercüme-i Kaside-i Senklâh der medh-i İzmir*. Būlāq: Maṭba‘a Mişr al-Maḥrūsa al-Kā’ina bi-Būlāq, 1845.

procedure that Cairene subjects used to commission printings from the press at Būlāq, like Sinkalākh's poem which Amīn Effendi al-Izmīrī paid to print in 403 copies.¹⁰⁶

b. The Manuscript Dimension of Private Printing at the Press at Būlāq.

From 1839,¹⁰⁷ and likely even before,¹⁰⁸ Meḥmed 'Alī's government allowed members of the wider Cairene community to pay to publish books at the press at Būlāq. Wealthy investors endeavored to print these books to profit from their sale. The investors could be European in theory,¹⁰⁹ however in practice they were Ottoman Cairenes. This latter group included dignitaries like the former *qāḍī*, or chief judge, of Cairo, and major figures in the manuscript industry like the guild master of the stationers and petition

¹⁰⁶ Untitled catalog of books printed at the press at Būlāq. No date, approx. 1845. 14598 f 9, British Library, UK, pp. 2-12, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Raḍwān reported that the process definitely existed from 1839 onwards, although he speculated that it began after 1831 (Raḍwān, 1953, pp. 110-111).

¹⁰⁸ Since the government claimed to have printed a commissioned edition of *Kitāb alf layla wa layla* before 1845, and the book first appeared in 1835, I believe that the *multazim* arrangement began sometime in the mid 1830s (14598 f 9, British Library, p. 9). The 1835 edition of *Kitāb alf layla wa layla* does not explicitly state that it was commissioned. But its colophon mentions an 'Abdulraḥman aṣ-Ṣafatī aṣ-Ṣarqāwī, who saw to the text's printing (d. 1848) (*Kitāb alf layla wa layla*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a al-Kubrā bi-Būlāq, 1835, vol. 2, p. 620 (misprinted as p. 120)).

¹⁰⁹ Refer to Nicholas Perron's longstanding, and ultimately failed, attempts to print titles from the Arabic canon at Būlāq (Perron, Nicholas and Yacoub Artin Pacha (Ed.). *Lettres du Dr. Perron du Caire et d'Alexandrie à M. Jules Mohl, à Paris, 1838-1854*. Le Caire: F. Diemer, 1911, pp. 59, 89-92, 93-95, and 99).

writers of Cairo.¹¹⁰ Their names appear in the colophons of the texts they commissioned, frequently after the term “*multazim*,” meaning “contractor,” or the phrase “*alā dhimma*,” meaning “at the expense of.”

The process for commissioning a printing worked almost identically to that for hiring a copyist.¹¹¹ The commissioner submitted the book that they desired to print to the minister of public instruction.¹¹² They chose the format for their desired text, and determined the number of lines per page.¹¹³ The press then printed a sample page to test the justification of the text and the type of paper to be used.¹¹⁴ From there, an estimate was made of the number of pages that would comprise the completed printing, and how much the job would cost the *multazim*.¹¹⁵ Typically, the *multazim* would set a deadline for the job.¹¹⁶ But the press could violate these deadlines, as it prioritized governmental

¹¹⁰ Mention of the judge and the guild master comes from an *al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīya* announcement from 1847. Raḍwān quoted this announcement, and listed the guild master of the stationers and petition writers, *ṣaiḥ aṣ-ṣaḥāfīyīn wa al-'arḍhālīya*, as one man: Kāmil Effendi al-Adirḥawī (Raḍwān, 1953, p. 110). It is therefore possible that these guilds merged during the mid-nineteenth century.

¹¹¹ Refer to chapter three.

¹¹² Perron, 1843, p. 16.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.17.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

printings, and the *multazim* bore the financial costs of the delays.¹¹⁷ The *multazim* also paid for the costs of the materials used, and the salaries of everyone involved in the printing.¹¹⁸ Once these sums were calculated, a percentage of the total, ranging from ten to fifty percent, was taken off the top and paid to the government.¹¹⁹ When Nicholas Perron (1798-1876), a French instructor of medicine in Cairo, described this process in 1842, he suggested by way of example that a text could take three months to print and ultimately cost the *multazim* the very pricey sum of 18,000 *qirš*, of which 6,000 *qirš* went to the government's coffers.¹²⁰

The approach for commissioning a printed text derived from local manuscript tradition. But despite the similar process for commissioning Cairene manuscripts and printings, manuscripts had three major advantages. Firstly, hiring a copyist gave one recourse to an agreement drawn up in advance of the job, and ultimately, to the government if the arrangement soured. *Multazimūn* could not rely on the impartiality of the government in the event of a disagreement. Secondly, the manuscript hirer could ascertain the duration and the cost of the job upfront. By contrast, the press at Būlāq served Meḥmed 'Alī's state first and only established its fees after the job was through. Finally, the cost for commissioning a text copied by hand was drastically cheaper than commissioning its printing. If we recall Edward Lane's (1801-1876) estimate from the

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17; and Raḍwān, 1953, p. 124.

¹²⁰ Perron, 1843, p. 17.

mid-1830s, a mere three *qirš* could command "...a *karras* [quire] of twenty pages, quarto size, with about twenty-five lines to a page, in an ordinary hand...but more if in an elegant hand, and about double the sum if with the vowel points, etc."¹²¹ Even if the *multazim* paid double, they could not get vowel points on their printings, for the state had no sorts for these. The traveller and Egyptologist John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875) listed the average price per "*karras* or quire [at] five piastres [*i.e.*, *qirš*]" in a guide that was published in 1843.¹²² The cost of commissioning a text in manuscript remained cheaper than commissioning its printing despite this increase in price.

Still, printing had its advantages too. While a copyist could only make one copy at a time, a press could make several copies much faster. Many *multazimūn* appreciated this advantage. According to a governmental pamphlet published sometime around 1845, the largest print run for a commissioned text ran to 1,954 copies of the *Ma 'rifatnāmah*.¹²³ At that time, the press at Būlāq had printed a total of seventy-eight commissioned texts,¹²⁴ with seventeen more commissioned printings on the way.¹²⁵ Together, these

¹²¹ Lane, Edward William. *An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians: written in Egypt during the years 1833-1835*. London: East-West Publications, 1978, pp. 210-211.

¹²² Wilkinson, John Gardner. *Modern Egypt and Thebes: being a description of Egypt; including the information required for travellers in that country*. London: John Murray, 1843, vol. 1, p. 473.

¹²³ 14598 f 9, British Library, p. 9.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

commissioned print runs accounted for 66,108 copies and an average print run of 695.9 copies per commissioned text. If we take Lane's price quote of three *qirš* per twenty pages, and venture that the average book ran the length of two hundred pages, we can estimate that 696 manuscript copies would have cost 20,880 *qirš*. If we applied the same assumptions to Wilkinson's quote of five *qirš*, the cost would have reached 34,800 *qirš*. These prices make Perron's estimate of 18,000 *qirš* for a commissioned print run look like a good deal, if we suppose that he too was referring to a text of average length and print run. Still, commissioning 696 impressions of a book was only a good deal if one was extraordinarily wealthy, and had use for all the copies.

At the other end of the spectrum, it appears that some Cairenes paid dearly for commissions out of the novelty of having them printed. The smallest commissioned print run produced a mere forty-one copies of *Dīwān Wahbī*.¹²⁶ Although this surely cost less than 18,000 *qirš* to achieve, *Dīwān Wahbī*'s commissioner paid a huge upfront fee for the labor involved in typesetting a text that only produced a few dozen impressions.

It is unclear why Mehmed 'Alī's government began offering Cairenes the opportunity to print texts. If the process indeed started in 1839, it began during a time of acute financial hardship for Egypt: the *multazim* system would have begun one year after the 1838 Anglo-Ottoman Treaty of Balta Liman, which required Mehmed 'Alī to disband Egypt's monopolies. Perhaps the opportunity to commission printings was used as a means of generating funding, not so much to gain profit as to subsidize the press. These financial motives still hold in the likely event that the government allowed commissioned

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

printings from the mid-1830s. In 1836, for example, international prices for cotton fell and strained the Egyptian economy. However the commissioning system arose, it appears that the system developed extemporaneously over time.¹²⁷

It is also unclear whether *multazimūn* ultimately profited from their endeavors, either through the sale of their books or through currying Meḥmed ‘Alī’s favor by endorsing his state’s projects.¹²⁸ What is clear, however, is that these commissioned printings accounted for the bulk of the literary printings produced by Meḥmed ‘Alī’s governmental presses. Most of the titles that the government funded concerned topics of benefit to the state, like mathematics, engineering, and geography. By contrast, the titles commissioned by *multazimūn* largely covered *belles lettres*, collections of poetry, and even one-thousand copies of *Kitāb alf layla wa layla*, or *One thousand and one nights*.¹²⁹ Most of these texts were not original literary contributions. And I only encountered one overt attempt by an author to publish his own work. This distinction belonged to Jeffrey Morris, who besieged Yūsuf Ḥakīkyān Bey (1807-1875), brother-in-law to Artīn Pasha, with overbearing letters. “I have completed the memoir and I trust you will be pleased with the part devoted to commerce. Will you favour me with stating in reply if I shall send you the paper as you might wish to amuse yourself occasionally in the translation

¹²⁷ I explore this topic further below.

¹²⁸ In the early 1820s, for example, an Italian visitor to the press at Būlāq noted that Cairenes purchased its printings to please Meḥmed ‘Alī (Brocchi, 1841, p. 174).

¹²⁹ 14598 f 9, British Library, p. 9.

where you are...,” he wrote in one.¹³⁰ In another missive, he pushed further still: “I have already written you two letters, and in the last requested a reply which I have not received. I therefore conclude that no regular communication exists between Cairo and where you are at present _ I have my essay nearly completed_ but have no one to translate it, or introduce it to the press here _I think it would be better to have it published in the shape of a pamphlet, but this I shall leave wholly to yourself.”¹³¹ So far as I can tell, Morris never managed to bring his piece to print.

In the decades that followed Meḥmed ‘Alī’s rule, it appears that commissioning texts from the press at Būlāq grew somewhat less expensive. Well-off teachers, tradespeople, and stationers paid to print the bulk of these later printings, oftentimes in pairs.¹³² Nonetheless, the appearances and titles of the texts that they commissioned continued to take the form of long-popular manuscripts. This speaks to local tastes in reading, but also, to the pricey and speculative nature of printing on commission. The expense of printing texts encouraged *multazimūn* to invest in works that they believed would sell. Hence commissioned printings tended to conform to standard titles instead of

¹³⁰ Letter from Jeffrey Morris to Yūsuf Ḥakīkyān Bey dated 20 March 1845. Add MS 37462, British Library, UK, p. 2.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹³² See for example the respective commissionings of Bakrī al-Ḥalabī, and Aḥmad al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī “and his partners in the lands of the Hejaz” of: Damanhūrī, Muḥammad. *Ḥāshiyat laḡ al-jawāhir as-sanīya ‘alā ar-risāla as-Samarqandīya*. Al-Qāhira: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā‘a, 1856, p. 63; and Nawāwī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar. *Fath al-mujīb fī sharḥ mukhtaṣar al-katīb*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-mīriya bi-Būlāq, 1880, p. 26. Refer also to: Salāma, Ḥabīb. “Lamḥat ‘an an-naṣr al-‘arabī.” *Naṣr kitāb al-fann*, by Chandler B. Grannis and translated by Ḥabīb Salāma. Al-Qāhira: Dar an-Nahḍa al-‘Arabīya, 1965, pp. 1-39, p. 3.

new ones like Sinkalākh's poem. Finally, it is important to note that texts commissioned at the press at Būlāq were formal: *multazimūn* do not appear to have printed other genres of texts beyond that of highbrow books.

C. Governmental Printings in Manuscript Territory.

i. Distributing and Selling Printings.

Moving away from considering the press at Būlāq exclusively, let me now return to a general view of governmental printing. In this case, the way in which the state distributed its printings. The government did not appear to bring printing to Egypt to profit from it financially. Instead, it used printing to produce multiple copies of the new texts that the state's new schools required. These school printings ultimately served Egypt. But they did not mark a form of governmental charity. To fund these printings, the government requisitioned their cost from the stipends of the students required to buy them, as Perron noted: "In each of the schools, the teaching materials are provided by the government...the books are provided to [the students] upon their appointments, from which a fifth is retained each month until the payment for the price of the books is reached, which is given to them at close to the same cost that each volume cost the printing press."¹³³

But what of the rest of the government's printings, which ranged from surplus textbooks to laws, to books that Meḥmed 'Alī himself supported the printing of,¹³⁴ and

¹³³ Perron, 1843, pp. 21-22.

¹³⁴ Refer to Meḥmed 'Alī's funding of *Divan-i Leyla Hanım*, as stated in: Untitled catalog of books printed at the press at Būlāq. No date, approx. 1844. 14598 d 14, British

even those of the *multazimūn*? It appears that Cairenes could acquire governmental printings in two ways. The first was through a warehouse connected to the press at Būlāq, which tended to frustrate its western visitors. In December 1836, a British traveler alluded to the warehouse and its troubles when he remarked that “there is at present a quarrel, something like that between the stomach and the members, between the printing-office and the magazine [*i.e.*, the warehouse in Būlāq], and, till it is settled, which cannot be till after Ramadan, no books can be purchased.”¹³⁵ Another visitor echoed this description in 1843, writing that “up until today, in all of Egypt there is but one sole depot for printed books, and it is still, at this moment, at the press at Boulac itself, where these books are kept stacked up in pyramids (*amoncelés en pyramides*), without even the director himself knowing about them, and without it ever occurring to anybody to draft and publish a simple list [of their titles].”¹³⁶ Finally, an American missionary reported that disappointment with the warehouse continued into January of 1852: “I went a few days since to the government book depo and endeavored to obtain a sight of the books but not succeeding in this I asked two lazy Turks who were sitting in the vestibule of the building for a catalogue of their publications, telling them at the same

Library, UK, pp. 2-12, pp. 11-12. See also: Leylâ Hanım. *Divan-i Leyla Hanım*. Būlāq: Dār at-Ṭibā‘a al-Bāhira, 1844.

¹³⁵ Crawford, Alexander (Lord Lindsay). *Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land*. London: Henry Colburn, 1847, p. 33.

¹³⁶ Bianchi, T. X. “Catalogue générale des livres Arabes, Persans et Turcs, imprimés à Boulac en Égypte depuis l’introduction de l’imprimerie dans ce pays.” *Journal Asiatique, ou recueil de mémoires, d’extraits et de notices relatifs à l’histoire, à la philosophie, aux langues et à la littérature des peuples orientaux*. Paris: À L’Imprimerie Royale, Quatrième série, Tome II, July-August, 1843, pp. 24-61, p. 25.

time that I wished to purchase a pretty large bill of books. One of them put his hand under the seat and drove out a catalogue and thrust it towards me on the ground. I inquired if he had a copy that he could give me and on his telling me he had not, I asked him to loan me the copy in my hand until the next morning. This he also refused and I threw it on the ground before them and left. This is the way the pasha [*i.e.*, ‘Abbās (r. 1848-1854)] sells books.”¹³⁷

Scholars have used these accounts to make blanket statements about the Cairene public’s access to governmental printings. For example, the Islamic scholar Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905) wrote in the beginning of the twentieth century that during Meḥmed ‘Alī’s rule “there were many translated books on diverse subjects like history, philosophy, and literature, but these books were deposited in warehouses from the day they were printed and locked behind doors until the end of Ismā‘īl Pasha’s rule [*i.e.*, 1879]...”¹³⁸ However, other sources suggest that governmental printings met a different fate. An Italian visitor’s account from 1822, for example, recorded that wealthy Cairenes acquired the government’s printings when he noted that “the grandees and the effendis, in order to please the prince, were happy to make the purchase [of these printings].”¹³⁹ The

¹³⁷ Eli Smith Papers, 1819-1869. J.G. Paulding to Eli Smith, Cairo, 27 January 1852. HOU GEN ABC 60, 57. Houghton Library, Harvard University. I am grateful to Adam Mestyan for directing me to this letter.

¹³⁸ Riḍā’, Muḥammad Rašīd and Muḥammad ‘Abduh. “Āthār Muḥammad ‘Alī fī Miṣr.” *Tārīkh al-ustādh al-Imām aš-Šaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh*. Miṣr: Maṭba‘at al-Manār, 1906-1931, vol. 2, pp. 414-420, p. 418. First published in the fifth part of the fifth issue of *al-Manār*. Refer also to: Albin, 1988, p. 337.

¹³⁹ Brocchi, 1841, p. 174.

government also had another way of selling its excess printings to Cairenes. It vended them from the place where most books were sold in Cairo: the manuscript market in Khān al-Khalīl.¹⁴⁰

Edward Lane (1801-1876), the British Arabist who embedded himself in Cairene life in a way that few other contemporary Europeans did, noted “the shop of the Basha’s [*i.e.* Meḥmed ‘Alī’s] booksellers, in the main street of the city, nearly opposite the entrance to the bazaar called Khan el-Khaleele” in his journals from 1833-1835.¹⁴¹ Lane spent full days at this shop, starting from sunrise.¹⁴² It is apparent from his descriptions of the bookshop’s second-in-command, one Aḥmad,¹⁴³ that Lane knew Aḥmad from his first visit to Cairo between 1825-1828. It is unclear if Meḥmed ‘Alī’s booksellers’ shop existed during that time, but it was functioning from at least as early as December of 1833.

I quote Lane at length for the unique and vivid details that he provides of the bookshop, and the colorful characters whom he encountered there:

My old acquaintance the sheykh Aḥmad (or *seyd* Aḥmad, for he is a *shereef*) [*i.e.*, a descendant of the prophet Muḥammad] called on me as soon as he had heard of my arrival. He has resumed his old habit of visiting me almost every day; both for the sake of getting his dinner or supper, or at least tobacco and coffee, and to profit in his trade of

¹⁴⁰ Refer to chapter three.

¹⁴¹ Lane, 1978, p. 475.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Perhaps Aḥmad’s full name was Aḥmad Musatṭir al-Warrāq (refer to: Gacek, Adam. *Arabic lithographed books in the Islamic Studies Library, McGill University. Descriptive catalogue.* Montreal: McGill University Libraries, 1996, p. 42, book number 54).

bookseller. I wish I could make a portrait which would do justice to his singular physiognomy. For many years he has been nearly blind: one of his eyes is quite closed: the other is ornamented on particular occasions, as the two great festivals, &c., with a border of kohl; though he is a shocking sloven at all times. He tells me that he has taken a second wife, and a second house for her; but that he is as poor as ever; and that my usual yearly present of a dress will be very acceptable. He has a talent for intrigue and cheating, which he exercises on every opportunity; being lax in morals, and rather so in his religious tenets. Notwithstanding these defects, and sometimes in consequence of having the latter defect, I find him very useful. Much of the information that I have obtained respecting the manners and customs of his countrymen has derived from him, or through his assistance...He has just brought me a *muṣḥaf* (or copy of the *Ḳur-án*), which he wishes me to purchase; but he thinks it necessary, as he did on former similar occasions, to offer some excuse for his doing so.¹⁴⁴

The principal subjects of the conversations which my other Maṣree [*i.e.*, Cairene] acquaintances have held with me since my return to their country have been the oppression which they suffer under the present government, the monopolies of the Báshà, and the consequent dullness of trade and dearness of provisions, &c. The sheykh Aḥmad is less querulous: he praises the Báshà [*i.e.*, Meḥmed 'Alī] for including booksellers among persons of literary and religious professions, from whom no *firdeh* [*i.e.*, *firda*, or poll tax] is exacted. He and another bookseller, who is his superior, are agents for the sale of the books printed at the Báshà's press, at Boolàḳ. They have a shop in the principal street of the city (nearly opposite the entrance to Khán el-Khaleelee), which will be a convenient place for me to repair to on the occasions of public processions.¹⁴⁵

My almost daily visitor, the sheykh Aḥmad, the bookseller, tells me that he cannot spend much time with me this month; as he sleeps half the day, and breakfasts, and takes part in a Zikr [or prayer for the remembrance of God], every evening...As I was sitting at the booksellers' shop to-day, the Báshà, Moḥammad 'Alee, rode by, on his way to say the afternoon prayers in the mosque of the Ḥasaneyn, followed by only four attendants; the first of whom bore his *segádeh* (or prayer-carpet), in an embroidered kerchief, on his lap. The Báshà was very plainly dressed, with a white turban. I should not have known him, had I not been informed that it was he; for he appears much older than when I was last in Egypt; though he looks

¹⁴⁴ Written on 26 December 1833 (Poole, Stanley Lane. *Life of Edward William Lane*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1877, p. 48).

¹⁴⁵ Written on 26 December 1833 (*Ibid.*, p. 50).

remarkably well. He saluted the people right and left as he passed along: all rising to him.¹⁴⁶

I generally pay a visit to the shop of the Báshà's booksellers on the mornings of Monday and Thursday, when auction-markets are held in the street where the shop is situated, and in the neighbouring bazaar of Khán el-Khaleelee (the chief Turkish bazaar) which occasion the street above-mentioned to be much crowded and to present an amusing scene: but I am often more amused with the persons who frequent the shop where I take my seat. When I went there to-day, I found there an old man who had been possessed of large property in land; but he had been deprived of it by the Báshà, and been compelled to become a member of the university, the great mosque El-Azhar. This man, the Hagg..., is a celebrated character. He rendered great assistance, both by his wealth and active service, to Moḥammad 'Alee, in his contest with Khursheed Báshà, when the latter was besieged in the Citadel. The greater part of his property was confiscated by the man he had thus served, through fear of his influence. He thus shared the fate of most of those who had rendered eminent services to Moḥammad 'Alee; but he contrived to hide much of his wealth; and has since employed friends to trade with it privately on his account, so that he has still a large income... The elder of the two booksellers was relating his having just purchased a house [that gets robbed by a scholar from al-Azhar, and then presents legal troubles]..Soon after the bookseller had told this story, there joined us a Persian darweesh [or dervish], whom I had often met there before, and a fat, merry-looking, red-faced man, loaded with ragged clothing, showing the edge of a curly head of hair below his turban, and carrying a long staff...He took snuff; smoked from my pipe; and had a constant smile upon his countenance; though he seldom spoke...I was informed that he was a celebrated saint...There next joined us a man of a very respectable and intelligent appearance, applying for a copy of the sheykh Rifà'ah's visit to France, lately printed at Boolák. Asking what were the general contents of this book, a person present answered him, that the author relates his voyage from Alexandria to Marseilles; how he got drunk on board the ship, and was tied to the mast, and flogged; that he ate pork in the land of infidelity and obstinacy, and that it is a most excellent meat; how he was delighted with the French girls, and how superior they are in charms to the women of Egypt; and having qualified himself, in every accomplishment, for an eminent place in Hell, returned to his native country. This was an ironical quiz on the sheykh Rifà'ah for his strict conscientious adherence to the precepts of el-Islám during his voyage and his residence in France. The applicant for

¹⁴⁶ Written on 11 January 1834 (*Ibid.*, pp. 53-54).

this book had a cataract in each of his eyes.¹⁴⁷

To-day, as I was sitting at the booksellers' shop, a reputed welee [or holy man], whom I have often seen, came and seated himself by me, and began, in a series of abrupt sentences, to relate to me various matters respecting me, past, present, and to come. His name is the sheykh 'Alee el-Leysee. He is a poor man, supported by alms: tall and thin and very dark; about thirty years of age; and wears nothing, at present, but a blue shirt and a girdle, and a padded red cap.¹⁴⁸

Lane's descriptions of Meḥmed 'Alī's booksellers' shop provide a singular and useful vantage point into what went on there. To me, six takeaways stand out.

Firstly, Aḥmad was a consummate businessman whom Lane described affectionately as a hustler. He pursued Lane for sales regularly. Still, he was a friend to whom Lane owed much of his knowledge of Cairenes. In contrast to Aḥmad, we know practically nothing about his "superior," known from other sources as Muṣṭafā, who seems not to have been around the shop very much.¹⁴⁹ Aḥmad and Muṣṭafā worked on commission.¹⁵⁰ Until March 1832, they were paid two pence (*niṣf fiḍḍa*) for every *qirš* sold but afterwards received three pence per *qirš* sold.¹⁵¹ Aḥmad's constant presence and dealings with Lane suggest that he was not rich. Nonetheless, he could afford to keep two homes and two wives. This, and his relatively muted complaints about taxes and money, suggest that he got along financially. Indeed, Meḥmed 'Alī raised the status of

¹⁴⁷ Written on 27 October 1834 (*Ibid.*, pp. 68-71).

¹⁴⁸ Written on 6 November 1834 (*Ibid.*, p. 71).

¹⁴⁹ Ṣābāt, 1958, p. 153.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

booksellers by exempting them from the poll tax.

Secondly, Aḥmad sold manuscripts, like the Qur‘ān, as well as books that Meḥmed ‘Alī set for print, like Rifā‘a Badawī Rāfi‘ aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s (1801-1873) *Takhlīs al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz*, or *Extraction of gold in the summary of Paris*.¹⁵² It is unclear if Aḥmad traded in manuscripts at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s booksellers’ shop. Indeed, it appears that Lane knew Aḥmad in his capacity as a bookseller in the years before Aḥmad worked at the shop. Thirdly, clients expected to find recent impressions among the printings sold from the shop. We know this because aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s account of his 1826 studies abroad was printed at the press at Būlāq in 1834.¹⁵³ It therefore coincided with the time of Lane’s writing. Fourthly, clients popped in to acquire particular texts expressly. Since aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s book was newly printed and novel in content, some mechanism must have existed for advertising printings. Fifthly, as ever, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s presence loomed over Cairo, the shop, and the talk of its visitors.

Finally, Lane gives us a sense of what went on at the bookshop. And one does not get the impression that a lot of shopping occurred there. The clientele was entirely male, and ranged from those of “very respectable and intelligent appearance,” to an Azharite who had once been very rich, to a Persian Sufi dervish, to a venerated saint who walked around in “ragged clothing,” to a poor holy man “supported by alms.” All of

¹⁵² Refer to aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s praise for Meḥmed ‘Alī in: Newman, 2011, pp. 358 & 378; and Meḥmed ‘Alī’s gifting of aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s text in: Heyworth-Dunne, J. “Rifā‘ah Badawī Rāfi‘ aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī: the Egyptian revivalist (continued).” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1940), pp. 319-415, p. 401.

¹⁵³ Refer to: aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī, Rifā‘a Badawī Rāfi‘. *Takhlīs al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz aw ad-dīwān an-naḥīs bi-Īwān Bārīs*. Būlāq: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā‘a al-Khidīwiya, 1834.

these men fell on the higher end of Cairene society due to their religious standing and learning. Indeed, their reputations for piety oppose the notion that Cairenes found printing taboo in general. But each of them also seemed endearingly bizarre to Lane, between their troubled tales, their blindness, their antics, and their peculiar dress. Their personas and capers led Lane to find their fellowship much more amusing than the actual bazaar. And like Lane, they seem to have sought out the bookshop for company instead of books. They whiled away their days there, passing the time with smoke and gossip. When the respectable looking client came to shop, they pulled his leg by misportraying aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī's text as some sort of anti-Islamic odyssey, at once deriding aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāwī, France, and the decency of the inquirer. Their camaraderie trumped business. Only one of them appeared to have any money, so it is tempting to imagine that printed books were affordable to Cairenes who got by. But Lane does not permit us to draw such a conclusion since he did not suggest that any of them purchased anything.

From at least 1836-1842, Lane corresponded with Aḥmad from London.¹⁵⁴ Their letters discussed news, common friends, and the availability and shipment of books that interested Lane.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, Lane acquired his own copy of the aforementioned 1835 edition of *Kitāb alflayla wa layla* through this correspondence, and through the intervention of Šaikḥ Muḥammad 'Ayād aṭ-Ṭaṇṭāwī (1820-1861). Aṭ-Ṭaṇṭāwī hand-edited the copy of *Kitāb alflayla wa layla* that reached Lane. The two printed volumes are overwhelmed with aṭ-Ṭaṇṭāwī's marginal notes, so much so that the books are as

¹⁵⁴ Richards, D. S. "Edward Lane's surviving Arabic correspondence." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 9, No. 1, (Apr., 1999), pp. 1-25, pp. 1-3.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12 & 14-15.

much manuscripts as they are printings.¹⁵⁶ Lane used this edited text for his own 1840 edition of *The Thousand and one nights* printed in London.¹⁵⁷ I address aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī’s fascinating marginal commentary on printing therein below. For now, I want to highlight that this chain of transmission suggests the survival of the bookshop up to the period that Meḥmed ‘Alī’s printings were supposed to be “kept stacked up in pyramids.”¹⁵⁸ It also indicates that the long-standing Cairene practice of selling manuscripts through letter-writing continued with printed books.¹⁵⁹

Aḥmad continued to sell books and to engage with foreigners into the 1840s, as is confirmed by an 1848 article in *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal* entitled “A Cairo bookseller.”¹⁶⁰ The article was written anonymously in 1846 and focused on “the

¹⁵⁶ *Kitāb alf layla wa layla*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kubrā bi-Būlāq, 1835, 2 vols. Cam Adv. b. 88 78 & Adv. b. 88 79, Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge, UK.

¹⁵⁷ Lane, Edward William. *The Thousand and one nights: commonly called, in England, The Arabian nights' entertainments. A new translation from the Arabic, with copious notes*. London: C. Knight and Co., 1840, 3 vols.

¹⁵⁸ Bianchi, 1843, p. 25.

¹⁵⁹ Refer to chapter three for examples of this practice with manuscripts, and chapter five for examples of this practice with private presses. Europeans who acquired texts from Cairo through correspondence left money behind with a trusted friend, who would then pay the bookseller for their wares. For examples of this practice, refer to: Richards, 1999; and HOU GEN ABC 60, 57, Houghton Library.

¹⁶⁰ “A Cairo bookseller.” *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal. New Series*, edited by William and Robert Chambers. Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, and W.S. Orr, London. Vol. X, No. 261, Saturday, December 30, 1848, pp. 428-430, p. 428.

renowned Sheik Ahmed el Katoby [*i.e.*, the bookseller].”¹⁶¹ The author of the account confirmed Aḥmad’s liveliness and showmanship with quotes of his jokes and descriptions of his agility despite being “between sixty and seventy years of age.”¹⁶² Moreover, he supplemented details about Aḥmad, Muṣṭafā, and Meḥmed ‘Alī’s booksellers’ shop that Lane described twelve years earlier. By 1846, Aḥmad had four sources of income: “his shop in the Book Bazaar; a small daily stipend from the government as valuator of books;...the rent of a few houses in the Mergooseh;” and the fees that he collected in exchange for showing foreign travelers around Cairo, like the article’s author.¹⁶³ Thus it appears that Aḥmad maintained his trade in manuscripts formally, alongside some sort of governmental employ. Aḥmad’s shop was distinct from that of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s booksellers. It was described as “his shop in the Book Bazaar, which is a small courtyard leaning off the main line of bazaars. The court is very dark, from the height of the houses, and accommodates only five booksellers in this large city of above 200,000 souls.”¹⁶⁴ One gathers from the description of the courtyard and “the booksellers on each side of [Aḥmad]” who interjected during Aḥmad’s conversations that the shops were arranged traditionally as a series of stalls.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 428 & 430.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 429-430.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

It appears that Aḥmad was able to live comfortably off of his industriousness. Since the author of the article visited Aḥmad's home, he provided a description of Aḥmad's receiving room within his account: "An old divan [*i.e.*, seating area] surrounded it, and an old Turkey carpet covered the floor; chests and presses of books were at the lower end of the room, and on a high shelf a row of large old China plates, which had not been dusted for six months."¹⁶⁶ This visit demonstrated that Aḥmad and Muṣṭafā remained close, as Muṣṭafā joined the article's author in Aḥmad's receiving room. We learn that Muṣṭafā was "formerly one of the Ulema of the *aghar* or university of Cairo, but now a very old man, who never went out of the quarter, where his house was exactly opposite that of Sheik Ahmed."¹⁶⁷ Finally, we learn that Meḥmed 'Alī's booksellers' shop was by now fashioned in a noteworthy way: "We then went to see the sale of the books printed at the government press of Boulak. The place of sale is a new large edifice close to the Mehkemeh [*i.e.*, the courthouse], and is in the form of a European library, with a gallery above, all quite new, and having a European look."¹⁶⁸ Although Meḥmed 'Alī's booksellers' shop was positioned to draw from Cairene manuscript culture, it also seems to have been designed with the view towards distinguishing manuscript from print, and traditional forms of vending texts from western styles.

ii. Advertising and Commissioning Printings.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 430.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

These writings account for the bookshop from ≈1833-1846, and two pamphlets printed by the government also attest to the bookshop's endurance through the mid-1840s. The pamphlets are both undated, but their contents suggest that they were printed at the press at Būlāq in 1844 and 1845. As if on cue from the visitor who complained in 1843 that it never occurred "to anybody to draft and publish a simple list [of their printings' titles],"¹⁶⁹ these pamphlets listed the printings that the government sold from Mehmed 'Alī's booksellers' shop. The government may have printed pamphlets like these in the 1830s, given Lane's depiction of the shop's client soliciting Aḥmad with a predetermined title in mind.¹⁷⁰ And the practice of printing pamphlets, or "catalogs," may have also continued into the 1850s, judging from the aforementioned American missionary's frustration at being unable to acquire a copy of it in 1852.¹⁷¹

The pamphlets at hand listed books for sale at the bookshop already, and advertised upcoming printings to drum up enthusiasm and to gain backers for future texts. Each pamphlet amounted to twelve pages. The first opened with the proclamation: "this list (*fihrist*) shows the numbers, names, and prices of the books held in the bookshop (*al-kutubkhāna*) situated alongside the court in Cairo."¹⁷² Indeed, the ten pages that followed laid out the titles of the printings that the state funded, the number of impressions made of them, and their prices. The titles were arranged by genre: first came books associated

¹⁶⁹ Bianchi, 1843, p. 25.

¹⁷⁰ Written on 27 October 1834 (Poole, 1877, pp. 70-71).

¹⁷¹ HOU GEN ABC 60, 57, Houghton Library.

¹⁷² 14598 d 14, British Library, p. 2.

with the military; then mathematics; medicine; veterinary medicine; literature; and grammar and morphology. Following these sections came three additional sets of titles, grouped according to matters of business: a list of twenty-two finished translations being readied for print, from which anyone would be given permission to pay for their printing; five translations being undertaken; and eleven books “now being printed, though without designated prices, they are supposed to be sold at low cost.”¹⁷³

The 169 completed printings therefore ran according to a topical hierarchy, although the titles listed within them lacked any sort of order. The pamphlet advertised that 76,391 copies of these texts had already been produced. These figures set the average governmental print run at 583.1 copies per text. The most heavily printed text was *Qānūn as-sawārī*, or *The Cavalry law*, in 3,100 copies.¹⁷⁴ The text with the fewest impressions was *Qānūnnāma safarīya*, or *The Book of travel laws*, in 26 copies.¹⁷⁵ The prices of the printings ranged from as low as 00.20 *qirš*, with which one could buy copies of a pamphlet for treating plague,¹⁷⁶ to as much as 250 *qirš* for texts like a commentary on Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī’s (1207-1273) famous Sufī poem *Mathnawī*.¹⁷⁷ For one *qirš*, one could purchase a children’s arithmetic book or a morphology handbook.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The price per text cost 15.55 *qirš* on average.

The last page of the pamphlet explained why the government printed the pamphlet:

The books mentioned in the above table are those printed and copied (*tab' wa tamthīl*) at the press at Būlāq, near the city of Egypt the protected. They were issued in great numbers for the interest of the public and the select few, and after being dispensed out to the naval and military schools the rest were sold with its particular price to those asking. However, as the Khedive wished knowledge to be spread and all the students to be instructed and educated, from this time on the books will be sold with the low prices here shown in the list. And if anyone needs to, he is able to buy [the books] against his stipend; let this be known by all. And the tradesman who would like to purchase more than ten of one type, he would be able to get a discount of one tenth, and he would have a delay of six months at most. For the books given in the supplementary list shown as translated into Arabic and Ottoman but not yet printed, anyone would be allowed by the royal decree to publish [them] if they like. They have been listed to let people know that they would be produced with the lowest cost as well.

As a part of the benevolent actions of the Khedive at this time a short collection of poems by Leyla Hanım (d. 1847/8) has been printed with *ta' līq* fonts.¹⁷⁹ Now the printing of a selection of works by the deceased Nazīf Bey is to soon be completed in *farsī* fonts. And we publicly state here that these new types are so strong that anyone who holds any book of poetry, history, and other books in their possession and would like to print it at his own cost, he will be given permission to do that.¹⁸⁰

The second pamphlet picked up where the first left off:

Though the number and prices of the books held in the royal bookshop are shown in the lists published before, all those were printed at the expense of the government (*mīrī*). And those that had been printed at the expense of the *multazims* were not contained, nor were a bundle of

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 4 & 9.

¹⁷⁹ Leylâ Hanım. *Divan-i Leyla Hanım*. Būlāq: Dār at-Ṭibā'a al-Bāhira, 1844.

¹⁸⁰ 14598 d 14, British Library, pp. 11-12.

nice books printed after that date [*i.e.*, when the first pamphlet was published]. From this time on, books in whomever's name they would be, are to be listed with their numbers [of copies] and prices. And those that are printed at the expense of the government, after being put to use or distributed, are to be put into the bookshop (*kutubkhāna*) with their numbers and prices; and those that are printed at the expense of the *multazims* are simply to be listed with their names and the original numbers [of the copies made of them]. Many of the books listed are kept in Khān al-Khalīlī by Kāmil Effendi [al-Adirthawī], the head of the booksellers (*ṣaḥāflar re'īsī*),¹⁸¹ and their prices are known to him. Those who seek [these books] can ask him, and others who search for the books printed at the expense of the government can purchase them from the bookshop situated alongside the court.¹⁸²

The second pamphlet listed its 281 printed titles according to the same categories and order of the first pamphlet. However, it replaced the final three categories of the first pamphlet with three different sections: two devoted to the *multazimūn*, of which one concerned books already printed at the expense of *multazimūn*, and the other concerned books in the process of being printed at the expense of both the government and the *multazimūn*; and one devoted to laws printed at the expense of the government. Each of these three sections listed the titles alongside the original size of their print runs. In all, a total of 405,073 copies were printed from the 281 titles listed in this second pamphlet.

Returning to the sections of finished printings that had been funded by the government, the pamphlet included their prices alongside their print runs. Unlike the first pamphlet, however, it provided a new third column that tallied the number of books that remained in the government's possession from any given print run. For example, we learn that the pricey commentary on Rūmī's *Mathnawī* was printed in 1079 copies, of

¹⁸¹ Refer to chapter three for details on the terminology and function of Cairo's guild of booksellers.

¹⁸² 14598 f 9, British Library, p. 2.

which only 646 impressions were still available.¹⁸³ Of the 160 governmentally funded books with prices listed alongside them, the government printed 317,894 copies. Of these, 91,331 copies had already been consumed leaving 226,563 copies still available for sale. Some of the books for sale were new, while others were listed as copies that had been used previously. Of the latter, their prices ranged from just under one-quarter to two-thirds of the new printing's value. The most heavily consumed governmental printing was *Qānūn az-zirā'a al-Miṣriya*, or *The Egyptian agriculture law*. Of the several thousand copies printed of this text, only sixteen new copies and thirteen used copies remained for purchase at the price of 5 *qirš* and 1.11 *qirš* respectively.¹⁸⁴

A great deal of useful information comes from the short passages that accompany these tables. The first pamphlet indicated that the government did not want the surplus copies of school printings to go to waste. It therefore advertised them, printings yet to come, and the other printings that it produced to the public via print. The pamphlet claimed that the state did so to promote broader learning amongst students and governmental workers, and the business of tradesmen. However, it appears that it also sought to avoid losing money on unconsumed merchandise. This financial motivation is corroborated by the multiple ways in which the government allowed members of the public to support its presses by the mid-1840s. Cairenes could purchase finished printings for individual consumption and for re-sale at a discount. They could hire the government's presses to print poetic and historical texts of their choice. Finally, they

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

could fund the printing of manuscripts that the government had already translated. The comprehensiveness of these options supports the idea that the *multazim* system grew out of fiscal need.

Let me focus, for a moment, on the last option for funding that I listed above. The first pamphlet provided potential *multazimūn* of governmental translations with five technical works to choose from, with titles like *General mechanics* and *Descriptive engineering, part two*.¹⁸⁵ It also posted the languages to which they had been translated. In this case, all of the titles on offer were in Arabic. The details of how and why one paid to commission the titles set by the government are uncertain to me. However, given that the title of the first pamphlet explicitly named Meḥmed ‘Alī’s booksellers’ shop, I suspect that commissioners could make these arrangements there. I assume that the opportunity to fund these printings was structured as one backer per book, or perhaps two or three backers per book, instead of as a contribution drive. I arrive at this conclusion since the names of *multazimūn* rarely appear in multiples in the colophons of governmental printings.¹⁸⁶ As for why members of the public would want to fund such obscure printings set by the government, I suspect that the *multazimūn* who invested in these texts could benefit in four ways: the expectation of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s favor; the assurance that the government, too, would want the text to be printed well, in time, and “with the lowest cost;” the ability to put forward new titles without exerting great effort

¹⁸⁵ 14598 d 14, British Library, pp. 10-11.

¹⁸⁶ See for example the single *multazim* listed in: Sa‘dī. *Tarjamat al-Julistān al-Fārisī al-‘ibāra*. Būlāq: Maṭba‘at Būlāq, 1847, p. 182; and Hakkı, Erzurumlu İbrāhım. *Kitab-ı marifetname*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kubrā, 1841, p. 55.

or assuming great risk; and the possibility that the government could force the sale of these books through its schools. If this latter potentiality came to pass, it would have promised a particularly strong return on the *multazim*'s investment. Against these potential benefits, the *multazim* risked running a loss if the book failed to sell.

Returning to the general information provided by the pamphlets, the notion that *multazimūn* could profit from printing texts on the governmental presses arises when we read both texts together. The government printed the first pamphlet to endorse its own printings. In that pamphlet, it advertised the books that it had backed alone. But the second pamphlet emphasized the printings that had been funded by the *multazimūn* explicitly. This shift suggests that the government received pushback from the *multazimūn*. Those who had supported the printing of the government's translations, and those who had paid to print texts of their choosing, likely wanted their titles advertised. This view is corroborated by the announcements about *multazimūn* book printings that the government made in its gazette, *al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīya*, from at least 1847.¹⁸⁷ Still, the information that the second pamphlet advertised about *multazimūn* printings was limited. While it provided prices for the texts funded by the government, it did not list the prices of texts printed at the expense of either set of *multazimūn*. This suggests that both types of *multazimūn* determined the prices at which they sold their printings, regardless of whether or not the government had provided the initial manuscript to them. From this, it follows that all *multazimūn* stood to profit, or lose, from their investment.

¹⁸⁷ Refer to the quotes from *al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣrīya* in: Raḍwān, 1953, pp. 109-110.

Finally, the pamphlets suggest that Mehmed ‘Alī’s booksellers’ shop did not sell *multazimūn* printings. *Multazimūn* printings were sold down the street from the bookshop by “the head of the booksellers,” Kāmil Effendi al-Adirhawī, under the auspices of the same guild that had traditionally purveyed manuscripts.¹⁸⁸ So Cairene commissioners of printed texts inserted them into the same market structure through which they acquired and sold their manuscripts. A European description of these Khān al-Khalīlī booksellers from 1831 indicates that they sold governmental printings from early on, although it is unclear if these printings were commissioned: “When one enters a bookshop, they do not see any books laid out; if you ask for a work, it must be fetched from a trunk or from an armoire, where it is carefully conserved; the bookshops of Cairo sell the books printed at Boulac, but they only sell a few...”¹⁸⁹

It is not clear whether booksellers purchased the printings they sold from the *multazimūn*, or if they got paid a commission for their salesmanship. The aforementioned booksellers’ guild master, Kāmil Effendi al-Adirhawī, sidestepped this transaction altogether by commissioning a printing of a commentary on al-Bayḏāwī’s (d. 1286) Qur’ānic exegesis.¹⁹⁰ But since it is safe to assume that everyone was in it for gain, *multazimūn* printings likely arrived to consumers via governmental fees for printing, *multazimūn* price-adjustments for profit, and booksellers’ fees. I therefore

¹⁸⁸ Refer to chapter three for my discussion of the booksellers’ guild and their practices.

¹⁸⁹ Michaud, M. et M. Poujoulat. *Correspondance d’Orient (1830-1831)*. Brussels: N.-J. Gregoir, V. Wouters et Ce., 1841, vol. VII, p. 85.

¹⁹⁰ 14598 f 9, British Library, p. 12.

suspect that the average price for a copy of a commissioned printing cost more than the manuscript version of the same text. It should have also cost more than most governmental printings, given that governmental printings lacked the price-bump generated by *multazimūn*, had their prices set by the government upfront, and could be purchased second-hand at a discount. Still, most governmental printings covered dry topics.

iii. An Egyptian's Impression of Printing from a Manuscript Worldview.

Whether the government's printings were paid for through public or private funds, they still circulated in a manuscript society. We see this through the two volume commissioned edition of *Kitāb alf layla wa layla* that aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī edited for Lane.¹⁹¹ Aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī entered his commentary in the text's margins, according to manuscript custom. Page after his page, he corrected printing errors, explained obscure words, referenced relevant information, and summarized parables. Visually, his additions challenged the stark linearity of the pages of type. Aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī's handwritten notes billowed out from the rectangular printed text at different angles. The ways in which aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī confidently entered his edits reminds us that he wrote at a time when Cairenes absorbed printing into their manuscript tradition. Cairenes did not lionize printing or venerate it as a societal turning point during this period. Nor did they protect the blank margins of pages in printed books. Instead, they folded the technology and its products into their habits for esteeming and treating manuscripts.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9; and Cam Adv. b. 88 78 & Adv. b. 88 79, Cambridge University Library.

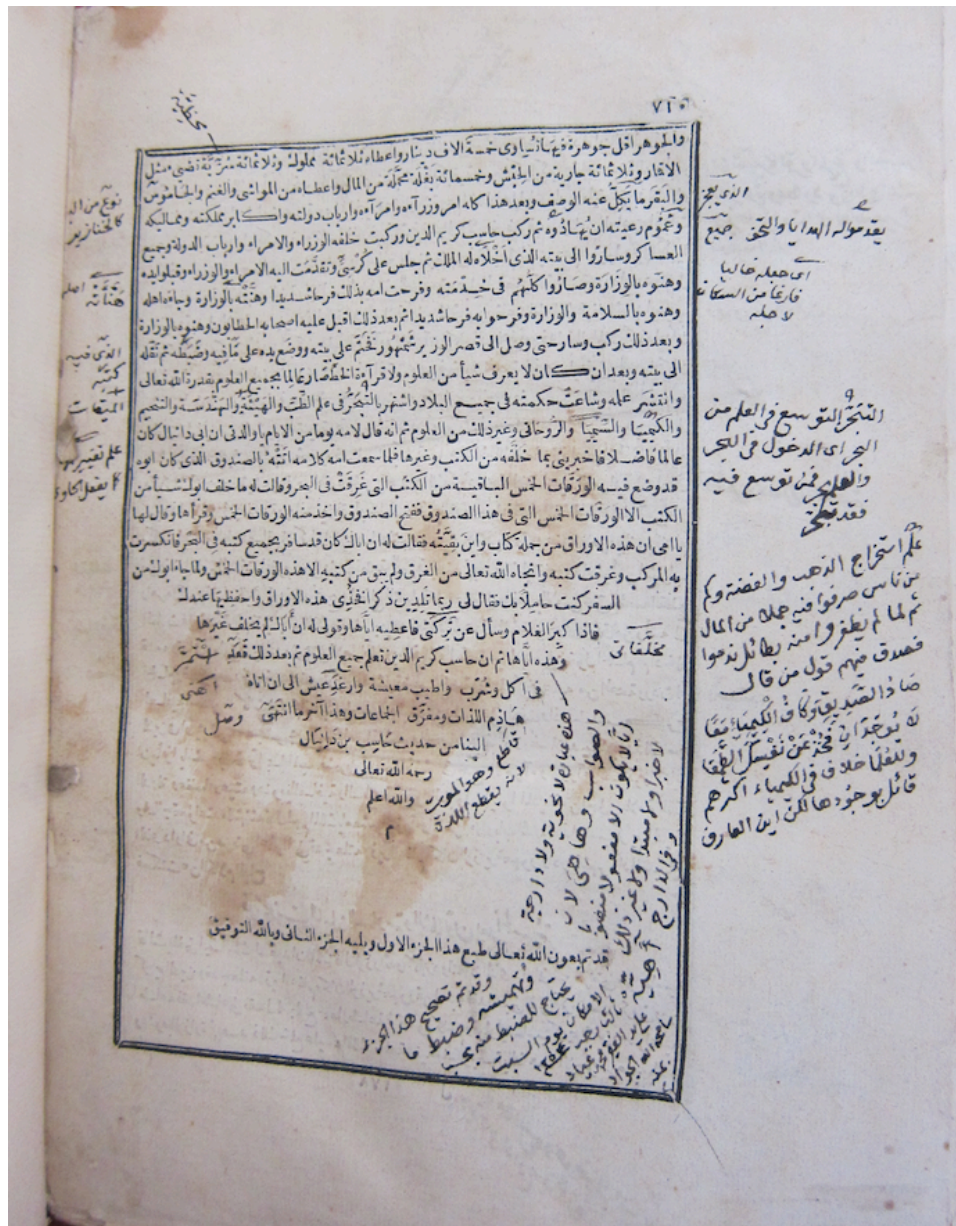


Image 4.3. Manuscript and print together in the colophons of aṭ-Ṭaṭṭāwī's edited copy of *Kitāb alf layla wa layla*.

Aṭ-Ṭaṭṭāwī's manuscript notes billow out from the printed text. The printed texts comprise the linear writings that begin within the rectangular borders, from the top. Although the printed texts look rather rigid in comparison to aṭ-Ṭaṭṭāwī's handwriting, their formatting takes after manuscript custom too, as demonstrated through the triangular colophons that end the printings.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Cam Adv. b. 88 78, p. 710, & Adv. b. 88 79, p. 620 (printed as 120 in error), Cambridge University Library.

The staunchest reminder of this text's inception from within Cairo's manuscript culture comes not from its appearance, but its content. Each entry projected the idea that texts, whether they be printed or handwritten, were alive and merited a qualified reader's intervention. Although this presumption comes across in each of aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī's entries, some passages illustrate it better than others. To me, the idea appears at its strongest in aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī's commentary on the two volumes' colophons.

At the end of the first volume, the government's pressworkers printed: "The printing of this first part has been completed with the assistance of God, and the second part will follow it, with God's grace." Directly underneath this explicit, aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī added: "and the correcting and marginal note writing and putting into order what needed organizing of this first part has been completed to the best of ability on the third Saturday of the year 1254 [*hijrī, i.e., 1838*], by the hand of the humble (*'alā yad al-faqīr*) Muḥammad 'Ayād [aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī], God permit him to do good."¹⁹³ Justifiably and unreservedly, aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī listed himself as a second producer of the text. But the way in which he did so suggested that he saw himself as a collaborator of the pressworkers. Aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī manifested this notion through his statement's rhetorical parallelism to the government's colophon. His seamless choice of wording makes it impossible to discern where the government's labors ended and where aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī's began, save for visually.

But beside the colophon to the book's second volume, aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī distanced himself from the governmental pressworkers. Indeed, he placed himself above them by calling their work into question. Aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī noted that their colophon claimed to have

¹⁹³ Cam Adv. b. 88 78, Cambridge University Library, p. 710.

corrected the manuscript text's "feeble errors and reprehensible meanings (*aghlāṭ rakīka wa ma 'ānin mustahjina*), and [that their] correction is void of all that and therefore is entirely free of smut (*al-farth*), meaning filth and blood (*ar-rauth wa ad-dam*), and accordingly that their correction is better than writing an entirely new invented composition. But this is an exaggeration (*fī hādhā mubālagha*). There were many errors in this correction [*i.e.*, the government's edition], so that [the correction] needed correcting."¹⁹⁴

At-Ṭanṭāwī pierced through the government's effort to promote its printing, and he did so in an aesthetic and intellectual style common to manuscript protocol. Although *Alf layla wa layla* was printed, educated Cairenes like at-Ṭanṭāwī did not cover at the printed word. Let alone cover, their manuscript inscriptions onto printed texts suggested that visual and intellectual authority remained with the hand throughout the 1830s. Even so, the government initiated several changes to Cairene writing through its printing practices.

D. The Effects of Early Governmental Printing.

In summing up the use of printing by Meḥmed 'Alī's state, let me conclude with some structural observations. The government combined tradition with innovation in countless ways. It appears to have done this extemporaneously, and not from a premeditated goal to revolutionize Egyptian society through print. Still, as Raḍwān pointed out with regard to his sense of a late nineteenth century enlightenment, the

¹⁹⁴ Adv. b. 88 79, Cambridge University Library, p. 620 (printed as 120 in error).

governmental printing complex set off a chain of unintended consequences.¹⁹⁵ To me, three repercussions of governmental printing stand out for their impact on the Cairene economy of writing.

First, the process of producing and consuming governmental printings invited participation from members of the public. This helps to explain why Cairene printing took-off, and endured, in a lasting way that had not characterized previous Ottoman printing endeavors. Voluntary public participation in the production and consumption of governmental printings held for only a portion of texts that the government printed. Namely, those commissioned by the *multazimūn* and those available for purchase from the governmental warehouse in Būlāq and Meḥmed ‘Alī’s booksellers’ shop in Khān al-Khalīlī. But the government’s espousal of these innovations tapped into intuitive ways for producing and selling texts to Cairenes. The government thereby carried manuscript traditions for commissioning and selling texts into the printed domain, allowing Cairenes to interact with both mediums in a familiar fashion.

With regard to the production of commissioned printings, this marked the first time that members of the public could direct the output of a mainstream press. The Ottoman printer İbrahim Müteferrika (1675-1745) had attempted to fortify the empire’s literary heritage through his private press’s printings,¹⁹⁶ and the governmental press of the Ottoman Sultan Selīm III (r. 1789-1807) had been used to facilitate the training of a

¹⁹⁵ Raḍwān, 1953, p. v.

¹⁹⁶ Refer to chapter two.

new private corps.¹⁹⁷ But while both of these presses were state-endorsed and printed texts in the dominant language of the population, neither allowed the public to set texts for publication. In this sense, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state did something fully unique when it permitted members of the public to pay the government for the printings which they desired. The governmental pamphlets demonstrate that the *multazim* system was brokered over time. In turn, this suggests that the government turned to the *multazimūn* to subsidize its printing scheme. Although the system seems not to have been predetermined, the process of inviting *multazimūn* to print helped to solidify and sustain Cairene printing.

