



On the Margins of the Nahda: The Life and Intellectual World of Muhammad 'Ayyad al-Tantawi

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On the Margins of the Nahda:
The Life and Intellectual World of Muhammad ‘Ayyad al-Tantawi

A dissertation presented
by
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to
The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations (NELC)
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the life and intellectual world of the Egyptian scholar and teacher Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī (1810–1861). In Egypt, al-Ṭanṭāwī collaborated with a scholarly network of European orientalists and Egyptian ‘ulamā’ in the process of excavating the Arabic literary past in the Ottoman context of Mehmed Ali’s rule. As a result of the reputation he garnered as a teacher, al-Ṭanṭāwī was offered a position to teach Arabic in Saint Petersburg at the age of 30. He would remain in the Russian metropolis for the rest of his life, ascending in orientalist circles. To understand how al-Ṭanṭāwī came to be invited to Saint Petersburg and how he was received in his new home, this dissertation traces key figures and discourses in the development of Russian Oriental Studies in the first half of the 19th century.

Furthermore, this dissertation decenters Rifā‘a Rāfi‘ al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s enduring legacy in Nahḍa Studies by placing his riḥla (travelogue) in dialogue with that of al-Ṭanṭāwī, and probing their intertextual relationship. In contrast to Rifā‘a, who was a student constrained by Parisian institutional regimentation, al-Ṭanṭāwī penned his manuscript as a professor of Arabic in Saint Petersburg. While both sought to effect reform, al-Ṭanṭāwī’s vision is more firmly rooted in his own observations and in curiosity about the cultures he encountered than that of Rifā‘a.

In analyzing al-Ṭanṭāwī’s life and writings, specifically his travelogue and Arabic language learning book, this dissertation brings into relief a road not taken for the Nahḍa, forged on its margins.

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Figure I: Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī (1810–1861)
Professor at the University of Saint Petersburg
Portrait by Martīnov, 1853.

Introduction

In the last few decades, interest in the Nahḍa has grown considerably.¹ Since the 1960s scholars have sought to unsettle festering dichotomies of east-west, modern-premodern, and popular-elite to offer more nuanced narratives for the development of Arabic literature. Still, much work remains to be done to include new scholars, texts, and experiences in scholarship on the Nahḍa.

This dissertation examines the early stages of the Nahḍa through a case study of Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī (1810-1861), his life, writings, and intellectual world. Al-Tantawi² was a trained scholar (*‘ālim*) from Tanta, Egypt. He attended and taught at al-Azhar, while becoming acquainted with and giving lessons to European orientalist residents in Cairo. In 1840, at age 30, he received an invitation to teach Arabic in Saint Petersburg, where he would rise as a professor in orientalist circles until his death in 1861.

Overall, I argue that al-Tantawi calls into question diffusionist and Saidian models for understanding cultural interaction and Arabic literary production in the first half of the 19th century. That formulation of Egyptian literary history has tended to privilege the role of European influences on Arabic literature, and accordingly to further a diffusionist paradigm for the transmission of knowledge, including literature. This paradigm sees the Nahḍa as primarily

¹ Abdulrazzak Patel, *The Arab Nahḍah: The Making of the Intellectual and Humanist Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013). Elizabeth Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). Stephen Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* (Gainesville: Florida University Press, 2004). Kamran Rastegar, ed., "Authoring the Nahḍa: Writing the Arabic 19th Century," special issue, *Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures* 16 no. 3 (2013).

² For the sake of simplicity, I hereafter do not include diacritics on al-Tantawi's name, except in citations, figures, and tables. For Arabic transliteration, I follow the IJMES (International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies), but without marking elisions.

driven by the translation and adaption of European genres, forms, and discourses into Arabic, and thus the interpretation of this period of rapid cultural change in 19th century Egypt is predicated on increased contact with and accessibility to Europe. More recently, scholars such as Shaden Tageldin, Tarek El-Ariss, and Stephan Sheehi, have looked at the Nahḍa as a site of contestation, identity formation, and translation between Arabic and European cultures, overwhelmingly French. I too study al-Tantawi's vast network and literary contribution in the context of increasing cultural and literary interaction. When I began this project, I had intended to rectify the undue emphasis placed on European influence by focusing on the early stages of the Nahḍa as if it developed without foreign interlocutors. Predictably, this proved quite difficult in light of the interconnected nature of early 19th century Egypt. Al-Tantawi and his writings are not simply a testament to this interconnectedness, but also a means to nuance the cultural encounter of the Nahḍa and to decenter Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's³ (1801–1873) primacy as its most championed Azharī pioneer.

In the field of intellectual history, the legacy of Albert Hourani's enduring study of Arabic through the lens of liberalism privileged a euro-centric reading of literary and intellectual modernity.⁴ Recent and diverse critiques of Hourani have spawned debates regarding the provenance of ideas in intellectual history.⁵ This dissertation redirects our attention to a thriving network of Egyptian scholars for whom pride and self-assuredness in an uninterrupted tradition

³ For the sake of clarity, I hereafter refer to him as Rifā'a.

⁴ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁵ Jens Hanssen and Max Weiss, eds., *Arabic Thought beyond the Liberal Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Nahda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). Faisal Devji and Zaheer Kazmi, eds., *Islam after Liberalism* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2017).

of literature (*adab*) took precedence over the imagined prestige or seduction of the European. Al-Tantawi contributed to a tradition of Arabic *adab* in conversation with Europeans and European culture and on terms nearing equal footing; he was neither enamored by their supposed superiority, nor seduced by their literatures.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* laid out the textual techniques by which colonial power is projected through and enacted in the production of knowledge and representation of the Orient, of which Egypt is paramount. The debates, some more meaningful than others, that *Orientalism* stirred for decades provided a fertile ground for exploring the concept of representation in the context of colonial rule and unequal power.⁶ To nuance and more accurately depict the varied interactions and writings among the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual strata of Mehmed Ali's Egypt, I shift away from the Saidian model of *Orientalism*; instead, I engage with al-Tantawi and his orientalist collaborators, such as Edward Lane and Fulgence Fresnel, through a framework more firmly rooted in the specificity of the literary and socio-political context of Egypt in the 1830s. In doing so, I offer a telling of Egyptian literary history from a figure on the margins of the Nahḍa, an Azharī shaykh engaged with Europe and Europeans in his capacity as teacher, editor, informer, and author from Tanta and Cairo, and from age 30 onwards in Saint Petersburg.

⁶ For a summary of the wide-ranging debates, Cf., Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For a compilation of articles attesting to the diverse engagements with and enduring afterlife of Orientalism, Alexander Lyon Macfie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

Al-Tantawi and his Legacy

Al-Tantawi was born in 1810 in the heart of the Nile Delta, about 90 kilometers north of Cairo in Najrīd⁷ near Tanta. His father, about whom we know little, was a merchant dealing in fabrics, coffee, and soap. Based on the goods he sold, one can venture that his father's family was relatively wealthy. Al-Tantawi's early life followed the general course of other scholars of his time. Success at the primary school (*maktab* or *kuttāb*) in Tanta prompted his transfer to Cairo, where he continued his studies at al-Azhar. There, he studied under some of the most prominent Egyptian scholars.⁸

As an adult, al-Tantawi gradually distanced himself from the religious sciences (*'ulūm dīniyya*), especially jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and chose to teach literature and Egyptian spoken Arabic to Europeans living in Cairo. For his efforts, he received gratitude and acclaim that resulted in an invitation to teach Arabic at the Institute of Oriental Languages in Saint Petersburg. He accepted, and Mehmed Ali submitted his approval in 1840, sending al-Tantawi off at the age of 30 with two stipulations: first, learn Russian, then come back to serve your Egypt. With some exaggeration, he did neither. He gained only a rudimentary command of Russian and appears to have only returned to Egypt once for several months in 1844.

In the next 21 years of life before his death in 1861, the last six of which were marred by a paralyzing illness,⁹ al-Tantawi reached the highest position in the Department of Oriental

⁷ It is now called Najrīj (Egyptian Arabic: Nagrīg). Incidentally, it is also the birthplace of the famous professional Egyptian footballer Muḥammad Ṣalāḥ.

⁸ They included three Rectors of al-Azhar (*Shuyūkh al-Azhar*), Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār (d. 1835; Rector, 1830–1835), Ḥasan al-Quwaysinī (d. 1838; Rector, 1835–1838), and Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī (d. 1860; Rector, 1847–1860).

⁹ See the end of Chapter IV for detail on the decline of his health.

Studies at Saint Petersburg University. There, he was largely occupied with editing Arabic literary texts for publication in collaboration with his colleagues throughout Europe, in addition to his pedagogical duties as a professor. His career was marked by various noteworthy accomplishments: producing the first Egyptian Arabic language learning book by an Arab in 1848;¹⁰ becoming the first Arab professor *extraordinarius* of Oriental Studies in 1847;¹¹ composing a detailed travelogue (*riḥla*) modeled on that of Rifā‘a;¹² and writing an intimate, if frustratingly brief, autobiography.¹³

One might duly expect al-Tantawi to have received more recognition in secondary sources for his achievements, yet Arabic literary biographies from the 19th century onwards allot scant attention to him, and that which has been written generally amounts to little more than summaries of his life or fragments of his writings. Let us consider some of the possibilities that account for al-Tantawi’s marginal position in literary histories: Was it his choice not to return to serve Egypt, and his lack of offspring in Egypt to champion his legacy? Did his literary work not possess the perceived originality necessary for inclusion in scholarship on the Nahḍa? Did his critical views of Mehmed Ali’s ventures and his penchant for poetry with motifs of ribaldry (*mujūn*) dissuade scholars from researching his works? What role did Cold War politics play in

¹⁰ Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab fī Ma‘rifat Lisān al-‘Arab* = *Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire: collection de textes, d’expressions et de phrases avec traductions en français* (Leipzig: G. Vogel fils, 1848)

¹¹ After seven years as a teacher at the Institute for Oriental Languages under the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was appointed as professor at the University of Saint Petersburg.

¹² Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Riḥlat al-Shaykh al-Ṭanṭāwī ilā al-Bilād al-Rūsiyya 1840-1850: Al-Musammāh bi-Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā’ bi-Akḥbār Bilād al-Rūsiyā*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Īsā al-Sālihiyya (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1992).

¹³ Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography,” in J.G.L. Kosegarten, “Autobiographie des Scheich Ettantawi zu Petersburg,” *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* no. 7 (1850): 48-63.

academic collaboration? Was al-Tantawi tainted by his own successful rise in an age of Russian aristocracy that has come to be much-maligned in 20th century historiography?