The commissioning process appealed to wealthy Cairenes who wished to speculate in printing. But the means for consuming governmental printings exposed a broader swath of Cairene society to printed texts too. Manuscript booksellers sold printings alongside handwritten texts. And although Meḥmed ‘Alī’s booksellers’ shop traded in governmentally funded printings, it did so from within Cairo’s manuscript market. These outlets for printings acculturated less wealthy Cairenes to something they had never seen under the French: their canon in print. Due to the specialized function and peripheral location of the warehouse at Būlāq, I assume that it played a lesser role in familiarizing Cairenes with printings.

The second repercussion of governmental printing concerned the multiple ways in which it impacted the manuscript industry. Governmental printings opened up new

¹⁹⁷ Aksan, Virginia. “Ottoman military recruitment strategies in the late eighteenth century.” *Arming the state: military conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia, 1775-1925*, edited by Erik J. Zürcher. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1999, pp. 21-40, p. 32.

spaces for texts that had not existed before. When the government printed texts for its own scholastic and administrative projects, its output did not tread on the staple texts that the manuscript industry produced. Mehmed ‘Alī’s state appears to be the first Ottoman government to communicate with the urban public via the printed word, as seen through the state’s gazette, pamphlets, and proclamations. But these genres did not interfere with manuscript production, and indeed some of the government’s printed output endorsed scribal production. Printed *ḥujja*, for example, functioned in conjunction with the manuscript industry by requiring a scribe’s hand to render them valid. Commissioned governmental printings did impact Cairo’s booksellers and part-time copyists, however. Because many *multazimūn* commissioned popular manuscript titles, their printings threatened the work of copyists. On the other hand, booksellers could have had more texts to sell than ever through the multiple copies of a title generated from single print-runs.

Finally, the government’s commissioning system established a quasi-private printing industry in Cairo. As the orientalist Thomas Xavier Bianchi (1783-1864) noted of the *multazim* system in 1842, “...the best and the most important printing, for some time now, for a small fee, has been opened up (*abandonée*) by the government to private publishers (*à des éditeurs particuliers*)...”¹⁹⁸ In turn, this phenomenon inspired the development of Cairo’s privately run printing presses in the 1850s. The private presses emerged with the commissioning system at their core, and they blended elements of

¹⁹⁸ Bianchi, 1843, p. 25.

manuscript and governmental commissioning into their function.¹⁹⁹ Accordingly, the city's first private presses drew from Azharites who generated most of the city's manuscript texts and acted as governmental *multazimūn*.²⁰⁰

It is important to understand how Cairo's governmental printing industry worked because scholars can misconstrue the significance of texts composed during the nineteenth century. For example, by finding it "curious" when a manuscript was not printed,²⁰¹ or by assuming that unprinted texts were "banned" by the government.²⁰² This

¹⁹⁹ Refer to chapter five.

²⁰⁰ Refer for example to the Azharite scholar Bakrī al-Ḥalabī, who commissioned the printing of a commentary by Muḥammad Damanhūrī (d. 1871/1872) from Būlāq in 1856 (Damanhūrī, 1856, p. 63). During the same period, Bakrī al-Ḥalabī commissioned lithographic printings from a Cairene private press, sometimes with partners (see for example: Khudārī, Muḥammad. *Ḥāšiya 'alā Šarḥ Ibn 'Aqīl 'alā Alfīyat Ibn Mālik*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar an-Nayyira al-Laṭīfa, 1856, p. 722; and Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad. *Hādhihi Ḥāšiyat Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī 'alā al-matn al-musamā bi-as-Sullam al-bahī li-'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Akhḍarī*. N.p., Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar al-fākhira al-bahīya az-zāhira, 1857, p. 110).

²⁰¹ See for example: Hamzah, Dyala. "Nineteenth-century Egypt as dynastic locus of universality: the history of Muhammad 'Ali by Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Rajabi." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Volume 27, Number 1, 2007, pp. 62-82, p. 82.

Hamzah asks: "How and why is it that no apparent attempt seems to have been made at printing Rajabi's modern work, when all the while medieval *jihadi* treatise *Fada'il al-jihad* was being published on the press of Bulaq?" (*Ibid.*). Refer also to the text in question: Rajabī, Khalīl ibn Aḥmad. *Tārīkh al-wazīr Muḥammad 'Alī Bāšā, taḥrīrūn Dānyāl Krīsīliyūs, Ḥamza 'Abd al-'Azīz Badr, Muḥammad Ḥusām ad-Dīn Ismā'īl*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Āfāq al-'Arabīya, 1997.

²⁰² Refer to the prevailing historiographical view that Meḥmed 'Alī and his descendants blocked the work of the Cairene chronicler 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (1753-1825) from being printed.

This notion has yet to be supported with documentation from Egyptian governmental sources, so far as I am aware. It appears to have been generated by the Austrian orientalist Alfred von Kremer (1828-1889), and substantiated by the historian

chapter has helped to explain why Cairenes chose to publish some types of texts over others on the governmental presses. It has done so with an emphasis on optionality and commerce.

Manuscript production, governmental printing, and private printing account for all nineteenth century Cairene writing. I therefore weave these three industries together with a particular emphasis upon the development of private printing in chapter five.

David Ayalon (1914-1988) in 1960 (refer to: Ayalon, David. "The Historian al-Jabartī and his background." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 23:2, 1960, pp. 217-249, pp. 229-230; refer also to the text in question: Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān. *Tārīkh ‘ajā’ib al-āthār fī at-tarājim wa al-akhbār*. Bairūt: Dār al-Jīl, 1983). It has circulated amongst scholars since then. See for example: Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, Smuel Moreh and Robert L. Tignor (trans.). *Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi Miṣr; Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabartī's chronicle of the first seven months of the French occupation, 1798*. Princeton: M. Wiener, 1993, p. 5; Jabartī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān and Jane Hathaway (ed.). *Al-Jabartī's History of Egypt*. New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009, p. xxxi; and Fahmy, 2009, p. 115.

CHAPTER FIVE. Private Printing, and the Manuscript and Governmental Printing Industries of Ottoman Cairo, ≈1850 – 1882.

It reminds me of that old joke - you know, a guy walks into a psychiatrist's office and says, "Hey, doc, my brother's crazy! He thinks he's a chicken." Then the doc says, "Why don't you turn him in?". Then the guy says, "I would, but I need the eggs."

-Woody Allen, *Annie Hall*, 1977.

Historiographically speaking, where are Ottoman Cairo's private printers?

Historians of modern Egypt make great claims about the late nineteenth century on the basis of private press publications. Nationalism,¹ political dissidence,² Enlightenment,³ and cultural renaissance,⁴ or the *Nahḍa*, have been assigned their origins and their proof

¹ See for example: Gasper, Michael. *The Power of representation: publics, peasants, and Islam in Egypt*. California: Stanford University Press, 2009.

² See for example: Cole, Juan R. I. *Colonialism and revolution in the Middle East: social and cultural origins of Egypt's 'Urabi movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993; and Khuri-Makdisi, Ilham. *The Eastern Mediterranean and the making of global radicalism, 1860-1914*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

³ See for example: Glass, Dagmar. *Der Muqtaṭaf und seine öffentlichkeit: Aufklärung, rasonnement und meinungsstreit in der frühen Arabischen zeitschriftenkommunikation*. Würzburg: Ergon, c2004.

⁴ Refer to Anouar Abdel-Malek's remark: "It is there...within the Ottoman Empire, where the fundamental contribution of Egypt resides, State and nation, with the progress of education, of the press and of publishing – the luminaries, in the Arab and Islamic world of the past – during this period which would later appear as having been the one of revolution's gestation and national renaissance" (Abdel-Malek, Anouar. *La Formation de l'idéologie dans la renaissance nationale de l'Égypte (1805-1892)*. Paris: s.n., 1969, p. 185). Also see: Gendzier, Irene L. *The Practical visions of Ya 'qub Sanu'*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966; and El-Ariss, Tarek. *Trials of Arab modernity: literary affects and the new political*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.

in private printings from the 1870s and 1880s.⁵ But this narrative of a Cairene printed modernity draws from scholars' expectation for popular printings to engender modern public discourse,⁶ as much as it relies upon the words that these printings actually contain.⁷ When scholars touch upon the private presses that produced these printings, they present them as fully formed, long-standing businesses that functioned just as European private presses did. Like Woody Allen's proverbial chicken-brother, scholars envisage these presses as normal Ottoman phenomena because they need the writings of the equally extra-ordinary 'journalists' who printed from them.⁸ Very little scholarship

⁵ For a critique of the role that printing plays in the historiography of the *Nahḍa*, refer to: Sajdi, Dana. "Print and its discontents. A case for pre-print journalism and other sundry print matters." *The Translator*, Vol. 15, Number 1 (2009), pp. 105-138, pp. 113 & 123-124.

⁶ Such an approach is informed by the work of: Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983; and Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989.

⁷ Refer for example to Ami Ayalon's portrayal of clandestine politics in: Ayalon, Ami. "Inscribing the public domain: arabic placards, proclamations and handbills." *Printing and publishing in the Middle East. Papers from the second symposium on the history of printing and publishing in the languages and countries of the Middle East, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, 2-4 November 2005. Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 24*, edited by Philip Sadgrove. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 155-164. See also Rashid Khalidi's call for the press to be studied as a source for Arab nationalism in: Khalidi, Rashid. "'Abd al-Ghani al- 'Uraisi and *al-Mufid*: the press and Arab nationalism before 1914." *Intellectual life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, edited by Marwan R. Buheiry. Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981, pp. 38-61.

⁸ Şerif Mardin wrote of the Ottoman Empire, for example: "A second aspect of modernization was the importation of new roles. The role of the journalist was crucial in regard to bridging the cultural gap. The young Ottomans who brought modern journalism into the Empire were from the beginning committed to the role of supporters of 'the people.' This was a novel conception, quite unlike the old idea of the welfare of the *reaya*, the term formerly used of the non-elite. The new generation's concern for 'the

exists about where Cairene presses came from, how they functioned, who ran them, and what their owners sought to accomplish.

In this chapter, I trace the contours of private printing in Cairo from its lithographic beginnings in the 1850s up until its typographic codification during the historiographically all-important late nineteenth century. I situate private printing within the constellation of manuscript production and governmental printing to show why and how it developed as it did. Moreover, I demonstrate that these developments were more Ottoman Cairene in nature than they were European. I argue that the private printing industry developed from the people, places, practices, and tools that constituted Cairo's manuscript and governmental printing industries. I do this through the experiences of two families of printers, the Šāhīns and the Kāstalīs, whose stories I trace through the novel methodological approach of aggregating the colophons and content of their formal and ephemeral output.⁹ This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the development and function of Cairene private presses during the nineteenth century. It also explains the development of the professional Cairene printer. Finally, it encourages

people' ruled out elitism....In the 1870s Ottoman journalism produced other anti-elitist ideas. Some of these were contained in the doctrine of constitutionalism, but an equally important ideological strain was the legitimation of 'the man in the street'" (Mardin, Şerif. "Power, civil society and culture in the Ottoman Empire." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11:3 (Jun., 1969), pp. 258-281, pp. 275-276). But journalism as a profession only arose in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. See for example: Salmon, Richard. *The Formation of the Victorian literary profession*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁹ Most of the Šāhīn and Kāstalī printings that I encountered belong to the libraries of Harvard University and Leiden University. Because many libraries catalog these printings without reference to the presses that produced them, I suspect that researchers in other libraries that preserve nineteenth century Cairene printings will come across more examples of their work.

scholars to consider publications via their long-neglected printers instead of just their authors and particular genres like the newspaper.

A. A Comment on the Sources.

If there are any extant private press archives that predate 1882, I do not know about them. But despite our lack of records for these presses, the texts that they produced serve as witnesses to printers' strategies, proclivities, and capacities. The printings themselves often indicate the types of works that presses specialized in, where they based themselves, how they printed, when they operated, and whom they involved. When we look at the corpus of a given press's printings, as opposed to just the books that it produced, or one particular journal title, a narrative appears about that press and what it did to survive. When we follow the people, fonts, and decorative motifs that various presses employed, we can see how presses often grew from one another. And when we compare what the private presses printed alongside the texts that copyists and governmental presses produced, we learn how these industries worked with and against one another. I therefore rely on the printings as texts and as objects to speak for the people who produced them.

B. Historiography.

Most of the little scholarly treatment that exists on Cairene private presses is devoted to particular presses;¹⁰ particular types of private printings, like chapbooks;¹¹

¹⁰ See for example: Pinto, Olga. "Mose Castelli, tipografo Italiano al Cairo." *A Francesco Gabrieli. Studi orientalistici offerti nel sessantesimo compleanno dai suoi colleghi e discepoli*. Rome: Giovanni Bardi, 1964, pp. 217-223; and Ryad, Umar. "A

particular forms of printing, like lithography;¹² and to the general development of private presses and stationers throughout the Ottoman Middle East.¹³ Over the course of my research, I have encountered just one book devoted to the private presses of nineteenth century Egypt: Maḥmūd Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭanāḥī's *The Printed book in Egypt in the nineteenth century*.¹⁴ While all of these works are pioneering, some engage with the

printed Muslim 'lighthouse' in Cairo *al-Manār*'s early years, religious aspiration and reception (1898-1903)." *Arabica* 56: 2009, pp. 27-60.

¹¹ See for example: Marzolph, Ulrich. "Adab in transition. Creative compilation in nineteenth century print tradition." *Israel oriental studies XIX. Compilation and creation in adab and luḡa. Studies in memory of Naphtali Kinberg (1948-1997)*, edited by Albert Arazi, Joseph Sadan, and David J. Wasserstein. US: Eisenbrauns, 1999, pp. 161-172; and Khayyat, Latif. "The Style and contents of Arabic folk material in chapbooks found in the New York Public Library." *Fabula*, 28, 1987, pp. 59-71.

¹² See for example: Gacek, Adam. *Arabic lithographed books in the Islamic Studies Library, McGill University. Descriptive catalogue*. Montreal: McGill University Libraries, 1996, pp. 1-6; Proudfoot, Ian. "Mass producing Hourī's moles, or aesthetics and choice of technology in early Muslim book printing." *Islam: essays on scripture, thought and society: a festschrift in honour of Anthony H. Johns*, edited by Peter G. Riddell and Tony Street. New York: Brill, 1997, pp. 161-184; and Messick, Brinkley. "On the question of lithography." *Culture & History*, 16, 1997, pp. 158-176.

¹³ See for example: Ayalon, Ami. *The Press in the Arab Middle East: a history*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, chapters two and three; and Ayalon, Ami. "Arab booksellers and bookshops in the age of printing, 1860-1914." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:1, (2010), pp. 73-93.

¹⁴ Ṭanāḥī, Maḥmūd Muḥammad. *Al-Kitāb al-maṭbū' bi-Miṣr fī al-qarn at-tāsi' 'aṣar: tāriḫ wa taḥlīl*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Hilāl, 1996.

There are a few works that address Egyptian private presses before 1882 briefly. See for example: Sa'īd Dāwud's study on Egyptian private presses of the twentieth century (Dāwud, as-Sa'īd. *An-Naṣr al-'ā'ilī fī Miṣr: dirāsa ta'ṣīlīya*. Cairo: al-S. Dāwud, 2008, pp. 75-79). I am grateful to Natalia Suit for directing me to this book. See also: Šābāt, Khalīl. *Tāriḫ at-ṭibā'a fī aṣ-Šarq al-'Arabī*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1958, pp. 192-196; and Salāma, Ḥabīb. "Lamḥat 'an an-naṣr al-'arabī." *Naṣr kitāb al-fann*, by Chandler B. Grannis and translated by Ḥabīb Salāma. Al-Qāhira: Dar an-Naḥḍa al-'Arabīya, 1965, pp. 1-39, pp. 1-6.

wider teleological narratives of printing that I have tried to historicize within this dissertation. Those devoted to private presses emphasize each press's particularities instead of considering the ways in which these presses worked together. Finally, these works do not consider how private printing functioned alongside Cairo's manuscript and governmental printing industries.

C. Private Printing in Cairo.

Private printing occurred in Egypt before the 1850s. Small Jewish presses printed Hebrew texts in Cairo during the early modern era,¹⁵ and European printers printed in European languages in Alexandria from at least the first decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ These European presses, like that of the Sicilian Gaspare Sevaglios, produced formal texts like books, and less formal texts like broadsides.¹⁷ Henry Salt (1780-1827), the artist cum Egyptologist cum British consul-general to Egypt, printed his fifty-three page *Egypt: a descriptive poem with notes by a traveller* anonymously in fifty copies at The European Press of Alexandria.¹⁸ Salt's closing note to his coterie of readers provides

¹⁵ Refer to chapter two.

¹⁶ Dodwell, Henry. *The Founder of modern Egypt: a study of Muhammad 'Ali*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 31.

¹⁷ Sevaglios came to print in Alexandria via Malta (FO 78/112, The National Archives, Kew, UK, p. 35).

¹⁸ Refer to the notes for the text held at Houghton Library at Harvard University (Salt, Henry. *Egypt: a descriptive poem with notes by a traveller*. Alexandria: Alexander Draghi at the European Press, 1824. *EC8.Sa373.824e, Houghton Library, Harvard University).

the sense that the European presses of Alexandria worked like European presses in Europe:

This poem was printed with a view to divert the Author's attention, whilst suffering under severe affliction as well as to give encouragement to a very worthy man, the Printer. It is the first English work [*i.e.*, as opposed to Italian] carried out through the press in Alexandria, and, as the compositor was entirely ignorant of the language in which it is written, the difficulties, that existed, in correcting the proof sheets, may be easily imagined. This, it is hoped, may excuse many errors. The notes are unavoidably delayed.¹⁹

Just as in Europe, European printers in Alexandria struggled to get by, accepted printing jobs that exceeded their capacity, made typos, and fell behind schedule. The Ottoman governor of Egypt, Meḥmed 'Alī (r. 1805-1848), understood this according to one European account. In the attempt to explain the nature of the Society of Frankfort to him, it was suggested that the society's scholars were "possessed of no stock but books, and had no capital." In response to this, Meḥmed 'Alī was quoted as saying "so much the worse...then they are *sahhaftehi* (booksellers), who carry on their business without money, like the Franks at Cairo and Alexandria."²⁰

So many Europeans settled in Alexandria that by 1832, European travelers to Egypt found the city almost perfectly "civilized": "Other amusements, adapted to the taste of civilised nations, are likewise obtainable [in Alexandria]; music parties, conversazione, soirees, balls, routs, dinners, wine, dancing-girls, &c. A book-club, consisting of the most respectable residents, has recently been commenced; a newspaper,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, unnumbered final page.

²⁰ "Indian and colonial intelligence." *The Oriental herald, and colonial review*. London: J. M. Richardson, No. I, Vol. I., January to April, 1824, p. 177.

in French and Arabic, is published by the Pasha [*i.e.*, Mehmed ‘Alī]; but a bookseller’s shop, and an Egyptian review and magazine, are still wanting.”²¹ Newspapers contributed to Europeans’ perception that Alexandria was civilized, but to rate as fully civilized, Alexandria still needed good European journals and a bookshop. By 1871, European Alexandrians had filled those gaps in spades.²² Alexandria struck travelers as so western that they did not even consider that their arrival there marked the start of Egypt: “We had always heard that Alexandria was perfectly uninteresting as a city, & looking forward to Cairo, had expected little at Alexandria, had indeed thought little about it, having been told that “the East” began at Cairo.”²³

Instead of the European private presses of Alexandria, I focus on ‘eastern’ Cairo²⁴

²¹ St. John, James Augustus. *Egypt, and Mohammed Ali; or, travels in the valley of the Nile*. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, Paternoster-row, 1834, vol. II, p. 358.

²² Refer to the list of European newspapers, bookstores, and stationers in Alexandria in: Levernay, Francois. *Guide-annuaire d'Égypte; statistique, administrations, commerce, industries, agriculture, antiquités, etc. avec les plans d'Alexandrie & du Caire. Année 1872-1873*. Caire: Typographie Francaise Delbos-Demouret, 1872-1873, pp. 182 & 234-236.

²³ M. R. Parkman diary. Entry from Sunday, 5 March 1871. Mss Col 2339. Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, p. 13.

²⁴ Some western visitors to Cairo observed that parts of the city, like the gardens of Azbakīya, were becoming westernized from the 1850s onwards (Mestyan, Adam. “Power and music in Cairo: Azbakiyya.” *Urban History*, 40, 4, 2013, pp. 681-704, p. 686). However, the changes made to the city during the 1870s marked an uptick in the articulation of this view (AlSayyad, Nezar. “‘Ali Mubarak’s Cairo: between the testimony of ‘*Alamuddin* and the imaginary of the *Khitat*.” *Making Cairo medieval*, edited by Nezar alSayyad, Irene Beirman, and Nasser Rabbat. New York: Lexington Books, 2005, pp. 49-66, pp. 49, & 56-57; and Ahmed, Heba Farouk. “A dual city?” *Ibid.*, pp. 143-172). The Hungarian orientalist Ignác Goldziher (1850-1921) articulated this point in 1873: “The first impression which the gaslit Cairo made on me was not a

and the advent of the Egyptian presses that printed for Egyptian consumption predominantly. These printed in Arabic and originated in Cairo. They based themselves around Cairo's traditional center for producing formal texts, al-Azhar Mosque. And in keeping with manuscript custom, the earliest Cairene private presses depended upon lithography to reproduce their texts.

i. Lithographic Printing, and its Appeal to Private Printers.

Unlike the earlier Jewish and European private presses, or even the governmental presses of Mehmed 'Alī, Cairo's first Arabic private presses used lithography instead of typography. Johann Alois Senefelder (1771-1834) invented lithography in Munich in 1798. The process functioned on the principle that grease and water repelled one another. The lithographer wrote on a slab of limestone with a steel pen, treated the face of the stone with water, and then pressed paper upon the stone to transfer the mirror image of the markings on the stone face onto the paper. While this technique supported the production of reflected images, lithographs of texts required a further innovation to save the copyist from mirror writing on the stone: transfer lithography.

Senefelder first published a description of transfer lithography in 1818, however

favorable one. I despise the European Orient, and what else is Cairo after all? I love that which is original and abominate the botched-up copy. Oh, if I could see again the dark bazaars of Damascus, could stumble after my heart's desire over sleeping dogs, and flee from this gaslit Orient, where Europe has spoiled everything healthy and tanned the honest Arab skins morally to death after French example" (Patai, Raphael. *Ignaz Goldziher and his oriental diary. A translation and psychological portrait*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987, p. 144, entry from 10 December 1873). I explore how Cairene printing was incorporated into this view of newfound westernization in chapter six.

he noted that European printers already employed the technique before then.²⁵ When and how transfer lithography arrived to Cairo's private presses remain a mystery to me. However, the temporal connection between the invention of transfer lithography and Cairenes' use of the technology in the first half of the nineteenth century suggests that Egyptians acquired the technique from Europeans.

Transfer lithography required transferring the text twice after composing it on transfer paper: first from the transfer paper onto the lithographic stone, and then from the lithographic stone onto the final printed paper. The printer treated the transfer paper with a gelatinous substance, wrote upon it with a lithographic crayon, or goose or crow quills, wet it, and placed it upon the lithographic stone. The ink stuck to the stone, while the transfer paper could be rubbed away.²⁶ From there, the printing operation carried on just as lithography normally would.

Texts produced by transfer lithography often lacked the crispness and clarity of direct printings from the lithographic stone.²⁷ This stemmed from imperfections with the transfer paper, and the greater possibility for smudging while transferring an image two times instead of just once. Very little is known about Cairo's lithographic printers. But

²⁵ Gascoigne, Bamber. *How to identify prints. A complete guide to manual and mechanical processes from woodcut to ink jet.* New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004, p. 20 a.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Twyman, Michael. *Early lithographed books. A study of the design and production of improper books in the age of the hand press with a catalogue.* London: Farrand Press & Private Libraries Association, 1990, p. 24.

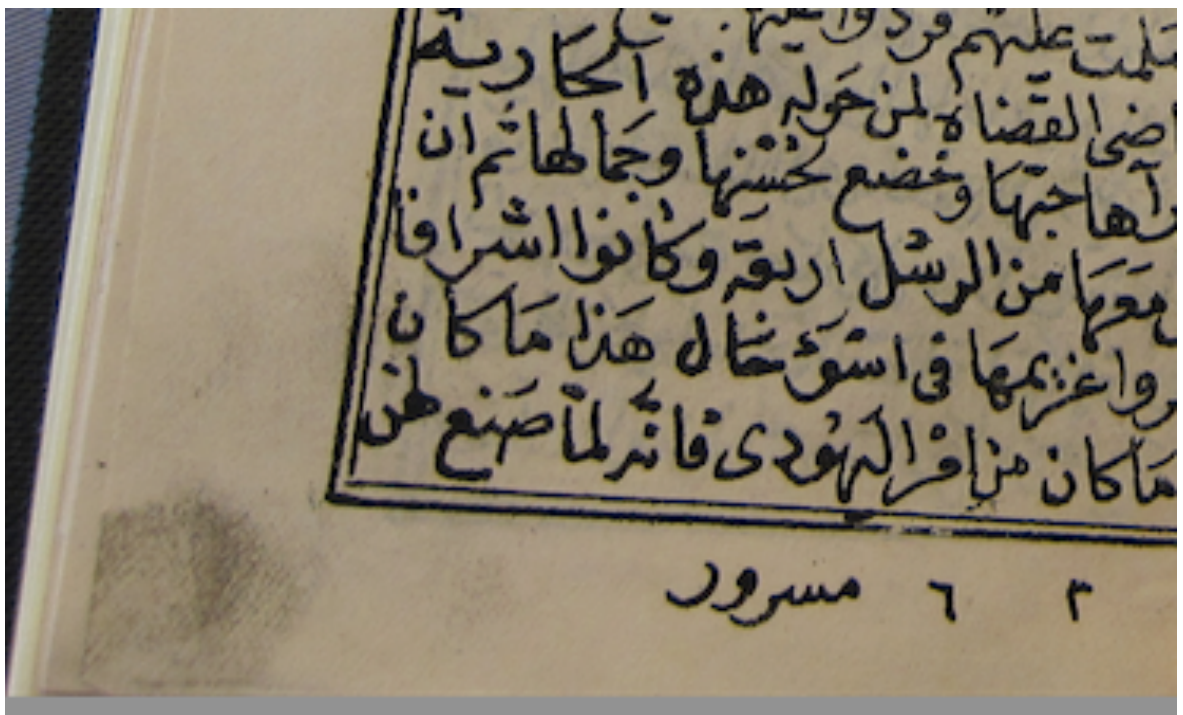
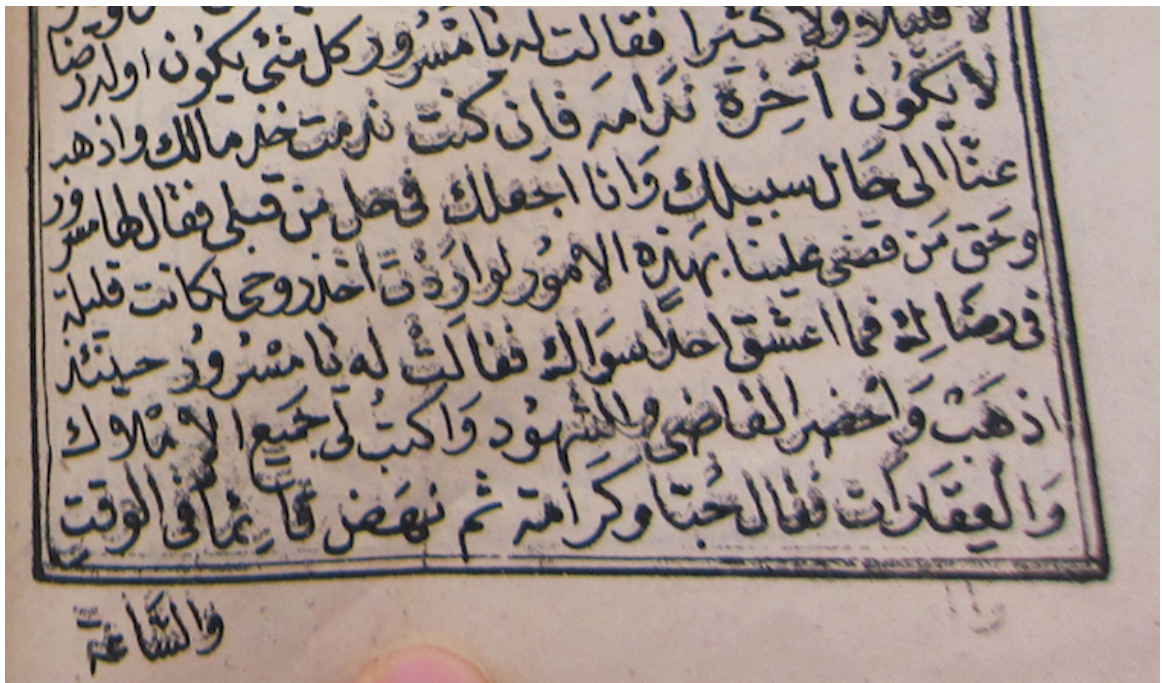


Image 5.1. Top: detailed view of a blurry text after a botched transfer. Bottom: a printing of a lithographer's fingerprints, Cairo, circa 1870.²⁸

²⁸ *Qiṣṣat masrūr at-tājir ma'a ma'sūqatihi Zayn al-Mawāṣiṣif*. N.p., s.n., n.d. 8203 F 8, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, pp. 8 & 41.

their fingerprints frequently adorn the margins of the texts they produced, leaving us with tantalizing traces of their identities.

Despite transfer lithography's drawbacks to direct lithography, it offered greater ease and speed in Arabic composition. Furthermore, transfer lithography allowed copyists to work away from the lithographic stone. As Cairene lithographic texts only state their place of printing, as opposed to their place of composition, it is unclear how this process unfolded. Some copyists described themselves as residents of al-Azhar mosque, so they could have copied their texts there. For example, the colophon of an 1856 lithographic printing ended with the epithet: "By the hand of [the book's] copyist, who seeks fairness from his forgiving Lord, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥājj Ismā'īl, known as the dark skinned from Nablus, the Damascene businessman (*al-faḥamāwī an-Nābulisī mu'āmalatan ad-Dimašqī*), Cairene by habituation (*aqlimatan al-Miṣrī*), Azharī by residence (*iqāmatan al-Azharī*), who is learned in and lives by the Hanafī rite, God forgive him and his two sons, and do right by them and him."²⁹ Copyists like Aḥmad could therefore have scored, copied, and corrected texts destined for the lithographic stone from the same places that they generated their manuscripts.

Let me also compare the utility of Arabic lithography to that of typography. From production to consumption, lithography accommodated Cairene resources and habits more effectively than did typography. Whereas Egypt lacked an abundant domestic supply of typographic presses and metal fonts, the territory already possessed limestone and copyists. The transfer paper required of textual lithography likely came from

²⁹ Khudaṛī, Muḥammad. *Ḥāšiya 'alā Šarḥ Ibn 'Aqīl 'alā Alfīyat Ibn Mālik*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar an-Nayyira al-Laṭīfa, 1856, p. 722.

Europe, however this import was far more practical than that of typographic equipment. All the more so given that Cairenes already imported European-made paper for their writings and printings.³⁰ Furthermore, lithographies took less time to compose than typographies did, and they required fewer skilled laborers and less space to be produced. Finally, lithographies appeared better integrated than typographies because they upheld the visual expectations of Cairenes who were accustomed to manuscripts. Their handwritten scripts flowed naturally, unlike the rigid typographies, and they supported traditional Cairene marginalia and manicules for calling readers' attention to particular areas of the text.³¹ And unlike Cairene typographies of the period, lithographies could carry accents that elucidated ambiguous Arabic grammar and syntax for their readers.³²

Arabic typography excelled over lithography in only two practical categories. Firstly, compositors could correct typographic errors during printing easily by rearranging the letter sorts that comprised their galley. By contrast, lithographers had to be careful not to disturb the wider lithographic stone or transfer paper. They could scrape the stone, or scratch the transfer paper to correct the mistake. But amending in-press lithographic errors required greater care than fixing typographic mistakes, and copyists

³⁰ Refer to chapter three.

³¹ See for example: Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad. *Hādhihi Ḥāšiya ustādhinā al-humām šaiḫ mašāyikh al-Islām al-fāḍil aš-Šaiḫ Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī*. N.p., s.n., 1863; and Ša'rānī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad. *Kitāb kašf al-ghumma 'an jamī' al-umma*. N.p., s.n., 1860/1861.

³² Compare for example: Ša'rānī, 1860/1861; and Tādilī, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. *Kitāb al-Wiṣāḥ wa-tathqīf ar-rimāḥ fī radd tawhīm al-majd aš-ṣiḥāḥ*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a al-Kubrā, 1865.

had to redraft offending pages anew. Post-print corrections also required extra effort from lithographers. Cairene lithographies tended not to feature errata pages, unlike their typographic counterparts.³³ So when lithographers only noticed a large mistake after they had finished printing, they amended the error by cutting out its surrounding area, and tipping in a fresh handwritten insert. With regard to correcting then, lithographers were

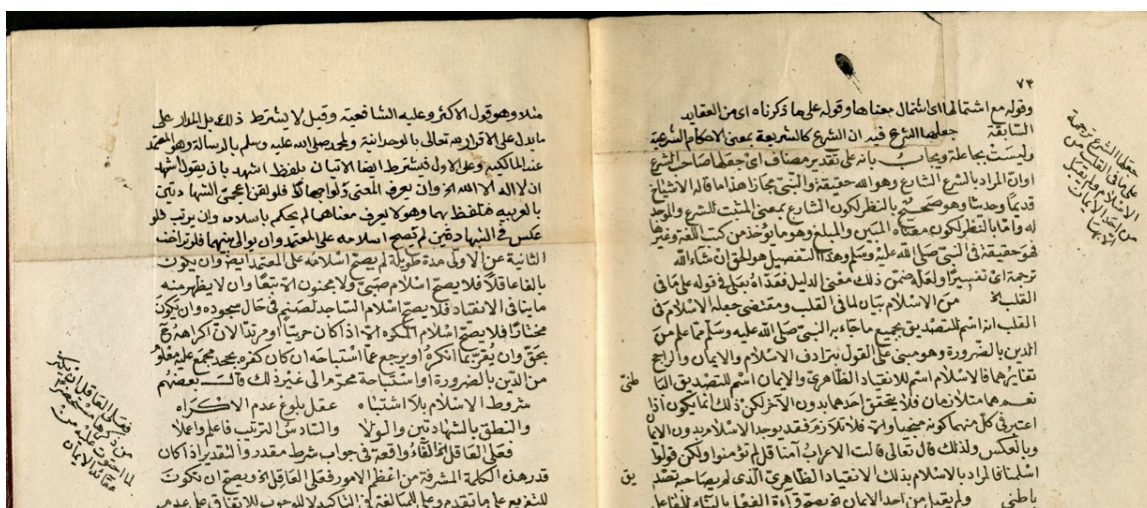


Image 5.2. Correcting lithographs with handwritten inserts. Detail of the top quarter of one page opening from a Cairene lithography printed in 1856, in which a tipped in insert bears handwritten lines of text.³⁴

at a comparative disadvantage to typographers.

Secondly, typography excelled over lithography with regard to the time required for printing each page, and the ultimate number of pages capable of being printed. In the mid-nineteenth century, European lithographers could produce no more than 100-120

³³ There were exceptions to this, however, like the errata page featured in the lithographic copy of: Šābb az-Zarīf, Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān. *Dīwān aš-Šābb az-Zarīf Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-‘Afīf at-Tilimsānī*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar, 1870/1871, p. 87.

³⁴ Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad. *Ḥāšiya ‘alā matn as-Sanūsīya*. Al-Qāhira: s.n., 1856. HOLLIS number: 006955855, Widener Library, Harvard University, pp. 73-74.

imprints from one stone per hour.³⁵ Their typographer counterparts could produce anywhere between 250-400 copies per hour depending on the type of handpress they employed. Furthermore, a prepared lithographic stone deteriorated faster upon impression than a page worth of typographic sorts did. Thus the number of impressions that a printer could make from sorts exceeded the number of possible printings from an inked up lithographic stone by a wide margin.

Crucially, however, lithography's disadvantages did not impact Cairene printing significantly due to the nature of the local private press. The lithographic pressed produced texts that were modeled on utilitarian manuscripts.³⁶ Copyists therefore corrected minor errors according to standard manuscript fashion, by crossing out offending bits or clarifying the correction in the margin.³⁷

Furthermore, the burden of upfront costs led private printers towards conservative print runs. While the governmental presses used state funding to back typographic print runs in the high hundreds and low thousands,³⁸ private lithographic presses appear to have bet low on quantity. They re-issued successful texts as and when the demand for them arose. For example, in 1864, Cairene lithographers produced two separate issues of

³⁵ Twyman, 1990, p. 20.

³⁶ Compare the aesthetics, for example, of: *Qiṣṣat al-qāḍī wa al-ḥarāmī qāṭi 'aṭ-ṭarīq*. *N.p., n.d.*, Hartford Seminary Arabic MSS 0991a, Beinecke Library, Yale University; and *Qiṣṣat al-qāḍī ma'a al-ḥarāmī*. *N.p., s.n., n.d.* 894 F15, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

³⁷ Refer for example to the treatment of errors and omissions in: aš-Ša' rānī, 1860/1861.

³⁸ Refer to chapter four.

a compilation of songs entitled *Safīnat al-mulk wa nafīsat al-fulk*.³⁹ Incidentally, but not coincidentally, as I will discuss below, this book’s author, Šihāb ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl (d. 1857), corrected texts at the governmental presses for thirteen years.⁴⁰ Both issues of *Safīnat al-mulk* amounted to a whopping 496 pages, and appear to have been written by the same copyist. They carry the same bibliographic information, and they certainly derive from the same manuscript, if the copyist did not use one lithography to copy the other.⁴¹ Yet a glance at their opening pages demonstrates that despite their identical wording, the press issued these books separately. This tactic made inefficient use of the copyist’s efforts, since the press had to commission two transfer paper copies of the same text. But it ultimately spared the press from locking up vast amounts of money in producing and storing any one particular work until it could be assured that

³⁹ Šihāb ad-Dīn, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl. *Safīnat al-mulk wa nafīsat al-fulk*. Al-Qāhira: s.n., 1864. HOLLIS number: 007122792, Widener Library, Harvard University; and Šihāb ad-Dīn, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl. *Safīnat al-mulk wa nafīsat al-fulk*. Al-Qāhira: s.n., 1864. 846 F 1, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands. I should point out that Ignác Goldziher admonished in 1874: “...I was informed that most of the books printed in the Orient have...doubtful indication of the date of publication” (Goldziher, Ignác and Adam Mestyan (trans.). “Report on the books brought from the orient for the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with regard to the conditions of the printing press in the orient,” in “Ignác Goldziher’s report on the books brought from the orient for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, LX/2 Autumn 2015, pp. 443-480, pp. 453-480, p. 477).

⁴⁰ Huart, Clément. *A history of Arabic literature*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1915, p. 423.

⁴¹ The chain of copying did not stop there. One of these lithographs from 1864 served as the basis for the 1891/2 Cairene typographic printing of *Safīnat al-mulk*, also in 496 pages, by al-Jāmi‘a Press (Šihāb ad-Dīn, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl. *Safīnat al-mulk wa nafīsat al-fulk*. Miṣr: Maṭba‘at al-Jāmi‘a, 1891/1892).



Image 5.3 The Opening pages of two issues of *Safinat al-mulk*, Cairo, 1864.⁴² The text flows from the top right-hand corner of the right-hand page, down to the bottom, and then back around to the top right-hand corner of the left-hand page. As is typical for Cairene books of the period, a decorative headpiece introduces the start of the text. The text of the book flows within a rectangular border, outside of which one often finds metatextual commentary and paratextual features like page numbers, signatures, and catchwords.

⁴² Šihāb ad-Dīn, 1864, HOLLIS number: 007122792, Widener Library, pp. 2-3; and Šihāb ad-Dīn, 1864, 846 F 1, Special Collections, Leiden University, pp. 2-3.

the title would sell.⁴³ On balance then, even lithography's practical disadvantages to typography benefited private Cairene printers.

Why, then, did the governmental presses not employ lithography for the textual content of their formal printings, even the very short ones? Although Meḥmed 'Alī's state purchased lithographic presses from Europe, it reserved lithography for diagrams tipped into the backs of books.⁴⁴ European private presses in Alexandria also favored typography, although they did so more justifiably since they printed in European languages.⁴⁵ In both of these cases it appears that the European attitude towards lithography impacted its development in Egypt. European printers in Egypt, and Cairene governmental printers, eschewed lithography in accordance with the European preference for typography.

⁴³ We also see this tactic described by a lithographic printer in: 'Idwī, Ḥasan. *Mašāriq al-anwār fī fawz ahl al-i'tibār*. N.p., s.n., 1860, (third and second from last pages). See below.

⁴⁴ See for example the hand-colored lithographs at the back of: Lacroix, Silvestre François. *Hādhā kitāb tahdhib al-'ibārāt fī fann akhdh al-masāḥāt*. Būlāq: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā'a al-'Āmira, 1844; the separate volume of lithographs allotted in: Jāsīmīl and Aḥmad Afandī Nadā (trans.). *Kitāb al-azhār al-badī'a fī 'ilm aṭ-ṭabī'a*. Al-Qāhira: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā'a al-'Āmira, 1874, 3 vols.; and the use of lithography for illustrations in: Ḥasan, Ḥusanī. *Is'āf al-as'ād bi mā ḥaṣala al-šābūr al-'awwād*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba'at Būlāq, 1875.

⁴⁵ For a list of these presses in the first half of the nineteenth century, refer to: Sadgrove, Philip. "The Development of the Arabic periodical press and its role in the literary life of Egypt (1798-1882)." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1983, pp. 48-50 & 532-539; and for the second half of the nineteenth century, refer to: Sadgrove, Philip. "The European press in Khedive Isā'il's Egypt (1863-66): a neglected field." *Printing and publishing in the Middle East. Papers from the second symposium on the history of printing and publishing in the languages and countries of the Middle East, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, 2-4 November 2005. Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 24*, edited by Philip Sadgrove. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 109-128.

ii. *The European Attitude towards Lithography, and Lithography's 'Passage to Cairo.'*

In the 1830s, French lithographers complained that typographic printers and society at large failed to appreciate the advantages of lithography. L. Benoist de Matougues warned that society would come to regret this familiar mistake:

Guttenberg, who discovered [typographic] printing, was made miserable by his discovery, he lived and died in misery. This will pass, some said; this is madness, said others; he is a wizard, some said. In any case, his knowledge of spells did not serve him well; and yet he bequeathed to future generations an art that made their fortune and their splendor. As what influence does the discovery of printing not exercise on modern societies! Influence on their ideas, influence on their customs, influence on their forms of government, influence on the fate of their working masses. Well! Whether the majority of Guttenberg's contemporaries did not believe in his discovery, or whether they just ignored it, they did not believe in it until they saw it beginning to succeed. Yes, they said, the idea could be useful...If [typographic] printing had a difficult beginning, lithography also possessed hard times.⁴⁶

To Benoist de Matougues, Europeans' reception of lithography was unjustifiably lukewarm. He suggested that the societal impediments facing lithography harkened back to those that typography had encountered. Furthermore, he implied that lithography's tepid reception undermined the progress of European society by delaying yet another revolution in the Republic of Letters. Ultimately though, Benoist de Matougues argued that European society would recognize and embrace lithography's benefits.

A familiar figure to nineteenth century France and Egypt concurred with Benoist

⁴⁶ Benoist (de Matougues). "Des progrès de la lithographie." *Le Lithographe, journal des artistes et des imprimeurs, publiant tous les procédés connus de la lithographie, avec leurs différentes modifications, signalant les découvertes nouvelles dans cet art, et rendant un compte impartial de ses productions, rédigé par des lithographes*. Paris: Au bureau du journal, 1838, vol. 1, pp. 172-177, pp. 174-175.

de Matougues's assessment: Edme François Jomard (1777-1862). Jomard first ventured to Egypt for Bonaparte's campaign (1798-1801), where he served as an engineer and a cartographer. Later, Meḥmed 'Alī incorporated Jomard into his regime, most famously with regard to developing and facilitating Meḥmed 'Alī's student missions in Paris.⁴⁷ Jomard shaped the curriculum that the students learned from, and he likely abetted the Egyptian government's acquisition of lithographic technology. From Paris in 1837, Jomard wrote in response to Benoist de Matougues's essay that he found his claims "fair" and "valuable."⁴⁸ He noted that lithography "still has adversaries, even amongst eminent men" because it unsettled their longstanding interests.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, he argued that "impartial people, and sincere friends of their country...ought to avow the importance of lithography to all conditions."⁵⁰ Jomard regretted that thirty years earlier, lithography could not yet produce high-quality drawings that befitted a "national work" when he mounted the *Description de l'Égypte*.⁵¹ But he noted that he had just recently used lithography for the drawings within his published account of his visit to eastern Egypt.

⁴⁷ Refer to: Silvera, Alain. "Edme-François Jomard and Egyptian reforms in 1839." *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Oct. 1971, pp. 301-316. Meḥmed 'Alī also commissioned Jomard to compose almanacs for him (At-Ṭaḥṭāwī, Rifā'a Rāfi' and Daniel L. Newman (trans.). *An Imam in Paris: account of a stay in France by an Egyptian cleric (1826-1831) (Takhliṣ al-ibriz fī talkhīs Bārīz aw al-dīwān al-nafīs bi-Īwān Bārīs)*. London: Saqi Books, 2011, pp. 374-377).

⁴⁸ Jomard, M. "Des progrès de la lithographie. Lettre de M. Jomard." *Le Lithographe*, pp. 201-205, p. 203.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

Jomard's ideas about lithography's utility and significance derived from the wider European attitude towards the technology, rooted as it was in a typographic worldview. Although Jomard endorsed Benoist de Matougues's call for printers to embrace lithography, he did so with regard to lithography's advantages for reproducing drawings and designs. He restricted lithography's import to images, instead of considering its application to texts. Jomard's position on lithography and his influence over the Egyptian government's acquisition of European learning may have impacted the government's printing practices. The governmental presses certainly mirrored these European currents through their restricted use of lithography throughout the nineteenth century.

Ironically, given lithography's unpropitious treatment by Egypt's governmental presses, several Parisian lithographers set up shop on the street called *Passage du Caire* in the 1830s.⁵² But lithography's "passage" to Cairo remained unremarkable until the rise of Cairene private printing in the early 1850s. Whereas the governmental presses could afford the inefficiencies of Arabic typography, the private presses could not. So when private Cairene presses began to form, their constituent members gravitated towards lithography. These men did not seem to mind that most Europeans held lithography in low regard. Nor did they limit lithography's use to the pictorial.

Aṭ-Ṭanāḥī reported that the earliest Arabic Cairene private press was the

⁵² Dickens, Charles. *Dickens's dictionary of Paris, 1883. An unconventional handbook*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1883, p.188.

lithographic Maṭba‘a al-Afandī, or Effendi Press, which operated around 1835.⁵³ He derived this conclusion from the lifespan of one of the press’s printed authors, Ḥasan al-‘Attār (d. 1834/1835). Aṭ-Ṭanāḥī’s dating is tenuous because we have no reason to assume that al-‘Aṭṭār’s commentary was printed before his death. Previous Egyptian scholars also used al-‘Aṭṭār’s lifespan to claim that an “Effendi Press” operated from 1835, and their conclusion suffers from the same weakness.⁵⁴ I have not been able to consult a copy of this text. However, I did find a Cairene lithographic text from the same Effendi Press that is misattributed to 1813/1814.⁵⁵ It was actually produced sometime between the 1850s and the early 1860s.⁵⁶ But the book’s colophon gives us insight into

⁵³ Ṭanāḥī, 1996, p. 97. I should note that another scholar recorded the first Cairene private printing press as Maṭba‘at ‘Abd ar-Rāziq operating sometime around 1837 (Ṣabāt, 1958, p. 166).

⁵⁴ For a brief discussion of the first work to claim the Effendi Press’s beginnings in the 1830s, refer to: Hsu, Cheng-Hsiang. “The First thirty years of Arabic printing in Egypt, 1238-1267 (1822-1851): a bibliographical study with a checklist by title of Arabic printed works.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 63 & 65-66. Notably, Hsu pointed out that this dating was questionable.

⁵⁵ Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad. *Hādhā Kitāb ḥāṣiyat al-‘alāma al-fāḍil al-ḥibr al-baḥr an-naḥrīr al-kāmil Ṣaiḥ maṣā’ikh al-Islām wa qadwat jamī‘ al-anām mawlānā aṣ-Ṣaiḥ Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī ‘alā matn al-Burda lil-‘Arif billāh ta‘ālā al-Būṣīrī. N.p., Maṭba‘at Aḥmad Afandī al-Azharī, n.d. Call number: 2269.22.567 1813, Firestone Library, Princeton University.*

Princeton’s catalog claims that this book was printed in 1813/1814. But like aṭ-Ṭanāḥī and his predecessors, Princeton’s librarians have confused the date attributed to the text’s composition, in manuscript form, for information regarding said text’s printing.

⁵⁶ This is because it corresponds to the printings from the mid-century period. For example, compare the headpieces found in: Bājūrī, Call number: 2269.22.567 1813, Firestone Library, p. 2; and Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *Laṭā’if al-minan fī manāqib aṣ-Ṣaiḥ Abī al-‘Abbās al-Mursī wa Ṣaiḥihi Abī al-Ḥasan al-aṣ-Ṣādhilī. N.p., s.n., 1860, p. 2. Moreover, the two men named in its colophon, the aforementioned Azharite scholar Aḥmad Effendi, and ‘Alī Mukhallalātī, were actively involved in*

the origins of the historiographical confusion surrounding the Effendi Press. For while it states that the text was compiled in 1813/1814, or 1229 *hijrī*, it does not provide the date of the text's printing.⁵⁷ Thus texts from this press tended not to list their dates of printing. And to the extent that they provided dates, these dates reflected the completion of the texts in their manuscript form. The idea that Cairene private printing began in the 1830s with the Effendi Press is therefore in doubt.

All of the European and Egyptian evidence that I have encountered suggests that Cairene private presses started cropping up in the early 1850s. A French list of foreign lithographers from 1838, for example, named presses in Algiers, Ottoman Smyrna, and even New York, but made no mention of Cairo.⁵⁸ Four years later, a French essay devoted to foreign lithography still made no mention of Egyptian presses.⁵⁹ Within Egypt, the lack of Cairene lithographers during the 1840s is also borne out through the absence of dated extant lithographic printings from this decade. I therefore privilege the Cairene printings themselves when I attribute the advent of Cairene private printing to the 1850s. In what follows, I use the intellectual and material information that these printings provide to tease out the private presses' heretofore neglected history.

printing and correcting printed texts during these mid-century decades (Refer, for example, to their mention in the colophons of: Dardīr, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *Ḥāšiyat 'alā Qiṣṣat al-Mi'rāj li-Najm ad-Dīn al-Ghayfī*. Cairo: s.n., 1858/1859, p. 54; and Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, 1860, p. 234).

⁵⁷ Bājūrī, Call number: 2269.22.567 1813, Firestone Library, p. 79.

⁵⁸ "Imprimeurs – lithographes à l'étranger." *Le Lithographe*, pp. xxiii-xviii, pp. xxxiii, xxxiv, & xxxv.

⁵⁹ "L'Art à l'étranger." *Le Lithographe*, 1842, vol. 3, pp. 241-244.

iii. The Interconnectedness of the Manuscript Industry, the Governmental Printing Industry, and the Lithographic and Typographic Private Printing Industries.

Just as the manuscript industry influenced the form and function of governmental printing, these two industries shaped Cairene private printing. Everything from the people who worked within these three industries, to the materials they used, to where they functioned and the content that they produced flowed symbiotically. Within this subsection, I illustrate this braid of competition and cooperation through two families of printers, the Šāhīns and the Kāstalīs. Because my focus is on the evolution of private printing, I privilege this strand of Cairene textual production as the vantage through which I present the manuscript and governmental printing industries. But in so doing, I provide an overview of each of these industries from Meḥmed ‘Alī’s death in 1849 until the British occupation of 1882.

1. Early Cairene Lithographic Private Presses.

Starting from as early as 1854,⁶⁰ a lithographic press began operating near the traditional Cairene center for manuscript production and consumption by al-Azhar mosque in Khān al-Khalīlī. We do not know the precise name of the press, the street that it worked from, or the people involved in copying or printing there. This information can only be gleaned haphazardly by comparing printings, and capitalizing on the incidental slips of information that copyists noted in their colophons.

⁶⁰ For this date, I rely upon: Alūsī, Maḥmūd ibn ‘Abdullah. *Šarḥ al-kharīda al-ghaybīya fī šarḥ al-qaṣīda al-‘aynīya*. N.p., s.n., 1854. HOLLIS number: 006944352, Widener Library, Harvard University.

If this press and others like it functioned for profit, why did its books not proudly proclaim such information? For two reasons: lithographers presented their works as manuscripts; and they had not yet adopted western methods for advertising and promoting their printings. One does not get the sense that lithographers tried to dupe consumers into buying ersatz manuscripts. Instead, early printings upheld manuscript customs because their printers had been reared on manuscripts. And they designed their output to appeal to people who shared this upbringing.

In keeping with manuscript tradition then, the earliest Cairene lithograph that I consulted ends with a date and a small prayer: “That which you see in writing (*min al-irqām*) was completed over a month and ten days, and that on the afternoon of Thursday the thirteenth of the month of *Rabī‘ ath-Thānī*, year 1270...we ask almighty God to transform our state into a better one, and praise be to almighty God for his forbearance...Amen.”⁶¹ That is to say, the printing ends just as any contemporary Cairene manuscript would. Manuscript copyists rarely noted the city from which they worked, let alone more personal information like their names or their motivations in copying.⁶² Nor did they explain how one might find them and how much their services cost.⁶³

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁶² For an example of the former, refer to: ‘Aṭṭār, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan. *Ḥāšiya ‘alā ‘uqūd al-maqūlāt*. *N.p.*, 1874. Hartford Seminary Arabic MSS 0428, Beinecke Library, Yale University, p. 42. For an example of the latter refer to: Suyūṭī, Or. 3056, Special Collections, Leiden University, p. 83.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

But the copyist provided two subtle clues to suggest that this lithograph was not actually a manuscript. Firstly, he noted that it took a whopping forty days to copy the plainly written 156-page book. Copyists tended not to mention the duration of their labor, even when they copied enormous texts.⁶⁴ Our anonymous copyist's boast about writing an average of 105 lines per day therefore seems excessive, were we not to recognize that a brand new technology was in the mix. Secondly, he used the rarely employed verbal noun "irqām" to denote his labors. "Irqām" frequently means "writing," but it also carries deeper nuances that encroach upon lithography like "inscribing," "tracing," and "imprinting." Whether our copyist employed "irqām" to represent "lithography," to furnish his readers with a *double entendre*, or to mean simply "writing" is anyone's guess. Nonetheless, small changes to the traditional formula suggested that something new was afoot.

Our copyist's anonymous lithography was printed by a consortium that operated alongside some others in Cairo during the 1850s and 1860s. I refer to them as "consortiums," instead of "presses" when they lack overt press names because it is unclear whether these consortiums kept separate presses, or whether they formed distinct syndicates that made common use of only a handful of presses. Their constituent members circulated between consortiums, and between the industries of manuscript and

⁶⁴ Even the copyist Ḥasan al-Fariḥ (or al-Farrā, as he provided alternate spellings for his name in the colophons of volumes one and four), for example, did not boast about the duration of his efforts after he copied four volumes of text amounting to 2,138 page openings in less than one year (Jamal, Sulaymān. *Ḥāšiyat al-Jamal 'alā tafsīr al-Jalalayn*. Cairo, 1845-1846, 4 vols. Or. 14.210 a-d, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, final pages of volumes I & IV).

print.⁶⁵ Lithographic printing did not seem to harden into an exclusive career during this period when the profession of the Cairene printer was developing. And even when groups labeled themselves with press names, it is unclear whether they owned their own press. This daunting state of affairs produces more questions than answers about the business and organization of Cairenes' print work. But certain patterns emerge from looking at the lithographs that they produced as a group to provide us with some insight into how the private printing industry functioned.

Because these consortiums produced lithographs from unnamed presses in Cairo during the same period, the work of each is indistinguishable bibliographically. But one can discern the unique corpus that each consortium produced by beholding their work visually, and by zeroing in on the usual sets of names that often appeared together. So far as I can tell, these consortiums amounted to around ten in number. One group frequently printed texts at the initiative, or "request to print," of one Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣabaḥī "nicknamed Badr ad-Dīn."⁶⁶ Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣabaḥī's son Nūr dabbled in commissioning lithographs too.⁶⁷ Another consortium pandered to the local elites' emerging taste for all things European. It printed "in connection with" a man called Yūsuf, who based himself in fashionable and nontraditional al-Mūskī, on "*ad-darb al-jadīd*," or "the new street," just a

⁶⁵ For example, lithographies were commissioned by stationers like Aḥmad Muṣaṭṭir al-Warrāq (Refer to: Gacek, 1996, book number 54, p. 42).

⁶⁶ See for example: Šarqāwī, Muḥammad aṣ-Šubrāwī. *Fawā'id al-'izz al-asnā fī šarḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*. N.p., s.n., 1862, p. 65; and Abū al-Mawāhib, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *Ibāḥat as-samā' wa al-maghānī*. N.p., s.n., 1861/1862, p. 30.

⁶⁷ See for example: *Uyūn al-ḥaqā'iq wa idāḥ at-ṭarā'iq*. N.p., s.n., 1862, p. 111.

few blocks beyond Khān al-Khalīl.⁶⁸ Yūsuf was either Christian or Jewish, because he went by the title *khawāja*, or mister. His honorific and location suggest that he cultivated European wares within the local sphere. Indeed, the lithograph he put forward was an Arabic translation of Jean de la Fontaine's (1621-1695) *Fables*. Yet another consortium relied consistently upon a copyist named Aḥmad Aḥmad al-Makhzanjī, the depot keeper, who copied small lithographic chapbooks on religion.⁶⁹ Another lithographic consortium operated with the Azharite Muḥammad Ša'rawī Raḍwān.⁷⁰ And another consortium, which listed no names at all, even printed lithographies of typographies published by the governmental press at Būlāq.⁷¹

Over time, these consortiums asserted the righteous nature of their work, even though many of them continued to operate without press names. One produced a printing that proclaimed “of the best things worth competing for is printing Islamic books to

⁶⁸ Jalāl, Muḥammad ‘Uthmān (trans.). *Al-‘Uyūn al-yawāqiz fī al-amthāl wa al-mawā‘iz*, by Jean de la Fontaine. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar, 1854, p. 147.

⁶⁹ See for example: Ḥulwānī, Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad. *Anḍar al-‘uqūd ‘alā bahjat al-wadūd fī faḍl Ašraf Mawlūd*. Cairo, s.n., 1867, p. 42; and Ṭanṭāwī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. *Majmū‘ yaštamilu ‘alā muqaddimat Ḥafṣ: wa yalīhā Matn as-Sanḥawīya thumma al-Jazarīya thumma at-Tuḥfa*. Cairo, s.n., 1866, p. 55.

⁷⁰ See for example: ‘Arabī, Muḥī ad-Dīn ibn. *Muḥāḍarat al-abrār wa musāmarat al-akhyār fī al-adabīyāt wa an-nawādir wa al-akhbār*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Muḥammad Ša'rawī Raḍwān, 1865/1866, vol. 2, p. 376; and Šabbān, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī. *Is‘āf ar-rāghibīn fī sīrat al-Muṣṭafā wa-faḍā’il ahl baytihi aṭ-ṭāhirīn*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Muḥammad Ša'rawī Raḍwān, 1864/1865, p. 75.

⁷¹ See for example: Abyārī, ‘Abd al-Hādī ibn Riḍwān Najā’. *Ḥāšiyat Zahrat aṭ-ṭal‘ an-naḍīd lil-ustādh al-Himām aš-Šaiḫ ‘Abd al-Hādī Najā al-Abyārī ‘alā šarḥ Iršād al-murīd lil-Fāḍil aš-Šaiḫ Ḥasan al-‘Idwī al-Ḥamzāwī*. Cairo: s.n., n.d. Compare to: Abyārī, ‘Abd al-Hādī ibn Riḍwān Najā’. *Ḥāšiyat Zahrat aṭ-ṭal‘ an-naḍīd*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kubrā, 1864.

revive the religion...”.⁷² The colophon to another lithograph offered an even stronger endorsement for its work when it proclaimed that “printing beneficial books and spreading the suns of its brilliant lights is among the best things to satisfy the eyes, and you won’t need [further] clarification or explanation beyond this book.”⁷³

How much these consortiums and the others like them overlapped remains unclear to me, although I imagine that they interacted heavily. They tended to produce shorter, more traditional works, often with religious and popular themes. For example, they printed sections of commentaries from the head of al-Azhar, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Bājūrī (d. 1859/1860),⁷⁴ amusing writings by Yusūf ibn Muḥammad aš-Šīrbīnī (d. 1687),⁷⁵ and chapbooks like *The Story of the judge and the thief* and *The Story of the cat and the mouse*.⁷⁶ In this sense, the early private presses complemented the innovative and longer printed texts put forward by the governmental presses.

Unlike the largely unconventional titles that the government published as

⁷² Šarqāwī, 1862, p. 48.

⁷³ *Uyūn al-ḥaqā’iq*, 1862, p. 111.

⁷⁴ See for example: Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad. *Ḥāšiyat al-Bājūrī ‘alā Bānat Su‘ād*. Cairo: s.n., 1856/1857; and Bājūrī, *Ḥāšiya ‘alā matn as-Sanūsīya*, 1856; and Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad. *Ḥāšiya ‘alā al-matn al-musamā bi-as-sullam al-bahī li-‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Akhḍarī*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar, 1857.

⁷⁵ See for example: Šīrbīnī, Yusūf bn Muḥammad. *Ṭarḥ al-madarra li-ḥall alā’ wa ad-durar*. Cairo: Ṭab‘ Ḥajar, 1868/1869.

⁷⁶ See for example: *Qiṣṣat al-qāḍī ma‘a al-ḥarāmī*, 894 F15, Special Collections, Leiden University; and *Qiṣṣat al-qīṭ ma‘a al-fa‘r*. Cairo: s.n., n.d. 894 F16, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

textbooks for its schools, like books on mechanics and engineering,⁷⁷ the private presses tended to publish conventional texts. The many extant eighteenth and nineteenth century manuscript copies of chapbooks like *The Story of the judge and the thief* and works by aš-Šīrbīnī suggest that the lithographers zeroed in on longstanding favorites.⁷⁸ Therefore, the aspects of the writing industry that the private presses threatened were those that revolved around commissioned texts with local popularity. The lithographers took commissioners away from the governmental presses, as I explain below. But they may not have posed an immediate threat to the manuscript industry, since their lithographs targeted the literate community surrounding al-Azhar.⁷⁹ Enthusiasts traditionally copied such manuscripts for their personal consumption, and more religious ones for their study at al-Azhar.⁸⁰ So while copyists may have lost some earnings through the advent of private lithographic presses, they may have welcomed the reprieve that printing offered them from this chore.

⁷⁷ Untitled catalog of books printed at the press at Būlāq. No date, approx. 1844. 14598 d 14, British Library, UK, pp. 2-12, pp. 10-11.

⁷⁸ For example: *Qiṣṣat al-qāḍī wa al-ḥarāmī*, Hartford Seminary Arabic MSS 0991a, Beinecke Library; and Šīrbīnī, Yusūf Ibn Muḥammad. *Hazz al-quḥūf fī šarḥ qaṣīd Abī Šādūf*, n.p., n.d., Hartford Seminary Arabic MSS 0056, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

⁷⁹ Salāma, 1965, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁰ Indeed, this pattern continued throughout the nineteenth century as people copied out printed chapbooks. See for example the astrological treatise copied from a Kāstaliya printing: *Mawālid ar-rijāl wa an-nisāʾ*. 1879/1880. Or. 14.059, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands (Witkam, Jan Just. *Inventory of the oriental manuscripts of the library of the University of Leiden, volume 15*. Leiden: Ter Lugt Press, 2007, vol. 15, p. 38).

Like Cairene manuscript copying and governmental printing, these lithographic consortiums also incorporated commissioning into their business model. It will be recalled that Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government allowed Cairenes to print books at its presses by permitting them to underwrite their publication costs.⁸¹ The state referred to these commissioners as *multazimūn*, or contractors, and it derived this system from the manuscript tradition for commissioning texts which allowed the governmental presses to assume the role of copyist for hire.⁸² The lithographic consortiums, in turn, resituated the government’s tradition within a domain that was at once handwritten and printed. A copyist would again be paid to write out a text, although this time on transfer paper. And the ultimate costs of publishing the text, being those associated with the copyist’s work in addition to those of the printer, would be shared amongst a handful of speculators.

Crucially however, the lithographers maintained an important quirk of the government’s practice within their own commissioned printings: they publicized the *multazimūn* within the colophons of the printings that they funded. While manuscripts rarely carried the names of their patrons, the state’s commissioned typographies listed their underwriters.⁸³ And the private printers’ perpetuation of this newfound habit for naming backers helps to lift some of the mystery surrounding the evolution of these presses.

⁸¹ Refer to chapter four.

⁸² Refer to chapter three.

⁸³ Compare, for example: Suyūfī, Or. 3056, Special Collections, Leiden University; and Amīn Effendi al-Izmīrī’s commissioning of: Senklâh-i Horasanî. *Tercüme-i Kaside-i Senklâh der medh-i İzmir*. Bülâq: Maṭba‘a Mişr al-Mahrûsa al-Kâ’ina bi-Bülâq, 1845.

2. *The Šāhīns, 1850s-1860s.*

a. *The Šāhīns as Commissioners at One Private Lithographic Press.*

The figure that I focus on in this subsection, Muḥammad Šāhīn, belonged to this private lithographic milieu. The earliest printing that I have found to feature him lists him as a *multazim* for a 722 page lithography of a supercommentary of a commentary on Ibn Mālik's (d. 1204) poem on grammar, the *Alfīya*, which was printed in 1856.⁸⁴

Unlike some of the other lithographic consortiums, the group that printed this *Ḥāšīya 'alā Šarḥ Ibn 'Aqīl* often declared its press name. Or perhaps more accurately, it often declared a name. The French practice of changing press names in Egypt, which later got play under the presses of Meḥmed 'Alī's state, did not cycle out of Cairene presses until the 1870s.⁸⁵ Accordingly, the colophons of texts from this press noted that Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar, literally “the stone press,” or “the lithographic press,” printed them. But after the fixed wording of “Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar,” the copyists who composed these colophons riffed on rhyming adjectives that continue to defy library catalogues to this day. And that is if the librarians who compiled the catalogues were tenacious enough to exhume the references to Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar from the wording that surrounded them. One of this group's colophons, for example, lists their press name as “The Dazzling Stone

⁸⁴ Khudārī, 1856, p. 722.

⁸⁵ Refer to chapter three.

Press Located in the Land of Cairo, the Victorious.”⁸⁶ Another reports the press name as “The Praised Stone Press of Well-Protected Cairo, the Happy.”⁸⁷

The lithograph of *Ḥāšiya ‘alā Šarḥ Ibn ‘Aqīl* was copied by Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥājj Ismā‘īl.⁸⁸ Given that Aḥmad copied a particularly long book, the colophon with which he ended the text was noticeably boastful. And it is here that we first find Muḥammad Šāhīn’s name:

Here ends the execution of the printing of this lofty supercommentary, at The Luminous and Nice Stone Press Located in Well-Protected Cairo, the Victorious, for whom God made noble books of knowledge (*ja ‘alaha allah bi-kutub al-‘ilm aš-šarīf*) beneficial and abundant, at the expense of its generous commissioners, the brightness of Aleppo (*Ḥalab aš-šahbā’*) and Damascus (*Dimašq aš-Šām*), the most learned and distinguished Šaikh Bakrī al-Ḥalabī, and the most learned and distinguished Šaikh Muḥammad Šāhīn, the venerable *Sayyid* Ḥāmid Salīq, and the respected *Sayyid* Darwīš ‘Afrāh, the Damascenes...⁸⁹

Aḥmad listed the names of the text’s commissioners at the colophon’s end. First, he connected the work of the press to piety through the promotion of learning. Then he proclaimed that God had made books for Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar to print. When he finally named the text’s commissioners, he presented their efforts as charitable, rather than profit seeking. He emphasized their societal standing, and where relevant, the extent of their

⁸⁶ The Arabic states: “Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar al-Bāhira al-Kā’ina bi-Arḍ Mišr al-Qāhira” (Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad. *Futūḥ Mišr wa a‘māluhā*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar al-Bāhira, 1859, p. 95).

⁸⁷ The Arabic states: “Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar al-Ḥamīda bi-Maḥrūsa Mišr as-Sa‘īda” (Šafadī, Khalīl ibn Aybak. *Law‘at aš-šākī wa dam‘at al-bākī*. Mišr: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar al-Ḥamīda, 1857/1858, p. 181).

⁸⁸ Khudārī, 1856, p. 722.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

learning.

Notably, the commissioners of this book hailed from Greater Syria, *aš-Šām*. Muḥammad Šāhīn, and the cast of characters with whom he speculated frequently, were non-native residents of Cairo. Still, as Aleppines and Damascenes in Cairo, they were not exactly foreign. They were Ottomans. The order in which the commissioners' names appeared and the length of the descriptions attributed to them suggest that their partnership was hierarchical. Muḥammad Šāhīn was junior to Bakrī al-Ḥalabī, and senior to Ḥāmid Salīq and Darwīš 'Afraḥ. This classification might have stemmed from the amount of money put up by each party. But it also reflected the wider Ottoman status of the commissioners. As *šaikhs*, Bakrī al-Ḥalabī and Muḥammad Šāhīn were perhaps older men. But it is clear from other sources that Bakrī al-Ḥalabī also bore this title because he trained in the religious sciences at al-Azhar.⁹⁰ Comparatively, Ḥāmid Salīq and Darwīš 'Afraḥ were just *sayyids*, or “men of rank and quality.”⁹¹

Neither Muḥammad Šāhīn nor his partners appear to have owned Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar outright. Indeed, it is not clear if any one person did: I have not encountered a Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar printing from the 1850s that was put forward under the name of the press exclusively. All of the press's printings that I consulted from this period were produced on commission. The press may have therefore functioned as a shared endeavor

⁹⁰ Refer to the colophon in: Damanhūrī, Muḥammad. *Hāšiyat Laḡ al-jawāhir as-sanīya 'alā ar-Risāla as-Samarqandīya*. Cairo: Dār at-Ṭibā'a, 1856, p. 63.

⁹¹ I defer to Edward William Lane's definition for “*sayyid*,” since he compiled his text in Cairo during the mid-nineteenth century (Lane, Edward William. *Arabic-English lexicon*. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1984, vol. 1, p. 1462). The term can also refer to descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad.

rather than a fixed business. That is to say, “Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar” might have been the name attributed to one group’s lithographic activity rather than a brick and mortar printing press so named.⁹² Lithography required very few upfront costs in terms of novel and discrete space, technology, and skilled labor. When several people decided to print a text, they could muster up the necessary transfer papers and lithographic stone, and then defray the requisite costs of that particular printing amongst named partners.

Whether Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar had a proprietor, or functioned as some sort of print share, it was certainly not the preserve of Greater Syrian émigrés to Cairo. Other books that Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar lithographed named their commissioners as locals from Egypt.⁹³ Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar therefore permitted the participation of native and non-native Cairenes alike. Moreover, the names of Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar’s commissioners indicate that the press carried weight within the orbit of Cairo’s manuscript market. One particularly quirky colophon, for example, credited a “Maḥmūd Effendi, one of the traders of Khān al-Khalīlī” with “administering” a printing at the behest of its commissioners.⁹⁴

The flexibility that Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar exhibited in attracting cycles of commissioners was mirrored by the ever-shifting partnerships of the commissioners

⁹² The colophon to a book printed by Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar in 1867 proclaimed that by then, the press may have had an Egyptian owner named Maṣṣūr Effendi. The colophon states that the press “[is] connected to his respected excellency the right honorable pilgrim Maṣṣūr Effendi” (Tha‘ālabī, ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad. *Kitāb fiqh al-luḡha*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar an-Nayyira al-Fākhira, 1867, p. 196).

⁹³ See for example: Ibn Ishāq, 1859, p. 95.

⁹⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī, Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Alī. *Al-Adhkīyā*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar al-Fākhira, 1861, p. 215.

themselves.⁹⁵ Muḥammad Šāhīn’s cohort did not commission books together exclusively. Nor did they commission books from Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar exclusively. Bakrī al-Ḥalabī, for example, underwrote a typographic printing at the governmental press at Būlāq singlehandedly during the same year that he partnered with Muḥammad Šāhīn.⁹⁶ Unlike his Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar printing, this one names him as “one of the seekers of knowledge at al-Azhar mosque, which [puts] him amongst the luminous luminaries of the sciences and of knowledge.”⁹⁷ We can therefore surmise that although Bakrī al-Ḥalabī relocated from Aleppo, he was rich, learned, enterprising, and well-connected to Cairo’s government and religious establishment. And for whatever reason, he liked to commission printings.

Bakrī al-Ḥalabī was superior to Muḥammad Šāhīn socially, and he exhibited

⁹⁵ However, I wonder if Muḥammad Šāhīn, Bakrī al-Ḥalabī, Ḥāmid Salīq, and Darwīš ‘Afrāh did not form something of a business together. They may have been the “four Damascene traders” referenced in the correspondence between two American missionaries in 1852: “I went a few days since to the government book depo and endeavored to obtain a sight of the books but not succeeding in this I asked two lazy Turks who were sitting in the vestibule of the building for a catalogue of their publications, telling them at the same time that I wished to purchase a pretty large bill of books. One of them put his hand under the seat and drove out a catalogue and thrust it towards me on the ground. I inquired if he had a copy that he could give me and on his telling me he had not, I asked him to loan me the copy in my hand until the next morning. This he also refused and I threw it on the ground before them and left. This is the way the pasha [*i.e.*, ‘Abbās (r. 1848-1854)] sells books. Four Damascene merchants here have promised to procure me a catalog which I shall send you” (Eli Smith Papers, 1819-1869. J.G. Paulding to Eli Smith, Cairo, 27 January 1852. HOU GEN ABC 60, 57. Houghton Library, Harvard University).

⁹⁶ For more on private commissions on the governmental press at Būlāq, refer to chapter four. The Bakrī al-Ḥalabī commission that I refer to is: Damanhūrī, 1856, p. 63.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

important markers for prestige in the Ottoman Cairene world. But despite Bakrī al-Ḥalabī's retention of traditional status symbols, he had an appetite for a less-conventional practice: printing. Indeed, Bakrī al-Ḥalabī's movement between private and governmental presses suggests that this appetite for printing transcended loyalty to business partners, one single press, or to one mode of printing. Whether fame, greater fortune, or piety drove Bakrī al-Ḥalabī to print is unclear. What is obvious, however, is that he exuded conventional markers of manuscript cachet onto the sphere of Cairene private printing.

Muḥammad Šāhīn's status as a *šaiḫ* indicates that he too did not just occupy a place in the lithographic world. Rather, he possessed respectability within Ottoman society more broadly, and Cairene society in the specific. His connections to Bakrī al-Ḥalabī and Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥājj Ismā'īl indicate that Muḥammad Šāhīn had access to al-Azhar's community. Indeed, Aḥmad's claim that God endorsed their project shows that their consortium held religious capital. Thus I assume that these men did not venture to Cairo purely to strike it rich as publishers. Rather, it appears that they took part in Cairo's religious educational complex in other ways first. And my suspicion is corroborated by the numerousness of their commissions, which suggests that they already possessed a comfortable degree of wealth to act upon their entrepreneurial ambitions.

The practices and qualifications of men like Bakrī al-Ḥalabī and Muḥammad Šāhīn suggest that it would be a mistake to assume that Cairene private printing developed as a western import or practice, or out of an intellectual movement like *Nahḍa*. Instead, Cairenes appear to have inserted private printing into local structures of power and textual production. Muḥammad Šāhīn exhibited this regional facility in another way

too. Either he, or his son Muḥammad Effendi Šāhīn the younger, “*aṣ-ṣaghīr*,”⁹⁸ worked for the governmental press at Būlāq as a contracted typographic printer occasionally.⁹⁹ In this regard, the Šāhīns applied the familial links that had existed between Azharite scholars, booksellers, and paper vendors during the eighteenth century¹⁰⁰ to the emerging printing trade in the nineteenth century.

b. The Šāhīns, and Azharites Generally, as Workers for the Government’s Typographic Presses.

Connections between Azharite scholars and the governmental presses began as soon as Meḥmed ‘Alī brought typography to Egypt. Azharites satisfied the state’s need for copy editors and correctors because they formed Cairo’s preeminent literate community.¹⁰¹ The state therefore applied their longstanding manuscript skills to a novel printed forum. They no longer had to copy texts themselves at the government’s presses. But the intellectual demands of abridging and verifying the contents of texts remained the same regardless of whether a text was handwritten or printed. The same financial

⁹⁸ Faṣnī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥijāzī. *Al-Majālis as-sanīya fī al-kalām ‘alā al-Arba ‘īn an-Nawawīya*. Cairo: Muḥammad Afandī Šāhīn aṣ-Ṣaghīr, 1868, p. 250.

⁹⁹ Nuṣayr noted that a Muḥammad Šāhīn worked for the press at Būlāq as a “*ṭāb ‘aan bi-al-muqāwala*,” but she neither listed her source for this information, nor specified which Muḥammad Šāhīn printed there (Nuṣayr, ‘Āyida Ibrāhīm. *Ḥarakat naṣr al-kutub fī Miṣr fī al-qarn at-tāsi ‘ aṣar*. Al-Qāhira: al-Hay’ a al-Miṣrīya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, p. 435).

¹⁰⁰ Raymond, André. *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*. Le Caire: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 421-422.

¹⁰¹ Heyworth-Dunne, J. “Printing and translation under Muḥammad ‘Alī of Egypt: the foundation of modern Arabic.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 3 (Jul., 1940), pp. 325-349, pp. 341-343.

prompts that drove Azharites to copy manuscripts encouraged them to work at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s presses. Somehow, in the case of one of the Šāhīns, this labor and the networks that it established grew to involve the act of printing. Muḥammad Effendi Šāhīn was not a *šaiḥ* himself. But he had access to this world through his father’s cohort.

Perhaps naturally given their proximity to printing, many Azharites and their less eminent counterparts at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s presses began commissioning books from the government.¹⁰² This was an expensive endeavor, full stop. But Cairenes who worked for the government tended to be better off than the average subject because governmental jobs carried financial stability. So perhaps Azharites felt themselves to be in a position to assume the risk involved in printing books on prospect.

The cost of commissioning a text at Meḥmed ‘Alī’s presses was neither guaranteed upfront, nor insignificant for even wealthy Cairenes.¹⁰³ Accordingly, not many scholars, tradesmen, or merchants took advantage of this opportunity. But the advent of private lithographic presses made commissioning printings more accessible to such figures. Although lithographic printing was an elite activity relative to society at large,¹⁰⁴ it required few pressworkers and practically no machinery, which drove down

¹⁰² For example, refer above to Bakrī al-Ḥalabī’s commissions and the printing of Sinkalākh’s ode in chapter four.

¹⁰³ Refer to chapter four.

¹⁰⁴ For example, one Cairene lithography was commissioned by Maḥmūd Effendi al-Jazā’irī, son of the mufti of Alexandria (Gacek, 1996, book number 99, p. 69).

printing prices precipitously.¹⁰⁵ Its print runs need not have run so large as typographic print runs to capitalize on the time taken to prepare the text for printing. Finally, unlike printings from the governmental presses, the price and timing of a commissioned lithography could be determined upfront according to the longstanding parameters for ordering manuscripts.¹⁰⁶ Unsurprisingly then, Azharites availed themselves of lithographic commissions. All the more so since these figures set the texts that students needed for their studies. They therefore lowered their risks by backing sure-bet titles such as Khālīd ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Azharī’s (1425-1499) *Student exercises in the craft of grammatical inflection*, and the 1830-1835 grand imam of al-Azhar’s supercommentary on al-Azharī’s grammar.¹⁰⁷

With this backdrop in mind, the Šāhīns’ professional association with the press at Būlāq was not out of the ordinary. Nor was their practical expansion from commissioning lithographs at Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar in Khān al-Khalīlī to working at the typographic press at Būlāq. Indeed, the different relationships that they maintained with

¹⁰⁵ An engineer for the state, Muḥammad Kānī al-Baqlī, commissioned a lithographic pamphlet from the Šāhīns in 1865 in a bid to secure better patronage. He complained that his monthly salary was a mere 500 *qirṣ* after he paid for his other expenses, and emphasized the extent of his poverty (Konrad, Felix. ““Fickle fate has exhausted my burning heart”: an Egyptian engineer of the 19th century between belief and progress and existential anxiety.” *Die Welt des Islams*, 51 (2011), pp. 145-187). Still, al-Baqlī could afford to commission a printed pamphlet. This suggests that commissioning a printing was a feasible splurge on the part of a mid- to low-ranking governmental employee.

¹⁰⁶ Refer to chapters three and four.

¹⁰⁷ Azharī, Khālīd ibn ‘Abdullāh. *Kitāb tamrīn at-ṭullāb fī šinā‘at al-i‘rāb*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar al-Zāhira, 1858; and Aṭṭār, Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad. *Ḥāšiya ‘alā Šarḥ al-Azharīya fī ‘ilm al-‘Arabīya li-Khālīd al-Azharī*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar, 1862.

Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar and the press at Būlāq, which ranged from backer to employee, gives us a sense of the Šāhīns’ shifting personal wealth and the relative costs of printing at either establishment. What made the Šāhīns unique was their ability to navigate the religio-scholarly and financial world of printing alongside the utilitarian labor of the press. Muḥammad Šāhīn kept up with commissions at Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar throughout the 1850s. He took on new partners, like the mufti of Rawḍat al-Baḥrain, Šaikḥ Muḥammad al-Jazā’irī, and maintained old ones, like his fellow Damascene, Darwīš Afrāḥ.¹⁰⁸ But then the Šāhīns did something really extraordinary: by June of 1861, they began running a typographic press.¹⁰⁹ And not only did they run a press: they ran one of Cairo’s first ever for-profit Arabic typographic presses.

c. The Šāhīns as Operators of One of Cairo’s First Private Typographic Presses.

i. The Big Picture.

I use the words “run” and “operate” carefully, for the colophons of Šāhīn typographies indicate that the men may have worked for a wider consortium. They only sometimes attributed the press’s ownership to the Šāhīns outright, as when one labeled it

¹⁰⁸ See for example: Jamal, Sulaymān ibn ‘Umar. *Futūḥāt al-Aḥmadīya bi al-minaḥ al-Muḥammadīya*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar an-Nayyira al-Fākhira, 1857, p. 249.

¹⁰⁹ This earliest Šāhīn printing that I have encountered is: Marzūqī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *Šarḥ ‘Aqīdat al-‘Awwām al-mussamā bi-Nayl al-marām li-bayān manzūmat al-‘Awwām*. Cairo: As-Sayyid Muḥammad Afandī Šāhīn, 1861, p. 27. 844 E 10, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

“the press of Šaiḫ Muḥammad Šāhīn, the Damascene.”¹¹⁰ Such statements appeared when the typographies lacked named commissioners, implying that a certain etiquette may have informed the claims that private printers made to texts that they did not pay for themselves. More often, the Šāhīns’ colophons diffused their authority to suggest that they were appointed or chosen for their various roles in the press. For example, one colophon stated: “this compilation has been printed...at the press of the one designated to run [the printing], the appointed (*bi-maṭba‘a li-mutawakkil ‘alā rabbihi al-mu‘ayyan*) sir Muḥammad Effendi Šāhīn.”¹¹¹ Another noted that the work “has been printed...at the press of the one trusted to run [the printing], the designated (*al-wāthiq bi-rabbihi al-mu‘ayyan*), Šaiḫ Muḥammad Šāhīn.”¹¹² Such assertions leave it unclear as to whether God, print commissioners, or fellow press owners chose the Šāhīns to run their printings. The latter possibility is not implausible, given that I encountered a printing in the same typeface employed by the Šāhīns, during the same timeframe in which the Šāhīns printed, naming a different Azharite *šaiḫ* as its press owner, or *ṣāḥib al-maṭba‘a*.¹¹³ Nor is this implausible given the way in which consortiums paid to print from Maṭba‘at al-Ḥajar. Whatever the specifics behind their business arrangement, the Šāhīns’ names

¹¹⁰ Ibn Abī Ṭālib, ‘Alī. *Hadḥā kitāb nays al-maṭālib fī mā warada fī al-Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Šaiḫ Muḥammad Šāhīn ad-Dimašqī, 1861, p. 52.

¹¹¹ Marzūqī, 1861, p. 27.

¹¹² Šāfi‘ī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ayyād. *Al-Adhkār al-‘alīya wa al-asrār aš-šādhiḥīya*. Cairo: Šaiḫ Muḥammad Šāhīn, 1862, p. 166.

¹¹³ Šihāb ad-Dīn, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl. *Dīwān Muḥammad Šihāb ad-Dīn*. Cairo: s.n., 1861, pp. 379-380.

monopolized the stewardship of the typographic press from which they worked. Accordingly, I proceed with the understanding that they commandeered the press frequently, if they did not own it outright.

Before I turn to when and how the Šāhīns printed, let me reemphasize the remarkableness of their typographic printing endeavor. As I argued in chapters two and three, scholars anticipated Cairene printing, predicated its advent on the early modern European experience of print, and projected western norms about printing onto Ottomans. But the Šāhīns belie this narrative. The way in which they arrived to the novel realm of printing was neither European driven nor preordained, but rather, oddly serendipitous. Their backgrounds and approaches to printing were distinctly Ottoman. Muḥammad Šāhīn hailed from Damascus and had access to al-Azhar and the governmental establishment through the press at Būlāq. He had a solid Ottoman Cairene pedigree that he parleyed over to typography in a non-idiosyncratic way, despite his pioneering efforts in printing. First he accessed the local manuscript industry around al-Azhar to produce lithographs. Then he segued to typography by relying upon the governmental presses for staffing and equipment, as I discuss below. Finally, the Šāhīns' motivation in printing appears to have been local in character. According to their colophons, the Šāhīns did not print to catch up with European print culture or to usher Cairenes into modernity. To the extent that they expressed their reason for printing, they offered that they printed “in praise of God.”¹¹⁴

Thus the Šāhīns are remarkable on two counts. Their connections within Cairo

¹¹⁴ Marzūqī, 1861, p. 27.

made them uniquely suited to run one of the city's first privately owned Arabic presses. And their story cannot be disentangled from the understanding that writing in nineteenth century Cairo involved the separate, but overlapping worlds of manuscript production, and the governmental and private presses. I will close this subsection by explaining how the Šāhīns printed within a framework that privileges the overlaps between these three industries.

ii. How and When the Šāhīns Printed.

The roles that each of the Šāhīns played at the press varied, judging from the colophons of the books they printed. According to the earliest Šāhīn printing that I encountered, the press first fell under Šaikh Muḥammad Šāhīn's control, with Muḥammad Effendi Šāhīn serving as backer.¹¹⁵ In another printing, these roles reversed. Šaikh Muḥammad Šāhīn assumed the role of backer and Muḥammad Effendi Šāhīn received billing as press leader and corrector.¹¹⁶ It appears that positions rotated according to circumstance. In this vein, a third Šāhīn joined the family's printing business by September 1861: Muṣṭafā Effendi Šāhīn, who often served as corrector.¹¹⁷ When Muṣṭafā Effendi Šāhīn did not correct printings, he served as the head of

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Fašnī, 1868, pp. 249-250.

¹¹⁷ Ibn Abī Ṭālib, 1861, p. 52; and Ṣadīq, Badr ad-Dīn Sālim ibn Muḥammad Ṭābi'. *Kitāb Nuzhat al-abṣār wa al-asmā' fī akhbār dhawāt al-qinā'*. Cairo: Šaikh Muḥammad Šāhīn, 1862, p. 168.

operations, or *ra'īs at-tašghīl*.¹¹⁸ But he was likely a junior member of the family, as the press did not appear in his name. Nor did he ever commission typographic printings from his family's press. However, Muṣṭafā Effendi Šāhīn did speculate on at least one short lithography in January of 1862.¹¹⁹ This lithography was copied out by the hand of its author, 'Abd al-Hādī ibn Riḍwān Najā' al-Abyārī. Al-Abyārī carried the authority of manuscript holographs into the printed world by serving as author and copyist both.

The Šāhīns thereby bound the manuscript industry to the industries of governmental and private press printing through their very persons. But they also manifested the overlaps between these three industries through their typographic work. With regard to the connection between manuscripts and private printing, the Šāhīns' gave credence to the authority that Cairene society bestowed upon the manuscript word. Their printings recognized this by making claims like "this book was printed with the utmost exactness and precision from a handwritten copy."¹²⁰ They also printed texts that belonged to the local manuscript tradition, like commissioners' entreaties for state patronage.¹²¹ With regard to the connection between lithographers and typographers within the private printing sphere, their printings defy any notion of a divide between

¹¹⁸ Šāfī'ī, 1862, p. 166. The term *ra'īs at-tašghīl* may have also carried the more specific meaning of typesetter.

¹¹⁹ Abyārī, 'Abd al-Hādī ibn Riḍwān Najā'. *Hādhā lughz 'aẓīm yaštamilu 'alā muhimmāt thalāthīn fannan min al-funūn al-mu'tabara ma'a mā ruqima 'alā hāmišihī*. Cairo: s.n., 1862, p. 14.

¹²⁰ Fašnī, 1868, p. 250.

¹²¹ See for example: Konrad, 2011, p. 185.

these printers. One look at a page from the Šāhīns' printing of Sufi liturgies demonstrates that they maintained their familiarity with lithography's illustrative advantages over those of typography, if not their contacts with lithographic copyists and printers. Still, I should



Image 5.4. *Typography and lithography in al-Adhkār al-'alīya*, Cairo, 1862.¹²² The Šāhīns printed the right-hand page of this opening typographically, while the left-hand side of the opening was printed lithographically on account of its illustration. Aside from the verso and recto sides of the pages that carried illustrations, the Šāhīns otherwise printed this book typographically.

note that aside from such illustrations, the Šāhīns otherwise did away with lithography in favor of typography. Finally, their printings demonstrate that private typographic

¹²² Šāfī'ī, 1862, HOLLIS number: 003173461, Widener Library, pp. 144-145.

printing depended upon the governmental presses for labor and equipment.

The Šāhīns employed skilled laborers from the governmental presses to staff their typographic press. The reason we know this is as follows. The final words of the earliest Šāhīn printing stated: “operated by the one who seeks the forgiveness of God (*al-musāwī*), Ibrāhīm aš-Šabrāwī.”¹²³ When aš-Šabrāwī set this type, he did so demurely beneath the colophon that commemorated the Šāhīns’ efforts. But actually, aš-Šabrāwī’s gesture was rather grand. This is because aš-Šabrāwī started off as a typesetter at the governmental press at Būlāq,¹²⁴ and governmental typesetters did not receive nominal billing within the works that came from their labor.¹²⁵ The governmental presses reserved that right for the press’s lead supervisor, and the text’s editors, correctors, and commissioners.¹²⁶

It is apparent that aš-Šabrāwī worked at Būlāq because in 1908, when he was nearly ninety years old, he granted an interview to a scholar named Albert Geiss.¹²⁷

¹²³ Al-Marzūqī, 1861, p. 27.

¹²⁴ Geiss, Albert M. “Histoire de l’imprimerie en Égypte: II: introduction definitive.” *Bulletin de l’Institut Égyptien*, sér. 5, 2, (1908), pp. 195-220, p. 198.

¹²⁵ For example, refer to: Şeyh Galip. *Divan-ı Şeyh Galip kuddise sirruhu*. Būlāq: Maṭba’at Şāhib aš-Şa’āda al-Abadīya, 1836, p. 92; and Baqlī, Muḥammad ‘Alī. *Kitāb Ghurar an-najāḥ fī a’-māl al-jirāḥ*. Būlāq: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā’a al-Bāhiza, vol. 2, p. 419.

¹²⁶ For example, refer to: Abbāsī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān. *Şarḥ şawāhid at-Talkhīş al-musammā Ma’āhid at-tanşīş*. Būlāq: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā’a al-Miṣrīya, 1857/1858, pp. 642 & 644; and Fuzūlī. *Divān-ī Fuzūlī*. Būlāq: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā’a al-Bāhira, 1840, p. 113.

¹²⁷ Geiss, 1908, p. 198.

Geiss researched the history of printing in Egypt for a series of essays.¹²⁸ His focus on the press at Būlāq brought him to rely on aš-Šabrāwī to verify certain developments there. But Geiss’s delight at speaking to “surely the oldest typographer (*typo*) in the world” motivated him to admit two tangential details about aš-Šabrāwī in his essay. According to aš-Šabrāwī’s testimony, he began working at the governmental press at Būlāq in August 1829 and continued to work there until November of 1908. And he began as a compositor’s apprentice before working his way up to become a compositor.¹²⁹ Neither aš-Šabrāwī nor Geiss mentioned, however, that for a time, aš-Šabrāwī also served as the Šāhīns’ ‘print guy,’ or “*maṭba ‘ajī*.”¹³⁰

The Šāhīns may have known aš-Šabrāwī from their own work at the press at Būlāq. Nevertheless, aš-Šabrāwī possessed a rare skill for Cairenes in 1861 and the Šāhīns may have granted him the right to record his involvement at the press in recognition of this. Or, they may have done so because it followed the pattern of the recognition that was granted to the copyists of the lithographs that they commissioned.¹³¹ Aš-Šabrāwī exercised his unique privilege until at least June of 1862,¹³² after which it

¹²⁸ Geiss, Albert M. *Histoire de l'imprimerie en Égypte.* *Bulletin de l'Institut Égyptien*, Ser. 5, vol. I (1907), pp. 133-157; and Geiss, 1908.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Šihāb ad-Dīn, 1861, pp. 379-380.

¹³¹ See for example: Khudārī, 1856, p. 722.

¹³² See: Ša‘rānī, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad. *Tanbīh al-mughtarrīn fī al-qarn al-‘āšir ‘alā mā khālafū fīhi salafahum at-tāhir.* Cairo: Šaikḥ Muḥammad Šāhīn, 1862, p. 342.

seems that aš-Šabrāwī broke ties with the Šāhīns' press, allowing Muṣṭafā Effendi Šāhīn to takeover aš-Šabrāwī's role.¹³³ Thereafter, aš-Šabrāwī returned to work at the press at Būlāq. We know this not only because of his claims to Geiss, but because upon his return to the press at Būlāq, aš-Šabrāwī maintained his idiosyncratic prerogative to record his name beneath the colophons he set.¹³⁴

Aš-Šabrāwī's work demonstrates that the private and governmental presses overlapped, and this synergism reaches us in another striking way: the typefaces themselves. As one scholar noted with regard to early modern Europe, "nowadays we tend to forget how much letterpress printers used to be governed by the availability of types."¹³⁵ Scholars of nineteenth century Egyptian printing also neglected this point. As it happens, when we follow the letter faces, a remarkable chart of interaction billows out from amongst the presses of nineteenth century Cairo. I will follow one of these branches now, which I will pick up again when I turn to the Kāstalīs.

When and why the Šāhīns turned to typography depended entirely upon the availability of Arabic typographic fonts. But such typefaces were scarce in 1861 Cairo. A few private Arabic typographic presses operated in other Ottoman cities, like Istanbul and Beirut, and scholars hopscotch from one city to the next unhesitatingly when they relate the story of Middle Eastern printing teleologically from the view of a destined print

¹³³ See: Šāfi'ī, 1862, p. 166.

¹³⁴ See: Sa'dī, Maṣlaḥ ad-Dīn. *Gulistān-i Šaiḫ Sa'dī*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-'āmirā bi-Būlāq, 1864, p. 168.

¹³⁵ Twyman, 1990, p. 126.

culture.¹³⁶ But the mere existence of Ottoman typefaces did not make them any more available to Cairene printers, even wealthy ones, during this period when new routes for water, rail, and street transportation between Ottoman cities were beginning to be drawn. To understand what occurred in Cairo, we must look locally.

Two groups used typographic fonts in mid-nineteenth century Egypt: the private printers who serviced Alexandria's European community, and the governmental presses. Of these two groups, only the latter printed in Arabic fonts. So when the Šāhīns reoriented their print work from lithography to typography, they attached their fate to the biggest printer of Arabic texts in town: the governmental press at Būlāq.

Change was afoot at the press at Būlāq in 1860. After Meḥmed 'Alī's death in 1849 and the brief rule of his son Ibrāhīm (r. 1848), his grandson 'Abbās (r. 1848-1854) became *wālī*, or ruler, of Egypt. 'Abbās continued Meḥmed 'Alī's uses and policies for the presses until his own death in 1854,¹³⁷ whereupon Meḥmed 'Alī's son Sa'īd (r. 1854-1863) took over the province's leadership. Unlike 'Abbās, Sa'īd found the governmental presses wanting. In September of 1860, he issued the following decree to the

¹³⁶ Refer to the portrayal of Ottoman printing in the following quote: "In [the eighteenth] century, printing began hesitantly under the government's auspices in the Ottoman capital. It was followed in the nineteenth century by a more ambitious effort in Muhammad 'Ali's Egypt, where a government-owned press turned out several hundred titles within a few decades, with a modest print run and equally modest demand. The real breakthrough occurred only around mid-century, as Christian missionaries, their local pupils, and some other private individuals embarked on a vigorous published endeavour mostly in the Lebanon area" (Ayalon, 2010, p. 74). Refer also to the portrayal of typefaces in: AbiFares, Huda Smitshuijzen. *Arabic typography: a comprehensive sourcebook*. London: Saqi Books, 2001, p. 68.

¹³⁷ Raḍwān, Abū al-Futūh. *Tārīkh Maṭba'at Būlāq wa lamḥa fī tārīkh at-ṭibā'a fī buldān aš-Šarq al-Awsaṭ*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba'at al-Amīriya, 1953, p. 87.

superintendent, or *nāzir*, of the press at Būlāq:

Information that was given to us indicates that the books...ordered to be printed by the press have been delayed for a long time. This is natural, coming from the poor arrangements and the paucity of compositors (*al-jamā'īn*) and correctors. As a result of this, most of the commissioners of printings are demanding the return of their books consigned to the printing press, and are paying no attention to [the press's] printing and portrayal. This matter causes injury to the prestige (*ṣīṭ*) and fame of the famous Egyptian printing press [known] for its correctness and the precision of its matters and the goodness of its printing. As such, calmly bearing the loss of the basic advantages (*al-muḥassanāt al-aṣliya*) of the printing press is in no way shape or form permissible, given that they [*i.e.*, the advantages] should gradually increase rather than decrease. Accordingly, it is necessary to arrange and to select the correctors and the rest of those that they need to use for the press from amongst those people who are mindful of their work instead of those who suit your mood. Therefore it is necessary to seek out people who possess an acquaintance with the workings of the printing press, and those who are capable to adeptly undertake correcting and arranging. Accordingly, it is necessary for you to quickly put in place a list of the people required to be used, excepting the people there now, and to present this to us. The books selected now for printing are tantamount to twenty or thirty books, and are required to be completed quickly and in total correctness. From now on the operations of the printing press will be done with care and not disjointedly, whether they are for the commissioners or for the government. Accordingly, care and precision are required without neglecting the works or delaying them for a long time. Interest is in achieving them and completing them, regardless of their type. It is absolutely impermissible that the circulation and precision of the foreign (*al-ajnabiya*) printing presses rest above the viceroyal (*al-amīriya*) press. So it is necessary to exert increasing interest and effort in improving and arranging the aforementioned printing press, and to place it at the rank that befits its fame, and we write this to you for it to be followed.¹³⁸

I will return to this quote, with all of its import for the government's changing attitude towards its printings, in chapter six. For now, I seek to underscore that Sa'īd began

¹³⁸ Sāmī, Amīn. *Taqwīm an-Nīl wa asmā' man tawallū amr Miṣr wa muddat ḥukmihim 'alayhā wa mulāḥazāt tārikhiya 'an aḥwāl al-Khilāfa al-'amma wa šu'ūn Miṣr al-khāṣa 'an al-mudda al-munḥaṣira bayna as-sana al-ūlā wa sana 1333 al-hijriya, (622-1915 milādīya)*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba'a al-Amīriya, 1915-1936, volume 3:1, p. 356-357.

taking issue with the quality of work produced by the press at Būlāq. He found the efforts of his employees wanting. Still, he proposed to do something about it by initiating new management schemes. This did not go over well at the press apparently. Nine months later, in July of 1861, the superintendent charged with implementing Sa‘īd’s proposals fell out with his pressworkers.¹³⁹ As a result, Sa‘īd closed the press’s doors for more than one year.

The government’s press at Būlāq remained closed until October of 1862. That month, Sa‘īd got around this standstill by gifting the press to a high-ranking admiral. Although Sa‘īd presented this offering as a reward for service, the text of an accompanying decree that he sent to his finance ministry, *nizārat al-māliya*, demonstrates that the gift was a matter of business:

We had granted our decree of giving the printing press of Būlāq as a gift to ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Ruṣḍī Bey, director (*mudīr*) of the governmental steamships on the Red Sea, all that it contains of materials and tools like the necessities of typography and lithography, and lead letters, and the matrixes (*umhāt wa abhāt*), etc. He will go on operating the rest of what was running in [the press’s] operation, and what is new from the governmental laws and notebooks and other necessary governmental (*mīrī*) requirements. The price of paper and ink present in [the press] will be charged to him in his contract. And likewise the good *Book of nice smells* (*Kitāb an-naḥḥ*) that is presently in operation at the expense of the government will be given to him amongst his commissions without profits, and without including the original price of the copy on the printing. The works that are at hand will be appraised through the knowledge of expert people for the sake of completing the work and whose calculation of it will deduct that value from him and will be charged to him in his contract also. And the costs of the paper and the ink and the aforementioned books will be defrayed by him bit by bit from what he is asked to do in terms of works that are to be operated. So it is necessary that your receipt of our command will run in accordance with the aforementioned handover of the press to him, in the way that was

¹³⁹ Geiss, 1908, p. 217.

explained, and for the necessary permission to be written to him by writing a contract (*hujja*) which will be necessary for his possession of the immovables also. Let that be a reason to widen his substance as our decree requires.¹⁴⁰

To be sure, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Ruṣḍī Bey received favoritism from Egypt’s ruler. But through this boost, he also acquired the debts and responsibilities of a money-losing enterprise in an industry with which he was totally unfamiliar.

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Ruṣḍī Bey had much working against him. He now faced the task of printing all of the government’s necessary papers, without any financial backing from the government. By contrast, Sa‘īd benefited from the deal on all counts: the press would again provide the government with necessary printings, but the government no longer had to fund the press, or deal with the embarrassment and hassle of objectionable pressworkers. This arrangement did not last for very long. Under Sa‘īd’s successor, Mehmed ‘Alī’s grandson Ismā‘īl (r. 1863-1879), the ruling family acquired the press at Būlāq in 1865 for themselves.¹⁴¹ But this upheaval at the government’s main press affected the trajectory of private typographic printing in Cairo deeply. In fact, it helped to make it possible.

Sa‘īd did more than just close the press in July of 1861. He also ordered the disbandment of its machinery during its closure. He commanded: “Our wish has been decided to abolish the aforementioned press and to settle its arrears and dismiss its workers unless...one of the local [subjects] (*aḥad min al-ahālī*) wants the tools of what remains of them for printing books at his own cost without the government entering in its

¹⁴⁰ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 3:1, p. 424.

¹⁴¹ Raḍwān, 1953, p. 185.

profits and expenditures. So announce [this] to whomever is interested in that...”.¹⁴² With this decree, Sa‘īd singularly set Cairo’s private typographic printing industry afoot. He did not inject life into the private presses unknowingly. “When founding and organizing the press,” he said, “the goal was to print books and make them more numerous in order for benefit to be derived from them, and now there exists a group of printing presses that continue to print.”¹⁴³ Sa‘īd thereby cited the private presses’ existence to justify his closure of the governmental press at Būlāq, whose repute he had tethered to that of all Egypt only months previously. In addition, Sa‘īd offered the School of Engineering’s print equipment up for sale to the public in 1861.¹⁴⁴

The dispersal of the governmental presses’ typefaces gave the Šāhīns the means, if not also the purpose, to incorporate typography into their printing business. Indeed, the Šāhīns began their press the very same month that the press at Būlāq closed.¹⁴⁵ The two-year pause in printing at the press at Būlāq also granted the Šāhīns a competitive advantage within the printing market. With the closure of Cairo’s main typographic press, typesetters like aš-Šabrāwī were left without employment and typefaces became available for using. Commissioners of governmental printings also became available. And finished printings from the private press faced less competition on the market. I

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Hsu, 1985, vol. 1, p. 59.

¹⁴⁵ That is if the earliest Šāhīn printing that I encountered does indeed mark the start of their typographic work: al-Marzūqī, 1861, p. 27.

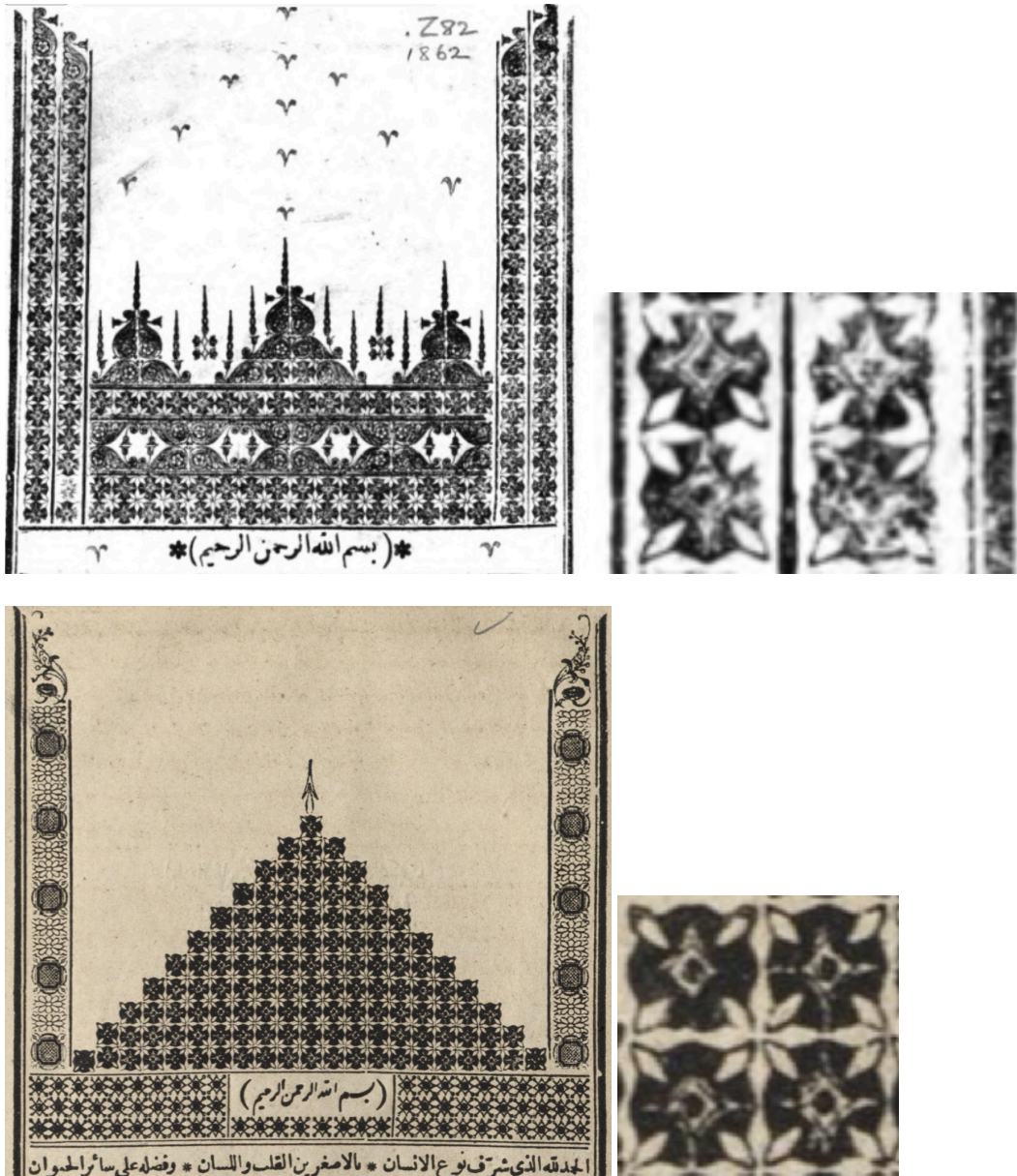


Image 5.5. An example of the Šāhīns' acquisition of governmental typefaces.
 Top: the headpiece of the Šāhīns' *Zubdat al-wā'izīn*, Cairo, 1861, beside its detail.
 Bottom: the headpiece of the government's *Hayāt al-ḥayawān*, Cairo, 1868, beside its detail.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ *Zubdat al-wā'izīn*. Cairo: Maṭba'at aš-Šaikh Muḥammad Šāhīn, 1861. HathiTrust Digital Library, p. 2; and Damīrī, Muḥammad ibn Mūsā. *Hayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*. Cairo: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā'a al-'āmira bi-Būlāq, 1867, vol. 1. HOLLIS number: 005706056, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 2.