Unlike Rifā‘a, whose indelible mark on the Nahḍa is unquestioned, al-Tantawi was discovered posthumously and separately in both Egypt and Russia. It was not until the 1920s, when the Egyptian historian Aḥmad Taymūr and Russian orientalist Ignati Krachkovski came upon al-Tantawi’s manuscript collection, that the breadth and value of his work began to become clear. The project of discovering al-Tantawi involved an exchange between Taymūr and Krachkovski, wherein they began to piece together al-Tantawi’s life and writings spanning the two stages of his life, in Egypt (1810–1840) then in Russia (1840–1861).¹⁴ The fact that he spent significant portions of his life in both countries necessitated Taymūr and Krachkovski’s early collaboration to get a fuller picture of his life.

In 1929, Krachkovski published the first extensive monograph on al-Tantawi. Making thorough use of Russian archival sources, it represented a foundational step in piecing together his life and writings. Krachkovski’s monograph¹⁵ was translated into Arabic and augmented in 1964 by Kulthūm Naṣr ‘Awda, a well-known Palestinian professor of Arabic in the Soviet Union.¹⁶ Krachkovski’s monograph and its translation proved indispensable to the study of al-

¹⁴ Aḥmad Taymūr, “Al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī,” *Majallat al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabī bi-Dimashq* 4, no. 9 (1924): 387-91. Ignati Krachkovski, “Al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī,” *Majallat al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabī bi-Dimashq* 4, no. 12 (1924): 562-4. Another article with some additional information about al-Tantawi in Egypt was published the following year, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, “Al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī,” *Majallat al-Zahrā’* 1, no. 7 (1925): 414-24.

¹⁵ Ignati Krachkovski, *Sheikh Tantawi, professor S.-Peterburgskogo Universiteta, 1810-1861* (Saint Petersburg: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1929).

¹⁶ Ignati Krachkovski, *Hayāt al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī*, trans. Kulthūm Naṣr ‘Awda (Cairo: Maṭbū‘āt al-Majlis al-A‘lā li-Ri‘āyat al-Funūn wal-Ādāb wal-‘Ulūm al-Ījtīmā‘iyya, 1964). The pagination that I use is from a more recent reprint with an introduction added by Sāmīḥ al-Kurayyim. Ignati Krachkovski, *Hayāt al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī*, trans. Kulthūm Naṣr ‘Awda (Cairo: Al-Markaz al-Qawmī lil-Tarjama, 2013). In 1964, the same year that ‘Awda translated Krachkovski’s

Tantawi over both periods of his life. In 1944, the Egyptian historian Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl wrote what remains one of the most fascinating studies of al-Tantawi in Egypt.¹⁷ Al-Shayyāl devoted three separate sections of his lengthy article to al-Tantawi, Dr. Nicolas Perron, and Muḥammad ‘Umar al-Tūnisī¹⁸ (1789–1857), who together formed what he deemed a triad (“*thālūth*”) of collaboration. Al-Shayyāl crucially situated them among the early institutions and the general socio-political context of Mehmed Ali’s Egypt.

In the following dissertation I lay the groundwork for understanding al-Tantawi’s contributions to the Nahḍa. His contemporaries include the more established names of the Nahḍa, not just Rifā‘a, but also Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1805–1887), Nāṣif al-Yāziḡī (1800–1871), and Buṭrus al-Bustānī (1819–1883). Their stories, writings, and visions for Arabic literature are quite different from al-Tantawi’s, and I hope this dissertation demonstrates his deserved place among them by virtue of the non-mimetic nature of his intellectual curiosity.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter I of this dissertation introduces al-Tantawi by tracing his intellectual formation in Tanta and Cairo, and situating him among peers and teachers at al-Azhar prior to his departure

monograph, ‘Alī Ḥusayn Maḥfūz, an Egyptian visiting instructor at Saint Petersburg University, published for the first time a compilation of al-Tantawi’s writings, ‘Alī Ḥusayn Maḥfūz, “Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī,” *Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb bi-Jāmi‘at Baghdād* no. 7 (1964): 75-128.

¹⁷ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, “Duktūr Perron wal-Shaykhān Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī wa-Muḥammad ‘Umar al-Tūnisī,” *Majallat al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabī* no. 6 (1944): 180-221; Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ghanī Ḥasan, “‘Arabī fī Bilād al-Ṣaḡāliba: Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī,” in *‘Ālām min al-Sharq wal-Gharb* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1949).

¹⁸ Muḥammad ‘Umar al-Tūnisī, though only discussed marginally in this dissertation, he played an important role in the Arabic literary output of the first half of the 19th century. His travelogue was recently published with English translation. Muḥammad ‘Umar al-Tūnisī, *In Darfur: An Account of the Sultanate and its People = Tashḥīdh al-Adhhān bi-Sīrat al-‘Arab wal-Sūdān*, trans. Humphrey Davies (New York: New York University Press, 2018).

for Saint Petersburg in 1840. To do so, I examine al-Tantawi's short autobiography (translated in Appendix I), in addition to marginalia and comments on manuscripts, correspondence, and printed periodicals, in order to discern his intellectual transformation. Furthermore, this first chapter explores al-Tantawi in the context of Mehmed Ali's early state-building ventures, in particular the Bulaq Press and growing translation movement, as we seek to understand al-Tantawi's strident criticism and outright refusal to serve the Pasha. Overall, Chapter I sketches al-Tantawi's intellectual and scholarly world in Egypt in relation to fellow Egyptian scholars ('*ulamā*'), as well as the emergence of the Bulaq Press that is too often associated with modernity.

Chapter II focuses on al-Tantawi's interactions, both personal and professional, with European orientalist in Cairo. He made his name and set his career in motion as the result of his work, mainly as a teacher, informer, and editor, particularly with Edward Lane, Fulgence Fresnel, and Dr. Nicholas Perron. To understand their relationship, we must zoom in on the lives, interests, skills, and convictions of these men as we explore a series of questions, such as: What ambitions brought them to Egypt? Why did they single out al-Tantawi for collaboration? And how did they join with him in excavating the literary past?

I pursue these questions through Edward Lane's life, works, and legacy, which have been well-studied in the context of Orientalism.¹⁹ This chapter investigates al-Tantawi's role as collaborator and interlocuter with Lane for his translation of the *Arabian Nights* in particular. In doing so, I tease out various types of literary interactions during this period contemporary with the gradual rise of the Bulaq Press and the translation movement. Moreover, Chapter II shows

¹⁹ Edward Lane's writings have been used as a conduit, whose reliability is often taken for granted, for literary historians to access and assess Egyptian popular literature, particularly as recorded in his *Manners and Customs*.

how the orientalist conceived of Egypt's intellectual and scholarly climate under Mehmed Ali's rule.

Chapter III considers al-Tantawi's *riḥla* (travelogue), *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā' bi-Akḥbār Bilād al-Rūsiyā* (A Gift for Discussion about the Land of the Russians), the manuscript of which he completed in 1850. I analyze his travelogue in dialogue with Rifā'a, whose travelogue *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīs* (The Extraction of Gold in the Distillation of Paris), occupies a prominent position in Nahḍa Studies. Chapter III shows how al-Tantawi modeled his work on that of his counterpart Rifā'a, and brings into focus the tellingly different ways in which they conceive of societal advancement in France and Russia. In doing so, it probes their visions of the didactic intent of their works as well. Furthermore, Chapter III examines Rifā'a and al-Tantawi's orientations to Mehmed Ali's Egypt in the context of the crucially different educational contexts in which they penned their travelogues. For al-Tantawi, as a professor in Saint Petersburg, and for Rifā'a, as a student in a regimented and constraining educational mission at the École Égyptienne in Paris.

Chapter IV turns to al-Tantawi's life and writings in Saint Petersburg, where he would ascend in orientalist circles. To understand what awaited al-Tantawi in his new home, I sketch the development of Russian Oriental Studies from ideological, institutional, and practical perspectives. Considering this context, I attend closely to the question of how al-Tantawi was hired, the reaction to his arrival, and how he thrived. Chapter IV then further investigates his ascent through two lenses: first, a close reading of his personal and professional relationship with one of his first students in Saint Petersburg, Georg Wallin (1811–1852); second, through his language learning book, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab fī Ma'rifat Lisān al-'Arab* (The Finest Selections for

Learning the Arabic Language). The latter sheds light on al-Tantawi's views on the proper or prescribed deployment of Arabic.

Chapter I: Al-Tantawi's Intellectual Formation in Egypt (1810–1840)

Introduction: Coming of Age in Mehmed Ali's Egypt

This chapter charts al-Tantawi's intellectual formation, from his origins in the central Nile Delta to his advanced education in Cairo, and situates him intellectually, socially, and politically among his peers and the newly established educational experiments of Mehmed Ali's Egypt. Recent scholarship from historians of 19th century Egypt has emphasized the importance of Ottoman suzerainty in the way political power was practiced and local identity was conceived in the Empire's most autonomous province.²⁰

To understand the particular context of Egypt at this time, we should turn our attention to Mehmed Ali, originally an Ottoman mercenary from Kavala. He consolidated political power in Egypt during the instability that ensued after the French invasion (1798–1801). The Pasha reigned from 1806 until 1848 and succeeded in ensuring his family would continue to rule Egypt after his death—no easy feat. Through a combination of shrewd political actions, loyalty building, and often uncompromising brutality, the Pasha managed to rid himself of the rival Mamlūk households who had dominated Egypt's political arena and had frequently wreaked havoc on its people.²¹ He gradually built the foundations of a modern nation-state, though not without its follies. As he eliminated his enemies, he summoned his extended family from Kavala

²⁰ Adam Mestyan, *Arab Patriotism: The Ideology and Culture of Power in Late Ottoman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017). Will Hanley, "When Did Egyptians Stop Being Ottomans? An Imperial Citizenship Case Study," in *Multilevel Citizenship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

²¹ For the means by which he accomplished this, see Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army, and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2002).

and beyond, appointing them to vital positions in the ruling regime. In addition to family members, he built an administrative apparatus with an Ottoman ethno-linguistic composition, replete with Armenian, Greek, and Turkish officials. It was into this political environment that al-Tantawi was born and lived; during the 30 years he lived and studied in Egypt, he knew but one system of ruling and one ruler.

Remarks on al-Tantawi's Autobiography as a Source

The most detailed account of al-Tantawi's life and intellectual formation in Egypt is found in his autobiography, which was published in 1850.²² Al-Tantawi's handwritten draft of the letter is held at Saint Petersburg University (see Figure II). Unlike a conventional autobiography, it also had an administrative function; al-Tantawi composed it as letter of accomplishment or *curriculum vitae* addressed to Christian Martin Frähn (1782–1851). Frähn, a German-Russian orientalist and numismatist (who will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV), worked first as the head of the Department of Oriental Languages at Kazan University and then directed the Asiatic Museum²³ in Saint Petersburg from 1818 to 1842. Frähn gave the text to his colleague, J.G.L. Kosegarten (1792–1860), a German orientalist at the University of Jena, who published it with German translation in 1850 in the periodical *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*. In his brief introduction to the autobiography, Kosegarten recounts that “Mr.