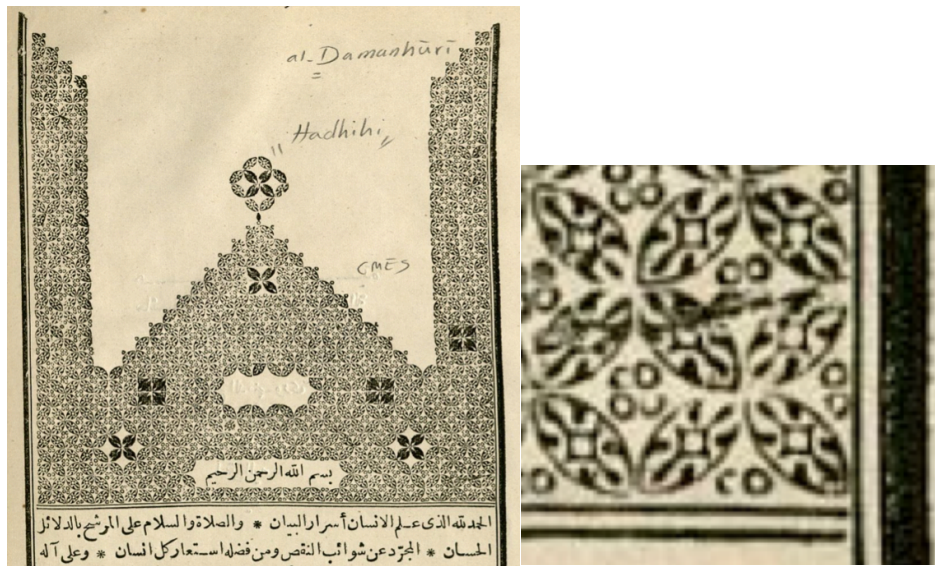
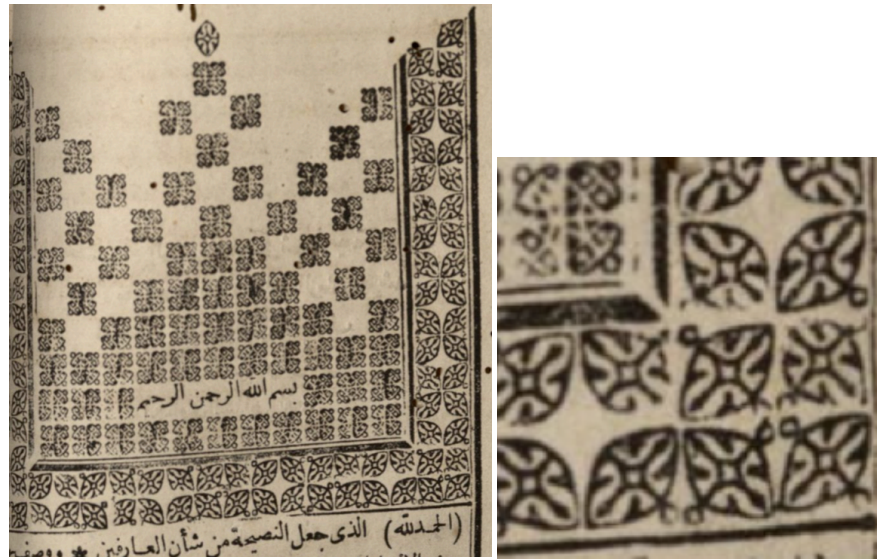


Image 5.6. Another example of the Šāhīns' acquisition of governmental typefaces. Top: the headpiece of the Šāhīns' *Faṭḥ ar-rahīm ar-rahmān*, Cairo, 1861, beside its detail.

Bottom: the headpiece of the government's *Hāšīyat Laqṭ al-jawāhir*, Cairo, 1856, beside its detail.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ These fonts are slightly different, but they derived from either the same set or the same producers (Images taken from: Qināwī, Mas'ūd ibn Ḥasan. *Faṭḥ ar-rahīm ar-rahmān fī šarḥ Naṣīḥat al-ikhwān*. Cairo: Maṭba'at aš-Šaikḥ Muḥammad Šāhīn, 1861. HOLLIS number: 003029788, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 2; and Damanhūrī, 1856. HOLLIS number: 007140883, Widener Library, p. 2).

have no details as to how the Šāhīns negotiated their entrance into this space, nor why they chose to ‘upgrade’ to typography.¹⁴⁸ I can only assume that the opportunity to acquire typefaces from the government was too good to pass up. Furthermore, typographic printing was likely something that Cairenes aspired to, given that typography was privileged by the imperial Porte, the French campaign in Egypt, and the governmental presses.¹⁴⁹ The only thing we have to go on are the works that the Šāhīns printed. However they did it, and wherever they did it from, the Šāhīns printed with the government’s workers and the government’s fonts. They therefore printed with an indirect form of state approval.¹⁵⁰

This chain of events demonstrates that Cairo’s typographic private press arose neither from a manifest destiny modeled on Europe, nor from Beirut immigrants. It originated between the people and government of Ottoman Cairo.

The Šāhīns produced typographies up until around 1869,¹⁵¹ whereupon their names cease to appear in printed colophons. I will return to the fate of their press below, under the subsection that treats their competitors, the Kāstalīs.

¹⁴⁸ They may have done this in collaboration with others, judging by aš-Šabrāwī’s role as typesetter and the typefaces used in a book commissioned by Azharites like Ḥusayn al-Marṣafī in: Šihāb ad-Dīn, 1861, pp. 379-380.

¹⁴⁹ Refer to chapters two, three, and four.

¹⁵⁰ Seven years later, the Šāhīns openly thanked Khedive Ismā‘īl for his support in: Fašnī, 1868, p. 251.

¹⁵¹ See for example: Qīnāwī, Mas‘ūd ibn Ḥasan. *Fatḥ ar-rahīm ar-rahmān fī šarḥ Naṣīḥat al-ikhwān*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Muḥammad Afandī Šāhīn aš-Ṣaghīr, 1869.

3. *The Kāstalīs, 1850s-1870s.*

a. *Their Background and Importance.*

Like the Šāhīns, the Castelli family, or Kāstalī family according to their Arabic publications, were not Cairene by birth but became integrated into Egyptian society. Their link to Egypt began under Mūsā [Mosé or Moïse] Kāstalī (b. 1816), who arrived to Cairo from Florence sometime around March 1832.¹⁵² Mūsā married a first-generation Italian-Egyptian from Rosetta around 1844, and together they had eight children. The Kāstalīs were Jewish, but that did not stop them from printing popular Islamic texts. Nor did the Kāstalīs' religion keep non-Jewish Cairenes from consuming their works.

Also like the Šāhīns, the Kāstalīs treated printing as a family affair. They strewed their various names like Çākamawā [Giacomo] and Ançalū [Angelo] across their printings, where they too made no secret of their extra-Egyptian origins.¹⁵³ The Kāstalīs frequently noted their Italian roots, in some cases referring to themselves as the “the Italian press, known as al-Kāstalīya.”¹⁵⁴ In 1869, after the Kāstalīs donated a collection of their printings to the Crown of Italy, King Vittorio Emanuele II (1820-1878) knighted Mūsā Kāstalī. From then on, Mūsā Kāstalī distinguished himself with the title “al-

¹⁵² Pinto, 1964, p. 218.

¹⁵³ See for example: Abū Ma‘šar, Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad. *Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Yūnānī al-faylasūf aš-šahīr*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a at-Tulyānīya, 1871, p. 86; and Madrāsī, Muḥammad Šādiq. *Kunūz alṭāf al-burhān fī rumūz awqāf al-Qur‘ān*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a at-Tulyānīya aš-šahīr bi-al-Kāstilīya, 1873, p. 40.

¹⁵⁴ See for example: Madrāsī, 1873, p. 40.

Kavalīr,” or Cavalier, in his colophons.¹⁵⁵ But despite the Kāstalīs’ longstanding recognition of their Italian origins, they appeared to be embedded within Cairene society fully. Their particular gift in printing derived from their merger of both cultures’ textual customs.

The Kāstalīs applied European printing methods to Cairene literary tastes in novel ways. Unlike the Šāhīns, the Kāstalīs indicated that their press belonged to them by giving it an eponymous name which they noted in all of their printings, including commissions.¹⁵⁶ This marks a difference in the way that the Šāhīns and the Kāstalīs presented, and perhaps indeed ran, their for-profit presses. For while the Šāhīns offered themselves up as conduits for printing, the Kāstalīs suggested that their print work was somehow more proprietary. Moreover, almost all Kāstalīys printings tapped into the Cairene manuscript canon and local sources for authority.¹⁵⁷ But they printed various sorts of texts, not just books, and they advertised their business and their wares between their different types of printings.¹⁵⁸ European practices such as these contributed to the

¹⁵⁵ See for example: Ibn Iyās, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. *Badā’i’ az-zuhūr fī waqā’i’ ad-duhūr*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Musā Kāstalī, 1871, p. 188.

¹⁵⁶ See for example: Madrāsī, 1873, p. 40; and Ibn Iyās, 1871, p. 188; and Ša‘rānī, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad. *Kitāb al-mīzān lil-‘arīf aṣ-Ṣamadānī wa al-quṭb ar-rabbānī*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kāstilīya, 1862, p. 246.

¹⁵⁷ Refer to the Kāstalīs’ list of their printings from 1873 in: *Qā’imat al-kutub allati ṭubi‘at bi-al-maṭba‘a at-taliyānīya al-ma‘rūfa bi-al-kāstalīya*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Kāstalīya, 1873. Phil 8° 02212/04, University and Research Library Erfurt/Gotha, Germany.

¹⁵⁸ See for example: *Ibid.*; and *Qiṣṣat at-tājir ‘Alī Nūr ad-Dīn*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kāstalīya, 1880, p. 72.

Kāstalīs' ability to stay in business for fifty years.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, their merger of local and European printing laid the groundwork for the conventions that other Cairene private printers would adopt.

It is unclear where Mūsā Kāstalī learned to print, but according to the research of Olga Pinto (b. 1903), he produced his first dated Cairene lithography in 1852.¹⁶⁰ The start date of 1852 is certainly not implausible, given that the first few years of the 1850s marked the beginning of private lithographic printing. If this date is correct, it situates the Kāstalīs as one of Cairo's earliest private printers, if not the earliest. The twenty-year lag between Mūsā Kāstalī's arrival to Cairo and the start of his personal press indicates that he held another job during that interval. Whatever form this employment took, it integrated Mūsā Kāstalī into the local fabric, for his printings were in Arabic.

Regardless of when the Kāstalīs began to print exactly, they formed the vanguard of Cairene private printing. They maintained their position as innovators throughout the nineteenth century, such that they may be considered Cairo's first professionalized printers. Like the Šāhīns, the Kāstalīs started out as lithographers and only later adopted typography, from as early as 1860 so far as I can tell.¹⁶¹ But unlike the Šāhīns, the Kāstalīs did not allow typography to stamp out their lithographic work. One of the keys to their success derived from their ability to distinguish what to print typographically

¹⁵⁹ Olga Pinto states that the Kāstalīya press stopped functioning in 1902 (Pinto, 1964, p. 218).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ The first typographic Kāstalī printing that I encountered is: *al-Qawānīn at-tijārīya*. Cairo: Maṭba'at Mūsā Kāstalī, 1860.

from what to print lithographically.

b. The Kāstalīs' Judicious Use of Typography.

I have only encountered two typographic Kāstalīya printings up until March of 1861. These two printings share the same typeface, which so far as I can tell, derived from the governmental presses.¹⁶² Thus the Kāstalīs may have commissioned typographies from the governmental presses. Or, they or another group comprised of Azharites may have purchased typefaces from the governmental presses before June of 1861.¹⁶³ After that date, the Kāstalīs joined the Šāhīns in availing themselves of the typefaces from the governmental press at Būlāq.¹⁶⁴ But the two typographies that the Kāstalīs printed before 1861 represented savvy investments.

For the Kāstalīs' first typographic printing in 1860, they published *al-Qawānīn at-tijārīya*, or *The [Ottoman] trade laws*, with the imprint "printed in well-protected Cairo...at the press of Mūsā Kāstalī."¹⁶⁵ The Porte had only recently instituted these trade laws to structure business transactions within the empire. Beneath the very title of

¹⁶² Compare the headpiece and typefaces of (*Ibid.*) and ('Idwī, Ḥasan. *Mašāriq al-anwār fī fawz ahl al-i'tibār*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Kastalīya, 1861) to those of (Waṭwāt, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā. *Ghurur al-khaṣā'iṣ al-wāḍiḥa wa-'urur al-naqā'iṣ al-fāḍiḥa*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Miṣrīya, 1867, p. 2).

¹⁶³ Refer to the same typefaces used to print: Abbāsī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī Muḥammad. *Tuḥfat as-sā'il fī ajwibat al-masā'il*. Cairo: s.n., 1860, p. 126; and Ša'rānī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad. *Kitāb al-Yawāqīt wa al-jawāhir fī bayān 'aqā'id al-akābir*. Cairo: s.n., 1860/1861, pp. 266-267.

¹⁶⁴ Refer below to Image 5.7.

¹⁶⁵ *Al-Qawānīn at-tijārīya*, 1860, p. 144.

the text, it stated that this book should be “issued by printing, publishing, and announcing it [according to] the commands of the imperial Sultanate (*al-‘alīya aṣ-Ṣultāniya*) throughout the territories of the Ottoman Empire (*mamālik ad-dawla al-‘uthmāniya*)...to conduct business through [the laws’] enforcement.”¹⁶⁶ Law-abiding merchants and traders therefore had to familiarize themselves with the contents of this text, whether aurally or through textual consumption.

In the speculative world of private printing, the expected necessity for merchants to consume *al-Qawānīn at-tijārīya* provided printers with a low risk opportunity. The likelihood for the text to be consumed widely presumably informed the Kāstalīs’ choice to print the laws typographically rather than lithographically. They may have also adopted this decision under the influence of the text’s 1859 typographic edition from Beirut, since the Kāstalīs declared that they used the Beirut edition as the basis for their own printing.¹⁶⁷

A further, and even more localized example of the Kāstalīs’ savvy in their pursuit of typography comes through their March 1861 edition of Ḥasan al-‘Idwī al-Ḥamzāwī’s (1806-1886) *Mašāriq al-anwār fī fawz ahl al-i‘tibār*, or *Daybreaks concerning salvation for those who take heed*.¹⁶⁸ The Kāstalīs relied on the same typefaces that they used for *al-Qawānīn at-tijārīya* to print this three-part Islamic text on

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ *Al-Qawānīn at-tijārīya*. Beirut: al-Maṭba‘a as-Sūrīya, 1859; and *al-Qawānīn at-tijārīya*, 1860, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Idwī, 1861.

bodily death and spiritual afterlife by a contemporary Azharite *šaiikh*. Al-‘Idwī’s historiographical importance derives from his support of the ‘Urabists in the 1881 revolt.¹⁶⁹ However, he also authored and commissioned several lithographic and typographic printings.¹⁷⁰ So much so that al-‘Idwī ranks among Cairo’s most frequent commissioners of books in the 1850s and 1860s. He wrote *Mašāriq al-anwār* in May of 1848, and first published it in manuscript form.¹⁷¹

Despite the book’s gloomy and esoteric subject matter, by 1861 it was a printed bestseller. The bump in its popularity occurred over the previous two years, when the book went through three printed editions before the Kāstalīs issued its fourth edition. The governmental presses produced the first printed edition at the start of 1859. Two further private lithographic editions appeared before the end of 1860. The colophon of the third edition provided the backstory to *Mašāriq al-anwār*’s success in print:

¹⁶⁹ Goldziher, Ignác. “Muhammadan public opinion,” translated with notes by Jerry Payne and Philip Sadgrove. *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XXXVIII/1 Spring 1993, pp. 97-133, p. 133.

¹⁷⁰ For example, al-‘Idwī authored texts like: ‘Idwī, Ḥasan. *Kitāb kanz al-maṭālib fī faḍl al-Bayt al-Ḥarām wa fī al-ḥijr wa aš-šādharān wa mā fī ziyārat al-qabr aš-šarīf min al-ma‘ārib*. Cairo: s.n., 1865; and he commissioned texts like: Ša‘rānī, *Kitāb al-Yawāqīt*, 1860/1861, p. 267; and Ša‘rānī, 1859/1860, p. 27; and Ša‘rānī, *Kitāb al-mīzān*, 1862, p. 246.

Al-‘Idwī promoted these titles into the 1880s, according to the contemporary journal *al-Ḥijāz*, as related via Goldizer. He did this: “by sending the ‘king of kings, the Sultan of Arabs and non-Arabs, the master of the sword and pen, the earthly shadow of Allah, the sword that cleaves injustice etc.’ a copy of each of all his works. This is how he addressed the Sultan in the letter accompanying these books. Our [journal] *Ḥijāz* publishes this in full, first listing the titles of the works and providing a brief and interesting description of them” (Goldziher, 1993, p. 133).

¹⁷¹ ‘Idwī, Ḥasan. *Mašāriq al-anwār fī fawz ahl al-i‘tibār*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Būlāq, 1859, p. 339.

...This book became a big thing, since it was accepted truly and befittingly. It was only after three months that it realized meaningful revelation by the issuance of the greatest circulating, majestic, [and] extolled Khedivial order to preserve it by printing this book in five hundred copies. After the printing of the three parts [*lit.* three books], the people of the cities and countryside (*al-aqtār*) met it with acceptance...and when the first printing ran out, requests for *Mašāriq al-anwār* increased from some of the cities and the countryside. [So] I ordered to have one thousand [more] copies of it printed, out of love for publishing it, and I laid the groundwork for [the second edition] and signaled signs of its news. So it was printed and finished, praise be to God the high and the exalted...and when the second [printing] ran out too, I printed the third [edition], and this [here] is it.¹⁷²

So *Mašāriq al-anwār* circulated in manuscript form for ten years before Sa‘īd, the very ruler of Egypt, liked it so much that he ordered his presses to print it in five hundred copies; this stirred such demand for the book that a lithographic private press printed another two thousand copies of it over two editions; and then the Kāstalīs joined the commotion to produce their own typographic edition the next year.

This episode shows the discernment that the Kāstalīs applied to choosing texts to print typographically. It also highlights the extent to which the Kāstalīs belonged to Cairo’s Islamic social fabric, despite being Italian-born Jews. Their edition of *Mašāriq al-anwār* demonstrates that they felt comfortable printing Muslim texts. And the survival of their press throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century suggests that Cairenes supported their work. Contemporary inscriptions of ownership within Kāstalīya printings also attest to this acceptance. Indeed, a copy of their edition of *Mašāriq al-anwār* belonged to a member of the Šāhīn family, who inscribed his copy proprietarily, if not customarily, with the formulaic notation: “In the possession of his humble [servant] (*al-*

¹⁷² ‘Idwī, 1860, (third and second from last pages).

faqīr bihi), Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Šāhīn...”¹⁷³

i. *Some Wider Points about Books: Bestsellers, Copyright, and Censorship as Illustrated through Mašāriq al-anwār.*

But this episode also illustrates several aspects about Cairene printing by the early 1860s, which I would like to flesh out. *Mašāriq al-anwār* demonstrates that contemporarily authored texts could now become print sensations. Furthermore, the success of *Mašāriq al-anwār* establishes that printed books sold within Cairo and its broader environs. Despite the temptation to think of the book’s fame as the dawn of print culture, we must recognize the very Cairene nature of this print culture. Bestsellers like *Mašāriq al-anwār* did not adopt the foreign themes or European printing norms that scholars looked for when they wrote about the Middle East’s “print revolution.”¹⁷⁴ After all, *Mašāriq al-anwār* was a book about Islamic eschatology written by an Azharite scholar. It, and titles like it, tapped into traditional circuits of manuscript production and religious and state authority. Such books exude the characteristics of the Cairene fold

¹⁷³ ‘Idwī, 1861. HOLLIS number: 002835969, Widener Library, p.1. Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Šāhīn owned other lithographed books as well, like: Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad. *Ḥāšiyat al-Bājūrī ‘alā al-muqaddima as-Sanūsīya*. Cairo: s.n., 1863. HOLLIS number: 006954991, Widener Library, Harvard University, on first page; and Bājūrī, 1857. HOLLIS number: 006955303, Widener Library, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ Refer to the use of “print revolution” in: Roper, Geoffrey. “The Printing press and change in the Arab world.” *Agent of change: print culture after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007, pp. 250-267, pp. 252, 257, 265-267. Refer also to the types of printings under study, and the impact argued for them, in: Ayalon, Ami. “Political journalism and its audience in Egypt, 1875-1914.” *Culture & History 16. The Introduction of the printing press in the Middle East*. Norway: Scandanavian University Press, 1997, pp. 100-121.

which produced them, and for whom their producers intended them, rather than those of a generic print modernity. A prime example of this locality comes from the printing industry's continued reliance upon manuscript publication first. Even al-'Idwī did not put *Mašāriq al-anwār* to press immediately despite his interest in printing books. To merit printing, manuscripts required the weight of traditional endorsements and the initiative of a commissioner to put them forward.

Just as the books and the people who published them drew from the rarified world of Cairene manuscripts, the purchasers of these printings belonged to the same segment of society that previously produced and commissioned manuscripts. Judging from ownership inscriptions within incunabular printings, these texts often fell into the possession of literate men with religious interests, if not formal training.¹⁷⁵ Their owners did not form a cross-section of the broader Ottoman Egyptian populous. Still, this did not mean that the number of consumers of printed texts was insignificant when we control for context.

Although 2,500+ copies of a text pales in comparison to European figures for print runs at that time, such a number demonstrates that Cairene commissioners and printers developed confidence in their ability to sell printings to a small group of consumers just ten years after the start of local private printing. Since most of these early commissioners and printers produced manuscripts themselves, we must appreciate these

¹⁷⁵ Refer for example to the ownership seals in: Alūsī, 1854. HOLLIS number: 006944352, Widener Library, pp. 2 & 156. Refer to the marginalia in: Šafadī, 1857/1858. HOLLIS number: 003093787, Widener Library, pp. 32 & 34. And refer to ownership seals and marginalia in: Šibbīnī, Aḥmad Mīhī. *Hāšiya 'alā Šarḥ al-sittīna mas'ala*. Cairo: s.n., 1868. HOLLIS number: 002788556, Widener Library, Harvard University, pp. 3, 6 & 7.

numbers even more: these men customarily produced texts one by one, and yet they dared to lock up significant sums of money in expectation of sales in the low thousands. True, printing made it easier and cheaper to make numerous copies of texts, and the ability to shock the market with countless copies of a ‘must have’ title presumably helped to stoke demand. But printing alone did not necessarily make the texts any more desirable, and it is difficult to imagine that runaway hits like *Mašāriq al-anwār* could have prompted stationers to invest in even a fraction of 2,500+ manuscripts in three years’ time. Given the newness of printing, Cairene printers and consumers appear to have been accepting of the medium. This flexibility is borne out by Cairenes’ openness to consuming manuscript, lithographic, and typographic copies of *Mašāriq al-anwār*.

The last point that I want to draw out from the example of *Mašāriq al-anwār*, before returning to my discussion of the Kāstalīs, is about the legality of printing books in Cairo with a focus on copyright and censorship. I offer my conclusions under the caveat that they derive from printed texts alone since I was restricted from accessing Egypt’s archival records. The Egyptian government issued four sets of laws about printing texts in its territories: the Ordinance of the Printing Press in 1856/1857;¹⁷⁶ the Ordinance for the Right to Print and Publish All Types of Newspapers and Broadsheets (*awrāq al-ḥawādith al-malikīya wa as-siyāsīya*) at the end of 1864 after having been promulgated by the imperial Porte’s legal code (*ad-dustūr al-humāyūnī*);¹⁷⁷ the Ordinance for the

¹⁷⁶ Jallād, Fīlīb. *Al-Qāmūs al-‘āmm lil-idāra wa al-qaḍā*. Iskandarīya: Maṭba‘at Banī Lāghūdākī, 1899-1902. Vol. 3, p. 539.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 534-538.

Right to Print Books in 1872/1873;¹⁷⁸ and a royal decree concerning printing presses and texts in 1881.¹⁷⁹ In theory, these laws regulated the Ottoman and Egyptian printing industries uniformly from 1856/1857 onwards. In practice, however, their implementation appears to have varied over time and between cities.

The notion of copyright, or *imtiyāz*, was likely inspired by the European tradition. The Egyptian government's laws of 1856/1857, 1872/1873, and 1881 folded copyright into their wider regulation of the printing industry.¹⁸⁰ They reserved copyright for the author of a printing if he followed the other statutes of the laws. This copyright restricted presses from printing texts with rights belonging to someone else. At first, authors were issued copyrights for untranslated texts for life but this was reduced later to forty years from the time of printing.¹⁸¹ Authors of translated texts were granted copyrights for twenty years from the time of printing under the ordinance of 1872/1873.¹⁸²

The printed books themselves suggest that the implementation of copyright laws varied between and within Ottoman cities. Books printed in Istanbul and Beirut during this period, for example, bear statements that reserved the rights of the printer and the

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 540-546.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 546-549.

¹⁸⁰ Refer to the eighth article from the laws of 1856/1857, articles two and three and the addendum from the laws of 1872/1873, and articles eleven and sixteen and the appendix from the laws of 1881 (*Ibid.*, pp. 539, 540-541, & 547-548).

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 541.

author.¹⁸³ By contrast, the overwhelming majority of books printed from Cairo did not. Over the course of my research, I encountered just three Cairene books printed before 1881 that carry a claim to copyright and legal protection. Two are translations from French into Arabic of a play and a novel by Syrian writers that were printed from the same press in 1871, and carried alternately on their final pages the message that: “It is not permissible for anyone to print this pamphlet without the permission of its author, and whoever transgresses [this] will be punished according to the rightful laws (*al-qawanīn aš-šar‘īya*);” and that: “No one is allowed to print this book without being permitted to [do so by] its translator, and whoever transgresses [this] will necessarily be prosecuted.”¹⁸⁴ The other is a pamphlet entitled *The Splendid beauties of the Azbakīya garden* printed in 1874, which bore on its second to last page: “(Notice): the printing of this book is not permitted, and no one may transgress [this] by committing [what is] forbidden to him and [what is] permissible. And whoever prints it is insolent by nature in reprinting it. And he will be punished according to the press laws (*qānūn al-maṭbū‘āt*). And this is a notification of warning, counseling him to be wary of the prohibitions.”¹⁸⁵

The case of *Mašāriq al-anwār* supports the notion that copyright regulations may

¹⁸³ See for example: Maḏlūm, Maksīmūs ibn Jurjis. *Kitāb Kanz al-‘ibād al-thamīn fī akhbār al-qiddīsīn*. Beirut: Maṭba‘at Ḥannā an-Najjār, 1868, title page; and Šidyāq, Aḥmad Fāris. *Kanz ar-raghā‘ib fī muntakhabāt al-Jawā‘ib*. Istanbul: Maṭba‘at al-Jawā‘ib, 1871. Vol. 1, p. 255.

¹⁸⁴ Šālīḥ, Nakhla (trans.). *Zawāj Ćirtrūdah aw al-Kawkab al-munīr fī ḥubb abnat al-amīr*. N.p.: Maṭba‘at Jurnāl Wādī an-Nīl, 1871, p. 10; and Šadīd, Bišāra (trans.). *Riwāyat al-Kawnt dū Mūntū Krīstū*. N.p.: Maṭba‘at Wādī an-Nīl, 1871, p. 232.

¹⁸⁵ Rāšid, Muḥammad Afandī. *Al-Maḥāsīn al-bahīya fī ḥadīqa al-Azbakīya*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Khairīya, 1874, p. 14.

not have been enforced in Egypt evenly. From al-‘Idwī’s holograph copy of *Mašāriq al-anwār*, to the text’s manuscript copies, to its governmental printed edition, its lithographic editions, and then its Kāstaliya edition, no party claimed a right to the text’s intellectual property. Even though the copyright statute from 1856 should have applied to the text theoretically, it does not appear to have influenced its production practically. This disconnect likely arose through the gaps made by the government’s incorporation of western legal customs into its own tradition. Copyright statutes appear to have predated the need for them and to have overlooked important local considerations for reproducing texts. For example, it was not until 1872/1873 that the government commanded that no one was to print the texts for which the state owned the copyright without gaining permission from the Ministry of Information (*Niḏārat al-Ma‘ārif*) first.¹⁸⁶ Such a statute would have impacted the editions of *Mašāriq al-anwār* that were printed after the government’s edition should it have existed in the 1860s. Moreover, the statutes lack reference to the legality of reproducing texts by hand.

These omissions suggest that Egyptian copyright regulations were not well-adapted to the city’s writing industries. They also suggest that during this period, Cairenes’ approach to the legality of reproducing a text was informed by their manuscript tradition. Cairene private printing developed out of the city’s manuscript tradition of copying, and the textual and material authority of the government and local elites. It did not mushroom up from a swashbuckling underworld. This inherent legitimization of printing helped to carry manuscript norms for textual reproduction into the printed

¹⁸⁶ Jallād, 1899-1902, p. 541.

sphere: whoever physically made a copy of the text appears to have disposed of said copy as they saw fit. While it is tempting to imagine that al-‘Idwī expressed displeasure at being scooped by the government, and the government by the lithographers, and the lithographers by the Kāstalīs, the editions of *Mašāriq al-anwār* do not express tension between these ostensible competitors.

Book censorship regulations, by contrast, appear to have been formulated locally and framed through a vocabulary of permissions. The four sets of laws about printing that were issued by the Egyptian government evince that the printing industry operated on permissions in theory from 1856. The permissions pertained to the legality of founding presses and to printing texts from them. But as with the case of copyright, their implementation may have been uneven. This was likely due to the legitimacy of the figures who formed Cairo’s private printing industry. As my treatment of the Šāhīns and Kāstalīs has thus far shown, Cairene private printers during this period were few. Printing was expensive, and it was an elite activity. Printers and commissioners came largely from the Azharite-governmental establishment, or they tacked themselves onto the establishment. Obviously, Sa‘īd’s support for *Mašāriq al-anwār* marked the opposite of censorship. But *Mašāriq al-anwār* represents the type of printing that Cairene producers and consumers of print desired during this period. Its success thereby indicates the relative lack of need for censoring printings when their authors, printers, and consumers drew from the city’s highest circles.

The only systematic evidence that I have seen for the enforcement of censorship statutes appears through the fifth volume of the seven volume collection of *fatāwā* issued

by Muḥammad al-‘Abbāsī al-Mahdī (1827-1897).¹⁸⁷ Al-‘Abbāsī followed the Ḥanafī school of Islamic law, which was that subscribed to by the Egyptian government despite the predominance of the Šāfi‘ī and Mālīkī schools amongst the populace. He served as the Grand Mufti of Egypt from 1848-1886 and 1887-1897, a member of the Privy Council from 1871, and as Šaiḫ al-Azhar from 1871-1881 and 1882-1886.¹⁸⁸ Al-‘Abbāsī selected nearly 13,500 *fatāwā* for his compilation from those that he issued over his career.¹⁸⁹ Among these *fatāwā* are twenty-two concerning permissions for Cairene printing that were written in his capacity as Grand Mufti.¹⁹⁰ They range in date from September of 1866 to February of 1884,¹⁹¹ and appear under the section entitled “Book of the hazardous (*al-khaṭir*), the permitted (*al-ibāḥa*), hunting (*aṣ-ṣaid*), and blood sacrifices (*adh-dhabā’ih*).”¹⁹²

Al-‘Abbāsī’s *fatāwā* on Cairene printing suggests that the Egyptian government enforced some combination of the laws from 1856 and 1864. This is because the 1856

¹⁸⁷ ‘Abbāsī, Muḥammad. *Al-Fatāwā al-Mahdīya fī al-waqā’i ‘al-Miṣrīya*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-Azharīya, 1887, vol. 5. I am grateful to Ahmed El Shamsy for directing my attention to this text.

¹⁸⁸ Peters, Rudolph. “Muḥammad al-‘Abbāsī al-Mahdī (d. 1897), Grand Muftī of Egypt, and his *al-Fatāwā al-Mahdīya*.” *Islamic Law and Society*, 1:1, 1994, pp. 66-82, pp. 70-73.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹⁹⁰ ‘Abbāsī, 1887, pp. 292-300.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 292 & 300.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 289-309.

law authorized the Council of Information and the police (*Majlis al-Ma‘ārif wa aḍ-ḍabṭīya*) to control book printing,¹⁹³ while the 1864 law admitted recourse to religious authorities despite its exclusive concern for printed newspapers and broadsheets. For example, the thirty-first article of the 1864 law mandated that those responsible for words that harmed the Sultan, his government, or representatives of the imperial Porte, “or perverted public decency (*al-ādāb al-‘umūmīya*) and good virtues (*muḥāsīn al-akhlāq*)” would be prosecuted by the government.¹⁹⁴ And it added that the government would prosecute for words that “demeaned (*ahīn*) one of the prevalent religions or Islamic legal schools (*aḥad al-adyān wa al-mudhāhib al-jārīya*).”¹⁹⁵

Whatever the legal source for al-‘Abbāsī’s authority on print permissions, the twenty-two *fatāwā* that he included in his compilation came to him from governmental sources. Eighteen came from the police, two came from the governorate of Cairo (*muḥāfazat Miṣr*), and two came from the interior (*ad-dākhilīya*) and supervisor (*annāzir*) of the state gazette, *al-Waqā‘i‘ al-Miṣrīya*. This suggests that the Egyptian government controlled permissions for printing to some degree, and that they deferred cases that carried the potential for demeaning religion to the Grand Mufti, who issued his opinion on whether or not they did. It is important to note that the contemporary Mālikī mufti Muḥammad ‘Illayš (1802-1882) did not include *fatāwā* on printing in his compilation, for this suggests that such opinions were sought from the official Islamic

¹⁹³ Refer to articles one, two, three, and seven in: Jallād, 1899-1902, p. 539.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 538.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

legal school of the government to the exclusion of the other schools of Islam.¹⁹⁶

The permissions to print, listed as *‘arīḍa*, *‘arḍ*, and *tarkhīs*,¹⁹⁷ were filed by Muslim Egyptian subjects in all cases except for one.¹⁹⁸ For the most part, they recorded their names along with the titles of the books that they hoped to print within their requests. These names and titles frequently appeared more than once. The standing of these hopefuls ranged from a commissioner of a printing at the press at Buḷāq,¹⁹⁹ to a press owner,²⁰⁰ to printers,²⁰¹ to a teacher,²⁰² to figures like the head of the stationers’ guild and “the head of the presses.”²⁰³

Of the one hundred book titles that fell under al-‘Abbāsī’s consideration, he

¹⁹⁶ Refer to: ‘Illayš, Muḥammad. *Fatḥ al-‘alī al-Mālik fī al-fatwā ‘alā al-Imām al-Mālik*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at at-taqaddum, 1901-1902.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Abbāsī, 1887, pp. 294, 296, & 297.

¹⁹⁸ The exception was al-Khawāja Yūsuf Mansān (*Ibid.*, pp. 293-294).

¹⁹⁹ As-Sayyid ‘Abdullah Nūr ad-Dīn (*Ibid.*, pp. 292-293).

²⁰⁰ Muḥammad Ahzaīlā, who was literally “*ṣāhib imtiyāz maṭba‘atihu*” (*Ibid.*, p. 300).

²⁰¹ Namely those given the label “*al-maṭba‘ajī*”: aš-Šaikḥ Ḥasan Aḥmad at-Tūkhī, Šālih Wahbī Effendi, Muṣṭafā Effendi Wahbī, and Manṣūr Effendi Muḥammad (*Ibid.*, pp. 294, 295).

²⁰² Muḥammad Abū Zaid Effendi, “*al-khūja bi-al-madāris*” (*Ibid.*, p. 294).

²⁰³ Aḥmad Maṭar (perhaps a misspelling of the name Musatṭir) was listed as “*ṣaikḥ tā’ifat al-warrāqīn*,” and Muṣṭafā Effendi Wahbī was listed as “*ra’īs al-maṭābi*” (Gacek, 1996, p. 42, book number 54; and ‘Illayš, 1901-1902, pp. 297 & 295). I suspect that this is the same Aḥmad who worked at Mehmed ‘Alī’s bookshop in Khān al-Khalīlī and sold texts from his own shop (refer to chapters four and six).

rejected twenty of them. His reasoning tended to be informed by whether the text in question demeaned or posed dangers to the Ḥanafī school of Islam. Regarding the requested titles that al-‘Abbāsī rejected, he dismissed *Kitāb šams al-ma‘ārif*, or *The Book of the sun of gnosis* on sorcery and spirituality by al-Būnī (d. 1225), because it went against Ḥanafī law and would amount to a loss of money without causing benefit and pose harm to God’s creatures. In this ruling, al-‘Abbāsī’s opinion differed from that of the Šaiḫ al-Azhar who permitted the text’s printing.²⁰⁴ Three years later, when another petitioner requested permission to print the abridged version of the same text, al-Abbāsī rejected it again.²⁰⁵ He also rejected the petitioner’s five other proposed titles: two because they would cause a loss of money without any gain; one entitled *Qiṣṣat ‘Alī at-tajīr*, or *The Story of ‘Alī the trader*, because it is “nothing but untruths, not worth the labor...[and] the loss of time without benefit” posed by its printing; and two whose printing would have otherwise been permitted had the men involved been Muslims.²⁰⁶ Al-Abbāsī wrote that the names of the booksellers (*kutubīyīn*) in this petition suggested that Jews and Christians would be involved in selling, buying, and especially printing the texts. He believed that this would demean Islam because the texts, which contained *aḥādīth*, Qur‘ānic verses, and exalted names, would therefore be scattered through the streets and taken into pubs.²⁰⁷ He rejected another eleven titles in a petition of fifteen

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 292-293.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

presumably because they were stories.²⁰⁸ He also rejected the head of the stationers' guild's attempt to print *Alf layla wa layla*, or *One thousand and one nights*, and another short story.²⁰⁹ Finally, he permitted one printing on the condition that its deficient parts be omitted.²¹⁰

These rulings evince that commerce motivated the petitioners, insofar as the bulk of the titles under request were popular or for students' use at al-Azhar. Indeed one petitioner noted that he wanted to "publish [his title] in the city (*bi-balda*) for sale."²¹¹ Still, they demonstrate that Cairo's governmental and private printing industries were constrained by the specter of regulation from at least 1866. It is interesting to note that neither the Šāhīns nor the Kāstalīs appear in al-‘Abbāsī's collection by name. In the case of the Kāstalīs, it is possible that they were free to operate outside of the censorship laws given their Italian origins. Europeans in Egypt could claim legal standing from their home countries until the establishment of Egypt's mixed courts in 1876. Before then, the ruler's authority to control printings in Egypt was restricted when the printers were of European origin.²¹²

There is reason to believe that the book censorship laws were not felt strongly by

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

²¹² Refer to Sa‘īd's struggle to stop two Italian printers in Alexandria in 1862 (Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 3:1, pp. 390-391).

Cairenes until November of 1881. The 1881 law marked a break with legal precedent, insofar as it rendered void all press laws that it succeeded and as it installed a stronger system of censorship.²¹³ For example, it called for presses to keep 10,000 *qirš* on deposit with the government which could be confiscated in the case of legal transgressions.²¹⁴ It also mandated that all types of writing that contained political news was neither “to be published or put up in the streets” if it “is not published by the government,” regardless of whether the text was published “by manuscript or printed by typography, engraving, or lithography.”²¹⁵ The notion that these laws were a departure from the past is corroborated by the Islamist scholar Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905), who wrote in 1881 that: “all of these categories of books [*i.e.*, all books] were printed in the presses of Egypt without permission and restriction until just recently (during the rule of our current government) [*i.e.*, under Tawfīq (r. 1879-1892)] [when] ordinances were published [stating] that no book may be printed from any of the presses without first having obtained a permit (*rukḥṣa*) approving the printing...”²¹⁶

Thus with regard to copyright and censorship, *Mašāriq al-anwār* demonstrates that the start of the 1860s marked a period in which laws existed, but need not necessarily

²¹³ Refer to article twenty-two and in: Jallād, 1899-1902, p.. 548.

²¹⁴ Refer to article one in: *Ibid.*, p. 546.

²¹⁵ Refer to article eighteen in: *Ibid.*, pp. 547-548.

²¹⁶ Riḍā’, Muḥammad Rašīd and Muḥammad ‘Abduh. “Al-Kutub al-‘ilmīya wa ghairha.” *Tārīkh al-ustādh al-Imām aš-Šaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh*. Miṣr: Maṭba‘at al-Manār, 1906-1931, vol. 2, pp. 163-167, p. 165. First published in the ninth part of the eleventh issue of *al-Waqā’i’ al-Miṣrīya*, 11 May 1881.

have been enforced. This appears to have remained the case until the dramatic political events of 1881 and the subsequent British occupation of 1882. I should note that by then, Cairo's private printing industry was large enough that it warranted steady legal controls.

c. The Kāstalīs' Blending of Cairene and European Practices within the Business of Print.

Returning now to the Kāstalīs, I will elaborate further on their business practices. As I argued through their edition of *Mašāriq al-anwār*, the Kāstalīs tapped into the Azharite printing circles that dominated Cairene manuscript and print production. They did this not only by reprinting Azharite texts, but by taking commissions to print Azharite texts directly from Azharite *šaikhs*.²¹⁷ This tactic was not new: we encountered it before under Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar.²¹⁸ But significantly, Mūsā Kāstalī was an Italian born Jew. To penetrate Cairo's book culture, the Kāstalīs had to leverage their ability to print within a tight knit, locally elite community. They also had to take to Cairo's practice of commissioning printing texts.

The Kāstalīs' employed local copyists to write out their lithographs, like Aḥmad Ḥijāzī Ismā'īl, who may have been the same Aḥmad that copied for the Šāhīns and others on Maṭba'at al-Ḥajar.²¹⁹ Moreover, they employed typefaces that evince that, like the

²¹⁷ For example, refer to: Yāfī'ī, 'Abdullah ibn As'ad. *Mukhtaṣar rawḍ ar-rayāḥīn fī manāqib aṣ-šāliḥīn*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Kastalīya, 1863; and Ša'rānī, *Kitāb al-mīzān*, 1862, p. 246.

²¹⁸ See for example: Khudārī, 1856, p. 722.

²¹⁹ See for example: *Qur'at at-tuyūr*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Kastalīya, 1863, p. 50.

Šāhīns, they purchased their typographic equipment from Sa‘īd’s 1861 sell-off. The Kāstalīs’ ability to buy governmental typefaces indicates that the government acquiesced to, and perhaps endorsed, their work. Finally, because the governmental presses, the Šāhīns, and the Kāstalīs’ all used the same typefaces, the appearance of their typographic page openings was almost identical. Thus the Kāstalīs deployed local aspects of Cairene printing in their work. Still, they asserted some differences which appear to have been

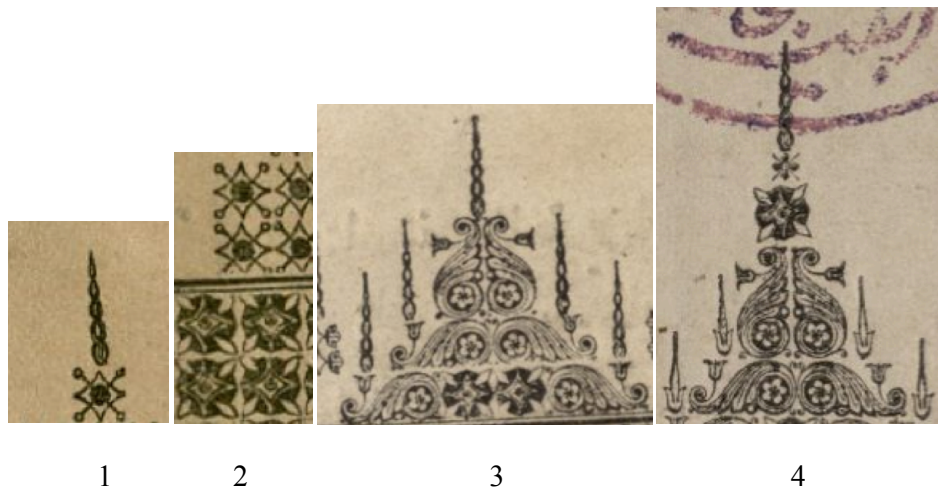


Image 5.7. *Governmental typefaces acquired by the Šāhīns and Kāstalīs. Details of typefaces used by the governmental press at Būlāq (1 & 2), the Šāhīns (3), and the Kāstalīs (4).*²²⁰

informed by European print culture. These distinctions are best seen in comparison to the Šāhīns, since both presses operated at the same time.

Unlike the Šāhīns who abandoned lithography for typography at the first

²²⁰ Raḍwān, Muṣṭafā. *Hidāyat al-jinān fī ‘ilm al-mīzān*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Āmira, 1872. HOLLIS number: 002116823, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 2; Ša‘rānī, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad. *Tanbīh al-muḡhtarīn fī al-qarn al-‘āšir ‘alā mā khālafū fīhi salafahum aṭ-ṭāhir*. Cairo: aš-Šaikh Muḡammad Šāhīn, 1862. HOLLIS number: 007107978, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 2; and Yāfī‘ī, 1863, HOLLIS number: 007242709, Widener Library, p. 2.

opportunity, the Kāstalīs incorporated both modes of printing into their business. They seem to have taken a text's size into account when they made this decision, since they overwhelmingly opted to print their larger books typographically.²²¹ On balance, they reserved lithography for their shorter and more ephemeral texts, like chapbooks and advertisements.²²² I will discuss these genres in further detail below, but it is important to note that by branching out into non-book printing in Arabic, the Kāstalīs availed themselves of virgin territory in Cairene private printing. Hardly any of the other early private lithographic or typographic presses cashed in on ephemera, and when they did, they restricted such printings to chapbooks.²²³

Moreover, when the Kāstalīs printed lithographic or typographic chapbooks, they made them visually enticing. The Kāstalīs bound their chapbooks in such vibrantly stamp-painted papers that they sometimes verged on garish. Inside their chapbooks, even more exciting decorations awaited the eyes. Their chapbooks' contents and general style subscribed to Cairene aesthetic themes. Yet the Kāstalīs exaggerated these motifs to make something that was at once quite familiar, but also avant-garde. The Kāstalīs

²²¹ See for example: Şaffūrī, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd as-Salām. *Nuzhat al-majālis wa muntakhab an-naḥā'is*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Kastalīya, 1864, 432 pages.

²²² See for example: *Qur'at at-tuyūr*, 1863, 50 pages; and *Qā'imat al-kutub*, 1873, 15 pages.

²²³ See for example: *Qiṣṣat al-qāḍī ma'a al-ḥarāmī*, n.d.; and *Qiṣṣat al-qitṭ ma'a al-fa'r*, n.d.



Image 5.8. The colorful bindings and decorative contents of Kāstalīya books.²²⁴

²²⁴ Clockwise from top left to right: *Qiṣṣat at-tājir ‘Alī Nūr ad-Dīn*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kāstalīya, 1880. 894 F 17, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; Wāqidī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar. *Futūḥ aš-Šām*. Cairo: 1866, vol. 1. HOLLIS number: 007235493, Widener Library, Harvard University; Jalāl, Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān. *Al-‘Uyūn al-yawāqiz fī al-amthāl wa al-mawā‘iz*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kastalīya, 1870. 845 F 7, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; *Qur‘at at-ṭuyūr*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kastalīya, 1863. HOLLIS number: 002504820, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 50; and Abū Ma‘šar, Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad. *Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Yūnānī al-faylasūf aš-šahīr*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a at-Tulyānīya, 1871. 8204 C 31, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, p. 86.

particularly took advantage of the illustrative capability of lithography in this manner.

Additionally, unlike the Šāhīns, the Kāstalīs promoted their press within their printings. They practiced this innovation in accord with textual etiquette. The colophons of Kāstalīya books contain information standard to Cairene printings like the date and place of production, and short invocations to an indeterminate God. But the Kāstalīs exceeded this custom by consistently providing the name of their press, and oftentimes, its location. The detail they offered about their location varied between printings. Sometimes they merely noted that their press operated in “the alley of the Jews (*ḥārat al-yahūd*)”²²⁵ or “the alley of the Israelites (*ḥārat al-isrā’īlīn*).”²²⁶ Other times, the Kāstalīs gave their readers directions to their press shop, which was itself an innovation as I discuss further on: “whoever wants to obtain [this book] by purchasing one copy of it, or more, should head to New Street, which leads to the Imām Ḥusayn [mosque]. Pass by the right [of the mosque] and you’ll find the bookstore (*dukkān al-kutub*) connected to [this book’s] commissioner [*i.e.*, Anḡalū Kāstalī].”²²⁷ The Kāstalīs used their printings to drum up business, and this was entirely novel. Yet they based their shop and press in Cairo’s traditional neighborhood for handwritten textual production.²²⁸ Their press shop beyond the Imām Ḥusayn mosque practically abutted Cairo’s traditional row of stationers

²²⁵ Abū Ma‘šar, 1871, p. 86.

²²⁶ *Qiṣṣat at-tājir ‘Alī Nūr ad-Dīn*, 1880, p. 72.

²²⁷ Jalāl, 1870, p. 161.

²²⁸ Refer to chapter three.

by al-Azhar mosque,²²⁹ and their press in the Alley of the Jews was a mere five minutes' walk from Khān al-Khalīlī.

The Kāstalīs cross-advertised their printings to fortify their overall brand. They leveraged printings from one genre to advertise another, as they did in the colophon to their chapbook edition of “The Story of the merchant ‘Alī Nūr ad-Dīn” from *One thousand and one nights* which ended with a promotion for one of the journals that they printed: “In praise of God, the sovereign, the giver, the printing of this delightful book has been finished at the Kāstalīya press, located at the place of the administration of the journal “The Egyptian Star” (*al-Kawkab al-Miṣrī*) in the Alley of the Israelites....”²³⁰ The diversity of the Kāstalīs' printing jobs allowed them to capitalize on this tactic. For with regard to journals alone, the Kāstalīs printed at least three other titles: *al-Maymūn*, or *The Lucky*; *Jūrnāl 'umūmī li-kāfat al-i 'lānāt*, or *The General journal of all announcements*; and James (Ya'qūb) Ṣānū' (1839-1902) *Abū Naẓẓāra*, or *Father spectacles*.²³¹

The Kāstalīs employed one final tactic to distinguish themselves from the other private Cairene presses: from at least as early as 1873, they followed in Meḥmed 'Alī's state's footsteps by printing small catalog booklets to advertise their printings.²³² I only

²²⁹ Refer to chapter three.

²³⁰ *Qiṣṣat at-tājir 'Alī Nūr ad-Dīn*, 1880, p. 72.

²³¹ Refer to chapter six for a discussion of the Kāstalīs' connection to Ṣānū' and *Abū Naẓẓāra*.

²³² Refer to chapter four.

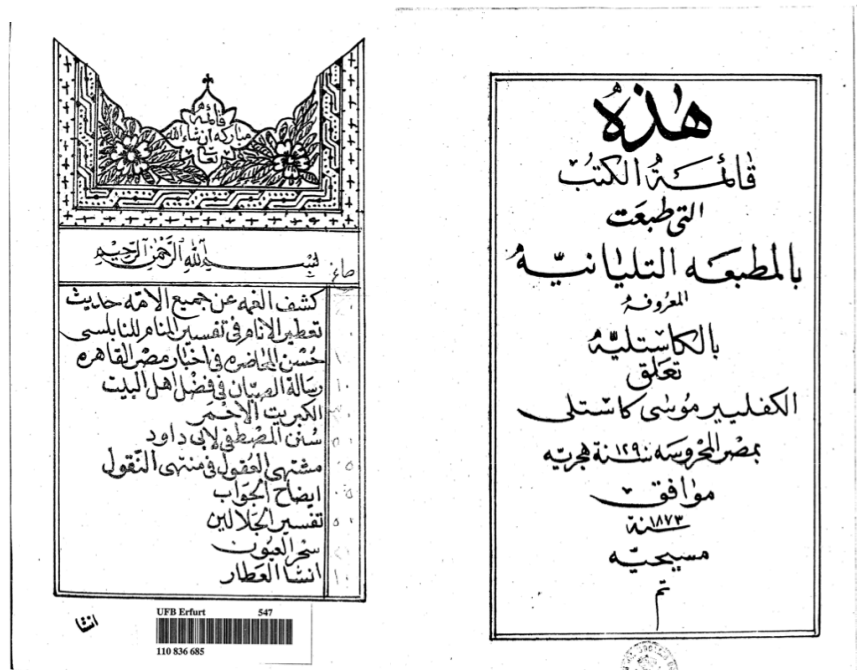


Image 5.9. *The Kāstalīs' catalog of their printed books, Cairo, 1873.*²³³

found copies of their catalog from the year 1873.²³⁴ But the appearance of the catalog suggests that it was not a one-off venture, but rather, a custom for promoting Kāstalīya books on offer at their bookshop. This view is supported by the terse but informative descriptions that the catalog provides for its use: “This is a list of the books that are printed at the Italian Press known as al-Kāstalīya, in connection with the Cavalier Mūsā Kāstalī...[and] a list (*bayān*) about the books currently under print.”²³⁵ The catalog was lithographed, again showing the Kāstalīs' discernment of printings worth typesetting.

²³³ *Qā'imat al-kutub*, 1873. Phil 8° 02212/04, University and Research Library Erfurt/Gotha, pp. 1-2.

²³⁴ Refer to: *Ibid.*; and Ṭanāhī, 1996, unpaginated sixteen page facsimile between pp. 114-115.

²³⁵ *Qā'imat al-kutub*, 1873, pp. 1 & 16.

And although the Kāstalīs appeared to produce it for public consumption, the pamphlet did not describe the contents or bibliographic details of the printings. Instead, it was comprised of fifteen pages of 256 abbreviated titles that the Kāstalīs had already printed, and one page of 17 titles that were then under print.

The Kāstalīs arranged the 273 titles loosely by category, as opposed to any strict thematic, temporal, or alphabetical layout. And they entered the books according to their bynames instead of their longer formal titles. They mentioned a text's author only occasionally, most reliably when the author's name was part of the book's title. Even then, they did not list the authors' full names. For example, the catalog listed "The Commentary of Ibn Qāsim" to perhaps refer to the edition of Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Ghazzī's (d. 1512/1513) *Faṭḥ al-qarīb al-mujīb* that they printed in 1864.²³⁶ This suggests that the Kāstalīs intended their catalog to be consumed by people who were already familiar with the literature of Ottoman Cairo.

As the pamphlet indicated by its title, it listed books exclusively. The catalog therefore provides us with information about the Kāstalīs' formal printed works only. Nonetheless, these books ranged from dense canonical texts like Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī's (d. 1111) *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, or *Revival of the sciences of the religion*, that sold for a costly 150 *qirṣ*, to less expensive and more beloved traditional texts like Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jazūlī's (d. 1465) *Dalā'il al-khayrāt*, or *The Waymarks of benefits*, which sold for 20 *qirṣ*, to downright cheap printings like the poetry

²³⁶ *Qā'imāt al-kutub*, 1873, Phil 8° 02212/04, University and Research Library Erfurt/Gotha, p. 6; and al-Ghazzī, Muḥammad ibn Qāsim. *Faṭḥ al-qarīb al-mujīb*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Kāstalīya, 1864.

of Abū Nuwās (756-814) which sold for 1 *qirš* under the title *The Anecdotes of Abū Nuwās*.²³⁷ The pamphlet also offered less traditional titles, like *The History of America* and *A Turkish-Arabic translator*.²³⁸ Finally, it listed 42 titles that lacked prices altogether. Perhaps the Kāstalīs' copies of these books had already sold out, or they printed these books on commission. This latter possibility is not improbable given that many of the books that lacked prices were obscure commentaries by *šaikhs*, or texts that lacked broad popular appeal like a Coptic-Arabic reader, *šumās*, and *The Book of Paul*.²³⁹

i. An Insight into the Prices of Privately Printed Cairene Books in 1873.

We know these prices because along the right-hand side of the titles, the Kāstalīs ran a blank column. In one of the copies of this catalog that I consulted, a contemporary hand labeled this column “*šāgh*,” or “standard,” which was common parlance for “one standard piaster.”²⁴⁰ The writer then entered the price values for each of the titles listed. It is therefore likely that the annotator held some sort of professional role at the Kāstalīs’

²³⁷ *Qā’imat al-kutub*, 1873. Phil 8° 02212/04, University and Research Library Erfurt/Gotha, pp. 6, 7, & 15.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11; and Ṭanāḥī, 1996, unpaginated sixteen page facsimile between pp. 114-115, p. 16.

²³⁹ *Qā’imat al-kutub*, 1873. Phil 8° 02212/04, University and Research Library Erfurt/Gotha, pp. 4, 5, & 14; see the perhaps falsely imprinted: *Risāla Mār Būlas ar-Rasūl ilā ‘Ahl rūmiya ḥasabmā dhabat ilayhu ‘ulamā al-Kanīsa al-Qabṭīya al-Arthūdḥūksīya*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Qabṭīya, n.d.

²⁴⁰ *Qā’imat al-kutub*, 1873. Phil 8° 02212/04, University and Research Library Erfurt/Gotha, p. 3.

press shop by the Imām Ḥusayn mosque. This assessment is upheld by a letter that Ḥakamawā Kāstalī wrote to the Hungarian orientalist Ignác Goldziher (1850-1921) in November of 1874, as the latter set about acquiring texts for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He promised: “Soon we will send to you the output (*natīja*) of 1875 (*sana* 92), and enclosed in it is the list stating the books and in particular the substance of the books...and so it is that if you need something from that collection in terms of information and lists of prices, then notify us...”.²⁴¹ For our purposes, these prices provide a useful sense of how much a Cairene private press charged for their books in the mid-1870s.

Of the texts listed with prices, one could ostensibly purchase the complete collection of the Kāstalīs’ 214 available printings in 1873 for the princely sum of 7,056 *qirš*. Each of their books therefore cost an average of 32.97 *qirš*, which still represented a formidable cost to most Cairenes as a contemporary English travel guide noted that a dragomen could expect to make 5-7 *qirš* for a day’s work, and that one dozen eggs cost 5-6 *qirš*.²⁴² But the prices of particularly expensive books drove up this average price.

²⁴¹ Castelli, Giacomo E. Castelli’s letter to Ignaz Goldziher, November 30, 1874. Goldziher Bequest. 000042681, GIL/17/24/04, Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Accessed on 3 October 2014. I am grateful to Adam Mestyan for directing my attention to this correspondence. http://prol.mtak.hu/F/3588D8P96MVM4PL4QB4UN5M6FQM2DEJF2MHTVVL6U48L7CFEHE-69124?func=find-m&request=castelli&find_code=WRD&adjacent=N&find_base=KKT&x=0&y=0&filter_code_1=WLN&filter_request_1=&filter_code_2=WYR&filter_request_2=&filter_code_3=WYR&filter_request_3=&filter_code_4=WFM&filter_request_4=&filter_code_5=WCL&filter_request_5=&filter_code_6=WST&filter_request_6=

²⁴² *A handbook for travelers in Egypt; including descriptions of the course of the Nile through Egypt and Nubia, Alexandria, Cairo, the pyramids, and Thebes, the Suez Canal,*

Take, for example, the 400 *qirš* required for the Kāstalīya edition of *al-Fatāwa al-Hindīya*, or *The Indian fatwas*, an exhaustive Hanafi legal compilation from the late seventeenth century Mughal Empire that filled thirty manuscript volumes.²⁴³ When we

Number of titles offered, per price in qirš

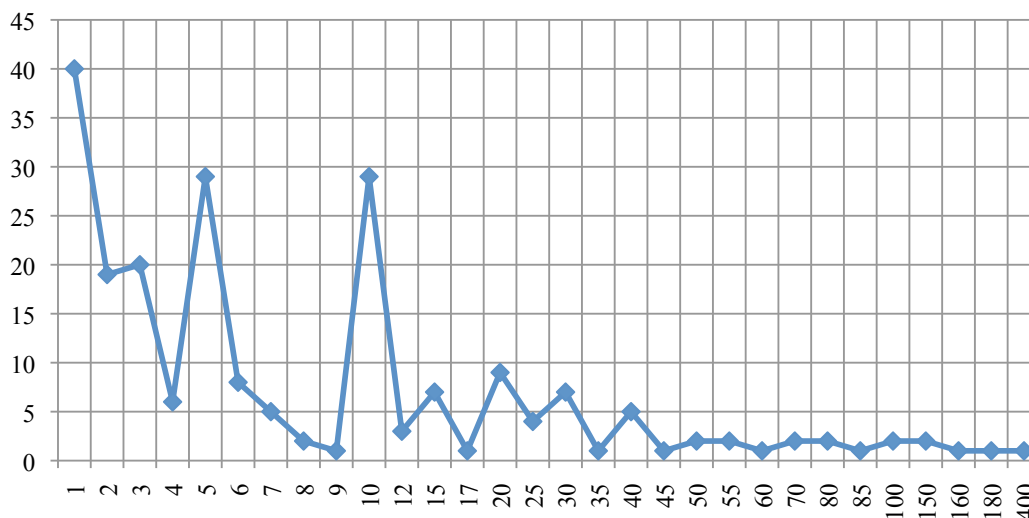


Image 5.10. Price chart of offerings from the Kāstalīs' book catalog, Cairo, 1873.²⁴⁴

remove the seven titles that commanded 100 *qirš* or more from our calculations, the average price of a Kāstalīya printing falls to 28.10 *qirš*. This average cost was still steep. But 130 titles fell beneath the price of 10 *qirš*. Indeed, the Kāstalīs offered 79 books between the prices of 1-3 *qirš*. With 159 titles priced at 10 *qirš* or less, 74.3% of Kāstalīya books were sold at relatively affordable prices.

the peninsula of Mount Sinai, the oases, the Fayoom, &c. London: John Murray, 1875, pp. 319-320, & 324.

²⁴³ *Qā'imāt al-kutub*, 1873. Phil 8° 02212/04, University and Research Library Erfurt/Gotha, p. 3.

²⁴⁴ Data taken from: *Ibid.*, pp. 2-16.

d. The Kāstalīs' Overall Significance.

The topics that the Kāstalīs printed ran the gamut of nineteenth century Cairene tastes. The prices of their books could appeal to the extravagancies of wealthy Cairenes, while also drawing in the hard-earned money of the less well-off. And the fact that they printed up catalog pamphlets illustrates the lengths that the Kāstalīs went to to advertise their work. Their unique ability to blend into Cairene society, to appeal to all types of the city's dwellers, to discern between two modes of printing, and to improvise their tactics for publicity ensured the Kāstalīya Press's survival until 1902.²⁴⁵ Even by the 1870s, their press began to survive the presses of their mid-century associates. Sometime in the late 1860s or early 1870s, the Šāhīns ceased to print. And Muḥammad Šāhīn, the man who helped to found private printing in Cairo, began taking occasional jobs as a corrector for the Kāstalīya Press.²⁴⁶

The Kāstalīs did something remarkable for the trajectory of nineteenth century Cairene printing: they introduced the Cairene private printing industry to the tactics of European printers. Before the Kāstalīs, Cairene private printing had been steeped in local manuscript culture. The Kāstalīs belonged to this tradition too, as much of their success derived from their initiation into Cairene textual custom. But they fused Cairene printing to the business practices of European printers to form something unique. As the century wore on, these practices grew evermore powerful. Manuscript production would not

²⁴⁵ Pinto, 1964, p. 218.

²⁴⁶ See the reference to Muḥammad Šāhīn in: Ibn Iyās, 1871, p. 188.

disappear, but lithographic printing and book commissioning began to recede. In concluding this chapter, I will summarize the trajectories of the manuscript and printing industries.

3. *Cairene Textual Production in the 1870s and into the 1880s.*

By the 1870s, private printing had developed into an important force in Cairene written production. Certain press names became more familiar than others, printings began to converge visually such that they no longer looked like printed manuscripts, and the types of printed output began to solidify around new types of texts. Quantitatively, the real bump in the founding of Arabic private presses occurred at the end of the 1860s. I estimate that these presses amounted to no more than fifteen in number,²⁴⁷ excluding contemporary European presses in Egypt which counted fewer than ten. These presses overwhelmingly converged around Cairo,²⁴⁸ with Alexandria hosting the second largest number of presses.²⁴⁹

The Arabic presses favored typography, and increasingly incorporated European bibliographic fixtures within their work. During this period, for example, the decorative

²⁴⁷ Refer for example to the presses of: al-Wahbīya, Wādī an-Nīl, al-Waṭan, al-Ḥajarīya al-Azharīya, al-‘Āmira aš-Šarafīya, al-‘Inānīya, Ḥasan Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭūkhī, and Jam‘īyat al-Ma‘ārif.

²⁴⁸ In 1874, Ignác Goldziher wrote: “At this moment, the private presses in Cairo are the following: a) the Castelli-press b) the press of *Wādī al-Nīl* ... c) the press of Muṣṭafā Wahbī Effendi, which, ... nowadays barely survives” (Goldziher, 2014, p. 16).

²⁴⁹ Like al-Maṭba‘a al-Waṭanīya which belonged to Mu‘awwiḍ Effendi Farīd, Maṭba‘at Jarīdat al-Burhān, and al-Maṭba‘a as-Sa‘dīya.

headpieces of texts began to disappear from books' opening pages.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, noting one's press name within one's printings gained traction, as evinced by texts from presses like al-Wahbīya, Wādī an-Nīl, al-Waṭan, al-Ḥajarīya al-Azharīya, al-‘Āmira aš-Šarafīya, al-‘Inānīya, Ḥasan Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭūkhī, and Jam‘īyat al-Ma‘ārif. Finally, the private presses began to distinguish the content of their works from the output of the manuscript and governmental printing industries. Private presses moved to print job ephemera like bespoke stationery, posters, calling cards, business cards, menus, and party invitations.²⁵¹ Many of these private presses printed journals, newspapers, and books too.²⁵² With regard to the latter, they increasingly printed living writers and unconventional topics like tracts on the state of contemporary society.²⁵³ And these texts shortened in length.²⁵⁴

Many scholars have attributed this printed transformation to Egypt's wider entrance into nationalist and literary modernity.²⁵⁵ Others have more accurately pointed

²⁵⁰ See for example: Šālih, 1871; and Maḥmūd, Ḥasan. *Kitāb fī al-bawāsīr wa mu‘ālatihā*. Cairo: s.n., 1878.

²⁵¹ See for example the printed ephemera preserved in: Grenfell Papers. GB165-0319. Album 1. Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, UK.

²⁵² Like Maṭba‘at Jurnāl Wādī an-Nīl and Maṭba‘at Jarīdat al-Burhān.

²⁵³ See for example: Marṣafī, Ḥusayn. *Hadhahi Risāla al-Kalim ath-thamān*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Āmira aš-Šarafīya, 1881; and Fikrī, Amīn. *Jughrāfiyat Amīn Fikrī wa mulakkhaṣ jughrāfiyat Miṣr*. Cairo: s.n., 1875/1876.

²⁵⁴ Ḥusayn Marṣafī's tract was 68-pages in length (Marṣafī, 1881).

²⁵⁵ See for example: Hourani, Albert. "Egyptian nationalism." *Arabic thought in the liberal age*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 193-221; Gershoni, Israel, and

out that this conception of modernity was rooted in Europe, therefore denying the possibility for non-European modernities.²⁵⁶ Cairenes did assimilate contemporary European fashions and norms.²⁵⁷ But they did so in a way that was particularly Egyptian.²⁵⁸ My own argument is that if printing is to be indicative of Egyptian modernity, this categorization ought to be considered rigorously for it currently relies upon the European experience of printing as its basis.²⁵⁹

The Šāhīns and the Kāstalīs used lithography and operated in conjunction with

James P. Jankowski. *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: the search for Egyptian nationhood, 1900-1930*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 5-6; and Starkey, P. B. "The Revival." *Modern Arabic literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006, pp. 23-41, pp. 23-29.

²⁵⁶ Refer to: Latour, Bruno. *We have never been modern*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993; and Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial through and historical difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

²⁵⁷ See for example: Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988; and Sanders, Paula. *Creating medieval Cairo. Empire, religion, and architectural preservation in nineteenth-century Egypt*. New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2008.

²⁵⁸ Refer to: Ryzova, Lucie. *The Age of the efendiyya: passages to modernity in national-colonial Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014; Huber, Valeska. *Channelling mobilities: migration and globalization in the Suez Canal region and beyond, 1869-1914*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013; and Fahmy, Khaled. "Modernizing Cairo: a revisionist narrative." *Making Cairo medieval*, edited by Nezar alSayyad, Irene Beirman, and Nasser Rabbat. New York: Lexington Books, 2005, pp. 173-200.

²⁵⁹ This view is characterized in the following quote: "Lebanon in the mid-nineteenth century was the scene of growing intellectual ferment. An educated group with a command of foreign languages, and inspired by Western ideas, was eagerly shaking the dust off the old treasures of local culture...Lebanon would blaze the trail for the cultural, and later nationalist, awakening of Middle Eastern society, while Lebanese intellectuals in Beirut, Cairo, Istanbul, and Paris would pioneer the revival of language and literature and the establishment of theatre and the press" (Ayalon, 1995, p. 28).

Cairene manuscript culture. But they also played important roles in developing several printed genres in Egypt, which extended to journals in the case of the *Kāstalīs*.²⁶⁰ They therefore warrant admittance into scholars' conception of Egyptians' printed modernity, which is usually predicated on certain types of texts instead of the people who produced them. When Rashid Khalidi called for historians of Arab nationalism to study the press, for example, he wrote that "while the Arabic press is either unavailable or of little use as a source for the period before the late 19th century, it becomes invaluable from the 1870s onwards, particularly those papers published from Cairo."²⁶¹ But Khalidi did not justify why newspapers deserve specific attention from Middle Eastern scholars. Indeed, the understanding that newspapers helped to foster nationalism in Europe has yet to have its thesis explored critically in the context of the nineteenth century Middle East.²⁶² Such research would have to explain if and how the *Kāstalīs*' journals made them any more significant to Egyptian thought and emerging conceptions of identity than did their other printings.

It also bears noting that a practical explanation lies behind the present conception

²⁶⁰ Refer to: *al-Maymūn*, *Jūrnāl 'umūmī li-kāfat al-i 'lānāt*, *al-Kawkab al-Miṣrī*, and *Abū Naẓẓāra*.

²⁶¹ Khalidi, 1981, pp. 38-61, p. 39.

²⁶² For the origins of this thesis, refer to: Anderson, 1983; and Habermas, 1989. For a short assessment of the relevance of this thesis to the development of Egyptian nationalism in the twentieth century, refer to: Gershoni, Israel and James Jankowski. "Print culture, social change, and the process of redefining imagined communities in Egypt: response to the review by Charles D. Smith of *Redefining the Egyptian nation*." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Feb., 1999), pp. 81-94.

that Egyptian print modernity began around the 1870s.²⁶³ The very emergence of competitive private printing informed many of the elements that made Cairene printing appear to be modern. Private presses began stating their names, cross-advertising their publications, and publishing new voices in shorter texts because they were now in competition with one another. As for-profit businesses, they diversified their risk by cashing in on undemanding job-printings while speculating in sensationalist new titles. They began to move away from commissions for books, since these required more effort to print than bespoke stationery. And the appearance of their output grew flashier as they competed for customers. They also took on disingenuous business practices, as Goldziher noted that he “heard from the publisher himself [*i.e.*, one of the Kāstalīs]” that the Kāstalīs falsely billed their printings as products of Istanbul instead of Cairo on occasion “because books in Turkish printed in Constantinople sell better than those printed in Egypt.”²⁶⁴

The internal competition within the private printing industry accounted for these changes that suddenly made Egyptian writing appear so much more modern. But despite these transformations, and their implications for modernity and print culture, the private printing industry continued to rely upon the manuscript and governmental printing industries that had given it rise.

²⁶³ Refer to depictions of the thesis that Egyptian print culture developed via the press under Ismā‘īl (r. 1863-1879) circa 1870 in: *Ibid.*; Sadgrove, 1983, p. ii; and Ayalon, 1995, pp. 40-42.

²⁶⁴ Goldziher, 2014, p. 39.

a. Private Printing's Reliance upon Manuscript Tradition.

The private presses invaded the heart of Cairene manuscript territory, and billowed out from there. Using his personal knowledge of Cairo, aṭ-Ṭanāḥī imagined what it must have been like to stroll past them in the late nineteenth century:

If you were there at that time, in the square of Bāb al-Khalq...and you looked to your right and left, then in front of you and behind you, and then traversed these four directions, you would see a large number of presses: in al-Azbakīya, and al-Fajāla, and Bāb aš-Ša‘rīya, and Muḥammad ‘Alī Street, and Darb al-Jamāmīz, and al-Khalīj an-Nāṣarī,...and Ḥasan al-Akbār Street, and ‘Ābidīn, and ‘Abdulazīz Street, and Darb as-Sa‘āda, and al-Ḥusayn, and al-Azhar, and al-Mūskī, and ad-Dirāsa, and al-Khurunfaš, and al-Jamālīya. These great streets, through them, spread tens of presses through the proud (*al-mu‘azzīya*) alleys and lanes of Cairo...which published the most minor of books and the most significant of them. These places, upon which flourished these local presses...did not exceed more than ten kilometers squared. Yet from these neighboring areas situated in the heart of Cairo: streets, alleys, and lanes, along with the small area upon which Būlāq was situated on the banks of the Nile: gushed forth the culture of the Arab and Islamic world in the last century. How [its] light spread, how its glow beamed!²⁶⁵

Aṭ-Ṭanāḥī subscribed to the view that Cairene print was something to be celebrated. But his effusive vision of printing shows that aside from the anomaly of the governmental press at Būlāq, the printing industry latched onto Cairo’s historic district for manuscript production.

The printers’ annexation of Khān al-Khalīlī extended further through the ways in which they sold their printings. Early Cairene commissioners and presses, like that of the Šahīns, placed their texts in the hands of the manuscript booksellers in Khān al-Khalīlī.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Ṭanāḥī, 1996, p. 82.

²⁶⁶ For example, refer to the advertisement for a Šahīn printing posted by a bookseller based near al-Azhar named Šaikh Ḥasan az-Zaghala, as recorded in: Šābāt, 1958, p. 195.

We saw this under the discussion of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s bookshop in chapter four. Indeed, the traders of Khān al-Khalīlī served as early private print commissioners, given that manuscript booksellers often dabbled in hand copying texts themselves.²⁶⁷ But when aṭ-Ṭanāḥī imagined strolling past the presses in the late nineteenth century, he likely meant their bookshops too.

Successful presses began founding bookstores under their press names in Khān al-Khalīlī during the late 1860s, as illustrated through the Kāstalīs’ professionalization from print entrepreneurs to printer-publishers. Unsurprisingly given the location of these press shops, they tapped into manuscript custom too. A description of bookshops from the 1878 Baedeker travel guide for Egypt seems to pick up where aṭ-Ṭanāḥī left off, and provides us with a sense of how the two different types of Khān al-Khalīlī bookshops functioned:

We follow this [Khān al-Khalīlī] street in a straight direction nearly as far as the post of the (lower) sentry on the left, a little before reaching whom we turn to the right into the Suk es-Sudan, or bazaar for wares from the Sudan, consisting of chests, gum, dum-palm nuts, ill-tanned tiger skins, etc...Farther on, in a straight direction, are the stalls of the Booksellers and Bookbinders.

Most of the booksellers are also scholars, but they are not so fanatical as their brethren of Damascus, who sometimes decline to sell their books to Christians. Seated on their mastabas [*i.e.*, benches] are frequently to be found various other members of the learned, or would-be learned, world, who spend whole days here in interminable colloquies. Some of the booksellers sell those works only which they have themselves published, while others keep an assortment of books from the printing-offices of Bulak and others. As the prices vary greatly in accordance with the demand and other circumstances, and there is no such thing as a fixed publishing price, purchasers should endeavour to ascertain beforehand the true value of any work they wish to buy. (The Cairene edition of the Thousand-and-one Nights, being now nearly out of print, is very

²⁶⁷ See for example: Ibn al-Jawzī, 1861, p. 215.

expensive.) As in the case of many other wares, the line between new and second-hand books is not so strictly drawn in the East as in Europe. The booksellers generally keep catalogues, several feet in length, to refresh their memories regarding the state of their stock. The Koran, which is shown very reluctantly to non-Muslims, is generally kept under lock and key, or at least separate from the other books. The books are not arranged side by side as in European shops, but piled up in a very inconvenient fashion. Many of them are sold in loose sheets, in which case the purchaser should see that the work is complete, as gaps are of frequent occurrence. The bindings usually consist of leather and pasteboard. Valuable books are often kept in cases of red sheepskin, out of which they are drawn by means of a loop. – The workmanship of the bookbinders, who like other Oriental artisans work in the open street, is generally cheap and durable. Red is their favourite colour.²⁶⁸

The Baedeker makes clear that press shops presented a new twist on old habits, in that they grew out from the existing bookselling industry. In location and function, they were distinct from traditional booksellers only insofar as they restricted their inventory to their own printed wares.

This made the late nineteenth century Cairene approach to selling books appear eastern to Europeans.²⁶⁹ Although some of the texts that vendors sold were printings, they sold them as though they were manuscripts. As one British resident of Cairo lamented: “On the southern side of the Musky, or rather its prolongation, are the shops of the booksellers, who are learned men, and enjoy the peculiar advantage of being tied down by no fixed published price for their books.”²⁷⁰ Another complained that Cairene

²⁶⁸ Baedeker, Karl (ed.). *Egypt. Handbook for travellers, part first: Lower Egypt, with the Fayum and the Peninsula of Sinai*. London: Dulau and Co., 1878, pp. 252-253.

²⁶⁹ Landau, Jacob M. and Manfred Woidich. “The *Baladiyyāt Aḥmad ilFār*. A note on a modern Egyptian manuscript text.” *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, Volume 6, 1992, pp. 59-70.

²⁷⁰ Lane-Poole, Stanley. *Cairo: sketches of its history, monuments, and social life*. London: J. S. Virtue & Co., Limited, 1898, 3rd Edition, p. 15.

booksellers were “dry, egoistic, [and] shrewd.”²⁷¹ Despite foreigners’ objections, these shops did not exist for them alone but for Cairene clients too. A book printed at the governmental press at Būlāq in 1840, for example, bears the inscription: “This is the book of the pilgrim Taqī ad-Dīn, son of the deceased pilgrim Muḥammad aš-Šāq ‘Alī, who came into possession of it by legal purchase (*bi aš-šira aš-šar‘ī*) from Šaikḥ Hāšim the bookseller and bookbinder (*al-kutubī al-mujallid*) on the 24th of August, 1872.”²⁷²

In addition to fastening themselves to the manuscript industry’s vending grounds, the private presses also made use of the manuscript industry’s binders.²⁷³ The governmental presses bound their books in-house.²⁷⁴ But judging from appearances and accounts, private printers relied on the city’s craftsmen for this task. One British journal noted in 1893 that: “One passes through that marvellous street of native shops, the Mouskee, and, turning off, forces his way through the narrow lane known as the “street of the Booksellers,” where Arab workmen are seen binding curious looking volumes, seated

²⁷¹ Patai, 1987, p. 147, entry from 18 December 1873.

²⁷² Lawrence, William and Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ar-Rašīdī (trans.). *Ḍiyā’ an-nayīrāīn fī mudāwāt al-‘aynāīn*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Āmīra, 1840. HOLLIS number: 002873518, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 1.

²⁷³ For an overview of the techniques used by Islamic bookbinders from various places and times, refer to: Scheper, Catharina Helena (Karin). “The Islamic bookbinding tradition. A book archaeological study.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Leiden University, 2014.

²⁷⁴ Fikrī, 1875/1876, p. 376. In-house binding at the governmental press at Būlāq began in 1836 (Šābāt, 1958, pp. 145-148).



Image 5.11. *Bookbinders in their shop, Cairo, circa 1890.*²⁷⁵

cross-legged on the floor of tiny box-like shops, and with a surging conglomeration of humanity, camels, and donkeys passing not two feet away.”²⁷⁶

The Baedeker suggests that presses did not always bind their printings before making them available for purchase. And this corresponds to what I have seen, as even identical titles from the same edition can feature different contemporary binding materials.²⁷⁷ Each private press’s books could come in a range of bindings, from Islamic

²⁷⁵ G. Lékégian and Co. “*Relieurs & tisserands #386.*” Cairo: circa 1890. Collection of photographs from the nineteenth century, Dr. Mohammed B. Alwan, Belmont, Massachusetts.

²⁷⁶ Penfield, Frederic E. “The World’s oldest university.” *The Idler. An Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, edited by Jerome K. Jerome. London: Chatto and Windus, Vol. X., No. II, September, 1896, pp. 193-196, p. 193.

²⁷⁷ For example refer to the bindings of: Širbīnī, Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad. *Hazz al-quḥūf fī šarḥ qaṣīd Abī Šādūf.* Cairo: s.n., n.d. HOLLIS number: 008021364, Widener Library,

tongue bindings in Cairo's famous red leather to colorful stamp-printed papers.²⁷⁸ The contents of the book appear to have determined the value and style of its binding, as religious pedagogical texts were often bound but left unsewn for what were apparently customary reasons.²⁷⁹

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the governmental and private presses adopted industrial European techniques for bookbinding like sawing space for thread into the backs of quires and gluing them into place.²⁸⁰ These machined bindings were less giving than traditional bindings. Furthermore, they have proven more damaging to the texts they enclose. But they likely appealed to Cairene printers due to

Harvard University; and Širbīnī, Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad. *Hazz al-quḥūf fī šarḥ qaṣīd Abī Šādūf*. Cairo: s.n., n.d. 8330 A2, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

²⁷⁸ See for example: Ibn al-Athīr, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad. *Usd al-ghāba fī ma'rifat aṣ-ṣaḥāba*. Cairo: al-Jam'iyyat al-Ma'ārif, 1868-1870, 5 vols. 845 e 21-25, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; and *Hādhā majmū' muštamil 'alā khamsat dawāwīn*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Wahbīya, 1876. HOLLIS number: 007219134, Widener Library, Harvard University.

²⁷⁹ See for example: Najjārī, Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad. *Anzar al-'uqūd 'alā bahjat al-wadūd fī faḍl ašraf mawlūd*. Cairo: s.n., 1866. 820 G 22, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; and Maghribī, Aḥmad ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq. *Hāšiya 'alā Šarḥ Šams ad-Dīn ar-Ramlī lil-Minhāj*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-'Āmira, 1875. HOLLIS number: 003185371, Widener Library, Harvard University. Refer also to chapter three.

²⁸⁰ See for example: Maydānī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *Majma' al-amthāl*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a al-Miṣrīya, 1867, 2 vols. 844 A 5-A 6, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; Ibn Qāḍī Simāwnah, Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. *Kitāb jāmi' al-fuṣūlayn*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Azharīya, 1882/1883, 2 vols. HOLLIS number: 006890927, Widener Library, Harvard University; and Kibrīt, Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallah. *Riḥlat aš-šitā' wa aṣ-ṣayf*. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Wahbīya, 1876. HOLLIS number: 007197833, Widener Library, Harvard University.

I am grateful to Karin Scheper of Leiden University for her guidance on the techniques of European and Islamic bookbinders.

their cost effectiveness and the growing local preference for wares that originated from Europe.

Unlike books, privately printed chapbooks often lacked bindings and instead were sewn together between papers.²⁸¹ This was probably done in-house by the presses, given the non-technical nature of the procedure and the consistency of such sewings within presses. In the mid-nineteenth century, the sewing followed the stitchwork patterns common within local manuscripts.²⁸² But from the late 1860s onwards, the ‘sewing’ shifted to punching two holes into gatherings.²⁸³ Punching was faster than sewing, but it also made page openings more taut, leaving the paper increasingly susceptible to ripping.

Up until the 1880s, the private presses also relied on the manuscript tradition to generate their bestselling chapbooks. In 1881, ‘Abduh composed an essay on Egyptian books.²⁸⁴ In his section on “books of unadulterated lies” (*kutub al-akādhīb aṣ-ṣirfa*), he wrote that: “these books mention within them the untrue history of peoples and sometimes are comprised of silly expressions confused with rules of the language, like the books of [chivalric heroes] *Abū Zaīd*, ‘*Antar ‘Abs*, *Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥasan*, and *az-Zāhir*

²⁸¹ See for example: Darwīš, Aḥmad. *Qiṣṣat al-maymūn*. N.p., s.n., 1880. 892 F 30, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; and *Qiṣṣat uns al-wujūd ma ‘a ma ‘šūqatihi al-ward fī al-akmām*. N.p., s.n., 1871. 857 F 24, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

²⁸² See for example: Bājūrī, Ḥāšiya ‘*alā matn as-Sanūsīya*, 1856. HOLLIS number: 006955855, Widener Library, pp. 73-74.

²⁸³ See for example: *Qiṣṣat masrūr at-tājir*, 8203 F 8, Special Collections, Leiden University; and *Qiṣṣat at-tājir ‘Alī Nūr ad-Dīn*, 1880. 894 F 17, Special Collections, Leiden University.

²⁸⁴ Riḍā’, 1906-1931, pp. 163-167.

Baībars. There are more readers (*al-muštāghilūn*) of these [books] than of any other category, and the books have been printed hundreds of times and have an active market (*nafaqa sūquha*), and there is not much time between one printing and the next.”²⁸⁵

Finally, the private presses relied upon the contents and cultural cachet of manuscripts to further their businesses. It bears pointing out that lithographic and typographic printers worked from manuscript copies of texts. Although very little research has been done on the subject of manuscripts prepped for printing,²⁸⁶ some of these handwritten texts now belong to library collections.²⁸⁷ These manuscripts illustrate how Cairene printers went about their work. But because they are handwritten and marked up by hand, they also remind us of printing’s artisanal nature.

The paratextual statements within printed books discussed these printers’ copies on occasion, and in particular, their printings’ faithfulness to them. One particularly long statement at the back of an 1864 Kāstālīya edition of *Nuzhat al-majālis*, a fifteenth century work on ethics and piety, illustrates this point. Its writer argued that he re-printed another press’s edition of *Nuzhat al-majālis*:

...to increase the desire for it, since it contained anecdotes and rarities and advice that were not contained in any [books] like it. But [the first printed edition of] it had not been corrected, so when it was to be printed this time by the Kāstālīya Press,...[the press] committed to correcting it from quire

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

²⁸⁶ A notable exception to this lacuna is: Witkam, Jan Just. “Manuscripts in print: some Arabic examples.” *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, vol. 2, 1987, pp. 115-125.

²⁸⁷ For example: Muḥammad ibn Rasūl al-Ḥusaynī al-Barzanjī. *Kitāb al-iṣā‘a li-aṣrāt as-sā‘a*. Cairo, approx. 1907. Or. 14.526, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

10 of the first part to quire 7 of the second part. But during this correction, a handwritten copy [of *Nuzhat al-majālis*] was found between the bindings. So [the Kāstalīya Press] compared [the handwritten copy] to the first printed copy, and what was found in the handwritten copy that exceeded the relevant discussion [in the first printed text] was put in [this second edition] in its entirety. But sometimes [the extra manuscript bits] were not put in [the second edition] in their entirety, because the [first] printed [edition] already had an extended [bit] that did not exist in the manuscript copy...²⁸⁸

To summarize, the Kāstalīya edition of *Nuzhat al-majālis* was an amalgamation of an unnamed previous printing and a mystery manuscript. Explanations such as this one ought to be borne in mind by scholars, since many of us depend upon nineteenth century Cairene printings as definitive editions of manuscripts. But the writers of comments like these did not intend to caution future scholars of the complexities of printed manuscripts. Ironically, they used their statements to endorse the authenticity of their printings, and to assert the dominance of their work over that of their competitors. The nonspecific “handwritten copy found between the bindings” was meant to reassure the second edition’s readers of their printing’s value and reliability. The cachet of this unnamed manuscript required no further detail.

Private printers also referenced the manuscripts that they relied upon to cash in on that particular manuscript’s prestige. For example, correctors claimed that they checked their printing against “the precious original” to fix any deviations.²⁸⁹ They also printed meaningful manuscript marginalia, like the signatures of dignitaries who had endorsed

²⁸⁸ Ṣaffūrī, 1864, p. 217.

²⁸⁹ Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Husayn ibn Muḥammad. *Dharī‘a ilā makārim aṣ-ṣarī‘a*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Waṭan, 1882, p. 170.

the handwritten text.²⁹⁰ Sometimes printers conjured up a manuscript's clout to excuse their own errors. For example, a Waṭan Press printing from 1882 ended with the rebuke: "The printing of [this book] was completed, as was the spreading of its benefit, from the original copy, [written] by the peerless hand, that we accessed from the Egyptian Khedivial Library...and there is no blame or reproach if some errors passed us by in correcting this book. For the process of printing does not come easily, and the work is hard. Criticism is easier."²⁹¹ In chapter six, I discuss the opening of the Khedivial Library in 1870 and the increasing fetishization of the manuscript within Cairene society, as printing became the normal mode for publication. For now, my point is that the physical and symbolic bases for private printings remained firmly rooted in manuscript tradition, despite the modern implications of Cairo's private press.

Even the journals that historians deem to be particularly progressive, like *at-Tankīt wa at-tabkīt*, or *Laughing and Reproaching*, relied upon manuscript custom.²⁹² The journal declared at the top of its first issue that: "We have chosen to publish the paper in quire format, to make it easy for subscribers to gather them all at the end of the year and make [the gatherings] into a book, whose pages won't be less than eight

²⁹⁰ See for example: Abū Šāma, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ismā'īl. *Kitāb ar-rawḍatayn fī akhbār ad-dawlatayn*. Cairo: Maṭba'at Wādī al-Nīl, 1871, vol. 1, p. 279.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

²⁹² For example, see the way that *at-Tankīt wa at-Tabkīt* is portrayed in: Kendall, Elisabeth. "Between politics and literature: journals in Alexandria and Istanbul at the end of the nineteenth century." *Modernity and culture: from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, edited by Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, pp. 330-343, pp. 336-337.

hundred.”²⁹³ *At-Tankīt wa at-tabkīt* was therefore promoted within a context which was more familiar to manuscripts than printings. But this context merged local manuscript custom with newfound print customs by going on to warn prospective subscribers that they had better start their subscriptions fast, since the newspaper’s administration would not assume responsibility for tracking down back issues for latecomers.²⁹⁴

Thus the contents of private printings, their coverings, and the way in which printers attempted to profit from them drew upon Cairene manuscript custom.

b. Private Printing’s Reliance upon Governmental Printing.

In addition to drawing from the manuscript industry, the private presses also leaned on the governmental printing industry. They did this in several ways, starting with their typographic equipment. The Šāhīns and the Kāstalīs were not the only presses to acquire their typefaces from the government. Almost all of the major Egyptian-owned presses of the 1860s and 1870s employed typefaces that once belonged to the government. For example, the presses of Wabhīya, Wādī an-Nīl, Waṭan, al-‘Āmira aš-Šarafīya, al-‘Umūm al-Ma‘ārif, Azhar, Maymūna, and Jam‘īyat al-Ma‘ārif availed themselves of this necessity in a city that otherwise lacked typefaces.²⁹⁵ It is unclear to

²⁹³ *At-Tankīt wa at-tabkīt*. Alexandria, *s.n.*, 1881, Issue 1, p. 2.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ See for example: *Hādhā majmū‘ mushtamil ‘alā khamsat dawāwīn*, 1876; *Fihrist al-kutub al-mawjūda bi al-Kutubkhāna al-Khidīwīya al-Miṣrīya al-kubrā*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Wādī an-Nīl, 1872-1875; Ayyāṣī, Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad. *Majmū‘ fīhi fawā‘id wa ba‘d khaṣā‘iṣ ašyā’*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Āmira aš-Šarafīya, 1882; Riyād, ‘Alī. *At-Tārīkh at-ṭabī‘ī*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at ‘Umūm al-Ma‘ārif, 1881; Ibn Qāḍī Simāwnah,

me whether they received these typefaces from the government directly by purchase or subsidy, or whether they received acquired them from failed presses.

While scholars have long pointed out that the government subsidized private printing initiatives,²⁹⁶ this exchange of equipment demonstrates that the government played a deeper role in fostering the private press. Although these presses were private, to the extent that their printers were not salaried employees of the government, their reliance upon the government for work, subsidy, and equipment made them somewhat governmental too. That ‘private presses’ were both private and governmental at once helps to explain why the Egyptian-owned private presses printed relatively tame materials until the late 1870s, and why the government did not target Arabic private presses *en masse* through local press laws until 1881.

Private presses depended on governmental printing in other ways too. The famous al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī printer-publishers of Cairo, for example, appear to have gotten their start by commissioning books on the governmental presses with partners from afar. Aḥmad al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī’s “partners” for one commissioned text were based in the Hejaz.²⁹⁷ Private presses also reprinted full editions of governmental printings when

1882/1883; Marrāš, Fransīs Fath Allāh. *Kitāb Ghābat al-ḥaqq fī tafṣīl al-akhlāq al-fāḍila wa aḍḍādhā ‘alā uslūb jalīl al-waḍ’ wa jamīl aṭ-ṭab’*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Maymūna, 1881, 2 vols.; and Ibn al-Athīr, 1868-1870.

Khalīl Ṣābāt makes this point with regard to al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī and Wādī an-Nīl (Ṣābāt, 1958, pp. 193 & 196).

²⁹⁶ For example, refer to: Philipp, Thomas. *The Syrians in Egypt, 1725-1975*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985, p. 97; and Sadgrove, 1983, p. 73.

²⁹⁷ Refer to the following for an example of their early governmental commissions: Nawāwī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar. *Fath al-mujīb fī šarḥ mukhtaṣar al-katīb*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-mīrīya bi-Būlāq, 1880, p. 26.

doing so benefitted their business.²⁹⁸ Finally, as for-profit businesses, private presses took the opportunity to take on governmental printing jobs when the governmental presses could not complete such jobs themselves.²⁹⁹

c. Private Printing's Influence upon the Manuscript Industry.

Thus far, I have emphasized the ways in which the private printing industry relied upon Cairo's two antecedent industries for written production. But when the private printing industry solidified in the 1870s, it did not merely draw from the manuscript and governmental printing industries; it also helped to shape them.

Manuscript publications now became an option for written distribution, as opposed to the only possible recourse. Copyists reflected this shift in the content and practice of their work. Copyists began reserving certain supplications for manuscript texts alone. Into the nineteenth century, copyists placed verses at the beginning or end of a text like: "My hand will dwindle away from me in my book, and the writing will remain after me in my book; would only that he who reads my book, invoke me to be absolved from rebuke."³⁰⁰ Or: "The text will remain long after (*zamānan*) its writer, when the writer of the text is buried under ground; oh reader of the text, cover and strengthen that

²⁹⁸ See for example: Abyārī, *Hāšiyat Zahrat*, n.d.; and Abyārī, *Hāšiyat Zahrat*, 1864.

²⁹⁹ See for example: Mariette, Auguste. *Notice des principaux monuments exposés dans les galeries provisoires du Musée d'antiquités Égyptiennes de S. A. le khédive à Boulaq*. Cairo: A Mourès, 1876; and *Fihrist al-kutub*, 1872-1875.

³⁰⁰ Ṭaḥṭāwī, Mas'ud Abū as-Su'ūd. *Šarḥ bānat Su'ad*. 1842. Jeffrey MS 1, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, first and last pages.

which surrounds it; verily the writing would go on lasting if pens did not come down and compromise its pages.”³⁰¹ But copyists refrained from applying these invocations to the lithographs that they produced. Printing’s entrance onto the Cairene written sphere seemed to strengthen the sentimental pull of handwritten texts.

The private presses also helped to sustain some of Cairo’s copyists, who had historically only engaged in part-time work. With the development of private lithographic printing, a whole new realm of regular business opened up for copyists. They could now support themselves by working with presses, in addition to picking up manuscript jobs on the side. We see this through the steady lithographic and manuscript output of al-Bahīa Press’s regular copyist, Ḥusayn Yaḥyī.³⁰² The manuscript texts that Yaḥyī copied were niche, like Coptic almanacs.³⁰³ Indeed, many of the manuscripts produced for Cairene consumption in the late nineteenth century boasted uncommon or esoteric titles. This suggests that manuscripts increasingly appealed to consumers who wanted texts that the presses did not invest in for lack of expectation of a mass readership. Many Christian manuscripts from the mid to late nineteenth century were

³⁰¹ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullah ibn Sa‘ad ibn Abī Jamra al-Azdī. *Jam‘ an-nihāya*. N.p., 1853. Or. 12.861, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, last page.

³⁰² See for example: Farrāzī, Khalīl. *Muqaddima bahīyya fī al-ḥisābāt al-falakīya*.

Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Bahīa, 1882, p. 15.

³⁰³ See for example: A small almanac, or calendar, of the Coptic months and festivals, 1862, last page. Add. 2902, Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge, UK.

actually copied from printings, which evinces the presses' aversion to producing new editions of printings that may not have sold well in the first instance.³⁰⁴

By the late nineteenth century, copying also experienced a newfound professionalization. Their services were still coveted for manuscript production too. The trajectory of the Marṣafī family demonstrates the way in which this transpired. Aḥmad al-Marṣafī was an Azharite *ṣaikh* who helped pioneer Cairo's private printing industry. He frequently organized and corrected lithographic and typographic texts, and died sometime before 1865.³⁰⁵ Aḥmad al-Marṣafī's son, Šaikh Ḥusayn al-Marṣafī (1815-1889), followed his father's religious vocation and active role in private printing.³⁰⁶ Ḥusayn al-Marṣafī also wrote a famous tract printed in 1881 that called on Egyptian presses to self-censor within his wider discussion of "the eight words" that were circulating in politically charged ways among Egyptians.³⁰⁷ Father and son therefore illustrate the human and practical links between Cairo's manuscript industry and the advent of private printing that I have argued for in this chapter.

³⁰⁴ See for example: *Qawānīn al-kamāl al-masīḥī*. Add. 458, Cambridge University Library, University of Cambridge, UK; *Al-ʿIza ar-rūḥānīya li-abīna al-qiddīs Maqāriyūs al-Miṣrī*. Arab 229, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; and *Šalawāt*. Arab 293, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

³⁰⁵ Refer to: Šaʿrānī, *Yawāqīt wa al-jawāhir*, 1860/1861, p. 266; and Šaʿrānī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad. *Kitāb al-Anwār al-qudsīya fī bayān ādāb al-ʿubūdīya*. Cairo: s.n., 1860, p. 124.

³⁰⁶ Refer to: Šābb az-Zarīf, 1870/1871, p. 86.

³⁰⁷ Refer to: Marṣafī, 1881; and in particular: Marṣafī, Ḥusayn. *Al-Kalim ath-thamān*. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Jumhūrīya, 1903, pp. 27-32. For a discussion of the significance of *al-Kalim ath-thamān*, refer to: Mitchell, 1988, pp. 134-138.

But by the end of the nineteenth century, private printing sidelined the very manuscript industry that once propelled the Marṣafīs. Many Azharites continued to



Image 5.12. *Detail of a photograph depicting Azharites studying texts, Cairo, circa 1880s.*³⁰⁸

write by hand, and Cairenes could still make money as public scribes, *‘arduḥālīyīn*,³⁰⁹ and as copyists. But a new job developed at the Khedivial Library: that of the in-house copyist.³¹⁰ Aḥmad and Ḥusayn al-Marṣafī’s respective grandson and nephew, Maḥmūd

³⁰⁸ Abdullah Frères. “Les étudiants d’el-Azhar (Université Arabe). N°65.” Cairo: circa 1880s. Collection of photographs from the nineteenth century, Dr. Mohammed B. Alwan.

³⁰⁹ Refer to chapter three.

³¹⁰ For a description of this occupation from the early 1900s, refer to: Kratchkovsky, I. Y and Tatiana Minorsky (trans.). *Among Arabic manuscripts. Memories of libraries and men*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1953, pp. 16-19 & 21-22.

ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad aṣ-Ṣayyād al-Marṣafī, found employment there.³¹¹ Maḥmūd al-Marṣafī also made money on the side by selling the chapbooks that he copied to foreigners. He commanded higher profits from unsuspecting purchasers by lengthening the texts' contents.³¹² The Marṣafīs therefore demonstrate the survival and changes to the manuscript industry throughout the nineteenth century, despite its wider marginalization with the proliferation of printing.

d. Private Printing's Influence upon Governmental Printing.

In addition to the influence that private printing exerted upon the manuscript sphere, it also impacted the conduct and output of governmental printing. For example, when the private presses first began to emerge in the 1850s, the government experimented with printing the prices and fees of their books underneath their colophons. They presumably did this because the private printers undercut their prices, and because booksellers inflated the governmental presses' prices. Thus we see advertisements at the

³¹¹ Refer to: Ibn Sūdūn, 'Alī. *Dīwān Ibn Sūdūn*. Cairo, 1910. Or. 14.520, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, f. 181. Maḥmūd al-Marṣafī was preceded by Muṣṭafā Ibrahīm and succeeded by Maḥmūd aṣ-Ṣidqī (see: An anthology of Arabic poetry by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Muqri' al-Mālikī, 1880. Add. 3201, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge University, last quire; and Ibn Qutaība, 'Abdullah ibn Muslim. *Kitāb al-aṣraba*. Cairo, 1928/1929. Or. 8288, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, f. 138). For other examples of manuscripts copied from the Khedivial Library refer to: Majrīṭī, Aḥmad. *Kitāb rutbat al-ḥakīm fī mudkhal at-ta'lim fī aṣ-ṣan'a al-lahīya*. Cairo, 1905. Or. 14.180, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; and Šāfi'ī, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs. *Ar-Risāla*. Cairo, 1885/1886. Or. 6984, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

³¹² Landau, 1992, pp. 67 & 69.

end of governmental printings, like that on a commissioned printing of sixty-four pages: “this book is worth the cost of its printing, [which is] the amount of 5 *qirš* and 16 pence (*niṣf fidḍa*), and it is duty free;” and that on a non-commissioned printing of two hundred forty-four pages: “this book... is worth the cost of its printing only, 72 *qirš*, absolutely nothing more, and it is duty free.”³¹³ We also see stamps beneath colophons of books printed at the government’s press at Būlāq to authenticate these printings.³¹⁴

Just as the private presses drew from governmental printers during the early 1860s, the governmental printers also acquired labor from the private presses. For example, when Sa‘īd gifted the government’s press at Būlāq to ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Ruṣḍī Bey in 1862, the latter hired a local European printer called Antoine Mourès to advise the running of his press.³¹⁵ Mourès had previously worked at the European Press in Alexandria. As early as 1859, he began to run a press with a partner named Perrin.³¹⁶ But with ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Ruṣḍī’s offer, Mourès left his partner and set off for Cairo.

During his time under Ruṣḍī Bey, Mourès reorganized the press and upgraded its equipment with machinery from Paris like Alauzet mechanical presses. Mourès stopped

³¹³ Damanhūrī, 1856, p. 64; and Abbāsī, 1857/1858, p. 244.

³¹⁴ See for example: Jīrār, Kūrtuwā. *Ar-Rawḍa al-bahīya fī zirā‘at al-khuḍrāwāt al-Miṣrīya*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Āmira, 1873. HOLLIS number: 002121185, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 173; and *Kitāb al-Anīs al-mufīd lil-ṭālib al-mustafīd wa jāmi‘ aṣ-ṣudhūr min manzūm wa manšūr*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Būlāq, 1879. HOLLIS number: 002379403, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 232.

³¹⁵ Geiss, 1908, p. 218.

³¹⁶ Refer to: *Bulletin de l’Institut égyptien*. Alexandria: Imprimerie Française de Mourès et Perrin, 1859, vol. 1.

working for the press before Ismā‘īl’s purchase of it in 1865. But Mourès capitalized on this experience. Upon his return to Alexandria, he founded a European typographic press in his own name.³¹⁷ He also used the governmental connections that he acquired in Cairo to draw in prestigious, official, and regular job printings from organizations like America’s Consul in Egypt and the Egyptian government, whenever the latter needed printings in European languages.³¹⁸ The governmental presses and private presses therefore managed to benefit from one another.

Finally, as illustrated by the example of the government’s reliance on Mourès, the government began to develop a better understanding for its own printing through the advent of the private presses. Starting from the mid-1860s, it outsourced the printing of its texts when it benefitted it to do so. This went beyond merely paying European presses for European language editions of its texts, as the government occasionally forced the private presses to print its official announcements in their publications.³¹⁹ In turn, the government began to concentrate on printing the texts that the private presses would not, or could not, produce. The government invested in the hefty opuses that comprised the

³¹⁷ See for example: Mariette, Auguste Bey. *Notice des principaux monuments exposés dans les galeries provisoires du Musée d'Antiquités Égyptiennes de S.A. le vice-roi a Boulaq*. Alexandrie: Imp. Française Mourès, Rey, 1864.

³¹⁸ Refer to: *Rules for the consular courts in Egypt of the United States of America*. Alexandria: Imp. Française Mourès, Rey, et ce., 1866; *Tarif des frais de justice en matière pénale*. Alexandria: Imp. Française A. Mourès, 1875; and Mourès’s printing of *Règlement judiciaire pour les procès mixtes en Égypte* in 1874, alongside the related correspondence of British and Egyptian officials in: FO 78/2747, The National Archives, Kew, UK, pp. 5-16 & 126-127.

³¹⁹ Refer to: *al-Burhān*. Alexandria: Maṭba‘a al-Burhān, July 1881. Issue 11: p. 2; issue 12: p. 4; Issue 13: p. 4.

Islamic and Egyptian canons.³²⁰ It also began promoting its control over the production of its ephemera, like forms for legal documents and tickets on its newly established trains.³²¹ In chapter six, I show that this development changed the symbolic meaning of printing in Egypt, and in particular, the symbolism of governmental printing. When the government began to project its printings as harbingers of the state's advancement, it assimilated the European idea of the civilizational power of print.

e. The Beirut Connection.

One final Ottoman element helped to solidify Cairene printing during this period: the immigration of Beirut printers to Egypt. In general, Egypt's economic boom from cotton sales during the American Civil War (1861-1865) attracted many Ottomans from greater Syria to Egypt. Print-inspired immigration, however, offered more particular pulls. The relatively small number of Cairene private printers, and the laxity of Cairo's enforcement of Ottoman press laws, enticed Beirut printers to venture to Cairo and Alexandria from the late 1860s. The year 1869 particularly stands out as a breaking point, as the opening of the Suez Canal brought an influx of news and tourists to Egypt, which in turn enabled the development of a private news industry. Famed Beirut figures like Salīm ibn Khalīl Naqqāš (d. 1883/1884), Salīm (1849-1892) and Bisāra Taqlā (1852-

³²⁰ See for example: Ibn Khaldūn. *Kitāb al-'ibar wa dīwān al-mubtada' wa al-khabar fī ayyām al-'Arab wa al-'ajam wa al-barbar wa man 'āṣarahum min dhawī as-sultān al-akbar*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a al-Miṣrīya, 1867, 7 vols.; and Qaṣṭallānī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *Kitāb iršād as-sārī li-ṣarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a al-Miṣrīya, 1873, 10 vols.

³²¹ Fikrī, 1875/1876, p. 376.

1901), and Adīb Iṣḥāq (1856-1884) entered the Egyptian private press at this time. Their printings evince that they brought their own typographic fonts with them, along with western printing tactics.

Unlike Cairo, with its longstanding manuscript tradition, Beirut had been an underpopulated Ottoman port town at the turn of the nineteenth century.³²² When American Protestant missionaries based themselves and their presses in Beirut, they accommodated Ottomans' aesthetic expectations.³²³ But they did not compete against an entrenched manuscript industry. When Beirutis began their own private presses in the 1860s, they printed texts that were influenced by western tastes and styles.³²⁴ They also adopted western business practices early on by printing genres like journals.³²⁵ In this sense, Beirut printers preceded Cairenes in some of the important industry innovations that were later adopted by the Egyptian presses. I suspect that this was because Beirut printers lacked the recourse to governmental subsidies and equipment that Cairene printers possessed.

Cairene printers like the Kāstalīs had already begun incorporating some of these tactics into the local print culture. Still, the increase in private printing competition and

³²² Hanssen, Jens. *Fin de siècle Beirut: the making of an Ottoman provincial capital*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 26-27.

³²³ Auji, Hala. "Between script and print: exploring publications of the American Syria Mission and the nascent press in the Arab World, 1834-1860." Ph.D. Dissertation, Binghamton University, State University of New York, 2013, pp. 50-90.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-171.

³²⁵ For example, *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* in 1858, *al-Jinān* in 1870, and *Thamarāt al-funūn* in 1875. See also: Sadgrove, 2008, pp. 124-125.

the injection of the fresh typographic fonts that the Beirutis brought with them helped make Cairene printing pop in the mid-1870s. Cairenes seemed well aware of this competition. With the political chaos engendered through the ‘Urābi revolt of 1881, for example, Cairenes lobbied the khedivate to expel the Syrian printers.³²⁶ Twenty years later, an Egyptian essayist and postal worker, Muḥammad Umar (d. 1918/1919) noted that the Beirutis, or Syrians as he called them, continued to have the upper hand: “Egyptian societies, and especially Muslim [Egyptians], lack learned magazines (*majāllāt*)...and nothing comes close to the magazines, particularly those of the Syrians (*as-sūrīyyīn*) ... and if there are any [good quality magazines] to be found in our Arabic language, then they are in the hands of our brothers, the most excellent (*al-afāḍil*) Syrians.”³²⁷ Umar elaborated on the failings of the Egyptian private presses, which he tied to their advent:

[The Egyptian private presses began] printing the noxious and the corrupt (*aḍ-ḍārr wa al-muḥsid*) from books until it became the practice of owners of the Egyptian printing presses (and especially the Islamic (*al-Islāmīya*) ones) to take up printing books of stupidity and delusions (*as-sikhāfa wa al-awhām*)...However the owners of Syrian (*as-sūrīya*) printing presses, especially these days, do not pertain to the likes of these idle tales but instead subscribe to a rapid conduct that evinces their interest in their presses and their printing of beneficial material. For you should see how from their hands come serious books urging the nation (*umma*) along developments in the world of fact, and what is the purpose in that other than their intention to print everything that is beneficial and useful? Take from that as an example the books of the best learned men that they have composed or translated on the true state of affairs (*al-ḥaqā’iq*) that you see printed in these printing presses and what remains of the books of ignorance (*al-jahl*) which evince the feebleness of intentions (*ḍa’f al-*

³²⁶ Philipp, 1985, pp. 103-105.