²² After much neglect, the genre of autobiography in Arabic was taken seriously and examined in Dwight Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 17-36.

²³ The Asiatic Museum (now: Institute of Oriental Manuscripts) was the primary depository for Arabic, Turkish, and Persian manuscripts. The director of the museum following Christian Martin Frähn, was Boris Andreevich Dorn (1805–1881), another German-born Russian orientalist who published a list of its vast holdings. Boris Andreevich Dorn, “Catalogue des ouvrages arabes, persans et turcs : publiés à Constantinople, en Égypte et en Perse, qui se trouvent au Musée Asiatique de l'Académie,” *Bulletin de l'Académie impériale des sciences de Saint-Petersbourg*, 10 (1866): 168-213.

Frähn was kind enough to inform me of the essay by the Scheich [al-Tantawi], and to give [me] permission to make it known in Germany.”²⁴ By 1850, al-Tantawi was at the height of his career in Saint Petersburg and his name was drawing interest in European orientalist circles. (The state of Oriental Studies in Russia upon al-Tantawi’s arrival in 1840 is discussed in detail in Chapter IV.)

In examining his autobiography, we must consider al-Tantawi’s self-fashioning or framing of his life in Egypt. To aid in this endeavor, I borrow Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of autoethnography, which sheds light on the complex ways in which the genre of autobiography informs a writer’s presentation of self. She writes of an autoethnographic text as one “in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them... [Autoethnographies] involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding.”²⁵

We can see the ways Pratt’s concept of autoethnography applies to al-Tantawi’s presentation of self insofar as his text was shaped by both indigenous influences as well as institutional and cultural power dynamics. Al-Tantawi appropriates the structure and idiom of the “metropolis” in that he adopts the genre of *curriculum vitae* and in that the intended audience is not his own community, but rather circles of Eastern European orientalists who sought to

²⁴ “Der Herr Staatsrath von Frähn hatte die Güte, mir den Aufsatz des Scheich [al-Tantawi] mitzutheilen, und die Erlaubniss hinzuzufügen, ihn in Deutschland bekannt zu machen.” Kosegarten, “Autobiographie.” See Appendix I for full translation.

²⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession*, (1991): 35.

decipher and circulate it. As with autoethnography that “constitute a marginalized group’s point of entry into the dominant circuits of print culture,”²⁶ and his language learning book, which mainly consists of his own writings, entered into circulation through print and garnered him much fame.²⁷

²⁶ Pratt, “Arts,” 35.

²⁷ Saint Petersburg University MSS 786, ff 66-7. Additional clarifications on his autobiography were published shortly after the initial publication. These quote al-Tantawi in Arabic elaborating on the meanings of phrases that eluded his colleagues in the original. Joseph Gottwaldt, “Aus einem Briefe des Bibliothekar Dr. Gottwaldt,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* no. 4 (1850): 243-8.

Tanta

لا قرآن إلا أحمدي ولا علم إلا أزهرى

“There is no Qur’ān study but Aḥmadī and no learning but Azharī.”

-Al-Tantawi, “Autobiography.”²⁸

General Background

Al-Tantawi introduces himself in his autobiography by way of Tanta, the site of his early intellectual formation. In early 19th century Egypt, Tanta, designated as capital of the administrative province (*mudīriyya*) of Gharbiyya in 1836, possessed several important sites of learning, commerce, entertainment, and ritual piety. Tanta lies approximately 90 kilometers north of Cairo and is roughly equidistant from both major Nile Delta channels leading to the Mediterranean port cities of Alexandria and Damietta. Its intermediary location made it a transit point between Cairo and the Mediterranean, as well as a common stopping point for movement across North Africa to and from the Ḥijaz and Levant regions in particular. In fact, it was so common for travelers to stop in Tanta on the way to perform the *ḥajj* that the city earned the title Gate to the Pilgrimage (*Bāb al-Ḥajj* or *Bāb al-Nabī*).²⁹ Tanta was integrated into Egypt’s modern infrastructural network in 1856 with the establishment of a major railroad station that served as the primary route from Cairo to Alexandria. However, even before the opening of the railway station, Tanta was a site of movement and transit for travelers, pilgrims, merchants, and scholars who made use of the city’s covered marketplace and numerous caravanserais.

In his autobiography, al-Tantawi emphasizes movement in his description of his early life in and around Tanta. His father’s job as a merchant required that he be on the move between

²⁸ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography.”

²⁹ EI², “Ṭanṭa.”

towns in the Nile Delta, and al-Tantawi would stay with his maternal extended family in nearby al-Ṣāfiya, the birthplace of his mother³⁰ Al-Tantawi describes Tanta as a city on the rise, developing and eclipsing in size and wealth neighboring towns of Maḥallat Marḥūm and Maḥallat al-Kubrā. The rise of Tanta and its fame rests on the Sufi saint (*majdhūb*) al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Badawī³¹ (d. 1276), whose tomb, shrine, and eponymous mosque are located in the heart the city. In 1769, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr³² (1728–1773) rebuilt the Aḥmadī Mosque in Tanta and ordered the construction of the *Qaysāriyya*,³³ thus linking the institution of learning with the commerce of the marketplace.

Early Intellectual Formation in Tanta

Literary and intellectual exchange are central facets of al-Tantawi’s scholarly life. One can chart his intellectual (trans)formation by examining his autobiography and correspondence in conjunction with other sources preserved on the manuscripts of his teachers and colleagues. These other sources include his *taqārīz* (encomia for texts or authors written on manuscripts); *ta’ālīq* (comments added to manuscripts); *ḥawāshī* (glosses, usually on commentaries of other texts); and *ijāzāt* (permission to transmit texts). Al-Tantawi’s early life sheds light on the culture of learning and the role of Tanta that has often been overshadowed by its much more widely

³⁰ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography,” Appendix I.

³¹ For the life of al-Badawī and the history of his Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*), Cf., Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Āshūr, *Al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Badawī: Shaykh wa-Ṭarīquh* (Cairo: Al-Dār al-Miṣriyya lil-Ta’līf wal-Tarjama, 1966); Al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṭu‘ayma, *Ḥayāt al-Sayyid al-Badawī* (Cairo: Al-Dār al-Qawmiyya lil-Ṭibā‘a wal-Nashr, 1966); Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, *Al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Badawī: un grand saint de l’Islam égyptien* (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1994).

³² A powerful Mamlūk leader who was exiled by his general, Abū Dhahab (1735–1775).

³³ The Qaysāriyya was a large covered marketplace in which merchants could set up shops. Additionally, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr built a *maqṣūra* in the Aḥmadī Mosque and endowed it with many *awqāf*. EI², “Ṭanṭa.”

known and studied counterpart, al-Azhar. After al-Azhar, the Aḥmadī Mosque was the most important place of learning in Egypt, specializing in recitation (*qirā'a*) and memorization (*ḥifẓ*), two aspects of learning that are addressed below.³⁴

At age six, al-Tantawi began attending school (*maktab* or *kuttāb*) in Tanta to memorize the Qur'ān and *mutūn* (didactic texts on which commentaries and glosses are written). Of the latter, he mentions two canonical works, one a versified work of grammar (*naḥw*), Ibn Mālik's (d. 1274) *Alfiyya*, and another on Shāfi'ī jurisprudence, and al-Bayḍāwī's (d. 1286) *Minhāj al-Wuṣūl ilā 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*.³⁵ Al-Tantawi identifies the Qur'ān and these two examples of very commonly memorized texts in the earliest phase of his education, from age six to ten. Al-Tantawi distinguishes the next stage of education as acquiring new knowledge ("ta'allum 'ilm"). The term signals a shift from memorizing to comprehending texts through reading commentaries and glosses. He attended lessons given by Muḥammad al-Kūmī and Muḥammad Abū al-Najā³⁶ on Ibn al-Qāsim al-Ghazzī's (d. 1512) *Fath al-Qarīb*, a commentary of Abū Shujā's (d. 1196) popular Shāfi'ī primer, *al-Taqrīb*.³⁷ Furthermore, he studied the commentary by al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī (d. 1342), *Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ*, itself a reworking and expansion of al-Baghawī's (d.

³⁴ Anthropologists have examined in-depth the practices associated with these modes of learning, perhaps most famously in Brinkley Messick's study of the Yemeni context. Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Khaled El-Rouayheb's groundbreaking work on practices of knowledge transmission examines an earlier period, Khaled El-Rouayheb "The Rise of 'Deep Reading' in Early Modern Ottoman Scholarly Culture," in *World Philology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015)

³⁵ Al-Tantawi refers to it as *Matn Minhaj fī 'Ilm al-Fiqh* in his autobiography.

³⁶ Cf. 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn: Tarājim Muṣannif al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1993), no. 16239, no. 11566. He was also the likely the father of 'Abd al-Hādī Najā al-Abyārī (1821–1888), later student of al-Tantawi. Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 120.

³⁷ Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī composed a widely studied *ḥāshiya* on the same text.

1122) compilation of *ḥadīth* entitled *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunna*. Taken together, these two Shāfi‘ī scholastic works of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* indicate a common intellectual and religious education of early 19th century Egypt.

The question of how these texts were transmitted is difficult to determine in the context of early 19th century Tanta. However, by drawing on sources that describe typical or prescribed configurations of oral, aural, and written practices, we can put forward a sketch, however tentative, of the modes by which texts were transmitted. *Qirā’a* (recitation) is paramount in this process, which included listening, repetition, and perhaps note taking.³⁸ This distinction is emphasized in his autobiography, when he states that “there is no Qur’ān study but Aḥmadī and no learning but Azharī.”³⁹ Al-Tantawi places the oral and aural learning of Tanta in opposition to the *‘ilm* of Cairo. For al-Tantawi, as will be discussed below, *‘ilm* was intimately tied to language, grammar, and ultimately literature.

During al-Tantawi’s time in Tanta in the 1810s and 1820s, Mehmed Ali’s Egypt had yet to set regulations on mosque and *maktab* education. It was not until 1837 that Mehmed Ali established the Department of Public Instruction (*Dīwān al-Madāris*) to regulate the *makātib*.⁴⁰ We should accordingly view Tanta and its *maktab* as a site of learning, mixing, and exchange rather than a regulated institution, as it would gradually become in the second half of the 19th century.

³⁸ Cf., Yacoub Artin, *L’Instruction publique en Égypte* (Paris : Leroux, 1890), 46-9.

³⁹ لا قرآن إلا أحمدى ولا علم إلا أزهرى Al-Ṭanṭawī, “Autobiography.”

⁴⁰ Cf., Aḥmad ‘Izzat ‘Abd al-Karīm, *Tārīkh al-Ta’līm fī ‘Aṣr Muḥammad ‘Alī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1938), 82-122.

Between Aḥmadī and Azharī: From Tanta to Cairo and Back

A central site of Tanta's literary and scholarly world is its festival (*mawlid*, Colloquial Arabic, *mūlid*).⁴¹ The *mawlid* was rumored to be the largest anywhere, attracting crowds of people from all over Egypt and beyond to celebrate on the plains just outside the burgeoning town. The *mawlid* in Tanta was not merely a site for revelry or debauchery, as it is so frequently portrayed by European travelers; in fact, it occupies an important and often unrecognized position in the transmission of knowledge in 18th and 19th century Egypt. For example, the arguably most prominent and well-connected scholar of 18th century Egypt, Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1790), notes in his *Mu'jam al-Mukhtaṣṣ*—a compendium of biographies of his scholarly peers—the hundreds of occasions when he transmitted texts at the “customary festivals” (“*mawālid mu'tāda*”) in Tanta.⁴²

Although al-Tantawi did not spend much of his adult life in Tanta, the language and culture of the Nile Delta remained important to him. In his sole brief trip back to Egypt from Russia in 1844, he attended the *mawlid* in Tanta where he recited a poem describing his unsuccessful attempt at finding his friend and colleague 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣafaṭī al-Sharqāwī (d. 1848).⁴³ Regarding the *mawālid*, al-Tantawi emphasizes commerce—as the merchants exchanged goods, the scholars exchanged knowledge. Many scholars (*'ulamā'*), jurists (*fuqahā'*),

⁴¹ For a history of Tanta's *mawālid*, see Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, *Histoire d'un pèlerinage légendaire en Islam: le mouled de Tantâ du XIII^e siècle à nos jours* (Paris: Aubier, 2004).

⁴² Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mukhtaṣṣ: Yaḥṭawī 'alā Tarājim Akthar min Sitmi'a min A'yān al-Qarn al-Thānī 'Ashar al-Hijrī* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyya lil-Ṭibā'a wal-Nashr wal-Tawzī', 2006). Stefan Reichmuth charts the intellectual life of Egypt for his generation during which the role of the *mawlid* was significant, Stefan Reichmuth *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi* (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2009).

⁴³ The poem is preserved in al-Safaṭī's unpublished *dīwān* and printed in Ḥusayn, “Muḥammad 'Ayyād al-Ṭantāwī,” 123-4.

and reciters (*qurrā'*)” would attend the grand festivities, which lasted one week. Even after settling in Cairo, al-Tantawi would frequently return to Tanta to visit family and to participate in the *mawālīd*, where he met with scholars to study.

At age 13, al-Tantawi completed his primary education in Tanta. Unlike his brother Muṣṭafā—who followed in their father’s footsteps and became a merchant—al-Tantawi chose to continue his education at al-Azhar in Cairo. He moved to the capital with his uncle where he studied under prominent ‘*ulamā'*, of whom he mentions only Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī (1783–1860) by name in his autobiography. Cairo had more opportunities for the study of *naḥw*, as he noted “I only studied about three lessons of *naḥw* before travelling [to Cairo], because it is rare in Tanta.”⁴⁴ The study of *naḥw* is an importance point of differentiation that al-Tantawi draws between Tanta and Cairo. In writing about his transition from Tanta to Cairo, al-Tantawi states again of *naḥw* that “there is no doubt that my learning (*ta'allum*) for three years in Tanta, even with play (*la'ib*), imparted in me some comprehension (*ba'd fahm*). I grasped, in particular, *naḥw*, etc., more than I did *fiqh*.”⁴⁵ His aforementioned teacher in Tanta, Muḥammad Abū al-Najā, was in fact a specialist in *naḥw*⁴⁶ in the conventional signification of the term, denoting grammar, especially syntax.⁴⁷ Based on the texts he studied, it is reasonable to conclude that *naḥw* refers not just to grammar but to the linguistic sciences in the broader sense.

⁴⁴ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography.” ولم أحضر نحوًا إلا نحو ثلاثة دروس قبل سفري لأن النحو قليل في طنطا

⁴⁵ ولا شك أن تعلم الثلاثة سنين في طنطا وإن كان مع العب أكسب لي بعض فهم فكنت أفهم خصوصًا في النحو وغيره أكثر من الفقه Ibid.

⁴⁶ He wrote a *hāshiya* in 1808 on Khālīd al-Azharī’s *sharḥ* of al-Ājurrūmiyya, which was posthumously published in 1867. Muḥammad Abū al-Najā, *Hāshiya ‘alā Sharḥ Khālīd al-Azharī ‘alā Matn al-Ājurrūmiyya fī ‘Ilm al-‘Arabiyya* (Cairo: Al-Maṭba‘a al-Khayriyya, 1867).

⁴⁷ Interestingly, in the handwritten draft of his autobiography, al-Tantawi had used the term rational/intellectual sciences (*‘ulūm ‘aqliyya*) instead of *naḥw*. Rational/intellectual sciences—fields of

An examination of the texts he studied in Cairo from ages 13 to 18 include a wide, though not uncommon, variety of genres in the rational, linguistic, and religious sciences. In the array of texts he studied, it was *naḥw* that al-Tantawi highlights as his forte, positioning it in opposition to *fiqh*, from which, as we will see, he gradually distanced himself. Many of the scholars of al-Azhar did not believe he had sufficient mastery of *fiqh* in order to teach it. He himself wrote in his autobiography that “many of the people (‘*amma*) of al-Azhar claimed that I did not know *fiqh*, and they were correct, as I forgot it after abandoning its study.”⁴⁸ His willingness to admit quite boldly his own inadequate knowledge of *fiqh* is notable and hints at where al-Tantawi’s intellectual interests and priorities would come to develop.

A strong command of linguistic sciences were the tools of ‘*ulamā*’ in general, be they jurists, exegetes, administrators, editors, or teachers. Al-Tantawi’s self-proclaimed predilection for the linguistic sciences is contrasted with the religious sciences that make up the majority of the texts taught at al-Azhar in the 1820s.⁴⁹ The study of *naḥw* entailed a detailed knowledge of Arabic’s structures and patterns, and how its units relate to each other in form, content, and meaning. *Naḥw*, in the case of al-Tantawi, was the scholastic preamble to the study of *adab*, which would come to dominate his career in Egypt and Russia.

knowledge pursued by human intellect (‘*aql*)—is a broader category that typically encompasses *naḥw*. Saint Petersburg University MSS 786, folio 66.

⁴⁸ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography.” كان كثير من عامة أهل الأزهر يظنون أنني لا أعرف الفقه وقد صدقوا فأني بترك مزاولته ضيعت

⁴⁹ Heyworth-Dunne provides a detailed list of al-Azhar’s “curricula,” culled from al-Jabartī and other sources. J. Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt* (London: Luzac and Co, 1939), 66.

At the age of 18, after five years of living in Cairo, al-Tantawi's father died in Tanta, ushering in two years of deep sadness that, according to his autobiography, stripped him of his focus and sent him back to live in the town of his youth.⁵⁰ During these two years spent back in Tanta, several sources indicate that he remained quite active intellectually, even though he describes the period as “without benefit” (“*bi-lā fā'ida*”) in his autobiography. During this trying period, he wrote a brief commentary on his sole work on the topic of inheritance (*'ilm al-mīrāth*),⁵¹ a versified text (*manẓūma*), entitled *Mushtahā al-Albāb 'alā Muntahā al-Ārāb*, in which he describes the sorrows clouding his mind in a comment on the first folio, “I began [the text] despite my sullied mind, genuine fears, and the arrival of fate's vicissitudes, as if I were a ball cast away by time's mallet.”⁵² Similar expressions of mourning are found in al-Tantawi's gloss (*ḥāshiya*) on *al-Kāfī fī 'ilma al-'Arūd wal-Qawāfī* by Ibn Shu'ayb al-Qinā'ī (d. 1454),⁵³ completed just months later. However, in this text, a more resolute al-Tantawi now defends himself against fate's cruelty, ultimately showing gratitude for the vicissitudes (*ṣurūf*) as they allowed him to write the text.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography.” *تكدت بسبب ذلك نحو سنتين... عراني شغل البال*

⁵¹ Perhaps the material consequences of his father's death motivated him to study this topic.

⁵² وقد شرعت فيه مع ما بي من تكدر البال وصفاء الأوجال وطروق الحدثان كأنني كرة طرحت بصوالجة الزمان Saint Petersburg MSS 820. Also printed in Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 120.

⁵³ Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 121. Muḥammad al-Damanhūrī (d. 1871) wrote a three verse *taqrīz* on al-Tantawi's *ḥāshiya* published in Maḥfūz, “Muḥammad 'Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī,” 101. He later published his own gloss on the same text. Muḥammad Damanhūrī, *Al-Ḥāshiya al-Kubrā 'alā Matn al-Kāfī fī 'Ilma al-'Arūd wal-Qawāfī* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1868). Not to be confused with Aḥmad al-Damanhūrī, one of Egypt's most respected scholars of 18th century.

⁵⁴ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography.” *شكرت هذه الصروف حيث أتيت لي فيها رقم هذه الحروف*

It would seem that these two years in Tanta were more productive than al-Tantawi suggests in his autobiography. These years of mourning provided a crucial opportunity for him to (re)connect with the ‘*ulamā*’ in Tanta, in particular Muṣṭafā al-Qināwī, the attendant (*khādim*)⁵⁵ of the Aḥmadī Mosque. In a manuscript held at the library of ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī al-Saqqā’, al-Qināwī offers al-Tantawi an impressive *ijāza* to teach *ḥadīth*, including *al-Kutub al-Sitta*. The *ijāza* was published in 1925 in the notes to an article in *Majallat al-Zahrā*.⁵⁶ According to the *ijāza*, Muṣṭafā al-Qināwī had received permission to transmit these texts from the 18th century luminary Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī.⁵⁷

Cairo

Adab and al-Azhar

Al-Tantawi’s keen interest in the literary sciences is evident in the types of texts he read, transmitted, edited, or taught to both fellow Egyptian scholars and orientalists. In his intellectual genealogy we see strong linkages to the intellectual traditions of the 18th century. Interestingly, in his autobiography, he touts himself as the first to teach at al-Azhar the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122) as well as al-Zawzanī’s (d. 1093) famous commentary on the *Mu‘allaqāt*. The texts that al-Tantawi used to study pre-Islamic poetry are preserved among his manuscripts. In the colophons and marginalia of the texts, it is clear that he began reading them in the 1830s—if he

⁵⁵ He is sometimes erroneously referred to as the *shaykh* (here: leader or rector) of the mosque. For a list of the *shuyūkh* of the Ahmadi Mosque Cf., Ṭu‘ayma, *Ḥayāt al-Sayyid al-Badawī*, 108. For the duties of the *khādim* see the index of F. de Jong, *Ṭuruq and Ṭuruq-linked Institutions in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

⁵⁶ Al-Khaṭīb, “Al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī,” 424.