³²⁷ Umar, Muḥammad. *Ḥāḍir al-Miṣrīyīn, aw, sirr ta’akhhurihim*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Muqtataf, 1902, p. 153.

'*azā'im*) in the printing presses of Egypt, and particularly the Muslim ones (*al-muslimīn*). This makes the reading [of them by] good scholars shocked from it (*dahša min dhalik*) and they deem it absurd (*istighrāb*). Until the reasonable person is obliged to disdain (*lil- 'āqil an yazdarī*) the Egyptian printing presses and not allow themselves to be printed in them so long as he can distinguish between a book printed in a printing press of one of the Egyptians and a book printed in a printing press of one of the Syrians. Since if he compares [them] he'll see the greatest of difference between what the one prints and what the other prints. And in general he sees the slimness (*siqāma*) of the [Egyptian] printing and the badness of the paper (*radā'a al-waraq*) such that his good taste (*dhaughu*) will eschew (*yanfaru minhu*) him from it. And secondly, the precision of the [Syrian's] composition (*daqqat al-waḍ'*) and the neatness (*nizāfa*) of the printing. And what is that if not the result of ignorance of the first group [*i.e.*, the Egyptians] of their work and the devotion of the other group of theirs, and the lack of obtaining good fonts (*al-aḥruf aṣ-ṣaḥīha*) instead of the ancient fonts (*al-aḥruf al-qadīma*) whose crookedness (*ḍulū'hā*) evinces the hammering (*ṭaraqqa*) of the printing machine and the length of its employment and that is the third reason in the backwardness (*at-ta'akhhur*) of the printing presses of the Egyptians. All of that does not take into account what the Egyptian printing presses do in terms of their abundance of errors, and dropping of diacriticals or words, or superimposing pronunciation marks on top of the letters next to them. And as such it is rare that a printed book from these [Egyptian] presses exists without an index at its end filled with errors for correcting [*i.e.*, an errata page], or an apology to the reader on what could be in [the book] resulting from negligence (*as-sahw*).

This is what I say about Egyptian printing presses, and it is correct except that I hope better for the future.³²⁸

Needless to say, Umar published his long essay from a “Syrian” press in Cairo. Umar promulgated his ideas in 1902, but he placed the decline of the Egyptian private presses on a continuum that began with their founding. His diatribe against the Egyptian presses was inspired by the increasingly commercial tactics of Cairene printers. Umar believed that their work stood in opposition to Beirut printings. Yet only thirty years after Beirut printers arrived to Egypt, Umar did not appreciate that the Beirutis helped to catalyze this

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-155.

process. Their numbers, equipment, and methods overwhelmed Cairo's private presses, driving the latter to produce cheaper printings from long-overused typefaces.

Although Umar surely exaggerated, he also hinted that the sorry state of Egypt's presses was an embarrassment to all Egyptians by 1902. This connection between printing and collective pride was quite a shift from the utilitarian portrayal of printing under Mehmed 'Alī. Over a mere sixty years, from 1820 to 1882, textual production in Egypt underwent seismic changes. In order to fully appreciate the intellectual changes that accompanied these industry shifts, let me now examine the meanings of these mediums in chapter six.

CHAPTER SIX. The Meanings of Written Mediums in Ottoman Cairo.

Cairene textual production changed during the nineteenth century, with the incorporation of the governmental and private printing industries into the manuscript economy. In this chapter, I examine how the meanings ascribed to Cairene textual production evolved with these changes. I distinguish between contemporary Ottoman and European projections of Cairo's writing industries to show their significant divergence during the first half of the nineteenth century. I argue that Egyptian sources projected state printing as a practical tool that implemented the government's projects and enhanced its symbolic power. By contrast, European accounts of Cairene textual production revolved around the theme of civilization, and placed Europe above Cairo in a civilizational hierarchy.

During the latter half of the century, western accounts of Cairene textual production adapted this civilizational theme to accommodate the development of Cairo's print culture. At the same time, Egyptians' textual projections began showing the impact of European influence in both foreign forums like the great exhibitions, and domestic ones like the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya*, or Khedivial Library, established in Cairo in 1870. Cairene writers who published in print also began engaging with foreign textual norms thematically within their compositions and emblematically to establish their legacies, as I show through the writings of 'Alī Mubārak (1823-1893), James Ṣānū' (1839-1912), 'Abdullah an-Nadīm (1845-1898), and Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905). While scholars have examined the rise of civilizational discourse in Egyptian writing generally during

this period,¹ they have not studied the ways in which this discourse was applied to textual mediums. It is important to recognize the changes in the meanings ascribed to Cairene texts during the early years of print because these ideas shaped textual production and practices. They have also influenced the historical legacy of the period and its actors.

A. Governmental Projections of Power through Printing under Meḥmed ‘Alī.

In chapter four, I argued that Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state employed printing in general, and printing at the press at Būlāq in specific, for functionality. However, the state also engaged with symbolism through printing. Crucially, this print symbolism did not have a manuscript counterpart. Moreover, it was used in a way that had little to do with printing’s long-term effects but instead emphasized the government’s acquisition of printing. The state appears to have deployed this understanding of printing to enhance the projection of its power. A striking example of this distinction comes from the memorial slab, or *kitabe*, that adorned the press at Būlāq.

a. Symbolism at the Press at Būlāq.

Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government did not project printing as the ultimate status symbol. Accounts imply that the press at Būlāq was noteworthy for its functional capability

¹ See for example: Delanoue, Gilbert. *Moralistes et politiques Musulmans dans l’Égypte du XIXe siècle (1798-1882)*. Caire: Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, 1982, vol. 2, pp. 417-420; Kenny, Lorne M. “The Khedive Isma ‘il’s dream of civilisation and progress.” *The Muslim World*, 55 (1965), pp. 142-155 and 211-221; and Konrad, Felix. ““Fickle fate has exhausted my burning heart”: an Egyptian engineer of the 19th century between belief and progress and existential anxiety.” *Die Welt des Islams*, 51 (2011), pp. 145-187, pp. 175-182.

instead of its appearance.² Still, the exterior of the press at Būlāq demonstrates that the government used printing to enhance Meḥmed ‘Alī’s image. Despite the press’s general lack of frills, it was fitted with a commemorative marble slab by its entryway sometime in or around the year 1829.³ The slab conveyed three lines of Ottoman poetry, in rhyme:

Meḥmed ‘Alī, the present Khedive of Egypt, the renowned first vizier of
the state and the religion, the benefactor (*sāhib el-minah*)
To his countless works he is adding yet another one, by ordering this
joyful printing press (*matba’ayi*) to be established
A voice told its complete date to a happy man: ‘It is the house of printing,
the most correct source of art (*dar ut-tiba’adır hünerin masdari
asahh*).⁴

In thinking about how Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state esteemed printing, three points jump out from this inscription. Firstly, the poem did not give a name to the press at Būlāq. The building and the works that the slab stood to honor instead contained two vaguer terms: “this joyful printing press” and a “house of printing.” At its founding then, the press was not presented as the peerless ‘Būlāq Press’ that would later captivate scholars.⁵

² See for example: Brocchi, G. B. *Giornale delle osservazioni fatte ne viaggi in Egitto, nella Siria e nella Nubia*. Bassano: Presso A. Roberti tip. ed editore, 1841, vol. 1, pp. 173-174; and Baedeker, Karl (Ed.). *Egypt. Handbook for travellers, part first: Lower Egypt, with the Fayum and the Peninsula of Sinai*. London: Dulau and Co., 1878, p. 292.

³ An image of the slab is published in: Raḍwān, Abū al-Futūḥ. *Tārīkh Maṭba‘at Būlāq wa lamḥa fī tārīkh at-ṭibā‘a fī buldān aš-Šarq al-Awsaṭ*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-Amīriya, 1953, p. 46. Raḍwān mistakenly read the date on the slab as 1235 *hijrī*, or 1819/20. In fact, the stone lists its date as 1245 *hijrī*.

⁴ This last line is a chronogram. I would like to thank Dr. Arnoud Vrolijk for generously helping me with the translation of this inscription.

⁵ Refer to chapter four.

Secondly, the inscription framed the press's establishment as one of Mehmed 'Alī's many projects for Egypt. Although the slab adorned the very entryway to a press, its verses subsumed printing within the totality of Mehmed 'Alī's other works. It did not claim that Mehmed 'Alī's importance derived from printing, as western scholars suggested throughout the nineteenth century with statements like: "It is known that the current pasha of Egypt...founded, nearly ten years ago, a printing press at Boulac, in the area around Cairo...If it ever were to be said that literature is the expression of society, it must be at the point when a nation is born, so to speak, to civilization, and which, disregarding the order of ideas according to which [the nation] lived so far, goes on towards (*se porte vers*) a world that is almost new to it;"⁶ and "...the great Muhammad Ali, whose name is for ever associated with this era of sudden intellectual growth in the country."⁷

Finally, despite subordinating printing within a wider scheme of accomplishments, the inscription offered an explanation for what made printing significant. Printing was "the most correct source of art." This estimation of printing as productive artistry was particularly Ottoman.⁸ It recalled the Istanbulite printer İbrahim

⁶ Reinaud, Joseph Toussaint. "Notice des ouvrages Arabes, Persans, Turcs et Français imprimés en Égypte." *Nouveau Journal Asiatique, ou recueil de mémoires, d'extraits et de notices relatifs à l'histoire, à la philosophie, aux langues et la littérature des peuples orientaux*. Paris: A L'Imprimerie Royale, 1831, Tome VIII, pp. 333-344, p. 333.

⁷ Hartmann, Martin. *The Arabic press of Egypt*. London: Luzac & Co., 1899, p. 2.

⁸ Refer to chapter two.

Müteferrika's (1675-1745) claim that the "...the art of printing is a beneficial one."⁹ By contrast, the poem made no allusion whatsoever to what the French had claimed to teach Egyptians just thirty years before.¹⁰ It will be remembered that in 1801, the *Courier de l'Égypte* declared that Khalīl al-Bakrī (d. 1808) had "inquired...whether there were typographic establishments in Russia, and seemed much astonished by the response that was made to him that this state had not begun to really police itself and make itself civilized, until printing had been introduced there. He therefore asked what influence printing could have on the civilization of a people, and seemed to understand and savor the reasons which were given to him..."¹¹ But the slab did not proudly proclaim that Egypt could now join Russia as a civilized land. Instead, it suggested that printing was a proper and cheerful art form within the wider range of Meḥmed 'Alī's "countless works."

One could construe the commemoration of the press with a plaque as an act of favoritism or appreciation for printing. To a certain extent, it was. But context provides some limitations to this line of thinking. As far as Ottoman inscriptions go, the wording of the press's slab is rather unadorned. Furthermore, many of the buildings that were

⁹ Murphy, Christopher M. (trans). "Appendix: Ottoman imperial documents relating to the history of books and printing." *The Book in the Islamic world: the written word and communication in the Middle East*, edited by George N. Atiyeh. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 283-292, p. 289.

¹⁰ Refer to chapter three.

¹¹ *Courier de l'Égypte*. N. 102. Le 24 Pluioise, IX^e. année de la République. Au Kaire: De l'Imprimerie Nationle, p. 4.

created under Meḥmed ‘Alī boasted such inscriptions.¹² For example, the government installed a slab below the entrance to the new records storeroom, or *daftarkhāna*, at the citadel in the same year as that in Būlāq (1245 *hijrī*).¹³ The general thrust of the *daftarkhāna* slab corresponds with the slab from the press. It began with praise for Meḥmed ‘Alī, it emphasized his wider work, it explained the purpose of the building that it commemorated, and it ended in a chronogram. Yet the *daftarkhāna* slab extended over six lines, instead of three, on account of its greater floridity and literary refinement. In addition to its aforementioned structure, it lavished praise on Cairo and its meritorious people. It also elaborated on Meḥmed ‘Alī’s greatness with choice verses like, “around the torch of his fortune, the sun and the moon are like moths.”¹⁴ So when we compare the hyperbole bestowed upon Meḥmed ‘Alī and his document storeroom to the more modest words assigned to him at one of his presses, it appears that the state did not rank printing as Egypt’s arrival at a civilizational watershed. The government used printing to enhance the state’s power, and not the other way round.

b. Aesthetics of Empire in Governmental Printings.

¹² For examples of these inscriptions and their embellished wording, refer to the commemorative slabs associated with Meḥmed ‘Alī’s charitable works in Kavala in: Lowry, Heath W. and İsmail E. Erünsal. *Remembering one’s roots. Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt’s links to the Macedonian town of Kavala: architectural monuments, inscriptions & documents*. Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2011.

¹³ Deny, Jean. *Sommaire des archives Turques du Caire*. Cairo: Impr. de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire, pour la Société Royale de Géographie d’Égypte, 1930, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

While the commemorative slab indicated how the government used its press at Būlāq to endorse its authority locally, it also used its printings symbolically to engage with rival powers. Nominally, Meḥmed ‘Alī ruled Egypt as a provincial subordinate to the Ottoman Porte. But the printings that his state produced suggested that Egypt was on an equal footing with European powers and the imperial capital. They therefore form a repository for the Egyptian government’s symbolic ambitions beyond the province.

In chapter three, I demonstrated the government’s appropriation of the French template for proclamations from the campaign of Egypt (1798-1801) for the state gazette, *al-Waqā’i’ al-Miṣrīya*.¹⁵ Furthermore, I argued that the very idea that leaders possessed presses to print things like state gazettes derived from the example set by Bonaparte during the French invasion. Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government harnessed the European example of printing to project its own power. But it also engaged with Ottoman symbolism through its printing. Indeed, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s relationship with the Ottoman sultan, and by extension, that of Egypt with the Ottoman Empire, was the most crucial to his rule.¹⁶ The governmental printings at Būlāq and beyond manifested this in many ways. But perhaps the most striking examples of this are the prologues to the state’s books, and the woodcut headpieces, or *‘unwāns*, employed in many of its printings.

The introductory prefaces which start the government’s books stand out for two reasons: their adulation of Meḥmed ‘Alī, and their silence over his subordination to the

¹⁵ Refer to ‘Image 3.5.’

¹⁶ Refer for example to: Abu-Manneh, Butrus. “Mehmed Ali Paşa and Sultan Mahmud II: the genesis of a conflict.” *Turkish Historical Review*, I (2010), pp. 1-24; and Fahmy, Khaled. *All the pasha’s men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt*. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002, pp. 22-29, 38-75, & 278-305.

Porte.¹⁷ With regard to the former, the prefaces extol Meḥmed ‘Alī’s greatness and his import to Egypt. As one text proclaims:

[God] preserve His Excellence the Benefactor of trade or art, and the benefit that has appeared from his projects in our Egypt in feeling and spirit, amen...in truth, [this translation] could not have been made without the hand of the Benefactor, Possessor of goodness and generosity, lover of sciences in Egypt after their nonexistence. The Possessor of Excellency, the holder of what came through those before him in virtue and abundance. Indeed, also the innovative, of what he transformed [into] benefit from those who came before [him], so that whoever succeeds him will enter a realm of possibility in which he [*i.e.* Meḥmed ‘Alī] is the touchstone.¹⁸

These openings of printed praise are noteworthy because there are no counterpoints to them in the manuscripts produced during Meḥmed ‘Alī’s reign. Just as Cairene manuscripts from this period rarely mentioned their copyists, they never referenced Meḥmed ‘Alī.¹⁹ Indeed, they only reliably offered praises to God. Less frequently, they praised or blessed the text’s original author.²⁰

¹⁷ The books do not provide a label for these prefatory remarks, which usually go on for several pages. I therefore refer to them as “prefaces.”

¹⁸ Ṭahtāwī, Rāf’i (trans.). *Ta’rīb kitāb al-mu’allim Firād fī al-ma’ādīn al-nāfi’a li-tadbīr ma’āyīš al-khalāyiq*. Būlāq: Maṭba‘at Būlāq, 1833, p. 2.

¹⁹ For example, refer to: Suyūṭī, Jamal ad-Dīn. *Lubb al-lubāb*. *N.p., n.d.*, p. 83. Or. 3056, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; Collective volume of manuscript texts, of which the last was edited in 1828/1829, in: Or. 6275, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; and Jamal, Sulaymān. *Hāšiya al-Jamal ‘alā tafsīr al-Jalalayn*. Cairo, 1845-1846, 4 vols. Or. 14.210 a-d, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

²⁰ For example, refer to: Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullah ibn Sa‘ad ibn Abī Jamra al-Azdī. *Jam‘ an-nihāya*. *N.p.*, 1853. Last page. Or. 12.861, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

That state printings broke textual protocol to exalt Meḥmed ‘Alī suggests two possibilities. Either Meḥmed ‘Alī claimed these works himself, or the people involved in printing them attributed their labors to Meḥmed ‘Alī. The latter possibility would not have been mere sycophancy. Everything about the production and consumption of these texts required Meḥmed ‘Alī. As discussed in chapter four, Meḥmed ‘Alī made it necessary and possible for the governmental texts to be written, translated, and printed. He was the patron *par excellence* for every level of printing in Egypt. So the men involved in conjuring Meḥmed ‘Alī’s vision for producing these texts commemorated him out of some combination of vanity, an instinct to please, and perhaps Meḥmed ‘Alī’s very own orders.

Secondly, these acknowledgements of Meḥmed ‘Alī stand out because they neglected to pay homage to the wider constellation of power within which he ruled, namely, the Ottoman Empire. The books made no mention of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s subservience to Istanbul, or to the sultan. Instead, they spoke of Egypt’s lands as though they were autonomous, and they supplied Meḥmed ‘Alī with titles that he claimed for himself without the necessary Ottoman investiture. For example, Meḥmed ‘Alī is ascribed the title *khidīw*, or khedive, in governmental printings years before the Porte consecrated his grandson Isma‘īl (1830-1895) with this symbolic promotion over other Ottoman provincial leaders in 1867.²¹

²¹ For example, refer to the use of “*khidīw*” in the colophon of: Clot, Antoine. *Mubligh al-barāḥ fi ‘ilm al-jirāḥ*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kubrā Allatī bi-Būlāq aš-Šahīra, 1835, p. 552.

The boldness of the governmental printings is demonstrated through the edition of *Mahasin ül-âsâr ve hakayik ül-ahbar*, or *The Most beautiful of relics and truths of events*, that the state printed at the press at Bülâq in 1827.²² *Mahasin ül-âsâr* is a history, written in Ottoman, covering the reign of Sultan Muştafâ III (1717-1774). The book did not conjure the Porte through its contents alone. Indeed, the Egyptian government re-printed the same text that Sultan Selîm III's (1761-1808) press first printed in 1804.²³

The Cairene edition harkened back to its predecessor from Istanbul stylistically and textually. The layout of the book, including its table of contents, expressed the influence wielded by the earlier printing.²⁴ In this sense, *Mahasin ül-âsâr* might appear as an homage to the Porte. But the Cairene edition never forthrightly admitted that it was a re-printing. The book's colophon stated vaguely: "Here ends the printing of this new history and beneficial literary work (*athar*) entitled *The Most beautiful of relics and truths of events* by Aḥmad Wâşif Efendi, the historian in the Exalted Porte (*fî ad-dawla al-'alīya*), which continues to be surrounded by eternal approvals, by the permission of the Possessor of His Splendid Excellency at the house of printing at Bülâq, Exalted Cairo (*mişr al-'alīya*)...to her Possessor the best of prayers and greetings."²⁵

²² Ahmed Vâsif Efendi. *Mahasin ül-âsâr ve hakayik ül-ahbar*. Bülâq: Dâr at-Ṭibâ'a bi-Bülâq, 1827.

²³ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi. *Mahasin ül-âsâr ve hakayik ül-ahbar*. Istanbul: Darüttibaat ül-Âmire, 1804.

²⁴ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, 1827, pp. 1-10; and Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, 1804, pp. 1-15.

²⁵ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, 1827, p. 251.

In addition to not crediting the Porte with the initial publication of the text, the Cairene edition reflected a strategic discrepancy. The first part of the above phrase was lifted from the Istanbul edition verbatim.²⁶ Interestingly, however, the Cairene edition then departed from the colophon of the Istanbul edition. For although the Cairene edition's colophon credited the text's author as an historian of the Exalted Porte, or "*ad-dawla al-'alīya*," it went on to ascribe Cairo with the very same adjective reserved for the Porte, "*mişr al-'alīya*," or Exalted Cairo. The colophon therefore implied that while the historian Aḥmad Wāşif Efendi (d. 1806) belonged to the Porte unequivocally, Cairo did not. The government's publication of an Ottoman history therefore managed to indicate both the imperial nature of Ottoman Egypt, and Egypt's exceptionalism as an imperial province.

The Egyptian government's brush with Ottoman print symbolism did not end there. Several headpieces that the governmental presses employed serve as potent visual indicators of the imperial advancement to which Meḥmed 'Alī's state aspired. An example of this may be seen through the 1804 Ottoman edition of *Mahasın ü'l-âsâr*, from which the image on the left in 'Image 6.1' derives. To its right is an image from a book printed at the press at Bülâq in 1834. The Bülâq headpiece is such an effective imitation of the one from Istanbul that it might seem as though Meḥmed 'Alī's pressworkers acquired the Porte's very woodcutting. But as the close-up photos that comprise 'Image 6.2' demonstrate, the Egyptian headpiece was instead a highly effective copy. Faint

²⁶ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, 1804, p. 315.



Image 6.1. *The headpiece of an Ottoman imperial printing, and the copy of it used by the Egyptian governmental press at Būlāq. From left to right: the headpiece of Mahasin ūl-āsār, Istanbul, 1804, beside that of at-Taʿrībāt aš-šāfiya, Būlāq, 1834.²⁷*



Image 6.2. *Detail of the Ottoman imperial and Egyptian headpieces of Image 6.1, displaying the differences between the two woodcuts. From left to right: detail of the headpiece of Mahasin ūl-āsār, Istanbul, 1804, beside that of at-Taʿrībāt aš-šāfiya, Būlāq, 1834.²⁸*

²⁷ Ahmed Vāsif Efendi, 1804. EC80.76/68532, Archives and Special Collections, School of Oriental and African Studies, p. 2; and Ṭaḥṭāwī, Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ. *At-Taʿrībāt aš-šāfiya li-murīd al-juḡhrāfiya*. Būlāq: Dār at-Ṭibāʿa al-Khidīwiya, 1834. HOLLIS number: 007148686, Widener Library, Harvard University, p. 2.

discrepancies appear when one looks closely at features like the pods in the urn's largest flower, or the twists in the ribbon woven at the top of the urn. Just as Meḥmed 'Alī's state drew upon French templates for some of its printings, it drew upon Ottoman templates for others. So far as I can determine, the Egyptian presses employed copies of at least two other headpieces used by Selīm III.²⁹

There is little utilitarian explanation for such mimicry. Even if Meḥmed 'Alī's government hoped that its printings would find an Istanbulite readership, the reason for copying imperial headpieces was to show off symbolically. Although French formatting had inspired the templates for some of the Egyptian government's publications, it used the French models as exemplars instead of casts. This may be seen, for example, through the first two images in 'Image 6.3' in which governmental pressworkers discarded the French Marianne in favor of a vase of flowers. The Egyptian government's lifting of imperial headpieces expressed the province's cultural standing on two counts. Firstly, it demonstrated the state's refinement through its awareness of earlier imperial printings. Secondly, it indicated the state's sophistication through its ability to either reproduce the

²⁸ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, 1804. EC80.76/68532. Archives and Special Collections, School of Oriental and African Studies, p. 2; and Ṭaḥṭāwī, 1834. HOLLIS number: 007148686, Widener Library, p. 2.

²⁹ Compare the headpieces of (Depping, Georges-Bernard. *Kitāb Qalā'id al-mafākhir fī gharīb 'awā'id al-awā'il wa al-awākhir*. Cairo: Dār al-Ṭibā'a al-'Āmira, 1833) to (Hayati, Ahmet. *Tuhfe-yi şerhi-yi Hayati*. Istanbul: Darutıbaatis'sultaniye, 1800); and (*Kitāb alf layla wa layla*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a al-Kubrā bi-Būlāq, 1835, vol. 1) to (Jawharī, Ismā'īl ibn Ḥammād. *Lugat-i Vankulu*. Istanbul: Darüt-Tıbbât il-Mâmure, 1802, vol. 1).

imperial headpieces itself, or to hire the Porte's craftsman for the task.³⁰ In this sense, Mehmed 'Alī's government appeared to use printing to demonstrate what it had, and could, accomplish. Its edition of *Mahasin ūl-āsār* and mastery of the Porte's headpieces demonstrated that anything the Ottoman sultan could print, Mehmed 'Alī's state could print too. In so doing, the governmental presses initiated a visual contest that would last throughout the nineteenth century.³¹ Three years after the Egyptian government began

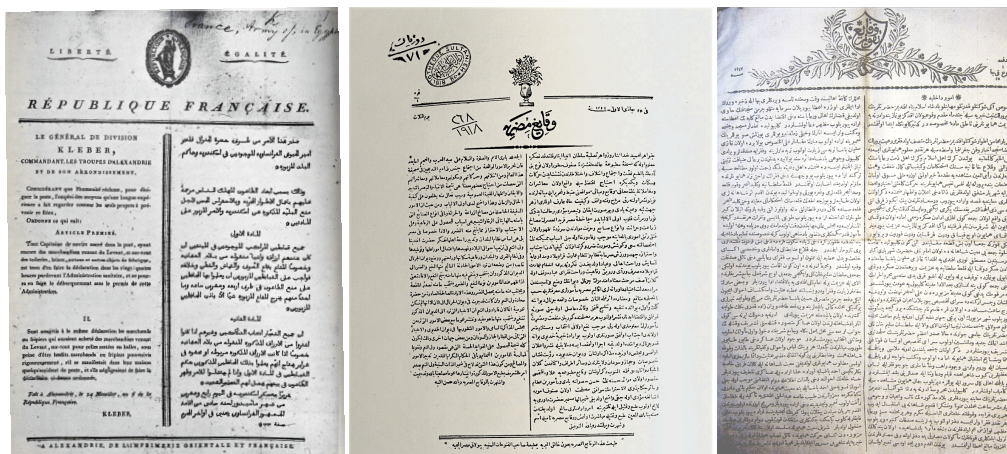


Image 6.3. *The Chain of influence between the printings of the French in Egypt, Mehmed 'Alī's governmental presses, and the imperial Porte's governmental presses. From left to right: a French proclamation, Egypt, 1800; the first edition of al-Waqā'i' al-Misriya, Egypt, 1828; and the first edition of Takvīm-i Vakayī', Istanbul, 1833.*³²

³⁰ Mehmed 'Alī employed the Porte's poets and architects for his monuments on Kavala (Lowry, 2011, pp. 111 & 15).

³¹ For more on the connection between Egyptian books and the Porte, refer to: Strauss, Johann. *The Egyptian connection in nineteenth-century Ottoman literary and intellectual history*. Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 2000; and İhsanoğlu, Ekmeleddin. *Ath-Thaqāfa at-Turkiya fī Miṣr: jawānib at-tafā'ul al-ḥadārī bayna al-Miṣriyīn wa al-Atrāk: ma'a mu'jam al-alfāz at-Turkiyah fī al-'āmmiyya al-Miṣriya*. İstānbūl: Markaz al-Abḥāth lil-Tārīkh wa al-Funūn wa ath-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya, 2003.

³² Jabartī, 'Abd al-Rahmān and S. Moreh (editor and translator). *Al-Jabartī's chronicle of the first seven months of the French occupation of Egypt: Muḥarram-Rajab 1213, 15 June-December 1798: Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi-Miṣr*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975,

printing *al-Waqā'i al-Miṣrīya* in 1828, the Porte started to print a gazette of its own, *Takvīm-i Vakay'ī*, or *Calendar of events*. In addition to the publications' similarity in title and content, their layouts looked noticeably similar too.

c. Exporting the Government's Printing Presses.

Symbolically, Meḥmed 'Alī's state used printing to demonstrate its capacity to print in French and Ottoman ways. That is to say, it showed that it could keep up with its perceived competition via typography. There is a difference between this use of printing and using print as a claim to civilization. Although the French and the Porte impressed Meḥmed 'Alī's government, insofar as it borrowed from their printings, the Egyptian state did not use printing to initiate its subjects into civilization as the French claimed to do with Egyptians. Meḥmed 'Alī sought to strengthen Egypt's economy and army,³³ and printing was one means of enabling this goal. It does not appear that he strived to make Egypt a beacon of western modernity by importing print technology.

Here, I distinguish between the symbolic power of acquiring and mastering print and the idea of print as a means for bestowing civilization. Meḥmed 'Alī's government engaged with the former idea to conquer print, as it were. It did not use the latter understanding of print to conquer anyone else. A representation of this difference comes through the territorial expansions made under Meḥmed 'Alī's rule. His army invaded the

Plate XIV; Raḍwān, 1953, Image 27; and *Takvīm-i Vakay'ī: cerīde-i resmīye-i Devlet-i 'Alīye-i 'Oṣmānīye*. Istanbul: Takvīm-i Vakay'ī Hane-yi Âmire, 1833: vol. 1, no. 1. 2057 B 16, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

³³ Fahmy, 2002, pp. 11-13.

Hejaz in 1811/12, Sudan from 1820, Crete between 1825-1840, and greater Syria between 1831-1841. But Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government only once established presses within these territories: on Crete.

If the Egyptian state had intended to civilize through print, the most likely place for it to have done so was the Sudan. Various Ottoman and European alliances blocked Meḥmed ‘Alī from expanding into the territories that his army invaded permanently, save for the Sudan. His state viewed the Sudanese as racially and culturally inferior to Ottomans and Egyptians.³⁴ And in the Sudan, Meḥmed ‘Alī’s government acquired a colony which it reorganized for Egypt to exploit: “...[the Egyptians] introduced a quite new concept of government, derived from the Ottoman system of administration. They had come to rule as colonisers, to command obedience, to regulate the affairs of everyone at every level, and claimed a natural right to extract a surplus for the Egyptian treasury....[and] the Viceroy in Cairo liked to think of the Sudan as Egypt’s own possession...”.³⁵ The projects of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s state even included the founding of indigo factories.³⁶ Yet the Egyptian government did not attempt to enact what the French

³⁴ For more on this topic, refer to: Powell, Eve Troutt. *A different shade of colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the mastery of the Sudan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

³⁵ Bjørkelo, Anders. *Prelude to the Mahdiyya: peasants and traders in the Shendi region, 1821-1885*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 34.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

claimed to accomplish in Egypt: the civilization of the Sudanese via printing. Nor did it communicate with the Sudanese via print during this period.³⁷

Mehmed 'Alī's army transported presses beyond Egypt's borders only once. This was to the island of Crete, where his administration established presses in the towns of Chania and Heraklion to print works like the gazette *Vaka-i Giritiye*, or *Cretan events*, from 1830-1840.³⁸ The state modeled *Vaka-i Giritiye* on its Egyptian gazette, *al-Waqā'i al-Miṣrīya*. The journals' corresponding names and similar appearances suggest as much.³⁹ So too do their bilingual contents: *Vaka-i Giritiye* features Greek and Ottoman

³⁷ Beginning from at least 1861, Mehmed 'Alī's son Sa'īd (r. 1854-1863) expected his administrators in the province (*mudīrīya*) of Sinar and Khartoum to be familiar with the standard formula for ownership documents employed in Cairo. These were likely printed (Sāmī, Amīn. *Taqwīm an-Nīl wa asmā' man tawallū amr Miṣr wa muddat ḥukmihim 'alayhā wa mulāḥazāt tārikhīya 'an aḥwāl al-Khilāfa al-'amma wa šu'ūn Miṣr al-khāša 'an al-mudda al-munḥašira bayna as-sana al-ūlā wa sana 1333 al-hijrīya, (622-1915 milādīya)*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba'a al-Amīrīya, 1915-1936, vol. 2, pp. 364-365). Moreover, the Egyptian government "brought a small lithographic press to Khartoum to print ledgers and other government documents" sometime before 1881 (Sharkey, Heather J. "A century in print: Arabic journalism and nationalism in Sudan, 1899-1999." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, (Nov., 1999), pp. 531-549, pp. 531-532).

³⁸ Koloğlu, Orhan. "La Presse Turque en Crète." *Presse Turque et presse de Turquie: actes des trois colloques organisés par l'Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes et l'École Supérieure de la Presse de l'Université de Marmara*, edited by Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Popovic, et Thierry Zarcone. Istanbul: Isis, 1992, pp. 259-268.

³⁹ For reproductions of sixty-one successive issues of *Vaka-i Giritiye*, published from 9 June 1832 to 6 January 1834, refer to: Tsoutsos, George A. and Christos N. Teazis (eds.). *Cretan events (Vaka-I Giritiye): a Graeco-Ottoman newspaper of the 19th century. The Surviving historical archive*. Athens: 3E-Elkranon, 2010.

text separated by a central column.⁴⁰ Indeed, it appears that the Egyptian state deployed the same typeface to Crete that it had used for *al-Waqā'i al-Miṣrīya*.

Because the government's printings for Cretans resembled those for Cairenes closely, I presume that Meḥmed 'Alī's state did not set out to 'civilize' Cretans via print. Instead, its Cretan printings appear to be extensions of its Cairene printings. They suggested the government's authority over the population without indicating that the printed medium formed the source of the government's authority in turn. European observers noticed this difference, particularly with regard to the Egyptian state's use of print for managing cholera. One marveled that it was the Egyptian government "which, hardly strengthened upon the island of Candia, had established this mode [*i.e.*, a printed journal] of publicity...[And] on the example of what we practice amongst ourselves (*chez nous*) [in France], the authority takes care to detach these sorts of articles [on plague from the *Vaka-i Giritiye*,] to print them on placards and post them up (*pour les imprimer sur placard et les afficher*) in public places. The new ideas of these measures must be born in mind."⁴¹ The goal of Egyptian printing on Crete appears to have been managing the population, instead of marking civility through the technology's very use.

It is unclear why Meḥmed 'Alī's government transported presses to Crete and not elsewhere. Its correspondence from the fronts of other campaigns expressed the need for particular printings but not printing presses, such as from Syria in 1832 and Anatolia in

⁴⁰ But the pictorial centrepiece that the Egyptians used for *Vaka-i Giritiye* differed from those used in *al-Waqā'i al-Miṣrīya*. *Vaka-i Giritiye* features a woodcut of two hillocks surrounded by a tree on either side.

⁴¹ Reinaud, 1831, pp. 343-344.

1835.⁴² In comparing the presence of Egyptian presses in Chania and Heraklion with their lack in Shendi, it may be that race, local custom, and political factors motivated the outcome. Perhaps the Egyptians printed on Crete out of competition with the British, who published proclamations from the island of Corfu from June-August of 1821.⁴³ But a more practical explanation lies in the fact that Crete is an island. Five Nile cataracts separated Cairo from Shendi, and transporting presses to the Hejaz and greater Syria would have posed formidable challenges. The Egyptian export of presses was therefore likely the result of pragmatics instead of ideas. All the more so since the government did not claim to unleash the transformative power of the printed word, as understood by contemporary Europeans. From the government's description of its printing agenda, to the prefatory content and appearance of its printed texts, to its deployment of printing beyond its traditional borders, the state used printing in service to itself.

B. European Depictions of Cairene Texts under Meḥmed 'Alī.

Scholars have noted that European accounts of Cairo from the nineteenth century emphasized a civilizational discourse around the duality of tradition and modernity, and

⁴² Fahmy, Khaled. "Women, medicine, and power in nineteenth-century Egypt." *Remaking women. Feminism and modernity in the Middle East*, edited by Lila Abu-Lughod. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 35-72, p. 43; and Uncataloged letter dated 22 Ša 'bān 1251, or 1835. Letters of Mısırlı Ibrahim Pasha to Menlikli Ahmed Pasha, Governor of Adana. GB-0033-HIL-IP, Palace Green Library, Durham University, UK.

⁴³ For examples of such printings, refer to: FO 78/103, The National Archives, Kew, UK, pp. 157, 160, 161, 200, & 202. The British wrested Crete from Egypt and returned it to the Porte at the Convention of London in 1840.

that this view was incorporated into subsequent scholarship uncritically.⁴⁴ Although this argument has been made with regard to facets of the city and its inhabitants, like architecture and dress, it has not been extended to Cairene textual production so far as I am aware. It should be though, since European descriptions of Cairene texts also emphasize the themes of decline and progress which have influenced the historiographical narrative. I should note, however, that while Europeans' civilizational ideas about Cairene printing have dominated the historiographical narrative,⁴⁵ their references to manuscripts have been overlooked by subsequent scholars. This intellectual history should be appreciated because of scholars' longstanding reliance upon the texts that European visitors once described, and because Cairenes integrated European ideas of progress into their own understanding of textual meaning during the latter half of the century.

A profusion of contemporary European travelogues and essays about Cairene texts complement the Egyptian sources that I examined above. These European descriptions provide important details about the governmental presses' operations and productions. But they differ from the Egyptian sources because they ascribed an inherent

⁴⁴ See for example: Ahmed, Heba Farouk. "A dual city?" *Making Cairo medieval*, edited by Nezar alSayyad, Irene Beirman, and Nasser Rabbat. New York: Lexington Books, 2005, pp. 143-172.

⁴⁵ Refer to the emphasis given to European accounts of Cairene governmental printing in: Raḍwān, 1953; Ṣābāt, Khalīl. *Tārīkh at-ṭibā'a fī aš-Šarq al-'Arabī*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1958; refer also to the deployment of a paradigm of progress and decline in: Atiyeh, George. "The Book in the modern Arab world: the cases of Lebanon and Egypt." *The Book in the Islamic world: the written word and communication in the Middle East*, edited by George N. Atiyeh. Albany: SUNY Press, 1995, pp. 233-253, p. 235; and Ayalon, Ami. "Arab booksellers and bookshops in the age of printing, 1860-1914." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:1, (2010), pp. 73-93, p. 74.

power to printing and because they are more numerous. This qualitative and quantitative unevenness likely stems from two points.

Firstly, Europeans were excited by printing. As I argued with regard to the French in chapter three, Europeans viewed Cairene printing from the purview of an established print culture. They ascribed goodness and virtue to print, particularly their kind of print, which they appreciated as a societal catalyst. This idea circulated among westerners of various nationalities during the nineteenth century. It was espoused by British, Italian, French, Dutch, Prussian, German, and even late-century American visitors to Egypt.⁴⁶ When these travelers wrote of Cairene printing, they did so out of comparison to Europe. They placed Cairo beneath Europe on a hierarchy of development, and used Cairene printing to illustrate wider claims to civilization or lack thereof. Richard Robert Madden (1798-1886) illustrated this framework when he wrote: “If Mohammed Ali would civilize his people, he must begin by bettering their condition....Among the unsuccessful attempts of the Pacha to make European enlightenment harmonize with his oppressive system of government, the establishment of a newspaper press is worthy of notice...The press that for the moment is of use to the views of Mohammed Ali, is the French: the one that may become ultimately useful to his people, is the press of England, whose leading journals are regularly read to him by his

⁴⁶ We have already encountered some figures who adopted this view. For example, refer to the quotes from: Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820) in chapter two; Edme François Jomard (1777-1862) and L. Benoist de Matougues in chapter four; and Joseph Toussaint Reinaud (1795-1867) in chapter five. Others appear below.

interpreters.”⁴⁷ Printing appealed to European visitors to Cairo like Madden in a way that Cairenes could not fathom. While Madden suggested that printing could bring “European enlightenment” to Egypt, most Cairenes had no basis for comparing societal states. Moreover, they had little means for comparing their printing to European printing.

Secondly, and perhaps on account of Europeans’ admiration for printing, they sought out Cairene presses and wrote about their visits. Bookish European visitors made tourist destinations out of the presses from the 1820s-1840s. Unlike the sugar refineries of Mehmed ‘Alī’s grandson, Ismā‘īl (r. 1863-1879), which were shown off to Europeans on tour intentionally,⁴⁸ the government does not appear to have cultivated these visits to its presses.⁴⁹ Nor did it prevent them, as accounts suggest that visitors met with courteous receptions. Why, then, did these European visitors seek out the presses? Because they were a self-selecting group of orientalist, scholars, administrators, and professional writers whose professions had filled them with an appreciation for printing. They visited the presses for their own amusement;⁵⁰ to inform their colleagues in Europe

⁴⁷ Madden, R. R. *Egypt and Mohammed Ali. Illustrative of the condition of his slaves and subjects, &c. &c.* London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1841, 2nd Edition, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁸ Thomas Cook Ltd. *Programs and itineraries of Cook’s Palestine tours, with extensions to Egypt and the Nile, Sinai, Petra, Moab, the Hauran, Turkey, Greece and Italy, for the season of 1877-78. With maps.* London: Thomas Cook, 1876, p. 53.

⁴⁹ Khaled Fahmy notes that Mehmed ‘Alī’s government took great care to encourage Europeans to visit its hospitals and to shape their impressions of them (Fahmy, 1998, pp. 38-39). This may have also been the case for his printing presses, but I have not found any evidence to support such an argument.

⁵⁰ See for example: Lushington, Sarah Gascoyne. *Narrative of a journey from Calcutta to Europe by way of Egypt, in the years 1827 and 1828.* London: John Murray, 1829, 2nd edition, pp. 168-169.

of potential acquisitions for scholarly research;⁵¹ to have their own works printed there;⁵² to provide information to their governments;⁵³ and to discover how their beloved Republic of Letters functioned in Cairo.⁵⁴ Their accounts reach us because they committed them to writing, and printed them from Europe in travelogues, academic journals, and books.

These European descriptions of the state's presses lack Ottoman counterparts, suggesting that locals were either unwilling or unable to visit the presses, or uninitiated into the European practice of making a living off of their observations. The western

⁵¹ See for example: Perron, Nicholas. "Lettre sur les écoles et l'imprimerie du pacha d'Égypte." *Journal Asiatique, ou recueil de mémoires, d'extraits et de notices relatifs à l'histoire, à la philosophie, aux langues et à la littérature des peuples orientaux*. Paris: À L'Imprimerie Royale, Quatrième série, Tome II, July-August, 1843, pp. 5-23, p. 23.

I should note that many European scholars who did not visit Cairo's governmental presses, like Reinaud and Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1856), also attempted to publish comprehensive lists of Egypt's printed books from 1831 onwards. For more on the European effort to collate Egyptian printed books from afar, refer to: Verdery, Richard N. "The Publications of the Būlāq Press under Muḥammad 'Alī of Egypt." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 91:1, (Jan. – Mar. 1971), pp. 129-32.

⁵² See for example: *La Contemporaine en Égypte pour faire suite aux souvenirs d'une femme sur les principaux personages de la République, du Consulat, de l'Empire, et de la Restauration*. Paris: Chez Ladvocat, 1831, vol. iv, pp. 294-295.

⁵³ See for example: John Bowring's papers on Egypt and Candia. FO 78/381, The National Archives, Kew, UK, pp. 254-258; and Bowring, John. *Report on Egypt and Candia: addressed to the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Palmerston, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, &c. &c. &c.* London: W. Clows and sons, 1840.

⁵⁴ See for example: English, George B. *A narrative of the expedition to Dongola and Sennaar: under the command of His Excellence Ismael Pasha, undertaken by order of His Highness Mehemmed Ali Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt*. Boston: Wells and Lily, 1823, p. vi.

fixture of the professional author developed considerably in Europe at the start of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ Professional authorship, let alone printed authorship, barely applied to Cairenes until the end of the century.⁵⁶ The French historian Joseph François Michaud (1767-1839) lamented this lopsidedness in 1831. His “Arab stationer” in Khān al-Khalīlī could not even understand what a professional author was: “My poor stationer was totally stunned (*tout interdit*) [to comprehend my explanation] and seemed to take what I was telling him for some addition to *The Thousand and one nights*, since no one here lives off of the product of his mind or the treasures of his intelligence; no man sells to another the right to publish his prose or his verses, and literature is a branch of industry that is totally ignored.”⁵⁷ While it is unfortunate that we do not appear to have unofficial accounts of the presses from Cairenes, it is Europeans’ expectations for Cairene printing which I wish to explore in this subsection.

European visitors to Meḥmed ‘Alī’s governmental presses expressed joy, fear, and disappointment at what they encountered there. This range of emotion likely stemmed from their belief in printing’s transformative power. The adventurous Dutch-born actress Maria Versfelt (1776-1845), writing under the pseudonym Ida St. Elme,

⁵⁵ For example, refer to: Salmon, Richard. *The Formation of the Victorian literary profession*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁵⁶ For an overview of the contours of Cairene literature during the long nineteenth century, refer to: Heyworth-Dunne, J. “Society and politics in modern Egyptian literature: a bibliographical survey.” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Jul., 1948), pp. 306-318; and Ostle, Robin. “The Printing press and the renaissance of modern Arabic literature.” *Culture & History*, 16, 1997, pp. 145-157.

⁵⁷ Michaud, M. et M. Poujoulat. *Correspondance d’Orient (1830-1831)*. Brussels: N.-J. Gregoir, V. Wouters et Ce., 1841, vol. VII, pp. 85-86.

could not believe that Egyptians printed at all: “With regard to printing in Cairo, I had to see it to believe that it was not a dream.”⁵⁸ And Michaud worried whether the government printed in order to foment religious fervor.⁵⁹ But he found a dampened comfort in the lack of Egyptian readers for the government’s printings: “...no one buys them [*i.e.*, the printings], no one reads them, because they neither respond to the needs of the present time, nor the spirit of the population...”.⁶⁰

In addition to these visitors’ emotional responses to the presses, they frequently relayed conflicting impressions of Egyptian printing within the same account. For example, Nicholas Perron (1798-1876), a French instructor of medicine in Cairo, proclaimed that Mehmed ‘Alī understood the European idea that printing brought progress: “The pasha attaches the greatest importance to all that can foster the intellectual development of Egypt, and he knows perfectly well that the [printed] books are the catalysts (*les puissances*) that will continue his work when he can no longer do so [himself], and that they will testify, in the future, to his efforts for progress (*les progrès*) of his country.”⁶¹ Yet a few pages later, Perron reversed this assessment to bemoan that Mehmed ‘Alī did not print what he should: “It is a real tragedy that there is not someone here [in Cairo] who can properly judge which Arabic books are the most interesting to publish. There would certainly be profit and honor for the government of Egypt to

⁵⁸ *La Contemporaine* 1831, p. 293.

⁵⁹ Michaud, 1841, pp. 83-84.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁶¹ Perron, 1843, pp. 15-16.

publish a large number of Arabic works; they would find purchasers in the Orient and the Occident, and save the monuments of Islamic literature from loss. I hope with all my heart that this thought of glory looms in the mind of the viceroy.”⁶² And despite Michaud’s fear for fanaticism to result from Egyptian printing, he also managed to find both excitement and sadness in governmental printing: “at first it is pleasing to see this printing press [*i.e.*, the press at Būlāq] which was established at great cost, like a lot of other industries that were imported from Europe...[but] it is necessary to entirely despair of the success of the enterprise, and to compare the press at Boulac to a hydraulic machine that pours its waters on sand and on barren rock. This idea is so upsetting that I could dwell upon it at length.”⁶³

Perron and Michaud claimed that their reports came from Cairenes. Perron assumed the power to speak for Meḥmed ‘Alī, while Michaud “made my observations to my guide, who found them to be true.”⁶⁴ But in fact, they projected their own expectations of print’s glory and civilizing effects onto Cairenes. And they did so in printed texts that targeted European audiences. Later European and Egyptian scholars of nineteenth century printing accepted these normatively charged assessments at face value. They shared Perron and Michaud’s beliefs about the power of print.⁶⁵ To the

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶³ Michaud, 1841, p. 84.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ See for example: Heyworth-Dunne, J. “Printing and translation under Muḥammad ‘Alī of Egypt: the foundation of modern Arabic.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 3 (Jul., 1940), pp. 325-349, pp. 325-326; Geiss, Albert M.

extent that they used the European accounts critically, they did so to determine which source was most factually reliable.⁶⁶ They did not endeavor to reconstitute contemporary Cairene attitudes about governmental printing, for they assumed that they resembled their own. In fact, as I demonstrated above, the governmental sources projected an entirely different view of printing as an art form that complemented the state.

Although the firsthand European accounts of Cairene governmental printing spoke inaccurately for Egyptians' understanding of printing, their authors' concern for the distinction between the modern and not-modern encouraged them to juxtapose Cairene printings with manuscripts. These allusions to manuscripts demonstrate the extent to which Cairene printing emerged from a culture of handwriting. Yet manuscripts were largely ignored by Middle Eastern and western scholars of Egyptian printing. This neglect highlights how the late nineteenth and twentieth century historiographical focus on printing tended to overlook local textual production.⁶⁷ Moreover, this neglect evinces how western norms for texts became integrated into Egyptian thought.

“Histoire de l'imprimerie en Égypte: II: introduction définitive.” *Bulletin de l'Institut Égyptien*, sér. 5, 2, (1908), pp. 195-220, p. 197; Raḍwān, 1953, p. v; and Šayyāl, Jamāl ad-Dīn. *Tārīkh at-tarjama wa al-ḥaraka ath-thaqāfiya fī 'aṣr Muḥammad 'Alī*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-fikr al-'Arabī, 1951, p. 202.

⁶⁶ See for example: Raḍwān, 1953, pp. 27-28.

⁶⁷ This pattern appears to have begun in the Arabic tradition under Abū al-Futūḥ Raḍwān, and it was followed by Khalīl Šabāt (See: *Ibid.*; and Šabāt, 1958, pp. 135-202). Subsequent scholars followed this example. See the lack of references to manuscript production in the coverage of European accounts in: Sadgrove, Philip. “Journalism in Muhammad Ali's Egypt, 1805-49.” *Culture & History*, 16, 1997, pp. 89-100; and İhsanoğlu, Ekmeleddin. *The Turks in Egypt and their cultural legacy*, translated by Humphrey Davies. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012.

Several firsthand European accounts of the governmental presses folded Cairene manuscripts into their discussion of printing. Let me provide examples of these references from some of the most heavily cited sources. When the Paduan naturalist Giambattista Brocchi (1772-1826) described the press at Būlāq, for example, he also spoke of the rising expense of handwritten Qurʾāns. He reported that the higher prices derived from a new benchmark set by Meḥmed ‘Alī when he acquired a manuscript copy of the Qurʾān for 25,000 *qirš*.⁶⁸ In Perron’s essay on printing in Egypt, he described how scholars produced countless manuscripts at little expense at al-Azhar. He wrote that each student and teacher there “had the obligation to copy, every month, a notebook (20 pages) of a manuscript. The head schaykh busies himself with finding old manuscripts, and distributes the fragments to the students for them to copy. Then he takes these copies; and, in this manner, forms one of the richest oriental libraries at the mosque, without any cost other than the necessary paper.”⁶⁹ The orientalist Thomas Xavier Bianchi (1783-1864) highlighted the fact that printings first required the preparation of manuscript copies.⁷⁰ After Michaud visited the press at Būlāq, he went straight to Cairo’s book market, where he proclaimed: “many writers are employed in copying books; the copyists are in a way like the printers of our Europe; because it is from them that publications are made; in the Orient there are stationery copyists (*des libraires copistes*), just as in Paris

⁶⁸ Brocchi, 1841, p. 174.

⁶⁹ Perron, 1843, p. 14-15.

⁷⁰ Bianchi, T. X. “Catalogue générale des livres arabes, persans et turcs, imprimés à Boulac en Égypte depuis l’introduction de l’imprimerie dans ce pays.” *Journal Asiatique, ou recueil de mémoires, d’extraits et de notices relatifs à l’histoire, à la philosophie, aux langues et à la littérature des peuples orientaux*. Paris: À L’Imprimerie Royale, Quatrième série, Tome II, July-August, 1843, pp. 24-61, p. 29.

[there are] stationery printers; the price of the works depends upon the manner in which it is copied, just as with us it depends upon the manner in which it is printed.”⁷¹ And a report of Cairo’s booksellers stressed the differences between European print culture and Cairene manuscript culture:

A bookseller on the banks of the Seine is not a very different person from one on the banks of the Thames, otherwise than that he has his country-house at Ruel or Passy, instead of Bayswater or Bromley. Lucky mortal! If he be possessed of capital and skill (as the Tonson or Lintot of times usually is) he can make a fortune by the routine of business without cramping his intellect, and indulge in much of the interesting labour of the man of letters without suffering the pains and penalties of authorship. But when we get to the banks of the Nile, we find ourselves in a new, or rather in an old world, where the calligraphist has not yet been expelled by the printer; where even a newspaper may come out a day sooner or later, to suit the convenience of editors and compositors; where a puff or an advertisement is unknown; and where the bibliopole [*i.e.*, bookseller], good easy man, taking it into his head to go on a trip to the fair of Tuntah, locks up his establishment for a week at a time.⁷²

For as much as these accounts described Cairene manuscripts as quirky counterpoints to European practice, and to the modernity of print, they also acknowledged the handwritten tradition from which Cairene printing emerged.

Although Europeans likened printing to manuscript production into the 1870s,⁷³

⁷¹ Michaud, 1841, pp. 84-85.

⁷² “A Cairo bookseller.” *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal. New Series*, edited by William and Robert Chambers. Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, and W.S. Orr, London. Vol. X, No. 261, Saturday, December 30, 1848, pp. 428-430, p. 428.

⁷³ See for example Ignác Goldziher’s statement from 1874: “The Oriental presses have the very peculiar feature that they do not waste the margins of the book...In this regard they might be comparable to the medieval copyists in Europe” (Goldziher, Ignác and Adam Mestyan (trans.). “Report on the books brought from the orient for the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with regard to the conditions of the printing press in the orient,” in “Ignác Goldziher’s report on the books brought from the orient for the

such accounts were confined largely to Meḥmed ‘Alī’s rule during the first half of the nineteenth century. As Egyptians printed more and more, European accounts moved on to assess Egyptians’ ability to enact European print culture. But before I look at examples of these later descriptions more closely, let me note that Egyptians began manifesting traces of European ideas about print civilization in their own writings.