⁵⁷ However, I did not find this Muṣṭafā al-Qināwī in al-Zabīdī’s own records of his colleagues in *al-Mu‘jam al-Mukhtaṣṣ*.

was the first to teach these at al-Azhar, it begs the question where did he originally study them and with whom? In one instance, with the manuscript of *Lāmiyyat al-Shanfarā*⁵⁸ there is a note that the copyist (*nāsikh*) was ‘Abdallāh al-Idkāwī (d. 1770), the prominent but understudied scholar and poet. This mention of al-Idkāwī, and his poetic attestations (*shawāhid*) that fill the margins of the text, are an indication of the link between al-Tantawī’s study of pre-Islamic poetry and the literary life of Egypt in the mid-18th century. Al-Idkāwī was a close colleague of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, who recorded a large amount of al-Idkāwī’s poetry in his *al-Mu‘jam al-Mukhtaṣṣ*.⁵⁹ This link corroborates the intellectual genealogy provided in the aforementioned *ijāza* of Ibrāhīm al-Qināwī. Putting aside the question of transmission—which is further pursued in Chapter II in the context of a joint excavation of the past with European orientalists—let us return to the texts that al-Tantawī claims to have taught for the first time at al-Azhar.

The *Maqāmāt* and *Mu‘allaqāt* stand out as two of the foundational corpora of scholastic *adab*. Both possess didactic qualities in that they impart the depths of the Arabic lexicon to the student through rhyme and meter. The two widely read and commented upon texts reflect two themes in the literary worldview of al-Tantawī. The *Maqāmāt* point to al-Tantawī’s interest in explicitly fictional literature, which includes popular *khurāfa* stories, such as the fables of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and the tales of the *Arabian Nights*. The issue of fictionality aside, the genre of the *Maqāma* contains rhymed prose (*saj‘*) and poetry, which especially in al-Ḥarīrī’s case, blends the text’s didactic character with picaresque narrative. The *Maqāma* as a genre had also become an increasingly popular text among European orientalists after Silvestre de Sacy’s inclusion of it in

⁵⁸ Saint Petersburg University MSS 780, 781.

⁵⁹ Al-Zabīdī, *Mu‘jam al-Mukhtaṣṣ*, 275-99.

his language learning books.⁶⁰ As for the *Mu‘allaqāt*, they point to al-Tantawi’s interest in lexicography. I do not think it is a coincidence that he tutored orientalist on these topics as well. While these interests, themes, and registers might be understood as partially aesthetic preferences, they were also a matter of livelihood for al-Tantawi and his orientalist peers, as I discuss in Chapter II.

Besides the *Maqāmāt* and *Mu‘allaqāt*, al-Tantawi does not mention reading or teaching works of *adab* in his autobiography. Nor does he mention the colloquial poetry he read in his youth and the manuscripts of this kind bearing his name on their colophons.⁶¹ His diverse literary production reveals a range of interests in topics distinctly related to *adab* and colloquial Arabic. For example, he read Yūsuf al-Maghribī’s (d. 1611) *Daf‘ al-Iṣr ‘an Kalām Ahl Miṣr*, an Egyptian colloquial lexicon, first published in Moscow on the basis of al-Tantawi’s manuscript in 1968.⁶² Furthermore, we find in his library minor comments on manuscripts he collected by poets such as Abū ‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī (d. 1057), Ibn Nubāta (d. 1366), Ibn Abī Ḥajala (d. 1375), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khafājī (d. 1659), and al-Maqqarī (d. 1632), in addition to his own extensive *mawāwīl*,⁶³ compilations of proverbs, and tales (*ḥikāyāt*).

⁶⁰ Chapter IV examines language learning books, including al-Tantawi’s own work published in 1848.

⁶¹ Saint Petersburg University MSS 821. Cf. *Dīwān* of Ibn ‘Afīf al-Tilimsānī (d. 1289). Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 212.

⁶² Yūsif al-Maghribī, *Daf‘ al-Iṣr ‘an Kalām Ahl Miṣr* (Moscow: Idārat al-Taḥrīr al-Ra’īsiyya lil-Ādāb al-Sharqiyya, 1968). Kirillina Svetlana, “Arab Scholars from the Ottoman Empire in Russian Universities in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries,” in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West* (London: IB Taurus, 2005), 165-78.

⁶³ Many of these poems by al-Ṭanṭāwī are published in his language learning book, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, 177-97.

Intellectual Network: ‘*ulamā*’ and *udabā*’

To further plumb the depths of al-Tantawi’s intellectual formation, one can examine his relationship to two of his teachers, who were themselves among al-Azhar’s most accomplished scholars, Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār (1766–1835) and Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī (1783–1860). Al-‘Aṭṭār has received considerable attention by scholars; Peter Gran’s study opened many doors for thinking about al-‘Aṭṭār in connection with broader social and economic forces, whereas Shaden Tageldin examines his literary encounter with the French as seduction in his *Maqāma Faransiyya*.⁶⁴ Al-‘Aṭṭār’s interaction with the French prompted his decision to travel and study in the Levant and Istanbul (1803–1815). When he returned to Egypt, he patently earned the trust of Mehmed Ali who appointed him as chief editor of his newspaper, *al-Waqā’i ‘al-Miṣriyya*. Given that Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār’s interest in *adab* and Maghribī forms of literature (such as the *muwashshaḥ* and the *zajal*) has been well documented, it is reasonable to speculate that he may have influenced al-Tantawi in studying *adab*.⁶⁵ However, it is unclear how much influence al-‘Aṭṭār had on al-Tantawi. Based on al-Tantawi’s manuscript collection, he studied al-‘Aṭṭār’s *ḥāshiya* on *al-*

⁶⁴ Tageldin sees in al-‘Aṭṭār’s *Maqāma Faransiyya* “a feminization of the colonizer” by whom he is lured. See Tageldin, *Disarming Words*, 66-107. An English translation of the *Maqāma Faransiyya* is found in Gran, *Islamic Roots*, 189-91. Gran’s work proved quite irksome to the Dutch Arabist J. de Jong, prompting him to stir an interesting, if pugnacious, debate about *Islamic Roots*. F. de Jong and P. Gran, “On Peter Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840: A Review Article with Author’s Reply*,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14, no. 3 (1982): 381-99. F. de Jong, “The Itinerary of Hasan al-‘Attār (1766–1835): A Reconsideration and its Implications,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 28, no. 1 (1983): 99-128.

⁶⁵ Taymūr, “Al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ayyād,” 388. Ḥasan, “‘Arabī fī Bilād al-Ṣaqāliba,” 33. Al-Shayyāl, “Duktūr Perron wal-Shaykhān,” 198.

Azhariyya, where he praises the acumen of the older teacher.⁶⁶ Perhaps more so than al-Tantawi, his orientalist colleagues viewed al-‘Aṭṭār as an exceptional figure among Egypt’s ‘*ulamā*’.⁶⁷

One can discern a tension between the religious and literary branches of knowledge in the texts of al-Tantawi. In the case of al-‘Aṭṭār, we know far more about the backlash he received from al-Azhar⁶⁸ than we do about any conflicts al-Tantawi may have had. Al-Tantawi does not appear to have been embroiled in the conflicts between al-‘Aṭṭār and his other teacher Ḥasan al-Quwaysinī (d. 1838). Possibly due to his association with al-‘Aṭṭār and their shared penchant for Maghribī popular poetry with motifs of ribaldry (*muḥūn*), Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl and others make the claim that he was accused by his colleagues of disbelief and apostasy (“*al-kufr wal-ilḥād*”).⁶⁹ However, without any evidence to substantiate this, it would be misguided to presuppose that al-Tantawi faced these accusations on account of his connection to al-‘Aṭṭār.

⁶⁶ شيخنا خاتمة المحققين والنظار مولانا حسن العطار Al-Tantawi writes this on his *Taqyīdāt ‘alā Sharḥ al-Azhariyya*, Saint Petersburg MSS 847, after stating that he had made his corrections consulting al-‘Aṭṭār’s commentary on the same text, Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār, *Hāshiyat Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār ‘alā Sharḥ al-Azhariyya fī ‘Ilm al-Naḥw* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1867). Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 123.

⁶⁷ For Example, Fulgence Fresnel frets that “because the schaykh Alattar has died” that no Egyptians aside from al-Tantawi and Rifā‘ know their own literature and history. Fulgence Fresnel, *Lettres sur l’histoire des Arabes avant l’islamisme* (Paris: T. Barrois Père et B. Duprat, 1836-38), viii. Edward Lane had said of al-‘Aṭṭār that “in theology and jurisprudence, he is not so deeply versed as some of his contemporaries...But he is eminently accomplished in polite literature.” Lane glosses “polite literature” as ‘*ilm al-adab*’ in a footnote. Edward Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, Written in Egypt during the Years 1833, -34, and -35, Partly from Notes Made during a Former Visit to that Country in the Years 1825, -26, -27, and -28*, (London: C. Knight and Co., 1836), 274-5.

⁶⁸ For al-‘Aṭṭār’s conflicts at al-Azhar see Peter Gran, *Islamic Roots*, 127-8; Indira Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 23-8.

⁶⁹ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-Tarjama wal-Ḥaraka al-Thaqāfiyya fī ‘Aṣr Muḥammad ‘Alī* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1951), 226.

Based on his preference for *adab* and Maghribī popular poetry, al-‘Aṭṭār would appear to be al-Tantawi’s most influential teacher as a young adult. However, al-Tantawi most explicitly connects himself to Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī in his autobiography, stating that “most of my studying was with the shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī,” who in his view was “the most learned of the Azharīs now without contest.”⁷⁰ This might seem surprising given that al-Bājūrī focused on the religious and rational sciences and avoided both *adab* and consorting with foreigners in Cairo.⁷¹ Al-Tantawi composed a praise poem to congratulate al-Bājūrī on his appointment to position of Rector of al-Azhar (*Shaykh al-Azhar*),⁷² which he held from 1847 until his death in 1860. At the time of al-Bājūrī’s rise at al-Azhar, al-Tantawi was himself ascending among orientalist in Saint Petersburg. It is perhaps unsurprising then that al-Tantawi would emphasize his connection to al-Bājūrī, as being linked to a scholar of such high stature at al-Azhar would have afforded him authority and authenticity among his colleagues in Europe. This is not to say, however, that al-Tantawi was not influenced by al-Bājūrī or that he only emphasized him for professional advancement; there is textual evidence drawing multiple linkages between the two men.⁷³

Although al-Tantawi’s connection to al-Bājūrī was likely somewhat exaggerated, we can discern in his writings that he was able to sustain relationships with acquaintances and colleagues

⁷⁰ غالب حضوري على الشيخ إبراهيم الباجوري وهو أعلم أهل الأزهر الآن بلا نزاع Al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography.”

⁷¹ Aaron Spevack, *The Archetypal Sunnī Scholar: Law, Theology, and Mysticism in the Synthesis of Al-Bājūrī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 7-29. See also EI³, “Al-Bājūrī, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad.”

⁷² Al-Tantawi’s praise poem for al-Bājūrī was printed at the end of Gottwaldt’s clarifications and corrections for Kosegarten’s German translation of al-Tantawi’s autobiography. Gottwaldt, “Aus einem Briefe des Bibliothekar Dr. Gottwaldt,” 245-8.

⁷³ Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 149, 151.

in Egypt, despite the barriers of both geographical distance and scholarly difference. Al-Tantawi's connection to Egypt did not wane, even when he was geographically distant from it. In Saint Petersburg, as we will see, he garnered legitimacy and authority through his connection to al-Azhar in particular. He saw al-Azhar as a university, place of learning just like those he encountered in Saint Petersburg, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter IV. For now, let us turn away from al-Azhar and examine a newly formed project of Mehmed Ali's Egypt, the Bulaq Press, to understand more fully al-Tantawi's connection to the translation movement and serving the Pasha.

Refusing to Serve the Pasha

When al-Tantawi returned from Tanta to Cairo in 1829 and resumed his work at al-Azhar, a new phenomenon was gaining momentum in the Cairene scene—the printing press. The printing press is generally viewed by literary historians as a critical turning point in the emergence of the *Nahḍa*. Al-Tantawi's reaction to the Bulaq Press, however, tells a different story, and his critique of it sheds light on his view of the Pasha and workings of the early stages of the translation movement.

Bringing the Printing Press to Egypt

The printing press, according to Benedict Anderson and others, stands as an important marker of nation building, because it facilitates the circulation of discourses in service of the state. Furthermore, modern print culture typically standardizes a temporal reference through regular circulation of writings that establishes a collective understanding of time for a

community.⁷⁴ Mehmed Ali's use of the press contrasts sharply with the preceding description of its potentially unifying effect. The publications were generally not intended for Egyptians, and as we will see through the lens al-Tantawi's criticisms, the Bulaq Press did not serve these purposes in its early stages, nor was it the harbinger of a collective nationalism.

Many Egyptians first witnessed the output of the printing press during the French invasion of Egypt (1798–1801). After arriving on the northern shore, Napoleon's army distributed pamphlets in error-riddled Arabic urging Egyptian obedience and warning against dissent.⁷⁵ When the French army left three years later, they took the presses with them. The impact of the French invasion remains a contested issue for literary and political historians alike. The French army's practice of printing often aggressive and coercive proclamations directed to all Egyptians (*"kāffat ahālī Miṣr"*) was unlikely to have inspired awe in the new printing medium.⁷⁶ Furthermore, in his chronicle of the events, al-Jabartī displays no admiration for the printing machinery, and omits any mention of it among the French's advancements in technical sciences.⁷⁷

The possible motives behind Mehmed Ali's Bulaq venture are reflected in its varied uses, including to provide educational manuals for the medical and military schools, to follow in the

⁷⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2001).

⁷⁵ Al-Jabartī wrote a staunch rebuttal and correction of the Arabic text. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, *Tārīkh Muddat al-Faransīs bi-Miṣr*, ed. S. Moreh (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 7-10.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 95-7. Tageldin interprets the language of proclamation as a form of seduction that lures Egyptians into thinking the French are indeed fellow Muslims saviors who will fight against tyrannical Mamlūk rule. While that is how the French see it and present it, I think most Egyptians were less seduced by such a proclamation than they were concerned about the invasion, instability, and violence. Tageldin, *Disarming Words*, 33-66.

⁷⁷ Al-Jabartī, *Tārīkh Muddat al-Faransīs*, 92-3.

steps of Istanbul and Europe, and to facilitate the circulation of administrative decrees.⁷⁸ To acquire the scientific and technical knowledge necessary to operate the press, Mehmed Ali sent a study mission to Europe, in this case Milan, headed by Niqūlā Musābikī for training in technical aspects of printing.⁷⁹ Upon his return, he would be in charge of the press from 1821 until his death in 1831.

In a different mission, the Pasha sent Osman Nureddin (d. 1835) to Pisa and Livorno in 1809 (and later to Paris) on the suggestion of Joseph Bokti⁸⁰ to study a variety of mechanical sciences.⁸¹ The printing project began in earnest upon the missions' return. The proverbial revolving door of educational missions sent to acquire technical and scientific knowledge from Europe is a crucial aspect of institution building under Mehmed Ali. Al-Tantawi's and Rifā'a's trips to Russia and France, respectively, are part of that system, though they came about under different circumstances, and are treated extensively in Chapters III and IV.

Mehmed Ali, who highly valued Nureddin on the basis of his studies in Italy, had reportedly asked of him, "Now that you've acquired all that learning abroad, why don't you create a school of your own right here with the means at your disposal? When your students have

⁷⁸ Abū al-Futūḥ Raḍwān, *Tārīkh Maṭbaʿat Būlāq wa-Lamḥa fī Tārīkh al-Ṭibāʿa fī Buldān al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Amīriyya, 1953), 27-42. Raḍwan summarizes the various reasons for establishing the Bulaq through contemporary printed sources.

⁷⁹ Cf., ʿUmar Ṭūsūn, *Al-Baʿathāt al-ʿIlmiyya fī ʿAhd Muḥammad Alī thumma fī ʿAhd al-Abbās al-Awwal wa-Saʿīd* (Alexandria: Maṭbaʿat Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, 1934), 10.

⁸⁰ Joseph Bokti was Consul-General of Sweden. The Bokti family were Christian merchants from Syria who played an important role in orchestrating Mehmed Ali's affairs.

⁸¹ J. Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction*, 105. Afaf Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 168.

attained a certain level of proficiency, I shall then send them to Paris.”⁸² Mehmed Ali insisted his fellow Turk, Nureddin, put to service the technical competencies gained abroad for the fledgling state and to prepare ostensibly Egyptian students for further missions. While in France, Nureddin became acquainted with Edme-François Jomard (1777–1862), a connection he would maintain, which would ultimately prove instrumental in orchestrating the 1826 mission that sent Rifā‘a to Paris.

Nureddin, during his travels in Italy and France, procured hundreds of books as instructed by the Pasha, who compensated him for them.⁸³ These French and Italian books of broadly ranging topics, along with some ordered from Istanbul, would form the basis of the library for the *Madrasat al-Handasa* (School of Engineering). The library, deemed an “interesting experiment” by Heyworth-Dunne, contained thousands of French, Italian, and Ottoman texts. The literature, encyclopedias, manuals, and miscellany mainly of European and Ottoman provenance, were housed in the district of Bulaq, next to the eponymous Press. The school and library, like the Press, were established in 1821. The library constituted a depository of knowledge that would over the years be augmented, rendered into Ottoman and Arabic, transferred to various schools as instructional material, and printed at the Bulaq Press.⁸⁴

⁸² Cited in Alain Silvera, “Edme-François Jomard and Egyptian Reforms in 1839,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 7, no. 3 (1971): 315.

⁸³ J. Heyworth-Dunne, “Printing and Translations under Muhammad ‘Ali of Egypt. The Foundation of Modern Arabic,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1940): 328.

⁸⁴ A second press was established at the Cairo Citadel in 1821/2 for the purpose of printing and circulating a bilingual Turkish-Arabic bulletin of state affairs, *Jurnāl al-Khidwī*. Cf., Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 14-5.

Nureddin, like the books he amassed in the library, moved from Bulaq to other schools in Cairo in the following years. He occupied high-ranking but short-lived positions at the new technical schools specialized in military affairs, especially naval tactics. Additionally, he translated military manuals from French into his native Ottoman tongue.⁸⁵ In the 1820s, Mehmed Ali mediated much of his affairs through his chief of staff, Nureddin, especially relating to printing, education, translating, and military reform.⁸⁶

I draw attention to Nureddin for several reasons. First, he constitutes a useful point of departure for framing al-Tantawi's criticism of the Bulaq Press, and the translation movement more broadly. Second, I do so to highlight the possibilities afforded to a Turk among the first generation of students sent to Europe by Mehmed Ali. It was his travel and acquisition of printing techniques and machinery along with Niqūlā al-Musābikī, (not to mention his choice to return to Egypt) that earned him the trust of the Pasha. With little knowledge of Arabic, he was charged with exceptional, albeit erratic, administrative authority at Bulaq and the first state schools.

Judging from its earliest printings, the Bulaq Press generally sought to serve the practical needs of Mehmed Ali's state-building ventures. The often cited fact that the first book published

⁸⁵ Thomas-Xavier Bianchi, "Catalogue général des livres Arabes, Persans et Turcs imprimés à Boulac, en Égypte, depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie dans ce pays," *JA* 4, no. 2 (1843): 24-61. These books he had brought back from Europe and several of the translation were printed at Bulaq in 1827. Alain Silvera, "The First Egyptian Student Mission to France under Muhammad Ali," *Middle Eastern Studies* 16, no. 2 (1980): 7.

⁸⁶ Nureddin defected to Istanbul in 1835 after his relationship with the viceroy soured over a dispute on how to govern in the island of Crete.

by the press was an Italian-Arabic dictionary⁸⁷ hints at Mehmed Ali's interest in providing means of facilitating translation and shows his early interest in Italy.⁸⁸ However, this dictionary stands as an outlier among the early types of printed texts, which primarily consisted of military, medical, and engineering tracts.⁸⁹ The Bulaq Press printed Ottoman literary texts as well, but with few readers of Ottoman in Egypt, these texts were likely sold and sent to places such as Istanbul and Izmir.⁹⁰ In addition to texts printed for transmitting knowledge, from its inception, the Bulaq Press in Egypt served a distinctly administrative function for Mehmed Ali. It printed the bilingual Turkish-Arabic bulletins about state affairs to inform the administrative class of happenings in other departments of Egypt.