The earliest example of this that I know of comes from a pamphlet written in 1838 by an Egyptian student in England named Ḥasānayn al-Basyūnī,⁷⁴ who described himself as “one of a number of youth to England by his Highness Mohammad Aly, Basha of Egypt, to be instructed in various branches of the arts and sciences...”⁷⁵ Al-Basyūnī had encountered British reports of Meḥmed ‘Alī’s “intention to declare his independence of the Ottoman Porte.”⁷⁶ Indeed, a series of parliamentary pamphlets debated the state of modernization in Egypt and whether Britain should play a role in suppressing Meḥmed ‘Alī’s moves towards autonomy.⁷⁷ To support Meḥmed ‘Alī’s reported bid, al-Basyūnī

Hungarian Academy of Sciences.” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, LX/2 Autumn 2015, pp. 443-480, pp. 453-480, p. 459).

⁷⁴ Al’ Besumee, Hassanaine. “Egypt under Mohammad Aly Basha. A reply to the “Remarks” of A. T. Holroyd, Esq., on “Egypt as it is in 1837.” Addressed to the Right Hon. Viscount Palmerston, Her Britannic Majesty’s Principal Secretary of the State for Foreign Affairs, &c., &c. &c.” London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1838. For more on al-Basyūnī and his role in Egyptian political thought, refer to: Lāšīn, ‘Abd al-Khāliq. *Miṣrīyāt fī al-fīkr wa as-siyāsa*. Al-Qāhira: Sīnā lil-Našr, 1993, pp. 55-90.

⁷⁵ Al’ Besumee, 1838, p. 3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

stressed “the improvements the Basha has introduced, and the reforms he has effected within the present generations.”⁷⁸ Discussion of these “improvements” led al-Basyūnī to address printing:

But I shall next notice the aid the Basha has given to the diffusion of knowledge amongst his subjects, by introducing the art of Printing into Egypt; by means of which, books of instruction in various departments of the arts, sciences, and literature, as well as a newspaper in the Turkish and Arabic languages, are published; and by establishing schools at his expense, where, according to Mr. Holroyd’s admission, the sons of the peasants are *even paid* for receiving instruction in the invaluable arts of reading, writing, and the elements of other useful knowledge. His Highness having also a special aim at perpetuating the advantages this plan is adapted to confer, has, at a vast expense, sent to England, France, and Italy, a great number of Egyptian youth (of whom I have the honour to be one), chiefly to acquire a knowledge of the arts and sciences, and also to imbibe the civilized habits of those countries.⁷⁹

Al-Basyūnī presented printing as an example of an Egyptian “reform” to his English readership. But he suggested printing’s power to civilize in a roundabout way, through the “diffusion of knowledge” which was to be paired with the “civilized habits” that select Egyptian students were to acquire during their time in Europe. Although al-Basyūnī only hinted at the civilizational role of printing, some writers in Egypt would argue for the causality of this connection more strongly from the latter half of the nineteenth century onwards. Before I address this view, let me describe how European

⁷⁷ Refer to: Waghorn, Thomas. “Egypt as it is in 1837.” London: Smith, Elder, 1837; and Holroyd, Arthur Todd. “Egypt and Mahomed Ali Pacha, in 1837: a letter containing remarks upon “Egypt as it is in 1837” addressed to the Right Hon. Viscount Palmerston.” London: J. Ridgway and Sons, 1838.

⁷⁸ Al’ Besumee, 1838, p. 9.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

accounts of Egyptian printing evolved with the expansion of Cairo's printing industries.

C. *Western Assessments of Egyptian Printing during the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century.*

Westerners in Egypt found themselves of two minds about the changes caused by the development of Cairo's private presses. On the one hand, the development pierced the exotic sense of time travel that visitors to Cairo once treasured. "In this quarter are...the booksellers' bazaar, of little interest..." wrote one.⁸⁰ On the other hand, westerners felt heartened by Cairo's increasing level of civilization, and their own ability to feel at home there. Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) noted both of these strands of thought as he walked Cairo's streets. When he "crossed from the Turkish street to pass through the corridor that leads to Mousky, I saw lithographed posters on the wall that announced a show for the same evening at the theatre of Cairo. I was not angry to rediscover a souvenir of civilization."⁸¹ De Nerval found hints of Paris's familiar "civilization" through chance encounters with printed theatre advertisements, but he took comfort in these patches of "rediscovery."

The European aspects of Cairene print culture made the city appear familiar to western visitors. As Cairene private presses grew more numerous, prolific, and competitive, this impression deepened. By the 1890s, the German Arabist Martin

⁸⁰ Reynolds-Ball, Eustace A. *Cairo. The City of the caliphs. A popular study of Cairo and its environs and the Nile and its antiquities.* Boston: Dana Estes and Company, 1898, p. 134.

⁸¹ Nerval, Gérard de. *Les Femmes du Caire: scènes de la vie Égyptienne.* Paris: Au bureau de la Revue des Deux Mondes, 1846, vol. 1, pp. 420-421.

Hartmann (1851-1918) found Egyptian printing so familiar that he compared its journalistic output to the provincial press of his native country: “The general verdict upon the Arabic Press of Egypt cannot be an unfavourable one. Together with the whole of the Eastern press, it is, with a few exceptions, still in its infancy, and ranks fairly well on a line with the German provincial press.”⁸² Hartmann implied that the nascent printing industry advanced so as to resemble the press in Europe. Although he found that the Egyptian press was more like that in the European backcountry than in the city, his assessment stressed its potential. That it was only ‘infant’ suggested that it would reach adulthood one day.

Moreover, the development of Cairene print culture made the city more convenient for western visitors. Western travel guides from the 1840s advised visitors to bring “ink, paper, pens &c., [and] drawing paper, pencils, rubber, &c. and colours...” with them from Europe, and warned that “a [western] library...cannot be collected in Egypt.”⁸³ “If you purpose only to visit Egypt,” admonished another guide, “books are almost the only necessity you need take from England....powder, books, and stationery are the three great essentials for the Egyptian traveler; they are scarcely to be procured after leaving Malta.”⁸⁴ This message was corroborated in published travel accounts:

⁸² Hartmann, 1899, p. 9.

⁸³ Wilkinson, John Gardner. *Hand-book for travellers in Egypt: including descriptions of the course of the Nile to the second cataract, Alexandria, Cairo, the Pyramids, and Thebes, the overland transit to India, the peninsula of Mount Sinai, the oases, &c.* London: J. Murray, 1847, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁴ Warburton, Eliot. *Travels in Egypt and the Holy Land: or, the crescent and the*

“The only things not to be found, or not worth buying in Egypt, are guns, instruments, and books...The choice of a library (which cannot be collected in Egypt) will, of course, depend on the occupations or taste of each person.”⁸⁵ Three decades later, travel guides for Europeans assured their readers of the many places in Cairo from which they could now purchase writing materials, texts, lithographs, photos, and printings.⁸⁶

Increasingly, westerners ascribed a proprietary role to western culture for precipitating these changes and their effects. An American schoolbook’s entry on Cairo under “Lessons in Geography” boasted that: “Striking signs of the effects of modern European influence are the Italian Opera and the French Theatres. There is a Government printing-press established by Mohammed Ali, from which many Oriental works have issued, and an unrivalled collection of Egyptian antiquities...”.⁸⁷ The author of a travel essay published in *The Dublin University magazine* observed that: “I knew well, from former experience, that in Alexandria and Cairo we should still have the civilization of the West around us. Magazines and reviews, newspapers and periodicals

cross. Comprising the romance and realities of eastern travel. Philadelphia: H.C. Peck & Theo. Bliss, 1859, p. 223.

⁸⁵ Wilkinson, John Gardner. *Modern Egypt and Thebes: being a description of Egypt; including the information required for travellers in that country.* London: John Murray, 1843, vol. I, p. 89.

⁸⁶ See for example: Levermay, Francois. *Guide-annuaire d'Égypte; statistique, administrations, commerce, industries, agriculture, antiquités, etc. avec les plans d'Alexandrie & du Caire. Année 1872-1873.* Cairo: Typographie Francaise Delbos-Demouret, 1872-1873, pp. 334-336.

⁸⁷ “Lessons in geography.” *The School Journal, a weekly journal of education*, edited by Amos M. Kellogg. New York: E.L. Kellogg & Co., Vol. XXIV, No. 6, September 9, 1882, p. 136.

of all kinds, can be found in the great cities of Egypt. But when you set your face towards Jerusalem and the Jordan, you are leaving civilization behind you. No more railways, no more reading-rooms. Newspapers become scarce and rare. Magazines, reviews, and new books are few and far between.”⁸⁸ And the Baedeker travel guide stated that “of the works printed in Egypt 1000-4000 copies are usually struck off, and the fact that the whole of them are generally sold within a few years affords a proof that the taste for literature in the East is again on the increase.”⁸⁹ These accounts suggested that although printing belonged to western civilization, it could be transplanted elsewhere to promote western decorum. The western projection of ownership over ‘Arab’ printing even appeared on the European continent. In 1872, the Englishman Josiah Wade patented his design of one of the century’s best hand-fed presses. He named his machine “The Arab,” because “the view at the time was that the Arab race was hard-working and reliable.”⁹⁰ Metaphorically, this label suggested that Europeans made “The Arab” print.

In a way, westerners did guide what Cairenes printed. This extended beyond the texts that westerners consumed from Cairene presses to the bespoke printings that Cairenes ordered. Wealthy Cairenes in particular began using printed invitations for their

⁸⁸ Knighton, W. “Brindisi to Cairo.” *The Dublin University magazine, a literary and political journal*. London: Woodfall and Kinder, Vol. LXXXIX, March 1877, pp. 371-384, p. 371.

⁸⁹ Baedeker, 1878, p. 292.

⁹⁰ Brundell, Ben. “The Arab,” <http://britishletterpress.co.uk/presses/platen-presses/the-arab/>. Accessed on 17 September 2013.

dinner parties,⁹¹ tickets for their wedding celebrations,⁹² photos for their friends,⁹³ calling cards to announce their arrivals,⁹⁴ and business cards to disseminate to associates and prospective clientele. These genres stemmed from European influence and had no equivalent in the earlier manuscript culture of Cairo. Sometimes these printings negotiated local and foreign custom at once, as seen through the depiction of the name of Egypt's famous nationalist officer, Aḥmad 'Urābī (1841-1911), in calligraphy and italics

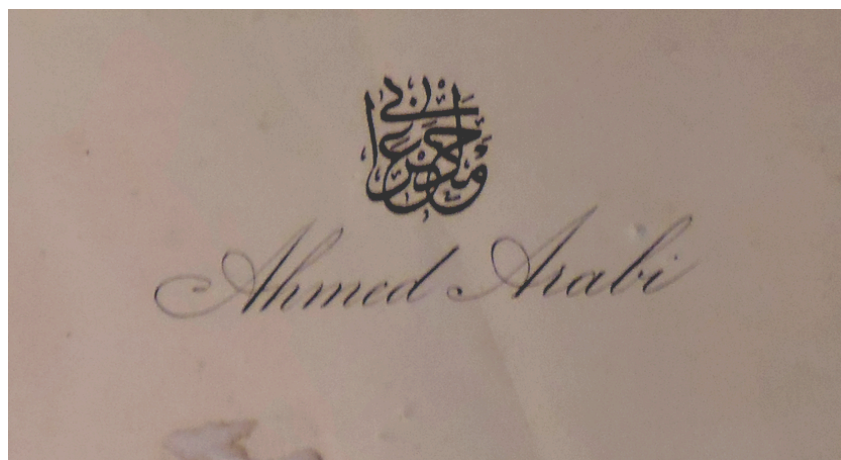


Image 6.4. *The merging of Ottoman Egyptian and western custom in Aḥmad 'Urābī's calling card, Cairo, 1882.*⁹⁵

⁹¹ See for example: Grenfell Papers. GB165-0319. Album 1. Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, UK.

⁹² See for example: Chennells, Ellen. *Recollections of an Egyptian princess by her English governess being a record of five years' residence at the court of Ismael Pasha, Khedive*. London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1893, p. 161.

⁹³ See for example: *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁹⁴ See for example: Stone, Fanny. "Diary of an American girl in Cairo during the war of 1882, with introduction by Lieut.-Gen. Charles P. Stone." *The Century Magazine*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, (June, 1884), pp. 288-301, p. 289.

⁹⁵ Grenfell Papers. GB165-0319. Album 1. Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony's College.

on his calling card from 1882. Other times, these printings gave little indication that they originated outside of Europe.

Westerners mainly approved of these efforts, but some Cairene printings elicited their criticism. Their opprobrium tended to center on Egyptian printings that failed to execute western customs perfectly. When westerners perceived these transgressions, they mocked Egyptian ineptitude. Of the aspects of Egyptian printing which could prompt western ridicule, orthography proved the most common. A travel series for young Americans, for example, disparaged an Egyptian's business card:

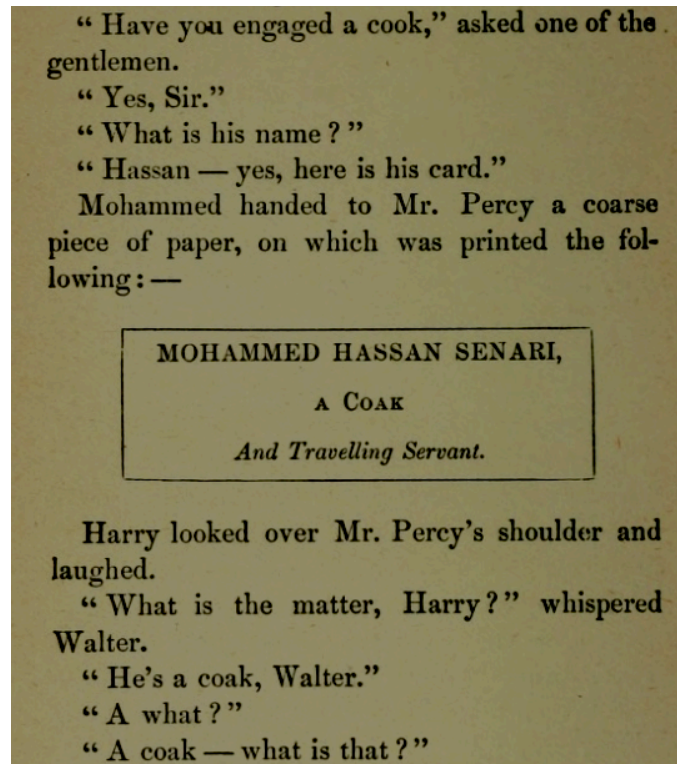


Image 6.5. *An Egyptian cook's business card rendered in an American children's novel to poke fun at the way he misspelt the English word for his occupation.*⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Eddy, Daniel C. *Walter's tour in the east. Walter in Egypt.* New York: Thomas Y. Corwell & Co., 1862, p. 150.

Egyptians' use of western languages often belied their efforts at cultural integration. To hand out business cards effectively, for example, they had to master fluency on three fronts: language, visual custom, and social performance. The cards had to be printed and formatted suitably and handed over properly. These steps could be accomplished despite the “coarse” feel of Egyptian paper.⁹⁷ Flawless orthography, however, proved more



Image 6.6. *The business card of Ahmed Abdel-Raheem, in which he promotes his work as a dragoman but misspells the word ‘address.’*⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* At the time of Eddy’s publication, Cairenes still imported paper from Europe. In 1870, Khedive Ismā‘īl (r. 1863-1879) established a local papermaking factory. For a contemporary description of the factory, refer to: Leverney, 1872-1873, p. 20.

I should note that into the twentieth century, westerners described the general appearance of Middle Eastern printings unfavorably. The Danish orientalist Johannes Pedersen (1883-1977), for example, wrote that: “The exterior appointments of books printed in the Orient are often very poor. The paper, commonly yellow in color, is often very coarse and loose, and the type is frequently indistinct. As a rule, the words are set very close together, which makes reading difficult. Instead of being stitched, the sheets are usually bound by having wire passed right through them along the spine, which makes it difficult for the reader to make the book lie open. This and the carelessly glued pasteboard bindings testify to the condition of decay in which the craft still finds itself” (Pedersen, Johannes and Geoffrey French (trans.). *The Arabic book*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 139-140).

⁹⁸ Grenfell Papers. GB165-0319. Album 1. Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony’s College.

elusive, and a single misspelt letter irredeemably cheapened an otherwise seamless implementation of foreign practice.

Westerners who spent time among Cairenes recognized Egyptians' awareness of the European publishing industry. The Englishwoman Ellen Chennells (d. 1896) served as a governess to Khedive Ismā'īl's daughter, Princess Zaīnab, from 1871 until the child's untimely death in 1875. Chennells noted that the women of the harem suspected that she would publish stories about them upon her departure:

Very soon after my arrival in Egypt, I had occasion to observe that the opinion prevalent among Mahometans was, that it was a disgrace to any woman for her face to be seen, or her name to be heard, beyond the walls of the harem. Every book published in London or Paris was immediately procured in Cairo, and great displeasure was manifested when (as occasionally happened) some distinguished visitor to the harem gave her impressions to the world at large. I had always been in the habit of keeping a journal when travelling or residing in foreign countries, and as I wrote openly it soon attracted the notice and disapprobation of my pupils. "Was I going to publish a book?" they asked. I said, "No; but as everything was new and strange to me, I wished to write down my impressions while still fresh, to assist my memory in later years." After a time they seemed satisfied, and had full confidence in me. Indeed the young Pasha [*i.e.*, Zaīnab's brother] often gave me information.⁹⁹

Chennells did betray the trust of these women by publishing an account of her experience. But she did so only after Zaīnab's death and she tended to describe her experiences with understanding. Her memoirs show that members of the khedivial fold knew all about European printing, and deserved more credit for their know-how than westerners often allowed.

Cairenes with knowledge of western printing extended from the khedivial court to the wider community. The Hungarian orientalist Ignác Goldziher (1850-1921) wrote of a

⁹⁹ Chennells, 1893, p. v.

Coptic professor's attempt to have Goldziher publish his treatise on logic as a textbook in Europe.¹⁰⁰ Another example of this may be seen through the anonymous author of an essay on the Khān al-Khalīlī bookseller Aḥmad,¹⁰¹ who reported that Aḥmad was well-aware of western authors' portrayals of Cairenes through orientalist tropes. He wrote: "On another occasion I took Sheik Ahmed to an English lady, then occupied in writing a book on Cairo; and on his asking for a gift of remembrance to give to his wife, he received a pair of gloves; so when we came out, he said to me, 'What will that lady say in her book of me?' I answered that I had no doubt she would describe him as the renowned Sheik Ahmed el Katoby. 'I think not,' said he: 'she will say that she saw the sheik of the beggars, old, and blind of one eye, who would not go away until he received a gift.'"¹⁰² These observations demonstrate that non-elite Cairenes appreciated the motivations behind western publications. Moreover, they show that westerners who interacted with Cairenes closely were aware of this.

The positive recognition that some westerners extended to Cairenes included the act of printing. An American printer was emboldened to come to his Egyptian "comrades'" defense in an article he wrote for an American trade journal called *The Inland printer*. He sought to support Cairene compositors who worked in western languages:

¹⁰⁰ Patai, Raphael. *Ignaz Goldziher and his oriental diary. A translation and psychological portrait*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987, p. 146, entry from 15 December 1873.

¹⁰¹ For more on Aḥmad, refer to chapter four.

¹⁰² "A Cairo bookseller," 1848, p. 430.

A deputation of compositors has called our attention to a paragraph which lately appeared in our esteemed Cairo contemporary under the heading of ‘An Explanation.’ The paragraph generally deplors the lack of skill and *esprit de corps* which it is alleged are the chief characteristics of the Cairo ‘printer.’

We do not know under the circumstances the ‘printers’ work in the office of our contemporary, but we are bound to state that we are very well pleased with the men working as compositors with us. They do their best, they are conscientious and loyal, and an hour or so more or less never causes them any heartburning.

The particular complaint of our contemporary seems not to be against the compositors, but against a man who left a large piece of wood on the bearings of the printing machine. This is essentially the fault of the ‘mechanicien,’ and the compositors can not be blamed. Heaven forbid that we should hold ourselves as Simon Pure in the matter of typographical errors, but what we do say, and that without reserve, is that our compositors work very hard in a difficult task, and that there is that good feeling between master and man which renders work a pleasure, and ensures the best being got out of the man.

And the explanation is this: The compositors responsible for the getting out of the Cairo papers have next to no knowledge of the language which they are setting up....But our comrades, all things considered, acquit themselves well, and there is no need to hold them up to ridicule.¹⁰³

Like Chennells, the anonymous printer defended Egyptians from foreign assertions of their ignorance in printing and print culture. He emphasized the difficulty of Cairene printers’ work in general, and of working in foreign languages in particular. Again however, this endorsement of Egyptians’ intelligence in print culture was qualified within an implied cultural hierarchy. In this case, the author worked from the assumption of western superiority between “master and man.” However sympathetic Europeans were to Cairene print culture, they extended onto it the hierarchy that had existed between western printing and eastern manuscript production.

Westerners’ qualified assessments of Egyptian printing stemmed from the

¹⁰³ “Written for *The Inland Printer*. “Printers in Egypt” by our special correspondent.” *The Inland Printer*. Chicago: December 1908, Vol XLII, pp. 398-399, p. 398.

tradition that had established the idea that the Ottoman sultans once banned printing.¹⁰⁴ Before the nineteenth century, Europeans used the lack of Ottoman printing to explain their sense of Europe's societal advancement.¹⁰⁵ Once Ottoman Cairenes began to print on a wide scale, westerners refined their narrative of superiority. They could no longer defend their state of advancement through the sheer absence of Ottoman printing. So they turned their focus to the comparative sources of inadequacy within Cairene print culture. They also began positioning themselves as guardians of Cairenes' manuscript tradition.

Westerners demonstrated a growing concern for the ways in which Ottomans preserved their manuscripts. Whereas they once reasoned that Ottomans had been hindered by their preference for manuscripts, some now suggested that Ottomans' neglect of their manuscripts left them in a state of decline. The Austrian orientalist and book collector Aloys Sprenger (1813-1893) articulated this point within the introduction of his Islamic manuscript collection catalogue:

¹⁰⁴ Refer to chapter two for more on the development and spread of the ban amongst Europeans, and later Ottomans.

¹⁰⁵ For example, Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820) wrote with regard to the absence of printing in Ottoman Egypt: "It is impossible therefore for books to multiply, and consequently for knowledge to be propagated. If we compare this state of things with what passes among ourselves, we cannot but be deeply impressed with the advantages of printing. We shall even be convinced, on reflexion, that this art alone is possibly the main spring of those great revolutions, which, within the last three centuries, have taken place in the moral system of Europe" (Volney, Constantin-Francois. *Travels through Syria and Egypt, in the years 1783, 1784, and 1785. Containing the present natural and political state of those countries; their productions, arts, manufactures, and commerce; with observations on the manners, customs, and government of the Turks and Arabs. Translated from the French.* London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1788, Vol II, p. 450).

Oriental nations are no longer able to take care of their own literary treasures. This is not owing to a want of veneration for them but to apathy and imbecility. If you describe to them the telegraph or a steamer, they may be heard saying: “We observed since many years that the Franks...purchase every old book they can find, and these are the fruits of their study of our literature”...Yet they [*i.e.*, the Oriental nations] allow their books to rot, to be devoured by insects and destroyed by neglect, though a Moslim never willfully tears up a book...As a general rule they place no value on old books and generally on works containing facts, and take little pains to preserve them, their destruction therefore proceeds with great rapidity. In some oriental towns you find bags and bags of odd leaves of the most valuable volumes, which if complete would give occupation to a learned society of Europe for a quarter of a century. Under these circumstances the duty of taking care of the patrimony of our eastern brethren devolves upon the enlightened public of Europe, and every man who finds an opportunity ought to secure as many good books as he can.

I doubt whether ever one individual has brought to Europe so many oriental works as are contained in my collection.¹⁰⁶

Sprenger cast himself as hero to Islamic manuscripts in distress, and called on European men of valor to follow his lead. He spent years in India and “oriental” cities like Cairo, where he set about pursuing his life’s work. His justification for his collection made no connection between the lack of Ottoman printing and societal backwardness. Rather, Sprenger suggested that eastern inferiority derived from the improper treatment and inadequate regard that Muslims applied to their manuscripts. Only “the enlightened public of Europe” could save the “patrimony” of the east from the easterners.

Accounts from the latter half of the nineteenth century indicate that westerners took up Sprenger’s call. In 1874, one scholar underscored this point when he announced:

Really valuable and useful manuscripts are increasingly rare in the Arab book markets because European bibliophiles had slowly migrated them to the huge collections of Europe. Thus we should look for manuscripts of

¹⁰⁶ Sprenger, Aloys. *A catalogue of the Bibliotheca Orientalis Sprengeriana*. Giessen: Wilhelm Keller, 1857, p. v.

scholarly significance – at least the Arabic ones – in the British Museum of the Indian Office in London, in the Bodleian in Oxford, in the Refaiya in Leipzig, in the Legatum Warnerianum in Leiden, or in the Sprenger-Wetzstein- and Petermann-collections in Berlin rather than where they had originated from. The energy of the European lust for knowledge, coupled with financial sacrifice, wiped the most ancient and most important sources of Arabic philology and Muslim science of religion out from their original homeland to [Europe] where these studies found a new home in the last decades.¹⁰⁷

Cairene booksellers observed this trend, too. In 1883, the bookseller Amīn ibn Ḥasan Ḥulwānī al-Madanī al-Ḥanafī (d. 1898) travelled from Cairo to Leiden to attend the Sixth Congress of Orientalists. He brought close to 700 manuscripts along with him,¹⁰⁸ indicating thereby that he expected to find strong demand for his texts in Europe. Al-Madanī detailed his experience at the Congress over a series of letters that were published during October and November of 1883 in the Egyptian newspaper *al-Burhān*. He explained western practices to his readers like the exchange of printed business cards¹⁰⁹ and the distribution of printed invitations.¹¹⁰ He also cautioned his readers that he encountered Islamic texts in Europe that he had not found in the east:

If we turn our attention to the purposes that the Franks have in printing these books, it is to sell them, and they print no fewer than 500 copies of each book. Despite my having worked in books (*ištighāl bi al-*

¹⁰⁷ Goldziher, 2014, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁸ Vrolijk, Arnoud. “‘The Usual Leiden types.’ A compositor’s personal account of Brill’s Arabic printing in the late 19th and early 20th century.” *Books and bibliophiles: studies in honour of Paul Aucterlonie on the bio-bibliography of the Muslim world*, edited by Robert Gleave. UK: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2014, pp. 119-132, pp. 120 & 129-131.

¹⁰⁹ *Al-Burhān*. Alexandria: Maṭba‘at al-Burhān, 22 October 1883, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

kutub) for a period of years, I had never seen most of them in the countries of the east (*bilād aš-šarq*), nor had I heard of their printing.

I fear that the endurance of this practice (*al-i'tinā'*) in Europe will encourage men of learning to be drawn to [Europe] from all the lands (*sā'ir al-aqtār*), even [those] pursuing Islamic religious sciences. Because when the Franks pursue learning, they do not desist but dive into its seas to extract a pearl from its soil with respect to it. Their kings are glorious in facilitating the path and their scholars are generous with what they have, and their books are easy to exchange and borrow, and their countries [offer] a life of plenty, and the bodies in them are healthy, and the religions are free. So all of these reasons invite the learned to be attracted to [Europe].¹¹¹

Al-Madanī's confidence in European scholarship came from two sources. First, his sense of westerners' appetite for manuscript collecting. And second, his sense of harmony and abundance within Europe. But when this commentary was translated into Dutch by the orientalist Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936), Hurgronje privileged al-Madanī's concern for western collecting over his emphasis upon the cultural preconditions for learning.

Hurgronje did this by misquoting al-Madanī's statement, writing: "I myself [*i.e.*, al-Madani], who have applied myself to the book trade for a great number of years, have hardly ever seen these European imprints in the East, nor had I ever heard that they were printed in Europe. Truly, if this European fervour should last I fear that camels will be saddled from all parts (*i.e.* in our countries) to take everything away from us, eventually even the fruits of our own Mohammedan jurisprudence."¹¹² Hurgronje distorted al-Madanī's argument by accentuating the latter's concern for the comprehensiveness of western collecting practices. He also added the orientalizing trope of camels to al-

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Hurgronje, Snouck. *Het Leidsche Orientalistencongres: indrukken van een Arabisch congreslid*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1883, p. 54. This translation from Dutch is quoted from: Vrolijk, 2014, p. 130.

Madanī's statement. In so doing, Hurgronje demonstrated the appeal that acquiring Egypt's manuscripts held for Europeans.

Western accounts implied that Egyptians were neither entitled to their printings, nor their manuscripts. While Egyptians printed the way that westerners did increasingly, they did so poorly; and their manuscripts that had once been used as evidence of their backwardness now became objects to be rescued from their custody. In both scenarios, westerners cast themselves as superior. If Egyptians printed at all, it was due to the civilizational prowess of European invention; and if oriental manuscripts were to be preserved for posterity, it was up to chivalrous western bibliophiles to save them.

D. Echoes of European Textual Norms within Egyptian Governmental Projects during the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century.

Westerners' ideas about printing and texts did not exist in a vacuum. The governments of Meḥmed 'Alī's successors displayed a growing awareness of these norms, some aspects of which they incorporated into official practice. I will explore examples of these overlaps below. But although the state drew from western tradition, it did not subscribe to westerners' claims for textual superiority. Instead, it began cultivating such authority for itself. This may be seen through the ways in which the state engaged with printing and Egyptian texts abroad, and within Cairo.

a. The Government's Use of Texts and Printing Abroad.

In its diplomatic dealings, the government cultivated the sense of its benevolence and advancement by gifting printed texts. This tradition began under Meḥmed 'Alī, who gave elaborate and ornately bound printings to the kings of France and Russia during the

mid-1840s.¹¹³ The official exchange of texts between states was not new to the Ottoman and Egyptian diplomatic traditions.¹¹⁴ The innovation came through the Egyptian state's novel use of printings for this purpose, as opposed to manuscripts.

Mehmed 'Alī's successors refined the practice of gifting printed books by donating them to foreign libraries expressly. The government of his son Sa'īd (r. 1854-1863) gave Turkish, Farsi, and Arabic books "for the Royal Library in the country of Austria," an act of officialdom which necessitated against requiring that the Austrians pay for the texts, but rather "requires that they [*i.e.*, the books] be given to them."¹¹⁵ Sa'īd's successor, Isma'īl (r. 1863-1879), carried on this tradition with more frequency. For example, in 1867 Isma'īl gave one hundred printed books to the Italian Biblioteca Nazionale.¹¹⁶ In 1870, he donated seventy-four printed titles, comprised of one hundred fifty volumes, to the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford because his son Ḥasan (1854-1888) was a student there.¹¹⁷ And in 1874, he commanded that the books printed

¹¹³ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 2, p. 589.

¹¹⁴ See for example: Arcak, Sinem. "Gifts in motion: Ottoman-Safavid cultural exchange, 1501-1618." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2012; Roberts, Sean. *Printing a Mediterranean world: Florence, Constantinople, and the renaissance of geography*. MA: Harvard University Press, 2013, pp. 1-14; and Behrens-Abouseif, Doris. *Practising diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate. Gifts and material culture in the medieval Islamic world*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014.

¹¹⁵ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 3:1, p. 285.

¹¹⁶ Pinto, Olga. "Mose Castelli, tipografo Italiano al Cairo." *A Francesco Gabrieli. Studi orientalistici offerti nel sessantesimo compleanno dai suoi colleghi e discepoli*. Rome: Giovanni Bardi, 1964, pp. 217-223; pp. 217 & 219.

¹¹⁷ These books were bound with red leather spines, and remain a part of Oxford's collections. For the list of their titles, refer to: *List of the books printed at the Boulak*

at the press at Būlāq during the previous year be gifted to the director of the École des Langues Orientales Vivantes in Paris.¹¹⁸ To my knowledge, the state's benevolence with Egyptian printings did not extend to manuscripts. This suggests that it distinguished between mediums as its textual engagement with westerners moved from leaders to libraries, and the quantity of books which comprised these gifts grew evermore numerous.

The government also projected its printing prowess to the broader European public through expositions, beginning with the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. Egypt's participation in the expositions began casually at the behest of Great Britain. On 18 March 1850 the British consul-general in Cairo, Charles August Murray (1806-1895), dispatched a letter to the secretary of state for foreign affairs in London, Henry John Temple third Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865). In it, Murray acknowledged receipt of "copies of the commission which the Queen [Victoria (r. 1837-1901)] has been pleased to issue for promoting an Exhibition in England – of the works of Industry of all nations...".¹¹⁹ Murray closed by adding that he "made to the Egyptian[s] the requisite communications on this subject."¹²⁰ Six months later, the British consul in Alexandria

Press, given to the library by His Highness the Khedive of Egypt. N.p., Donations to the Bodleian Library, 1870. Library Records e.466, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, UK; and see also: Macray, William Dunn. Annals of the Bodleian Library with a notice of the earlier library of the university. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1890, p. 385.

¹¹⁸ Roman, Stephan. *The Development of Islamic library collections in western Europe and North America*. UK: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1990, pp. 99-100.

¹¹⁹ Egypt: Mr. Murray, Diplomatic. FO 78/840, The National Archives, Kew, UK, No. 7.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

wrote to Palmerston indicating that the Egyptian government had accepted the invitation to participate in the Universal Exhibition of 1851.¹²¹

The run-up to the Exposition, and the event itself, occurred during the rule of Mehmed 'Alī's grandson 'Abbās (r. 1849-1854). 'Abbās did not attend the Exposition. Instead, he made captain 'Abd al-Ḥamīd the foreign acting commissioner of Egypt's delegation, and Rajab Ḥasan Effendi and Ḥasan Alī Effendi the agents.¹²² The idea behind the Exhibition was to celebrate modern industry, and the way that it had distinguished the mid-nineteenth century from previous ages. The Exposition's organizers claimed that Britain's singular role in manufacturing made it worthy of hosting such an event. They used this claim to suggest that Great Britain was preeminent amongst civilized nations, as the official catalogue to the Great Exhibition announced upfront:

The activity of the present day chiefly develops itself in commercial industry, and it is in accordance with the spirit of the age that the nations of the world have now collected together their choicest productions. It may be said without presumption, that an event like this Exhibition could not have taken place at any earlier period, and perhaps not among any other people than ourselves. The friendly confidence reposed by other nations in our institutions; the perfect security for property; the commercial freedom, and the facility of transport, which England pre-eminently possesses, may all be brought forward as causes which have operated in establishing the Exhibition in London. Great Britain offers a hospitable invitation to all the nations of the world, to collect and display the choicest fruits of their industry in her Capital; and the invitation is

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, No. 26; and *Great Exhibition of the works of industry of all nations, 1851. Official descriptive and illustrated catalogue in three volumes*. London: Spicer Brothers, 1851, vol. 1, p. xxiii.

¹²² *First report of the commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851, to the Right Hon. Spencer Horatio Walpole, &c. &c. one of her Majesty's principal secretaries of state*. London: W. Clowes and sons, 1852, p. 62; and *Great Exhibition, 1851*, vol. 2, p. 1408.

freely accepted by every civilized people, because the interest both of the guest and host is felt to be reciprocal.¹²³

The Exhibition secured Britain's status at the core of modern industry. But it also uplifted the status of the other participatory nations, like Egypt. According to the catalogue's introduction, these "nations" were made up of "civilized people" that belonged to the "spirit of the age."

The Exhibition's planners first intended "to have arranged the whole of the articles exhibited, both Foreign and British, according to a philosophical classification, without reference to the country of production."¹²⁴ But because many of the countries failed to announce the space that they needed to accommodate their wares, the planners decided "to adopt a geographical division on the general arrangement, and to arrange the articles of each nation by themselves..."¹²⁵ Of the goods displayed according to nations, most countries submitted industrial machines or the products of these machines. They had been produced by nationals of these countries privately. But Egypt, along with Turkey, did not offer goods that had been submitted by subjects individually. Instead, as noted by the report on the exhibition, "the articles exhibited were sent by the governments of those Countries."¹²⁶ A further distinction arose between Egypt and the

¹²³ *Official descriptive and illustrated catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the works of industry of all nations, 1851*. London: Spicer Brothers, 1851. Part I. Introductory, and Section I. Raw Materials. Classes 1-4, p. 1.

¹²⁴ *Great Exhibition, 1851*, vol. 1, p. xxxiv.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *First report of the commissioners, 1852*, p. 176.

other delegations insofar as the labelling for Egyptian goods lacked the names of the craftspeople who made them. This implied that the Egyptian government not only sent in the objects that were displayed, but that it also made these objects representative of Egypt in the collective sense.

The countries at the Exhibition were judged according to the novelty of their wares. In all, Egypt contributed eight-hundred pounds worth of specimens¹²⁷ including “potter’s earth and clay,” white honeys, ostrich eggs, and “refined sugar, from Ibrahim Pasha’s refinery.”¹²⁸ But the catalogue noted the general disappointment with the quantity of these goods by remarking that “the articles exhibited by the Egyptian Government are enumerated under nearly 400 heads; but as a numeral has been given to almost every article, the collection is not of so extensive a character, although very complete and interesting, as might have been otherwise anticipated.”¹²⁹ The Egyptian commissioners received a favorable judgment, however, by displaying “one hundred and sixty-five volumes of works in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, published at Boulac” and a “catalogue of printed books.”¹³⁰

That is because, as pointed out by the jurists of the Exhibition’s division on paper, printing, and bookbinding, “the date of the Great Exhibition of the world’s industry is

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹²⁸ *Great Exhibition*, 1851, vol. 3, pp. 1408, 1409, 1410, & 1411.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1408.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1410 & 1411.

coincident with the anniversary of that of the invention of printing.”¹³¹ Indeed, the jurists proclaimed that the anniversary of printing’s invention in 1450 appeared to inspire the very Exhibition: “It seems as if all nations were assembled in the capital of England to celebrate the centennial birthday of the Press – the most powerful instrument of their civilization.”¹³² They celebrated printing as an inhibitor of “national warfare” by promoting a singular understanding among nations.¹³³ And they equated printing with societal progress by announcing: “In every age, and in all countries, printing denotes the state of civilization, of which books are the reflection, and the history of the human mind is written in the progress of bibliography.”¹³⁴

The Exhibition’s celebration of printing included Egypt, as Egypt was one of 88 countries to be awarded a Prize Medal in the category of “Paper and Stationery, Printing and Bookbinding,”¹³⁵ of which Turkey received no awards.¹³⁶ However, the jurists for the medals did not award them “as rewards of different degrees of excellence of the same kind,” but rather “reward[ed] all articles which might appear to them to possess any

¹³¹ *Exhibition of the works of industry of all nations, 1851. Reports by the juries on the subjects in the thirty classes into which the exhibition was divided.* London: William Clowes & son, n.d., p. 397.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *First report of the commissioners*, 1852, pp. 198, 19, & 203.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

decided excellence, of whatever nature that excellence might be, and to regard the Medals rather as the means of appreciating and distinguishing the respective characters of the subjects to be rewarded, than as distinctive marks of greater or less merit in the same class of exhibits.”¹³⁷ It follows that Egypt’s Prize Medal in printing possessed excellence relative to a standard that befitted Egyptian printing.

This qualification was manifest in the jurists’ comments on Egyptian printing relative to western printing. Their report implied that European presses could print in more varied scripts, like hieroglyphic and Coptic, in comparison to Egypt’s mere Arabic, Turkish, and Persian typefaces.¹³⁸ Moreover, it found the paper that the Egyptians printed upon “peculiar.”¹³⁹ But the accolade that the Exhibition awarded to Egypt promoted their printing as a cause worthy of national and international repute. This successful outcome was likely reported to ‘Abbās, for “each medal was accompanied by a certificate, in which was stated the reason of the award.”¹⁴⁰

‘Abbās’s successor, Sa‘īd, seemed to absorb this message in two ways. Firstly, Sa‘īd agreed to attend the next Exhibition in Paris enthusiastically. In comparison to ‘Abbās’s muted acceptance of Victoria’s invitation in 1850, Sa‘īd announced to his administrators in 1855 that: “As it is known to all that the exposition (*ma‘rid*) that is

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

¹³⁸ *Exhibition of the works of industry of all nations, n.d.*, pp. 406-407.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Supplement to the first report of commissioners: containing engravings of the medals and certificates, prepared too late for insertion in their proper places.* London: Spicer Brothers and W. Clowes and Sons, 1853, p. 1.

taking place in Paris this year will be a group of the loftiest manufactured goods and most magnificent things that regions and countries (*al-aqṭār wa al-buldān*) are capable of, it is therefore befitting [for me] to visit and attend [the exposition] in every respect. When seeing and spectating at a place that is full of precious things and magnificent wares, like this, we take interest in it, and more particularly, it attracts us.”¹⁴¹ Secondly, Saʿīd came to connect governmental printings with the reputation of all Egypt in his governmental commands. He argued, for example, that “the prestige (*ṣīʿ*) and fame of the famous Egyptian printing press [came from] its correctness and the precision of its matters and the goodness of its printing” and that “it is absolutely impermissible that the circulation and precision of the foreign (*al-ajṇabīya*) printing presses rest above the viceroynal (*al-amīrīya*) press.”¹⁴² If the state’s diplomatic engagements with Europe did not inspire Egypt’s rulers to adopt aspects of the European ideology on textual modernity, they certainly helped to reinforce them.

During the years that followed, the state projected a sense of its printed advancement to other Arab and eastern territories. It did this by disseminating its excess printings abroad, as was boasted about in an Egyptian atlas from 1875/1876. The atlas first noted the impressive pace of production at the government’s printing presses and papermaking factory. After it listed statistics like the press at Būlāq’s ability “to print more than three million quires and more than two million railroad tickets in one year,” it went on to proclaim that “that which was not used in the country [of Egypt] from what

¹⁴¹ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 3:1, p. 129.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 356-357.

was produced is passed on to the Hejaz and the countries of India and others.”¹⁴³ The state also projected the image of advancement through printing more explicitly. In 1866, for example, Isma‘īl wrote to the sultan of Morocco, Muḥammad IV (1830-1873), allowing Muḥammad IV to send students to Egypt to apprentice in printing at the government’s presses. Within his permission, Isma‘īl noted his pleasure with this offering as printing gave “assistance to the quest for noble knowledge and its teaching, and opens the path for its dissemination between people and propagates it, and preserves its noble books from being altered by scribes and brings [books] closer to the hands of the seekers and the desirous, and this evidence is a manifest and brilliant proof of your [*i.e.*, Muḥammad IV’s] increasing attention to the public good.”¹⁴⁴ Just as westerners created a hierarchy of printing at Egypt’s expense, the Egyptian state projected a similar hierarchy onto other non-western territories.

b. The Government’s Use of Texts and Printing in Cairo.

The state’s adoption of European textual norms became evident within Egypt, too. It was manifested most clearly under the khedivate of Isma‘īl, who returned the press at Būlāq to state ownership in 1865 and established the *Kutubkhāna Khidwīya*, or

¹⁴³ Fikrī, Amīn. *Jughrāfiyat Amīn Fikrī wa mulakkhaṣ jughrāfiyat Miṣr*. Cairo: *s.n.*, 1875/1876, p. 376.

¹⁴⁴ Manūnī, Muḥammad. *Mazāhir yaqazat al-Maghrib al-ḥadīth*. Ar-Rabāṭ: Manšūrāt Wizārat al-Awqāf wa aš-Šu‘ūn al-Islāmīya wa ath-Thaqāfiya, 1973, p. 45.

Khedivial Library, in Cairo in 1870.¹⁴⁵ Isma‘īl used these occasions to assert the state’s primacy in brokering peoples’ access to texts. The ways in which he structured these initiatives combined local and European norms.

Isma‘īl’s predecessor, Sa‘īd, had gifted the government’s press at Būlāq to the admiral ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Rušdī Bey in 1862.¹⁴⁶ But two years into Isma‘īl’s rule, he ordered that the press be purchased back from ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Rušdī Bey for twenty-thousand pounds.¹⁴⁷ Isma‘īl was explicit that the press was to come under “my name and my protection,” although he later passed it to his son Ibrahīm.¹⁴⁸ Accordingly, the press became a khedivial possession after having been a governmental entity first and then a pseudo-private business. In Isma‘īl’s own words, the significance of printing to humanity spurred him to make this acquisition:

During the rule of the deceased Sa‘īd Pasha, the princely press (*al-maṭba‘a al-amīrīya*) standing in Būlāq had been gifted to ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Rušdī Bey. As a result of which from that day on [the press] started to be on the brink of ruin (*al-khirāb*) and almost shut down. So when news of this reached us, it made us very regretful. And that is because it is verily the center of majestic antiquities, its benefits and virtues for the public are great, and because valor and mankind cannot be satisfied or persuaded to watch this majestic monument (*al-athar*) fall into a state of disrepair while looking on at its shut-down and eradication with satisfaction instead of agitation. Accordingly, I command my desire to purchase the aforementioned press and all of its existing contents, supplies, and equipment from the

¹⁴⁵ For the history of the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya*, refer to: Yūsufī, Mušīra Jamāl. *Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya: sīra...wa-masīra, 1870-2008*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Kutub wa al-Wathā’iq al-Qawmīya, 2009.

¹⁴⁶ For more on this matter, refer to chapter five.

¹⁴⁷ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 3:2, pp. 598-599.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 599.

aforenamed admiral.

Isma‘īl’s estimation of the press as an important and goodly institution showed a growing European influence that he projected within Egypt. This influence was maintained through his establishment of the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya*, whose purpose was “to gather all of the beneficial books to be the totality of charitable attainment.”¹⁴⁹

The *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya* merged foreign and local norms about texts in an official capacity within Cairo. It did not mark the first instance of an Egyptian ruler developing a great collection. Previous members of the ruling family kept libraries, like Ibrahīm and ‘Abbās,¹⁵⁰ and records suggest that these libraries contained manuscripts and printings. Of Ibrahīm’s library, for example, one visitor wrote: “There is a library belonging to Ibrahim Pasha, consisting of Arabic and Turkish books, which, though formed since the year 1830, contains already a great number of volumes, comprising the works of the most noted Arab authors, in manuscript, besides many printed books.”¹⁵¹ What distinguished the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya* from the libraries of earlier rulers was that Isma‘īl intended it for “public benefit such that it is to be created with a space for general study which is open at specified times, and to which is welcome anyone who wishes to study, from amongst all people regardless of their religion or nationality.”¹⁵² In this

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 584.

¹⁵⁰ Refer to: Catalog of Ibrahim Pasha’s collection of manuscripts, 1850. OR 15382, British Library, UK; and *Fihrist al-kutub al-mukallafa ‘an al-marḥūm Ilhāmī Bāšā al-muqtaḍā bay‘uhā fī al-mazād al-‘āmm*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-mīrīya bi-Būlāq, 1861.

¹⁵¹ Wilkinson, 1843, pp. 263-264.

¹⁵² Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 3:2, p. 852.

regard, he followed the example of European libraries. For example, a Prussian national library was open to the public from 1661, the French royal library from 1692, and the library of the British Museum from 1759.¹⁵³

Despite the foreign influence which helped to shape the *Kutubkhāna Khidwīya*'s conception, its establishment drew heavily from Cairene textual tradition. The acquisitions for the library's initial collection in the mid-1860s were informed by the recommendation of religious scholars (*al-'ulamā*), who drew up an itemized list.¹⁵⁴ The majority of these texts came in manuscript form which the government purchased from the estates (*tarakāt*) of deceased book owners.¹⁵⁵ For example, the treasury (*bayt al-māl*) purchased thirty-six titles from the collection of one Abd al-Ḥamīd,¹⁵⁶ who may have been the active commissioner for Egypt at London's Great Exhibition in 1851. The government stated that its preference for acquiring manuscripts stemmed from the fact that many of these books were unique, had not been printed yet, and "because handwritten cop[ies] [are] more beautiful than printed cop[ies] and bedeck the library (*taḥalā bihi al-kutubkhāna*)."¹⁵⁷ But the process of acquiring manuscripts created several problems. Firstly, the contents of manuscripts could either be incomplete or feature

¹⁵³ Doyle, Kathleen. "Preserved and transmitted for the good of posterity": the transfer of the old royal library from a palace to a museum." *1000 Years of royal books and manuscripts*, edited by Kathleen Doyle and Scot McKendrick. London: The British Library, 2013, pp. 179-212, pp. 189 & 203.

¹⁵⁴ Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 3:2, p. 583.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 584.

repetitions.¹⁵⁸ Secondly, finding all of the desired texts from estates alone proved impossible.

Before the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya*, the state was not an active stakeholder in the preservation of texts. This task was shared between pious foundations (*al-awqāf*), mosques, and the city's booksellers and collectors who often traded in estate books. As late as 1861, for example, Sa'īd's government auctioned his predecessor 'Abbās's book collection to the public.¹⁵⁹ The books were made available after the death of 'Abbās's eldest son, Ilhāmī Pasha (d. 1861), who had acquired significant debts and acted as a nuisance to Sa'īd throughout his rule.¹⁶⁰ Regardless of these fiscal and personal issues, however, the collection had once belonged to a former ruler. That the government printed catalog-pamphlets to advertise its sale to the public demonstrates the extent to which the state did not preserve heritage books actively.¹⁶¹

When the government set about establishing the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya*, then, it lacked a sustained royal library from which to draw. It leaned on the collections of Cairo's well-stocked pious foundations when it needed books that the estates did not provide. But this situation was not ideal, as a governmental command noted, because "taking [books] from the pious foundations is impossible except by way of copying [the

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 584.

¹⁵⁹ *Fihrist al-kutub al-mukallafa 'an al-marḥūm Ilhāmī Bāšā*, 1861.

¹⁶⁰ Toledano, Ehud R. *State and society in mid-nineteenth-century Egypt*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 48.

¹⁶¹ *Fihrist al-kutub al-mukallafa 'an al-marḥūm Ilhāmī Bāšā*, 1861, front cover & title page.

texts by hand], and this requires time and greater expense than just purchasing [the book in the first place].”¹⁶² The state overcame this problem and accumulated holdings of 30,000 volumes by the time of the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya*’s opening in 1870 by assuming possession of the libraries of the pious foundations.¹⁶³

The influence of Cairene textual tradition extended beyond the texts in the collection and the sources from which they were drawn. The purpose of the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya*, according to the introduction of its printed catalog penned by the library’s first assistant, Muḥammad Ḥasanayn, in 1883 was to join “the civilized governments (*al-ḥakūmat al-mutamaddina*)” by “establishing a house of rare and magnificent books” to become “one of the great libraries...especially [with regard to] eastern books (*al-kutub al-mašriqīya*)” so that “writers and copyists will hasten to it” to help its collections surpass “the foreign countries that possess progress and civilization.”¹⁶⁴ In other words, the library was conceived as a site for civilization through the copying of texts. The many manuscripts copied from the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya* and preserved in European libraries today attest to this goal.¹⁶⁵ So too do state papers, like the governmental report

¹⁶² Sāmī, 1915-1936, vol. 3:2, p. 584.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 852.

¹⁶⁴ Ḥasanayn, Muḥammad. *Al-Juz’ al-awwal min fihrist al-kutub al-arabiya al-maḥfūza bi-al-kutubkhāna al-khidīwīya al-kā’ina bi-Sarāy Darb al-Jamāmīz bi Miṣr al-maḥrusa al-ma’azza*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at Wādī an-Nīl, 1883, Vol. 1, pp. 2-3.

¹⁶⁵ For examples of manuscripts copied from the Khedivial Library, refer to: Ibn Sūdūn, ‘Alī. *Dīwān Ibn Sūdūn*. Cairo, 1910. Or. 14.520, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, f. 181; An anthology of Arabic poetry by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Muqri’ al-Mālikī, 1880. Add. 3201, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge University; Ibn Qutaiba, ‘Abdullah ibn Muslim. *Kitāb al-ašraba*. Cairo, 1928/1929. Or.

on the *Kutubkhāna Khidīwīya* for the year 1887 that noted that 412 Arabic texts in 460 volumes had been copied during a period which saw 331 registered visitors.¹⁶⁶

Moreover, it does not appear that the library's collections were divided between mediums. The library's first printed catalog did not distinguish between its printed and manuscript holdings,¹⁶⁷ and subsequent catalogs organized books according to their subjects in the traditional hierarchy of texts beginning with the Qur'ān.¹⁶⁸

But these aspects of local tradition were fused with new and foreign practices. In addition to the very printing of library catalogs, which Muḥammad Ḥasanayn himself explained as a contemporary version of Kâtip Çelebi's (1609-1657) exhaustive list of texts in *Kašf az-ẓunūn*,¹⁶⁹ the library required patrons who wished to consult texts to enter

8288, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands, f. 138; Majriṭī, Aḥmad. *Kitab rutbat al-ḥakīm fī mudkhal at-ta'lim fī aṣ-ṣan'a al-lahīya*. Cairo, 1905. Or. 14.180, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands; and Šāfi'ī, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs. *ar-Risāla*. Cairo, 1885/1886. Or. 6984, Special Collections, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

Refer also to a recollection of the library's copyists from the early 1900s: Kratchkovsky, I. Y and Tatiana Minorsky (trans.). *Among Arabic manuscripts. Memories of libraries and men*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1953, pp. 16-19 & 21-22.

¹⁶⁶ *Tarjamat taqrīr marfū'a ilā al-i'atāb al-khidīwīya al-'alīya min niẓāarat al-ma'ārif al-'umūmī 'an ḥālat al-kutubkhāna al-khidīwīya fī sāna 1887 mīlādīya*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a al-Ahlīya, 1888, pp. 22 & 27. 14598 C 9, British Library, UK.

¹⁶⁷ *Fihrist al-kutub al-mawjūda bi al-Kutubkhāna al-Khidīwīya al-Miṣrīya al-kubrā*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba'at Wādī al-Nīl, 1872, vol. 1.

¹⁶⁸ See for example: *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5; and Ḥasanayn, 1883, pp. 2-32.

¹⁶⁹ Ḥasanayn, Muḥammad al-Miṣrī. Ḥasanayn's letter to Ignaz Goldziher. Goldziher Bequest, March 29, 1876, p. 2. 000043776, GIL/18/23/03, Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Accessed on 3 October 2014. I am grateful to Adam Mestyan for directing my attention to this correspondence. <http://prol.mtak.hu/F/3588D8P96MVM4PL4QB4UN5M6FQM2DEJF2MHTVVL6U48L>

information onto printed cards like their name, occupation, and address in addition to the call number of the book that they sought. New influences could also be detected through

عاشرا — اودة المطالعين بالكتبخانه الخديويه

طلب الاسـتعاره

اسم المستعير _____

وظيفته _____

سكنه _____

بيان اسم المؤلف والتأليف وتاريخ الخط سنة أو الطبع سنة والقاب _____

عدد ونمرة الاجزاء _____

الفن _____

والنمرة الخصوصيه _____

خط _____

طبع _____

للاستساخ _____

للمطالعة _____

Image 6.7. The card which readers of books filled out from the Khedivial Library's reading room.

The card asked the patron to list: their name, occupation, and place of residence, in addition to their desired text's author, title, date of copying or printing, and size. It also required them to record: the volume they desired and the number of its parts; the subject it fell under and its call number; whether the book was in print or manuscript; and whether they intended to use it for copying or for reading.¹⁷⁰

the library's Exposition Room that showcased the calligraphy found in rare manuscripts.¹⁷¹

[7CFEHE-04254?func=full-set-set&set_number=058404&set_entry=000003&format=999](https://www.britishlibrary.org/7CFEHE-04254?func=full-set-set&set_number=058404&set_entry=000003&format=999)

¹⁷⁰ *Tarjamat taqrīr marfū'a ilā al-i'atāb al-khidīwīya al-'alīya*, 1888, p. 29, 14598 C 9, British Library.

¹⁷¹ See for example: *Guide de la salle d'exposition. Bibliothèque Khédiviale*. Le Caire: Imprimerie Nationale, 1887. 14598 C 7, British Library, UK.

Within Cairo and abroad, the Egyptian government began reflecting a combination of local and European textual norms. It is important to note the cultural hybridity of these ideas and practices because scholars have argued that contemporaries viewed their manuscripts and printings according to a binary divide. For example, the Islamic scholar Reinhard Schulze (b. 1953) maintained that “after the introduction of printing, an original text was only valid and useful if it was printed; before being printed or edited, a text no longer had any use value. As a result, thousands of manuscripts covering widely differing subjects were consigned to the background of contemporaneous cultural production because, from the viewpoint of the scholars who formed part of the new public, they represented an obsolete tradition...”¹⁷²

E. Egyptian Writers’ Varied Projections of Texts in Print during the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century.

The merger of foreign and local ideas about texts began cycling through society more broadly, too. By the 1870s, three categories of thought emerged amongst Ottoman writers who published their work in print regarding what printing meant and how texts should be used. Some preserved the traditional Ottoman understanding of printing as a beneficial tool, and continued using texts as they had earlier in the century. Others noted the bourgeoisie’s, or *efendīya*’s,¹⁷³ reliance on texts as markers of western style, and

¹⁷² Schulze, Reinhard. “The Birth of tradition and modernity in 18th and 19th century Islamic culture. The Case of printing.” *Culture & History*, 16, 1997, pp. 29-72, p. 49.

¹⁷³ For more on the development of the *efendīya*, refer to: Ryzova, Lucie. *The Age of the efendiyya: passages to modernity in national-colonial Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

objected to the breakdown of customary learning. And others still advocated for printing's civilizational significance, claiming greatness for Egyptian modernity and their own legacy on account of printing.

a. The Endurance of Tradition.

In 1881, a rhyming eulogy was published on the rules of Ibrahīm, his predecessors, and his successors up through the rule of Isma‘īl’s son and successor, Tawfīq (r. 1879-1892).¹⁷⁴ It was written by Iskandar Bey Abkārīyūs (d. 1885), a functionary from Greater Syria who spent time during his later life in Egypt.¹⁷⁵ Three decades had elapsed between Meḥmed ‘Alī’s rule and the publication of Abkārīyūs’s ode, during which Egyptian textual production¹⁷⁶ and official depictions and uses of texts changed significantly. Yet the section that Abkārīyūs composed in Meḥmed ‘Alī’s honor maintained the practical way that earlier governmental sources once depicted printing:

And he strove to reform the lands (*iṣlāḥ al-bilād*) * After that decay * So he readied their harbors and their garrisons * And he secured their inundation [from the Nile] and their tracts * And he abolished all of the injustices in them * And he snuffed out the might of every tyrant and oppressor * And he reformed the laws and legal cases * And made for equality amongst the subjects * And he arranged in [the lands] military instruction * And built sea arsenals * And boats of war, and he established schools in [the lands] and printing presses * And he renewed what had been wiped out in terms of arts and crafts * And he made [the lands] a homeland (*waṭan*) of literature and learning * And a shrine (*ka‘ba*) to

¹⁷⁴ Abkārīyūs, Iskandar Bak. *Al-Manāqib al-Ibrāhīmīya wa al-ma’āthir al-khidwīya*. Al-Qāhira: al-Maṭba‘a al-Wahbīya, 1881.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

¹⁷⁶ Refer to the advent of private printing for profit, as examined in chapter five.

which the precious objects of rarity and refinement turn to * So the tracts
of land are made happy by the sight of it * And the people are delighted by
it [too] *¹⁷⁷

According to Abkārīyūs's ode, printing presses were something to be remembered by in nineteenth century Egypt. Moreover, they were something good to be remembered by. But although printing warranted honorable mention in a short verse of rhymed praise, it remained one of many points of compliment. And a vague one at that: "printing presses" sufficed to cover all of Meḥmed 'Alī's presses and the printings that they produced in a long list of practical feats.

Noticeably, Abkārīyūs remarked that something of a renaissance had been catalyzed by Meḥmed 'Alī. But in his explanation, this elevation of Egypt to "a homeland of literature and learning" arose from numerous sources: just laws, the removal of tyranny, environmental stability, military fortification, new information, schools, printing presses, and a renewal of crafts and of arts. Abkārīyūs did not make a causal connection between print and renaissance. Nor did he praise Meḥmed 'Alī for bestowing civilization upon Egyptians. Despite Abkārīyūs's temporal remove from Meḥmed 'Alī's reign, he summed up the official early nineteenth century Egyptian portrayal of its printing. The presses were significant but not all-important; they were one of many; they were a positive force on balance; and they fit into Meḥmed 'Alī's much wider agenda for modernizing Egypt.

These traditional Ottoman ideas about printing endured alongside conventional textual practices. Hence writers like Miḫā'il Mišāqa (1880-1888/9), the Mount Lebanon

¹⁷⁷ Abkārīyūs, 1881, pp. 17-18.

native who visited his family in Egypt often, recorded their print publications alongside their “books that have not been printed” matter of factly.¹⁷⁸ Libraries stored manuscripts alongside printings, and arranged these texts according to a hierarchy of topics despite European complaints about this practice.¹⁷⁹ And Cairo’s most reliable users and producers of texts, the scholars at al-Azhar, remained rooted in tradition as they “continued to use their yellowed manuscript books in lectures and study.”¹⁸⁰

But these practices were being renegotiated by the mosque’s younger students. Hence one foreign observer wrote that “the sheik, perhaps, knows less about the printed page than the boys,”¹⁸¹ and another noted that a student’s room could contain “a page of freshly copied manuscript” in addition to “piles of books and pamphlets.”¹⁸² Moreover, the Islamic scholar Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905) suggested that the overlap between printings and manuscripts extended beyond al-Azhar to Egyptian readers of religious

¹⁷⁸ Mišāqa, Mīkhā’il and W. M. Thackston, Jr. (trans.). *Murder, mayhem, pillage and plunder: the history of Lebanon in the 18th and 19th centuries*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988, pp. 236-237.

¹⁷⁹ Refer to the dismay noted by European scholars in: “Séance du 3 Avril 1874. Présidence de S. E. Colucci-Pacha.” *Bulletin de l’Institut Égyptien*, N. 13, (1875), pp. 55-67, pp. 64-65.

¹⁸⁰ Goldziher, Ignaz. *Muslim studies. Muhammedanische studien*, edited by S. M. Stern, and translated by C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971, p. 183.

¹⁸¹ Penfield, Frederic E. “The World’s oldest university.” *Current Literature*, Vol. 20, No. 5, Nov. 1896, pp. 424-425, p. 425.

¹⁸² Woolson, Constance Fenimore. “Cairo in 1890. Part second.” *Harper’s new monthly magazine*. New York: Harper & Brothers, Volume LXXXIII, June to November 1891, pp. 828-855, p. 834.

texts more broadly. He wrote that this genre made up a significant category of writing, of which “compositions have spread through copying and printing to the majority of places.”¹⁸³ But despite the endurance of these conventional ways for esteeming and deploying printing, new textual practices and attitudes also began to emerge.

b. Some Objections to Fashionable Egyptians Who Used Texts as Markers of Western Fancy.

In ‘Abduh’s same essay, he referred to the popularity of books that “ignite thoughts and convey morals,” like books “of history, intellectual virtues (*al-akhlāq al-aqlīya*), and novels (*kutub al-rūmānīyat*).”¹⁸⁴ But he noted that these books “are impossible to purchase without immense cost (*al-thamin al-jasīm*).”¹⁸⁵ The texts that ‘Abduh described were inspired by European subjects and literary practice. Their expense derived from their scarcity relative to works from the Egyptian canon, but also from the wealth of the type of Egyptians who consumed them. But it was not just the cost of these texts that began eliciting comment. The way in which the *efendīya* used these texts created a new space for writers to critique how texts ought to be used.

Some Egyptians feared that the craze for western styles and ideas like “the ‘age of

¹⁸³ Riḍā’, Muḥammad Rašīd and Muḥammad ‘Abduh. “Al-Kutub al-‘ilmīya wa ghairha.” *Tārīkh al-ustādh al-Imām aš-Šaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh*. Miṣr: Maṭba‘at al-Manār, 1906-1931, vol. 2, pp. 163-167, p. 163. First published in the ninth part of the eleventh issue of *al-Waqā’i‘ al-Miṣrīya*, 11 May 1881.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

enlightenment” were undermining the basis of their society.¹⁸⁶ To the extent that they discussed European customs towards manuscripts and printings, they did so to admonish those who chased after western fashions for superficial reasons. Their concerns were not so much with what was written or its medium, but with the ways in which the *efendīya* used these texts to show-off. ‘Abdullah an-Nadīm (1845-1898), the Alexandrian and Cairene who founded the journal *at-Tankīt wa at-tabkīt*, or *Laughing and reproaching* in 1881, made such an argument in his very first issue. He did so through a parable entitled “The Foolishness of imitation,” which opened with the following parable:

Someone made of money built a home, decorated it, and filled it with furniture and chairs and valuable thrones. Then he made a great banquet for some of his favorites [in honor of] his move [to the house]. Amongst the group of invitees, there was a man of distinction. So when [the guests] found themselves at the gathering, they started to wonder why this house had been built, and how much had been spent on its [construction], and what [the owner had] suffered in terms of workers’ delaying and fighting over deadlines. So he explained all about the furnishings and the belongings to them, until he reached a bookcase (*khazānat kutub*). He said, “I bought this cupboard (*khazāna*) for one thousand *qirš*, and I got these books for one hundred pounds by way of one of the most eminent *‘ulamā* [*i.e.*, learned scholars].

So the distinguished guest said to [the homeowner]: “You must love the poems of the Arabs to seek out their situations, their famous events, and their acts of bravery that are in these [books], and everything else that the [poems] focused on, and the protection that they took up in them and the fidelity with which they excelled in and the pride with which they knew them, and the dignity with which they praised them, and the loyalty which allowed them to excel, and the courage that is in [the poems] that they trained in, and the wisdom that is in [these poems] that they generated, and the limited exaggeration in them, and the eloquence contained in them, and the roving in which they excelled and the journey that they undertook, and you can learn obscure allegories and novel

¹⁸⁶ As quoted from Goldziher’s translation of excerpts from the Egyptian military journal *al-Ḥijāz* circa January 1882: Goldziher, Ignác. “Muhammadan public opinion,” translated with notes by Jerry Payne and Philip Sadgrove. *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XXXVIII/1 Spring 1993, pp. 97-133, pp. 125-126.

meanings and wondrous imagery from them, and their dumbfounding power, and the smoothness of their pronunciation, and the fineness in their meaning, and the compositions taken from the minds and the artistry that points to the strength of their minds and the abundance of their material, and the clarity of their thinking. And all of that is in their poems. The easterner attests to this, and the westerner recognizes this, and no one denies this except the person who has been cast off from humanity...”

The owner of the house said: “There is nothing there in terms of poems of the Arabs, nor their prose.”

The distinguished guest said: “[Oh, so] I think you [must] be occupied reading history to learn how it was that mankind came to exist and then spread, and how mankind learned crafts, [etc.]...”¹⁸⁷

This exchange between the homeowner and the distinguished guest carried on for two more pages. We learn that the homeowner did not buy his books to learn about history, the intellectual world, religion, or foreign languages. The distinguished guest finally asked:

“What’s with these books then, and what reason have you for purchasing them?”

The owner of the house said: “I entered the house of Šaikh So-and-So, and mister So-and-so, and the pilgrim So-and-so, and the gallant So-and-so, and prince So-and-so, and I saw that each of their guest rooms had a case with books in it, and upon it a green curtain, and next to it a duster made of feathers, and every day the servant dusts it, and wipes the glass and the case. So I learned that this is a new style of fashion in house building, and I arranged my guest room like theirs so that I could be among the ranks of the civilized (*fī ṣaff al-mutamaddinīn*).

So the distinguished guest cursed ignorance and rebuked imitation, and he said: “As long as people imitate what some individuals do, without considering [whether it is of] benefit and without contemplating what of the sciences he wants to perish, and the characteristics to be transformed, the bonds of unity dissolve and everyone becomes numb in the foolishness of imitation.”¹⁸⁸

An-Nadīm did not specify which medium comprised the homeowner’s books. As a

¹⁸⁷ An-Nadīm, ‘Abdullah. “Ghalafat at-taqlīd.” *At-Tankīt wa at-tabkīt*. Alexandria, s.n., 1881, Issue 1, pp. 13-15, p. 13.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

printed journal editor himself, I assume that his quarrel was not with printing. Instead, it was with the *efendiya*'s use of books as accessories. An-Nadīm condemned those who relegated vessels of learning to decorative objects of western fashion. He perceived this act as hollow, and believed that it would damage the fabric of Egyptian intellectual heritage. Another group, however, reflected a different attitude towards the new ideas about texts that were developing within Egyptian society. Moreover, they worked to capitalize from these cultural shifts happening around them.

c. Claims for Civilization through Textual Norms, and Writers' Exploitation of the Changing Conception of Texts.

Elite Egyptians with western educations differed from Abkārīyūs and an-Nadīm's projections of what textual mediums meant and how they ought to be displayed. Perhaps unsurprisingly, their ideas drew from western thought heavily. They therefore aligned with the state's evolving depiction of texts, particularly from the late 1860s.

Most of the figures who adopted western outlooks on texts possessed firsthand experience of Europe. This often meant that they belonged to the governmental fold because they had been sent overseas for training through state patronage. A prominent beneficiary of this tutelage was 'Alī Mubārak (1823-1893). 'Alī Mubārak battled his way from rural obscurity into Mehmed 'Alī's Egyptian schools, European study abroad program, and successors' governments. His contemporaries suffered from his competitive wrath frequently, which he exercised through: political exile; the collection of important titles like the minister of education, public works, and railways; and the

appropriation of pay and credit for the work of others.¹⁸⁹

Egyptian literary historiography esteems ‘Alī Mubārak as one of Egypt’s first novelists and modern historians for the western genres he employed in his compositions.¹⁹⁰ Among his most famous writings is a fictional four-volume account of an Egyptian’s travel to Europe entitled ‘*Alam ad-Dīn*’ after its protagonist. ‘Alī Mubārak used ‘*Alam ad-Dīn*’s adventures to draw out parables about east and west “so that the East before the West knows its proper place in world civilization.”¹⁹¹ One such parable arose through ‘*Alam ad-Dīn*’s visit to a library (*bait al-kutub*) belonging to a society of orientalist.

‘Alī Mubārak described how the perimeter of the room was lined with shelving

¹⁸⁹ On ‘Alī Mubārak’s banishment of his predecessor, Rifā‘a Rāfi‘ at-Ṭaḥṭāwī, see: Newman, Daniel. “Life of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī.” *An imam in Paris: account of a stay in France by an Egyptian cleric (1826-1831) (Takhliṣ al-ibriz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz aw al-dīwān al-naḥīs bi-Ḥwān Bārīs)*, by Rifā‘a Rāfi‘ at-Ṭaḥṭāwī and edited by Daniel L. Newman. London: Saqi Books, 2011, pp. 31-71, pp. 53-56; on Alī Mubārak’s theft of his juniors’ paychecks, refer to Muḥammad ‘Ayād at-Ṭantāwī’s correspondence with Edward Lane in: Richards, D. S. “Edward Lane’s surviving Arabic correspondence.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 9, No. 1, (Apr., 1999), pp. 1-25, p. 7.

¹⁹⁰ See for example: ‘Abd al-Karīm, Muḥammad. ‘Alī Mubārak: ḥayātuhu wa ma’āthiruhu. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘at ‘Ābidīn, 1958; and Šarqāwī, Maḥmūd. ‘Alī Mubārak, ḥayātuhu wa da‘watuhu wa ātharuhu. Al-Qāhira: Maktabat al-Anjilū al-Miṣrīya, 1962; Kenny, Lorne M. “Alī Mubārak: Nineteenth Century Egyptian Educator and Administrator.” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter, 1967), pp. 35-51; and alSayyad, Nezar. “Ali Mubarak’s Cairo: between the testimony of ‘Alamuddin and the Imaginary of the Khitat.” *Making Cairo medieval*, edited by Nezar alSayyad, Irene Beirman, and Nasser Rabbat. New York: Lexington Books, 2005, pp. 49-66.

¹⁹¹ Al-Qadi, Wadad. “East and west in ‘Ali Mubarak’s ‘Alamuddin.” *Intellectual life in the Arab east, 1890-1939*, edited by Marwan R. Buheiry. Beirut: Center for Arab and Middle East Studies, American University of Beirut, 1981, pp. 21-37, p. 25.

(*dawālīb*), except for the doorway.¹⁹² Above the “straight” shelves made of black wood hung paintings.¹⁹³ Within the shelves were books “that could not be found elsewhere.”¹⁹⁴ The library’s books were organized first according to their place of origin, then their discipline, and then alphabetically therein.¹⁹⁵ To find a book, one could search a catalog (*ad-daftar*) for the book’s “number and its letter.”¹⁹⁶ Manuscripts were kept separately from printings.¹⁹⁷ The protagonist remarked that the east boasted few libraries (*kutubkhānāt*) on a par with this one, and that those that existed belonged only to kings.¹⁹⁸ ‘Alī Mubārak implied that Egypt’s learned gentlemen ought to start keeping libraries like this one.

In the same way that ‘Alī Mubārak promoted elite Europeans’ habits for displaying their texts to his Egyptians readers, he also endorsed the idea that printing made people civilized. In 1868, a school primer was published in ‘Alī Mubārak’s name although it was actually written by Šāliḥ Majdī (c. 1827-1881). The book was “a selection of learned, light, and numerous readings to furnish the minds of children with

¹⁹² ‘Alī Mubārak Bāšā. *‘Alam ad-Dīn*. Alexandria: Maṭba‘at Jarīdat al-Maḥrūsa, 1882, vol. iv, p. 1264.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1265.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1267.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1264.

learned and pure (*nazīfa*) information with exercises for reading apprehension in the noble Arabic language, for carrying out compositions [in it] and devoting attention to its gatherings and structures on their own.”¹⁹⁹

“Reading three” bore the title “Regarding the crudeness and brutishness of the bygone nations,” and concluded “that there was no difference between man and beast in terms of crudeness.”²⁰⁰ “Reading four” was an essay entitled “Regarding the arts in the bygone times” that claimed nineteenth century western technology as Egypt’s invention and purported the advanced state of Egyptian society. ‘Alī Mubārak distinguished the present from the past to support his argument:

The progress of the arts in places that were civilized in bygone times was very feeble...there were no carriages, indeed there were no roads to facilitate connections between them, nor was there a post to send letters, or steam machines to increase human power and to help man in his works. And their knowledge in the science of astrology was limited to some faulty theories that all grew up around watching the event of the lunar eclipse and fearing the end of the nation. And so was the state of the medicinal sciences. So if one of the Iraqis were sick they would take him out from his house and place him in the middle of the road so that a passersby could prescribe him with whatever might possibly benefit him in terms of medicine...²⁰¹

‘Alī Mubārak reached the topic of printing and its role in the world in “Reading six,” which bore the title: “Regarding the civilization from progress (*at-tamaddun min at-tuqaddum*) in this epoch.” He proclaimed that printing was among the modern

¹⁹⁹ ‘Alī Mubārak Bāšā. *Kitāb ṭarīq al-hijā’ wa at-tamrīn ‘alā al-qurrā’ fī al-luġha al-‘Arabīya*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Wādī al-Nīl, 1868, p. 4.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7. Roger Owen notes that ‘Alī Mubārak’s reference to Iraqis drew from Herodotus (Owen, Roger. Personal conversation, Harvard University, 17 July 2014).

advantages that enabled Egyptian schoolboys to be in a better position than ever before:

There is no doubt that we are felicitous to find ourselves in this civilized epoch and not before. And it is easy for most of the boys of the primary schools to be proud of their wealth in knowledge which is as abundant as that of famous princes from past centuries, because laws and the political rules that govern them and work today amongst us had made the weak and the strong and the rich and the poor on an equal level under justice; and smoothed the road to wealth and happiness, and widened the circle of comfortability by way of inventing new inventions and good and useful innovations like the compass, and the printing press, and machines of steam called ‘*wābūrāt*’ and railroads and electrical signals known as telegraphs and other kinds of beneficial materials. ... And the flowers have become ripened, flowing from the canals and the rivers built by the masters of magnificent farming and crafts, [who have] educated their sons in schools and primaries established from the deluge of noble traits in the mothers of the cities and the towns furnished with workshops and factories and foundries, and the people have reached a point now where they can strut about in the vestments of their knowledge and riches, safe from the accidents of fate, hopeful for the endurance of security, and comfortable under the cover of sovereignty, victorious from happiness and abundance.²⁰²

Whereas Abkārīyūs justified his sense of Egypt’s progress on the premise of balance and renewal, ‘Alī Mubārak argued that learning and invention caused Egypt to be civilized.

He endorsed this argument further by communicating it in print.

‘Alī Mubārak projected the societal import of printing so much so that he assigned himself an integral role in developing Egypt’s presses. He did this in his encyclopedic history of Cairo, *Al-Khiṭaṭ at-Tawfīqīya*, or *The Configuration [of Egypt Under Khedive] Tawfīq*. One scholar noted that ‘Alī Mubārak professed to have founded a press in the government’s school of engineering, but concluded correctly that “his claim

²⁰² ‘Alī Mubārak Bāšā, 1868, pp. 8-9.

to have established the press at the school cannot be correct” because the press predated him.²⁰³ Why would ‘Alī Mubārak have misrepresented his contribution to printing?

To my mind, ‘Alī Mubārak embellished his role in Egyptian printing because he espoused the idea that printing was an act of civilization. From the 1870s onwards, other Egyptian literary figures followed ‘Alī Mubārak’s lead. They began staking claim to their singular roles in promoting printing in Egypt as part of their legacies. For example, the Islamic reformer and journalist Muḥammad Rašīd Riḍā’ (1865-1935) did this in his memoirs by assuming credit for his founding partner’s efforts in underwriting the journal *al-Manār* in 1898.²⁰⁴ In so doing, Riḍā’ claimed to have founded his important journal alone. But a more striking example of this practice comes through the case of the satirist Ya‘qūb, or James Šānū‘ (1839-1912).

Šānū‘ was a Jewish, Italian, and Cairene playwright, teacher, and writer. Or as he described himself in his Cairene publications, he was “boss and editor...Mister (*mistr*) James Šānū‘, teacher of eastern and western languages and founder of the Arabic theatres (*at-tiyātirāt*).”²⁰⁵ Historians presented Šānū‘ as Egypt’s first modern public intellectual, leaning heavily on his progressive political paper *Abū Naẓẓāra zarqā’*, or *Father blue*

²⁰³ Albin, Michael W. “An essay on early printing in the Islamic lands with special relation to Egypt.” *Mélanges de l’Institut Dominicain d’Études Orientales du Caire*, 18, (1988), pp. 335-344, pp. 340-341.

²⁰⁴ This intentional misportrayal is depicted in: Ryad, Umar. “A Printed Muslim ‘lighthouse’ in Cairo *al-Manār*’s early years, religious aspiration and reception (1898-1903).” *Arabica*, 56: 2009, pp. 27-60, p. 37.

²⁰⁵ *Abū Naẓẓāra*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kāstaliya, 1878, Issue 12, p. 4.

spectacles, to establish this claim.²⁰⁶ More recently, however, scholars have reassessed Ṣānū‘’s legacy by examining the extent to which it was crafted by Ṣānū‘’s own exaggerated assertions, particularly regarding his role in the traditions of Francophone imperial discourse and the theatrical arts.²⁰⁷ My own argument is that Ṣānū‘’s self-promotion extended to Egyptian print culture, too. As late nineteenth century Egyptians began engaging with western norms about printing, Ṣānū‘ was motivated to label himself as Egypt’s preeminent printed intellectual. His claims to importance with regard to Egyptian printing have yet to be challenged within the historiographical tradition.

Political exigencies caused Ṣānū‘ to reside in Paris from the summer of 1878. Towards the end of Ṣānū‘’s life, someone in Cairo published his biography under the sobriquet “an Egyptian citizen.”²⁰⁸ The book contained curious and detailed sections, like those devoted to listing the awards that Ṣānū‘ had won throughout his life, and an

²⁰⁶ Irene Gendzier started this historiographical tradition with *The Practical visions of Ya‘qub Sanu‘*, which focused on Ṣānū‘’s contribution to Egyptian literature and nationalism (Gendzier, Irene L. *The Practical visions of Ya‘qub Sanu‘*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966). Refer also to: Hourani, Albert. “Egyptian nationalism.” *Arabic thought in the liberal age*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 193-221.

²⁰⁷ See for example: Fahmy, Ziad. “Francophone Egyptian nationalists, anti-British discourse, and European public opinion, 1885-1910: the case of Mustafā Kamil and Ya‘qub Sannu‘.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Volume 28, Number 1, 2008, pp. 170-183; Mestyran, Adam. “Arabic theater in early khedivial culture, 1868-72: James Sanua revisited.” *Int. J. Middle East Stud.*, 46 (2014), pp. 117-137; and Fahmy, Ziad. *Ordinary Egyptians. Creating the modern nation through popular culture*. California: Stanford University Press, 2011, pp. 43-51.

²⁰⁸ Refer to the title of *Kitāb al-Kawākīb as-sayyāra fī tarjimat ḥal aš-Šaiḫ Abū Naẓẓāra li-Miṣrī al-waṭanī*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Jāmi‘a, n.d. (but published sometime between 1897-1912).

exhaustive list of the names of dignitaries with whom he corresponded.²⁰⁹ Such contents suggest that either Ṣānū‘ authorized this biography, or that he wrote it himself.

The book reads as an argument in support of Ṣānū‘’s singlehanded transformation of Egyptian state and society through his printings. When Ṣānū‘ produced the first issue of his satirical paper *Abū Naẓẓāra* from Cairo, the author tells us, he printed it in fifteen copies only. But “you could see people clamoring to buy the [copies of the issue] and they couldn’t get their hands on them. People would sell them for more than twenty gold French coins. The literati had respect for it and were keen on it, so they collected the newspapers...”. We learn that from then on, Ṣānū‘ published the journal in the preposterously large print run of 15,000 copies.²¹⁰

The author goes on to note that Ṣānū‘ founded the Egyptian Arabic theatre, that he wrote or translated thirty-three novels, and that his most recent novel had been translated into seven different languages and printed in 20,000 copies, all of which had already sold out.²¹¹ There was more: Ṣānū‘ wrote numerous Arabic poems, translated them into Italian, and had these poems published by several European newspapers; he was the first who “lifted the veil on the nature of politics” in Egypt; he did all the writing for *Abū Naẓẓāra*; and he even had his articles published in New York.²¹² If the reader cared to follow up on these compositions, the book provided a list of all of Ṣānū‘’s

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-53.

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51.

publications.²¹³ The list was annotated with details like “in the year 1885, [Ṣānū‘] changed [*Abū Naẓẓāra*’s] appearance and improved its paper, increased its length and its contents, and made it approximately half Arabic and half French, so as to put [the paper] on the highest level that the Europeans have, and so as to give easterners a loftier station.”²¹⁴

Ṣānū‘ had indeed secured fame through *Abū Naẓẓāra*, which he began writing from Cairo in the spring of 1878.²¹⁵ But the paper poked fun at the Cairene establishment, particularly Ismā‘īl, whose family had supported Ṣānū‘’s earlier studies in his father’s native Italy and who had backed Ṣānū‘’s plays himself. Accordingly, Ismā‘īl exiled Ṣānū‘ to Paris in June 1878.²¹⁶ Once there, Ṣānū‘ began printing *Abū Naẓẓāra* in French and Arabic from the Lefebvre lithographic press.²¹⁷ Ṣānū‘’s Parisian work grew increasingly popular in Egypt and in Europe. It also became evermore cosmopolitan and politically irreverent.²¹⁸

²¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

²¹⁵ The third issue of *Abū Naẓẓāra* is the first to bear a date of publication: *Abū Naẓẓāra*, Sunday 11 *Rabā‘ Thānī*, 1295, Issue 3, p. 1.

²¹⁶ Fahmy, 2011, p. 48.

²¹⁷ The bibliographic information on the papers published from Paris reads: “Imp. Lefebvre Pass. Du Caire 87, 89 Paris” (See for example: *Le Charmeur. Liberté, égalité, fraternité*. Paris: Imp. Lefebvre, 5 February 1881, 5:1, p. 1. <http://abou-naddara.uni-hd.de>, accessed on 17 March 2014.

²¹⁸ Ettmüller, Eliane Ursula. *The Construct of Egypt's national-self: in James Sanua's early satire & caricature*. Berlin : Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2012, p. 79.

The editions of *Abū Naẓẓāra* that Ṣānū‘ produced from Paris were important, unique, and amusing. But they were also timely, given Egypt’s increasing debts to Europe and Europe’s deepening involvement in Egyptian politics. As someone with firsthand experience of Europe and Egypt both, Ṣānū‘ used his standing within each society to broker himself as a cultural intermediary between them. Hence Ṣānū‘ repurposed his Egyptian popularity for his European readership.²¹⁹ And he used his success in Europe to promote his standing amongst Egyptians as the claims within his biography demonstrate. In both contexts, Ṣānū‘ depicted himself as Egypt’s representative voice. But what is particularly interesting about Ṣānū‘’s work is that in order to bolster his reputation, he made pretenses to printing.

From Paris, Ṣānū‘ printed an image of himself for his French audience.²²⁰ The picture was meant to be “a touching memory, which he himself drew, of how he was before his exile, when, in Cairo, he wrote, composed, imprinted, pressed, and sold his newspaper himself to the Arab clientele.”²²¹ It therefore depicts Ṣānū‘ as the sole force behind *Abū Naẓẓāra* conceptually and materially. The picture shows Ṣānū‘ printing the paper from a lithographic table, wearing his telltale glasses and a fez to signal his Egyptianness. His mustache and attire of a blazer and bowtie, however, asserted his

²¹⁹ Ziad Fahmy makes this point with regard to Ṣānū‘’s cultivation of his Francophone readers, which he describes with words like “cleverly,” “adept,” “manipulation,” and “exploitation” in: Fahmy, 2008, pp. 170-171.

²²⁰ Refer to ‘Image. 6.8. Top.’

²²¹ De Baignières, Paul and Ya‘qūb ibn Rāfā‘īl Ṣānū‘. *L’Egypte satirique: album d’Abou Naddara*. Paris: Imprimerie Lefebvre, 1886, p. 22.

standing as a westernized member of the *efendīya* too. In contrast to Ṣānū‘’s cosmopolitan appearance, his “Arab clientele” appeared in turbans and long robes.

Ṣānū‘ also printed a counterpart to this image for *Abū Naẓẓāra*’s Egyptian readership.²²² Like the image before it, Ṣānū‘ used the drawing to portray himself as the paper’s author and printer. But his appearance differed in that he grew more European in style with a vest, cravat, and French fork beard. The appearance of Ṣānū‘’s “Arab clientele” changed too. The traditional garb with which they were portrayed for *Abū Naẓẓāra*’s European readers gave way to a more balanced appearance in turbans and jackets. The Arabic caption that accompanied the picture was also modified. It explained that Ṣānū‘ could now print *Abū Naẓẓāra* lithographically after a “clever” Frenchman “invent[ed] a press for me that I can print from with my hands with the greatest of ease.”²²³ But if Ṣānū‘ had printed lithographically in Egypt, as he had told the French he did, what required him to tell his Egyptian readers that he now printed lithographically from Paris?

Although Ṣānū‘ claimed to the French that he had printed his paper himself from Cairo, this was a fabrication. In fact, *Abū Naẓẓāra* had never been lithographed in Cairo. It had been printed typographically. Moreover, Ṣānū‘ never printed it in the first place:

²²² Refer to ‘Image. 6.8. Bottom.’

²²³ *Abū Naẓẓāra*, Paris: 15 September, 1878, Issue 6, p. 21.



Image 6.8. *Ṣānūʿ depicts himself as Abū Nazzāraʼs author and lithographer in Cairo for his French (Top) and Egyptian readers (Bottom), thereby denying the role played by the Kāstalī family in printing Abū Nazzāra.*

Top: Ṣānūʿ depicts himself as a Cairene printer to his French readers. The caption reads: “The charmer, Abou-Naddara prints and distributes his newspaper to subscribers. [Arabic:] Abū Nazzāra prints his newspaper by hand and distributes it to the lovers of the [Egyptian] nation.”

Bottom: Ṣānūʿ depicts himself as a Cairene printer to his Egyptian readers. The caption reads: “The group of famous worshippers laughing at the impression, and by God Monsieur Rājnū [far left] is clever for inventing a press for me that I can print from with my hands with the greatest of ease.”²²⁴

²²⁴ De Baignières, 1886, p. 1; and *Abū Nazzāra*, 15 September, 1878, Issue 6, p. 21.

the Kāstalī family did.²²⁵ The Kāstalīs owned and operated the press that printed Ṣānū’s paper while it ran in Cairo. Indeed, the Kāstalīs produced many of the nineteenth century



Image 6.9. Front page of Ṣānū’s *Abū Nazzāra* when it ran in Cairo, printed typographically by the Kāstalīs and not lithographically by Ṣānū.²²⁶

Arabic printings that western libraries preserve today. Their output forms a significant source base for scholarship on Egyptian Arabic literature. Moreover, important

²²⁵ Refer to chapter five for more on the Kāstalī family and the development of their printing business.

²²⁶ *Abū Nazzāra*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kāstaliya, 1878, Issue 10, p. 1. <http://abou-naddara.uni-hd.de>, accessed on 17 March 2014.

nineteenth century literary figures likely consumed their printings. They certainly relied upon the Kāstalīs to publish their works, as is evidenced by the literary dramatist Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Jalāl’s (1829-1898) pseudo-anonymous Kāstalīya chapbooks that were published under his initials.²²⁷

The Kāstalīs were so important that Ṣānū‘ feted them in his paper when he wrote from Cairo. He extolled their reputations and detailed their significance to his work with frequency. Ṣānū‘ even devoted columns of his paper to stories about the Kāstalīs. In one such narrative, Ṣānū‘ referred to them to advertise his paper. The paper’s protagonist, Abū Nazzāra, was asked by his sidekick, Abū Khalīl, for the first and second issues of Abū Nazzāra’s eponymous paper. But Abū Nazzāra informed Abū Khalīl that none remained. In response, Abū Khalīl offered to pay double for the issues. Abū Nazzāra swore to God that he did not have a single copy of either issue left. But, he chimed in: “the Kāstalīya Press is starting to print a small book comprising the first five issues, so whoever wants them has to go to the site of the press and write down his name, and then they will send him the book once they’ve finished printing it, but you will have to prepay the 5 *qirṣ*, got it, Abū Khalīl?”²²⁸ Abū Khalīl responded affirmatively, wished Abū Nazzāra good luck, and inquired after any other news. Abū Nazzāra went on to relate that there had been a crackdown on his group, and that measures were to be taken by the khedivial court. He noted dejectedly that even though Egyptians loved his paper, a

²²⁷ See for example: Jalāl, Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān. *Ḥiml zagal fī al-mukayyifāt*. Cairo: s.n., n.d.; and Jalāl, Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān (trans.). *Al-‘Uyūn al-yawāqiz fī al-amthāl wa al-mawā‘iz*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kāstalīya, 1870.

²²⁸ *Abū Nazzāra*, 1878, Issue 6, pp. 1-2.

whopping two thousand copies per issue would need to be sold to cover the necessary kickback to the authorities. And this compared to the fifteen thousand copy print run that Ṣānū's biography claimed that *Abū Nazzāra* ran in. Ever the faithful sidekick, Abū Khalīl encouraged Abū Nazzāra to put pencil to paper.

In another issue, Abū Nazzāra related a tale to his friends at a coffee shop. He told them about a policeman who stopped him in the street and asked him about the papers under his arms. He described how he talked himself out of trouble, causing his associates to marvel at his exploits. Abū Nazzāra assured them that he had plenty more “that you’ll see in issue eight, it’s great.”²²⁹ Then he went on to tell them about the books that he had with him. One of them “has written in it the case of my friend Kāstalī, if not for him from below and our Lord from above, I’d never be able to ply my newspaper.” The group responded: “yes, you are an advocate for that printer of yours.”²³⁰ A member of the party then added that “that’s because [Mūsā Kāstalī] had a [court] case and a verdict was promulgated against him from Egypt’s council of traders (*majlis tujjār miṣr*), and the court threw out (*faraghhu al-majlis*) his request to make an appeal. And that was before the opening of the [Mixed Court] tribunals [of 1876], when the idea was to defame his behavior, whereas now, God willing, he [will] come out ahead of them because [the previous case had been found against him due to bribery] (*al-ḥaqq naṭṭāh*) and [since then] people stopped chattering.”²³¹ Abū Nazzāra concurred, stating: “mister Kāstalī has spent forty-six years here and served the government, the people of distinction, and the

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, Issue 7, pp. 3-4.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

'*ulāma* with the utmost integrity, and he is famous in Europe and possesses great knowledge, and his medals of honor amount to forty.’²³²

In yet another issue, Ṣānū‘ provided a sense for what it was like to write and print a paper in 1878 Cairo. Abū Khalīl asked Abū Naẓẓāra what he got up to on Thursday night, because he had not seen him around. Abū Naẓẓāra responded that “I sat writing issue ten throughout the night...and as I wrote the printing press printed...so on Thursday we were printing issue ten and soot began covering everything, when five or six elegant effendis entered the printing press with the utmost graciousness, God preserve them. They looked at what we were up to, so we showed it and held it over our head, and we told them we’re working on it [as best we can], but it’s still missing two words and punctuation marks and the like [*i.e.*, the finishing touches]...and they stood up gratefully [to leave without copies of *Abū Naẓẓāra*], but they understood that the newspaper of Abū Naẓẓāra is intended to be great and the salvation of the world [*i.e.*, not to be rushed].”²³³ Abū Khalīl concurred that the next night brought more of the same: “so was the Friday night, which I spent in the printing press. You were writing, and our uncle Kāstalī was printing, and by God he is a man who possesses great importance.”²³⁴

Ṣānū‘’s references to the Kāstalīs within the Cairene printings of *Abū Naẓẓāra* demonstrate the importance that Ṣānū‘ once ascribed to them. When Ṣānū‘ moved to Paris, however, he effaced the Kāstalīs’ contribution to his success from his subsequent

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*, Issue 12, p. 1.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

writings. Moreover, Ṣānū‘ misappropriated their role as printer for himself. This narrative served the reputation that Ṣānū‘ cultivated for himself, although it may also have resulted from a breakdown in his relationship with the Kāstalīs when “the Government had managed...to persuade M. Castelli, the printer, to turn the Man with the Blue Spectacles out of his office, by threatening to shut up his [*i.e.*, Kāstalī’s] printing establishment altogether.”²³⁵

But because scholars have yet to examine nineteenth century Cairene private presses systematically, they have not challenged Ṣānū‘’s claims to printing his paper himself. To the extent that historians reference Ṣānū‘ alongside the Kāstalīs at all, they tend to do so incorrectly. Michael Gasper’s 2009 book on the formation of modern Egyptian identity, *The Power of representation*, for example, uses private press printings to draw out intellectual transformations between 1875-1919. In service to Gasper’s wider argument about changing identity, he mistakenly labels the Kāstalīs as “progovernment journalists” who worked against “such antikhedivate activists as al-Nadim and Ṣannū‘.”²³⁶ Gasper goes on to argue that the Kāstalīs were so pro-government that their “*al-Kawkab al-Misri* newspaper, although it was contemporaneous with al-Nadim’s *Tankit*, was no rival because it rendered “absolute and unceasing support to the Khedive and to members of his government.”²³⁷

²³⁵ Jerrold, Blanchard (ed.). *Egypt under Ismail Pacha. Being some chapters of contemporary history*. London: Samuel Tinsley & Co., 1879, p. 222.

²³⁶ Gasper, Michael. *The Power of representation: publics, peasants, and Islam in Egypt*. California: Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 35.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

Gaspar conflates the roles of the journalist and the printer, just as Ṣānū‘ would have wanted him to. Ironically for Ṣānū‘, however, Gaspar’s misunderstanding asserts the legacy of the Kāstalīs all the same. Although Ṣānū‘ tried to write the Kāstalīs out of history by claiming their work as his own, Gaspar labels the Kāstalīs as “public intellectuals” on a par with Ṣānū‘.²³⁸ But contrary to Gaspar’s claims, the Kāstalīs were neither journalists, nor pro-government agitators, nor public intellectuals. The Kāstalīs were for-profit printers. And for as much as they printed pro-governmental papers, they also printed the khedive’s biggest critic and their supposed enemy, if we are to believe Gaspar: Ṣānū‘. Gaspar misinterprets the nature of Egyptian printing in the 1870s and 1880s, and in so doing, he weakens the moorings of his argument.

In addition to printing papers like *Abū Naẓẓāra*, the Kāstalīs printed much else as I show in chapter five. One of the reasons why they have been forgotten is because the people that they made famous through their labors misappropriated the role that they played. Ṣānū‘ once celebrated his printers because they were integral to his work. But after he and others like ‘Alī Mubārak adopted the idea that printing was a great civilizational achievement, they claimed the act of printing for themselves. Twentieth and twenty-first century scholars have not questioned their claims because they aligned with the prevailing belief in the impact of printing. As a result, the distinctive evolution of the meanings of Cairo’s written mediums has received little historiographical attention. So too have the consequences of misattributing significance to particular historical actors

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

and their texts.²³⁹ Besides perhaps placing too much emphasis on the contemporary societal significance of writers like ‘Alī Mubārak and Ṣānū‘ and their printings, scholars have overlooked the composers of contemporary manuscripts as well as printings that do not engage with themes of modernity.

In 1901, Jūrjī Zaīdān (1861-1914), the Beirut-born, Syrian Protestant College medical student who moved to Cairo to open a press and found a journal, both called al-Hilāl, published a book on physiognomy.²⁴⁰ Under the section “Physiognomy of tradesmen and craftsmen,” he included a small portrait of Johannes Gutenberg “the German inventor of typographic printing who was born in 1400 and died in 1468.” Zaīdān concluded that “you will almost never find amongst these inventors narrow heads or faces, nor weak features. All of them have full faces that indicate their strength of mind and tenacity. And all of them rose from the common masses to the levels of great men through their seriousness and strides, and they never stopped reading books.”²⁴¹ Zaīdān’s argument stemmed from a pseudo-Darwinian branch of thinking.²⁴² But it also

²³⁹ Historians of America have begun questioning historical actors’ claims to the wide production and consumption of their printed writings, and problematizing the narratives of movements like nationalism that others have grounded on such claims. See for example: Loughran, Trish. “Disseminating *Common Sense*: Thomas Paine and the problem of the early national bestseller.” *American Literature*, Vol. 78, No. 1, March 2006, pp. 1-28.

²⁴⁰ Zaīdān, Jūrjī. *‘Ilm al-firāsa al-ḥadīth*. Al-Qāhira: Maṭba‘a al-Hilāl, 1901.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

²⁴² For more on Darwanism amongst Arab intellectuals during this period, refer to: Elshakry, Mona. *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860-1950*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

recalled the European emphasis on printing's destined impact.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Ottoman Cairenes engaged with western ideas about many things, including printing. Historians of nineteenth century Egypt have yet to appreciate the westerly shift in how some Cairenes came to think of their texts, and the ways in which their ideas leveraged and competed with other local attitudes towards texts. The blowback from this lapse affects all scholarly research that depends upon Egyptian textual sources from the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER SEVEN. Conclusion.

In November 1898, serial installments of what would become Muḥammad al-Muwāylīhī's (1868-1930) 1907 novel *Ḥadīth 'Īsā ibn Hišām aw fatra min az-zaman*, or *The story of 'Isā ibn Hišām or a period of time*, began to be published from his father's newspaper, *Miṣbāḥ aš-šarq*.¹ The story's plot pivoted around the upset of tradition that had taken place in Cairene society over the past century. Al-Muwāylīhī drew out this theme through two protagonists, a contemporary author called 'Īsā ibn Hišām and a minister of war, or *bāšā*, who returned to life fifty years after his death. The *bāšā* leaned on 'Īsā ibn Hišām to help him navigate the transformed society that now surrounded him. He struggled to negotiate Cairo socially and legally. He also struggled to comprehend the changed nature of authority in Cairene society, which no longer afforded him due respect on account of his position.

Al-Muwāylīhī underscored the material and intellectual changes to Cairene writing that this dissertation has historicized to evoke many of these transformations. Materially, he called upon the evolving forms that writing took. Several scenes turned on 'Īsā ibn Hišām's attempts to explain new writing practices to the disoriented *bāšā*. 'Īsā ibn Hišām described how the professional author differed from the scribe, and how houses were now known by the numbers written upon them rather than by the names of their owners.² He tried to make the *bāšā* understand that authority no longer derived

¹ Allen, Roger. "Hadith 'Isa Ibn Hisham by Muhammad al-Muwailihī. A reconsideration." *Journal of Arabic Literature*, Volume 1, Issue 1, 1970, pp. 88-108.

² Muwāylīhī, Muḥammad. *Ḥadīth 'Īsā ibn Hišām aw fatra min az-zaman*. Miṣr: al-Maktaba al-Azharīya, 1911/1912, pp. 11-12.

from ancestry but from pieces of paper like diplomas and certificates.³ He reassured him that a vendor's shouts to sell mountains, *al-muqaṭṭam*, pyramids, *al-ahrām*, and countries, *miṣr*, concerned the titles of newspapers instead of the literal world.⁴ This brought 'Īsā ibn Hišām to distinguish the government's gazette, *al-Waqā'i 'al-Miṣrīya*,⁵ that was issued during the first half of the nineteenth century from the newspapers and journalists that emerged over the next fifty years.⁶ He explained *cartes de visite*,⁷ wedding invitations,⁸ and that the *bāšā*'s handwritten legal documents were unintelligible to the literate of his generation.⁹ He also noted that Egyptians sold their antiquities to foreigners to fund the printing of manuscripts that were now housed in the Khedivial Library, or *kutubkhāna*.¹⁰

Intellectually, al-Muwāylīhī drew out the evolving symbolism of writing too. Although the *bāšā* speculated that printing should have liberated readers from relying upon the generosity of manuscript lenders, 'Īsā ibn Hišām lamented that important men

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

⁵ Refer to chapter three.

⁶ Muwāylīhī, 1911/1912, pp. 56-58. See also the discussion of *hujja* in chapter four.

⁷ Muwāylīhī, 1911/1912, pp. 61-62.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-286.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 422-428.

abandoned books for journals, newspapers, and fancy western objects.¹¹ The *bāšā* also came to discover that the scholarship of the *‘ulamā*, or religious scholars, of al-Azhar was rendered incompatible to the learning of ‘Īsā ibn Hišām’s day.¹² Finally, the *bāšā* was informed that one of the reasons why “westerners were so advanced (*tuqaddum al-gharbīyīn*)” was because of the “difference between...copying books by hand (*naskh al-kutub bi al-khaṭṭ*) and copying them by printing (*wa naskhhā bi al-ṭab*).”¹³

Many of the changes to writing that were depicted by al-Muwāylīhī reflected Cairenes’ engagement with western influence over the nineteenth century. When these changes were seen by the *bāšā* from the distance of one half century, they represented a drastically different world. Yet when we view these changes incrementally over a series of years, as we have done through the chapters of this dissertation, it becomes apparent that they flowed in succession. This dissertation has underscored the importance of the material and intellectual changes that al-Muwāylīhī emphasized. But it has done so from the premise that these changes occurred amongst people, in practical ways, and on a local continuum, instead of as a series of abstract ruptures catalyzed by modernity and an inevitable print culture that western experience predetermined for Egyptian culture. This makes the Cairene experience of printing unique within the Ottoman Empire and the world at large. Indeed, my focus on Cairo suggests that each incidence of Ottoman printing should be examined separately.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-204.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 213-215.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 318-319.

In *Meaningful mediums*, I have studied Cairene printing from a novel framework that privileges locals' preexisting methods for producing texts, and for thinking about them. Moreover, I have done so from the vantage of the industry of writing to highlight the interconnectedness of Cairenes' manuscript, governmental, and private printing industries. Doing so has allowed me to argue that Cairo was the first Ottoman city to develop a lasting urban print culture because Cairenes welded the commissioning and selling of printings to their manuscript customs. These practices made local printing participatory, and helped to solidify and sustain Cairene printing so that it endured in a permanent way, unlike previous Ottoman printing endeavors.

I have also demonstrated the ways in which Cairenes' production of manuscripts, governmental printings, and private press printings relied upon the same people, places, materials, and practices. This point highlights the fact that the Cairene transition to a print culture was uniquely Ottoman in its nature, rather than European. It also stresses the significance of human actors and practical desires and constraints in contrast with the existing historiography that has been dominated by ideas about religious resistance, cultural backwardness, and linguistic barriers to print culture (such as varied local dialects and the fact that the Arabic script is cursive). Indeed, I have shown how the history of Ottoman printing came to be told from a European perspective within Arabic and western historiography.

To counter this view, and to demonstrate the richness of Ottomans' accounts of the changes that they detected in Cairene textual output, I traced the intellectual history of texts among Cairenes. I argued that Cairenes held evolving views of texts and what they meant. Moreover, I showed how the holders of one set of these views incorporated

western norms about the civilizing power of print into their thinking. It is important that scholars recognize the foreign origins of this idea and the fact that it competed with other views held by Cairenes, like the understanding that printing was a practical art. The interpretation of print as a mark of civilization was only one contemporary perception among many others, but one which has had an outsized influence on the narrative about the history of printing in Egypt. This view came to dominate western and Egyptian thinking about printing during the twentieth century.

Nearly one hundred years after Meḥmed ‘Alī ruled the Ottoman province of Egypt as a governor (r. 1805-1848), his great-great-grandson Fārūq (1920-1965) reigned over the country of Egypt as king (r. 1936-1952). Although contemporary accounts of printing under Meḥmed ‘Alī depicted the process as a useful art form, Fārūq presented it as something far more consequential. While Fārūq was still king, he used an ex-libris bookplate to designate the texts that belonged to him. It was drawn and engraved by the French artists M. Albert Decaris (1901-1988) and Georges Visat (1910-2001).¹⁴ The bookplate depicted the European idea that printing catalyzed civilization. Still, it did so in a way that was decidedly Egyptian.

The bookplate projected a scene of contrasts. Beneath Fārūq’s monogram stood a dignified, light-skinned *šaiḫ*. His robe, turban, and beard marked him as affluent, respectable, and pious. He held a text that he outstretched benevolently. His uprightness

¹⁴ Tagher, Jacques. “L’Ex-libris de S.M. le Roi Farouk et sa signification historique.” *Cahiers d’Histoire Égyptienne*. Le Caire: Maison d’édition al maaref, I:4, 1949, pp. 281-282, p. 282.



Image 7.1. *King Fārūq's ex-libris book plate, in which a text from a typographic press separates the worlds of the civilized and the uncultivated.*¹⁵

was enhanced by the extra height he gained by standing upon the base of a hand-operated typographic press. The formidable press of wood and metal rose nearly as high as he did. It was sleek and sturdy, and gave off the sense that the wheels and gears that propelled it could return to motion at any moment. Beneath the *šaiḥ* and the press kneeled a dark-

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

skinned peasant. His diminutive figure made him a fraction of the size of the *šaiḫ* who commanded his attention. Little distinguished the peasant aside from his subservience. His face was obscured, leaving his bare attire to indicate that he was more of an object than an individual. Just like the press, the peasant gave the impression that he had just paused from action. He sat in soil that was plowed by the two cows that stood ahead of him. The tilled earth beneath him looked like Kufic calligraphy, and he reached out to receive the *šaiḫ*'s text of rigid printed lines.

This scene transpired in a barren space beyond Cairo's citadel. It suggested that the peasant would take the *šaiḫ*'s printing, and that something of enormous importance would transpire thereafter. The bookplate cast white skin against black skin, machine power against animal labor, urbanity against the uncultivated, and the ruled lines of print against primitive swirls of clay. Printing separated these two worlds. But the point was not that printing merely straddled the divide, but that printing caused the divide in the first place. We are to understand that with the peasant's acceptance of the outstretched text, printing would make a *šaiḫ* out of him too. The bookplate suggests that printing had generated Cairene civilization, and that it could cultivate more civilization yet.

Meaningful mediums has investigated the origins of the equation of printing with civilization and has problematized its premise, while giving credence to al-Muwāylihī's depiction of the depth of the changes that occurred to the forms and meanings of Cairene writing. Late-nineteenth century texts themselves evince these changes in a number of ways. These range from the uptick in governmental laws regulating forgery,¹⁶ to the

¹⁶ "Al-Bāb as-sādis 'ašr fī at-tazwīr." *Qānūn al-'uqūbāt*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a as-Saniya, 1875, pp. 37-41.

government's publication of guidelines for how scribes should go about filling out official printed forms,¹⁷ to the forms themselves. The latter for example show how scribes were confused by or sought to rebel against the reach of print into the traditional domain of handwriting by ticking out printed passages beneath which they wrote the same words by hand.¹⁸ Treating writing as an object of material and intellectual history is important because texts form the source base for scholarly research. Understanding the immediate purposes behind their creation informs the meanings of the words that they contain. Scholarly analysis that excludes such consideration is limited.

This dissertation is part of a larger intellectual project to extend the application of book history to the Middle East, and to develop the history of texts in places where they circulated abundantly, such as cities like Istanbul, Beirut, and Damascus. Moreover, *Meaningful mediums* complements scholars' efforts in generating locally framed, urban histories of nineteenth century Cairo. Like other recent works, it does so from underappreciated sources and overlooked people with a critical eye to the view that the period represented one of *Nahḍa*, or cultural renaissance. There is still much work to be done. Scholars are only just beginning to study the development of Egyptian nationalism beyond the European paradigm of newspapers,¹⁹ of new professions in Egypt like that of the editor and the journalist, and of Egyptian statehood through the bureaucracy's production of paperwork.

¹⁷ *Majmū'at al-qarārāt wa al-manšūrāt*. Būlāq: al-Maṭba'a al-Amīriya, 1881, p. 33.

¹⁸ *Hujja*, 1892. Collection of Cairene *hujja* from the nineteenth century, Dr. Mohammed B. Alwan, Belmont, Massachusetts. Refer to chapter one.

¹⁹ Refer to the precedent set by: Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

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