Mehmed Ali's interest in history and biography is reflected in both what the Bulaq Press printed and in a thorough examination of his correspondence with his son Ibrāhīm Pasha.⁹¹ Even though he was illiterate until around age 40, Mehmed Ali often had members of his entourage of advisers and translators read to him from books on military and imperial history. Texts printed at Bulaq include biographies of strongmen rulers he admired, including Alexander the Great,

⁸⁷ Its author, Don Raphael (1759–1831) taught Arabic at the *Madrasat Būlāq* in the early 1820s. Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-Tarjama*, 98. For more on his life, see Charles Bachatly, “Un membre Oriental du premier institut d'Égypte, Don Raphael,” *Bulletin de l'institut d'Égypte* (1935): 237-60.

⁸⁸ French and France would later replace Italian as a language of administration and destination for European-bound missions.

⁸⁹ Bianchi, “Catalogue général,” 24-61.

⁹⁰ Richard N. Verdery, “The Publications of the Bulaq Press under Muhammad ‘Ali of Egypt,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91, no. 1 (1971): 129-32.

⁹¹ Khaled Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali: From Ottoman Governor to Ruler of Egypt* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 102.

Napoleon, Frederick II, as well as Peter the Great and Catherine the Great.⁹² In the early 1830s, roughly 10 years after its establishment, the Bulaq Press began to expand its printing to include more translations of largely French texts translated into Arabic. Upon the return of Rifā‘a’s mission in 1831, a growing trend can be seen in the demand for translations from European languages.⁹³

Al-Tantawi’s Critique of Bulaq: Refusing the Call to Serve

Although al-Tantawi does not lay out his views of the Bulaq Press in an in-depth appraisal, his autobiography gives us enough information to sense of his objection to the press and more specifically the way the translation movement functioned at Bulaq. Al-Tantawi’s view of the translators (*mutarjimīn*) working at the press sheds light on the translation movement in Egypt. Al-Tantawi articulates his views in his autobiography as follows:

وأما خدم الباشا فإني دعيت إليها كثيرا ومع ذلك لم أجد نفسي تميل إليها وذلك
لأسباب منها أن من ذهب إليها لا يقدر أن يكون له درس في الأزهر ومنها أن
أشغالهم مقرفة وذلك أن المترجم يأتي بألفاظ سخيفة لا يفيد معنى فلا يفهم المصحح
منه المعنى إلا بعد شق النفس ومع ذلك فلهم أنفة وتكبر إلخ

⁹² For more on the translation of biographies of Russian rulers into Arabic, see Nicole Khayat, “Historiography and Translation during the Arabic Nahḍa: European History in Arabic,” (PhD diss., University of Haifa, 2016), 128-63. For a detailed list of translated works, see the index of al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-Tarjama*. In an often-repeated account, Robert Salt (1780–1827), British Consul-General and friend of Edward Lane, gave Mehmed Ali a copy of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. The attempt to ingratiate himself fell flat, as the Pasha purportedly scoffed that Machiavelli “was a mere blabber. In Turkish we have two words worth more than this whole book.” James St. John, *Egypt and Mohammed Ali, or, Travels in the Valley of the Nile* (London: Longman, 1834), vol. 2, 454. Maria Nallino draws our attention to the lesser known fact that Mehmed Ali had found Ibn Khaldūn’s writings to be more instructive than Machiavelli. Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali*, 102. See also Elisabetta Benigni, “Translating Machiavelli in Egypt: The Prince and the Shaping of a New Political Vocabulary in the Nineteenth-Century Arab Mediterranean,” in *Machiavelli, Islam and the East* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

⁹³ Raḍwān, *Tārīkh Maṭba‘at Būlāq*, 132-7.

As for serving the Pasha, I was invited to do so often, but did not find myself inclined to it for several reasons: if one does [serve the Pasha], then they cannot give lessons at al-Azhar. Also, their work [at the Bulaq Press] is despicable because the translator provides ridiculous expressions that do not make sense, and accordingly the editor only understands the meaning with great strain. Besides, they display disdain and arrogance, etc.⁹⁴

He adopts a critical stance towards accepting a role working for the Pasha. The two reasons he gives for refusing to serve Mehmed Ali are illuminating in terms of his orientation toward the fledgling state apparatus, in general, and the Bulaq Press, in particular. The first reason is rather straightforward—if he were to work in service of Mehmed Ali, he could not teach at al-Azhar. Whether this was an official policy or rather a reflection of a rift between the *ulamā'* and the Pasha is not clear. In any case, for al-Tantawi, teaching at al-Azhar outweighed any possible advantage of serving Mehmed Ali.

It is important to note that al-Tantawi's explicit criticism of serving the Pasha reflects a position that was strikingly different from many of his better-known contemporaries, including Rifā'a, who had returned from France to serve his country with newly acquired knowledge and expertise in translation. Why was al-Tantawi so opposed to serving the Pasha, especially considering that so many of his scholarly network—Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 1835), Quṭṭa al-ʿAdawī (d. 1864), and Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī (d. 1883)—occupied important positions in the press or translation movement? Even though he was not fit to translate because he lacked requisite knowledge of a second language,⁹⁵ could he not have worked as a corrector (*muṣahhiḥ*) of

⁹⁴ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, "Autobiography."

⁹⁵ He studied French with Fulgence Fresnel in Egypt but admits to not having enough time to finish studying it with him. Al-Ṭanṭāwī, "Autobiography." See Appendix I.

Arabic texts? This position would have required a strong command of Arabic and attention to detail, qualities al-Tantawi and his fellow scholars certainly possessed.⁹⁶

To answer these questions, let us shift to the second reason that al-Tantawi rejects the repeated invitations to serve the Pasha. According to al-Tantawi in the quote above, it was the translator (*mutarjim*) who provides meaningless phrases, thereby rendering the task of the corrector (*muṣaḥḥih*) painstakingly difficult. The sloppiness of the translator is contrasted with the precision of the corrector. This precision with language was an acquired skill that al-Tantawi and his network of ‘*ulamā*’ excelled at and is evident in al-Tantawi’s intellectual formation examined above. Lastly, al-Tantawi’s attack on the character of the translators is noteworthy. In addition to the translators’ sloppy and incomprehensible work, he deems them arrogant and conceited, which hints perhaps at his frustration with the prestige or financial compensation they received.

Al-Tantawi’s criticism of the work of the translator is found elsewhere in his writings as well. We can see in more detail what it is that makes the translation movement so terrible to the point of being silly or ridiculous (“*sakhīf*”) in his eyes, by turning to an example he gives in his travelogue:

ها هنا نكتة لطيفة وهي أن بعض مترجمي مصر ترجم كلمة "بريسكيل"
بالفرنساوية بقوله "بحيث جزيرة" وهذا من ضيق العطن لأن هذا التركيب لا يحسن
في العربية وزاد تعسفا بضم الباء التي هي حرف جر فيكون تصغير بحث وهو
خروج عن البحث...فحق أن يقال له حفظت شيئا وغابت عنك أشياء⁹⁷ والذي ألجأه

⁹⁶ It should be mentioned that in addition to correcting texts, the *muṣaḥḥihīn* also wrote the introductory and concluding remarks. For more on the roles of the *muṣaḥḥihīn* compared to translators and editors (*muḥarrirīn*) in various Egyptian schools, see Al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-Tarjama*, 172-84.

⁹⁷ This is a famous expression and hemistich from Abū Nuwās’s (d. 814) poem, *Da‘‘anka lawmī* (Censure me not). The full verse is: *فقل لمن يدعي في العلم فلسفة حفظت شيئا وغابت عنك أشياء* “Say to

إلى ذلك أن كلمة "بريسك" تترجم تارة ببحيث وقد كان يغنيه عن هذا كله أن يقول
شبه جزيرة

Here is a nice amusing remark: Some of Egypt's translators translate the word 'presqu'île' as *buḥayth jazīra*. This is narrow minded because this structure is unsuitable in Arabic, and he arbitrarily added a *ḍamma* on [the letter] *bā'*—which is a preposition—making it a diminutive of *baḥth*, which is an [incorrect] aberration from the word *baḥth*. It should be said to [the translator] 'You have learned something but are ignorant of much more.' What compelled him to [translate it this way] is that the word 'presque' is sometimes translated as *bi-ḥaythu*. He would have done away with all this by saying *shibh jazīra*.⁹⁸

Here al-Tantawi shows the types of errors that he denounces and sees as foundational deficiencies in the translation movement more broadly. The French word for peninsula, *presqu'île*, (literally, 'almost island') aligns quite closely with the common term for it in Arabic, *shibh jazīra* (semi-island). However, the translator instead rendered it in an incomprehensible, if unintentionally humorous, manner. The result is the type of words and expressions like *buḥayth jazīra* which the correctors would be left to decipher. The quotations of poetry that al-Tantawi deploys further provide an explanation for his assessment of the translators as arrogant. As he saw it, they acquired new knowledge ignorantly, and achieved success because of it.

Unlike others who deem printing and translation as early markers of progress in 19th century Egypt, al-Tantawi scoffed at it. He continued his teaching at al-Azhar and increasingly collaborated with orientalist in the 1830s. He engaged with texts, teaching, and literary production outside of the purview of Mehmed Ali's projects and the translation movement in Egypt. I connect his sharp criticism of serving the Pasha to both his disappointment in the quality of their work, and to a broader dissatisfaction with the performance of the growing bureaucracy.

the one who claims of knowledge as reaching philosophy, 'You have learned something, but are ignorant of much more.'"

⁹⁸ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'*, 62. The verse is from a poem by al-Tihāmī (d. 1025). EI² "al-Tihāmī."

As the translation movement began to gain momentum in the early 1830s, al-Tantawi singles out what he considers its glaring deficiency—the translators are not adequately producing Arabic materials that were meaningful or even comprehensible to him. Furthermore, it might explain why he worked with orientalist instead, despite the increasing need for editors and correctors of Arabic.

Conclusion

In terms of texts studied and transmitted, the start of al-Tantawi's intellectual life was not particularly distinct from other aspiring Egyptian '*ulamā*' of his time. The *maktab* of Tanta was the center of his early learning, where he would acquire the oral mastery of the Qur'ān and *mutūn* (didactic texts on which commentaries and glosses are written). The importance of Tanta as a site of learning should not be overlooked, and it is clear that even though he does not mention them in his autobiography, he was exposed to a wide range of Arabic poetic and literary conventions in his youth and young adulthood. In his autobiography, he sees his relocation to Cairo as a great opportunity to pursue what Tanta lacked—lessons on grammar (*naḥw*). In this chapter, I have contended that to al-Tantawi, grammar, and the linguistic sciences more broadly, represented an emancipatory field of study tied to *adab*, which he situates in opposition to the *fiqh* he abandoned.

If most of the intellectual activities of al-Azhar were in the domains of rational and religious sciences at this time, he had brought, according to his own account, new texts into the circles of study at al-Azhar, such as the *Maqāmat* and *Mu'allaqāt*. Therefore, while he received a common early education, he made use of it in a quite distinct way, seeing merit in studying and teaching texts that others of his time had not. Just as it is crucial to examine the influences that

al-Tantawi embraced and admired, it is important to consider those that he rejected and denounced (e.g., the translators at the Bulaq Press).

Using diverse and previously unanalyzed texts, including an examination of his manuscript collection, this chapter has probed al-Tantawi's relationships to the intellectual genealogies of his teachers and charted his intellectual transformation into an *adab*-centric scholar. But why and how did this transformation transpire? Was it a matter of disposition and the influence of al-ʿAṭṭār and others who are seen as important extensions of the literary trends of the previous generation? Or did other actors influence his path of study? We cannot interpret al-Tantawi's intellectual transformation without also examining the role of the orientalist with whom he collaborated upon returning to Cairo as a young man after two years of mourning in Tanta.

Chapter II: The Excavation of the Past: Al-Tantawi and the Orientalists in Egypt

Introduction

“We sometimes have passages that are quite obscure and distorted, but it is wonderful to see how our erudite shaykh Mohammad Ayyad knows how—with his intellectual microscope—to dive in and resolve these problems.”

-Dr. Nicolas Perron, *Lettre sur Antar*.⁹⁹

This chapter examines the roles of several orientalists with whom al-Tantawi cultivated professional relationships, particularly of note are Edward Lane (1801–1876), Fulgence Fresnel (1795–1855), and more tangentially, Dr. Nicolas Perron (1798–1876). By providing a detailed study of their lives, interests, and aims in Egypt during the 1830s, I show how they, alongside al-Tantawi, engaged in a collaborative excavation of the Arabic literary past. We must carefully situate the orientalists within the context of the constructed identities they imagined for themselves in order to understand not simply their underlying motivations to live in Egypt, but also their extensive literary engagement and collaboration with al-Tantawi. Through these case studies, we can discern al-Tantawi’s entrance into the world of Oriental Studies, in which he would be highly praised and relied upon for decades.

Fulgence Fresnel and Dr. Perron saw themselves as saviors of the downtrodden ‘*ulamā*’ who suffered under Mehmed Ali’s reign. These Frenchmen were concerned with the dissonance and injustice between the Pasha and the Muslim Arab Egyptian scholars whom he ruled. In a sense, the decline they perceived was at once rooted in an Arab-Islamic literary civilizational

⁹⁹ “Nous avons parfois des passages bien obscurs, bien altérés; mais il est merveilleux de voir comment notre savant schaykh Mohammad Ayyad sait, avec son microscope intellectuel, plonger et découvrir dans ces difficultés.” Nicolas Perron, *Lettre sur Antar* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1841), 23.

decline, as well as engendered by the oppressive Pasha's treatment of his locally educated 'ulamā' subjects. Al-Tantawi did not espouse a paradigm of decline, but he did object to Mehmed Ali's vision of literary modernity and the translation movement, as discussed in some detail in Chapter I. Most interestingly, Fresnel and Dr. Perron sought renewal not in excavating an Egyptian or Islamic past, but rather in the rigorous readings, research, and translation of the culture of pre-Islamic Arabia, which they saw as the "true" and "pure" origins of the Arabs.

Edward Lane was very much of the ilk of these Frenchmen, even if his project differed from theirs. Indeed, the reclusive and abstemious British engraver turned orientalist found in the vivacious and indulgent Fresnel one of his most trusted friends, who would come to serve as a key intermediary between al-Tantawi and Lane, as we will see below. Whereas the two Frenchmen looked to pre-Islamic Arabia for inspiration and renewal, Lane felt compelled to record aspects of contemporary Egyptian culture, before its impending extinction or further decline at the hands of its Pasha. This chapter examines Lane's translation and explication of his *One Thousand and One Nights* to show how this British orientalist's presentation of Egypt was mediated through his most important collaborator, al-Tantawi.

Fulgence Fresnel and the Search for the Pre-Islamic Arabian Past

French orientalist Fulgence Fresnel launched al-Tantawi's teaching career soon after arriving in Cairo in 1831. Al-Tantawi, in his autobiography, stresses the important role that the Frenchman played in his life, as the first European he acquainted himself with upon returning to Cairo after two years of mourning in Tanta. As we will see below, it was Fresnel, in conjunction with Russian diplomats, who ultimately facilitated al-Tantawi's invitation to teach Arabic in Saint Petersburg. Before heading to Cairo for the first time at the age of 36, it was not Arabic

literature, but rather translations of Swedish, German, and Chinese¹⁰⁰ works into French that preoccupied Fresnel. Additionally, one can detect his interest in Romantic literature in his choice to translate selections from Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853), a leader of German literary romanticism.¹⁰¹ Ever eclectic in his interests, he also translated a work on chemistry and minerology.¹⁰² After pursuing these topics, Fresnel devoted much of the rest of his professional life to the study of Arabic and Semitics. In his late 20s, Fresnel began studying under French orientalist Silvestre de Sacy (1768–1838) in Paris and at the Maronite College in Rome in preparation for a sojourn in Egypt.

As mentioned above, in 1831 at the age of 36, Fresnel came to Cairo and began a productive and long-lasting relationship with al-Tantawi, who was 16 years his junior.¹⁰³ Fresnel would stay in Cairo until 1837 when he was appointed consul general of Jeddah, though the two remained in correspondence. They primarily read pre-Islamic Arabic literature that would figure prominently in the Frenchman's research project, *Lettres sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'islamisme*,¹⁰⁴ (henceforth: *Lettres*). The *Lettres* were a series of letters or essays, the first of which appeared in 1836 and was addressed to his publisher, Benjamin Duprat, that examine

¹⁰⁰ Fresnel studied Chinese under renowned French sinologist Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788–1832) at the Collège de France.

¹⁰¹ Jules Mohl, "Rapport sur les travaux du conseil de la Société Asiatique," *JA* (1856): 12-3.

¹⁰² He published his acclaimed translation of the Swedish chemist-geologist Jöns Jakob Berzelius's work, *Om Blåsrörets Användande i Kemien och Mineralogien*, a treatise on the use of the blowpipe in chemical and mineral experiments.

¹⁰³ "[Fresnel] se décida, en 1831, à s'établir au Caire, où il prit pour maître d'arabe Mohammed el-Tantawi, un des hommes les plus savants de l'Égypte, et aujourd'hui professeur à Saint-Pétersbourg." Jules Mohl, "Rapport," 13.

¹⁰⁴ Fulgence Fresnel. *Lettres sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'islamisme* (Paris: T. Barrois Père et B. Duprat, 1836-1839).

mostly through translation, the poetry, stories (*akhbār*), and battle tales (*Ayyām al-‘Arab*) of pre-Islamic Arabia.

Al-Tantawi is described by Fresnel as “the second, if not the first, philologist at the mosque of al-Azhar.”¹⁰⁵ Fresnel asks rhetorically how, if al-Tantawi does not understand the meaning of some Arabic words, could he, a Frenchman, do any better?¹⁰⁶ As a consequence of this inevitable challenge of translation, Fresnel advocates for a joint “association de Lettrés” comprising Europeans and Muslim scholars dedicated to the study of Asia and Africa.¹⁰⁷ We must stop to consider several questions. What was Fresnel after in Egypt? Why did Fresnel become interested in studying pre-Islamic literature?

Fresnel acutely senses a divide between Mehmed Ali and the *‘ulamā’*. He contends: “I attest that this class of men [*‘ulamā’*] have fallen, due to the exclusively European inclination (*“tendance”*) of the Turkish government, into a state of relative ignorance that is extremely deplorable.”¹⁰⁸ Here Fresnel presents a somewhat cryptic explanation for the state of the *‘ulamā’*. According to Fresnel, the Pasha undervalued the *‘ulamā’* (among whom Fresnel counted al-Tantawi) as a result of the *“tendance”* (inclination or tendency) of the Turkish government towards Europe to the neglect of Egypt’s *‘ulamā’*. In short, Fresnel blames the perceived stagnation of the Egyptian *‘ulamā’* on the Turkish-Ottoman governing class’s preference for

¹⁰⁵ “Mon schaykh lui-même, qui est assurément le second philologue de la mosquée Alazhar, s’il n’en est pas le premier.” Fresnel, *Lettres*, v. Lane would echo these words, almost verbatim, in the introduction to his translations of the *Nights*, discussed below.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., vi.

¹⁰⁸ “J’avoue que cette classe d’hommes [*‘ulamā’*] est tombée, par suite de la tendance exclusivement européenne du gouvernement turc, dans un état d’ignorance relative, extrêmement déplorable.” Fresnel, *Lettres*, vii.

Europeans. It is precisely in this context that we should understand Fresnel's project of relating and translating the Arabic pre-Islamic past, in which al-Tantawi played an essential role.

Fresnel was not alone in his strong desire to revive and to study the pre-Islamic past. Dr. Perron was another French orientalist with whom al-Tantawi worked closely. Dr. Perron, quite unlike the other orientalists, had arrived in Egypt with extensive training as a medical doctor. He served as director of the Qaṣr al-ʿAynī Hospital and was an integral part of al-Tantawi's network in Cairo.¹⁰⁹ He, like Fresnel, believed firmly that the *'ulamā'* were in a terrible state under Mehmed Ali, bemoaning in 1841 that "the learned are no longer learned, the lettrés are no longer the lettrés."¹¹⁰

Fresnel, after more than four years in Egypt, believed that Mehmed Ali's study missions were an insufficient means of elevating the intellectual class. The missions lacked numbers, and even the students who did go knew "neither their own history, nor their own literature."¹¹¹ To Fresnel, Rifā'a was exceptional in this regard. However, he did not seek to work with Rifā'a or with the nascent schools of the Pasha. Whether Fresnel's assessment of education in Egypt is accurate is of less importance here than his proposed solution is.

If the Egyptian scholars did not receive their due, rendered victims of the Turkish European-oriented ruling class, then Fresnel saw in al-Tantawi a hope of rectifying this. He stated in his *Lettres*, "but by the example of my shaykh (al-Tantawi), these woeful and

¹⁰⁹ On their particular collaborations, see al-Shayyāl, "Duktūr Perron wal-Shaykhān," 180-221.

¹¹⁰ "Les savants de l'Orient, ne sont plus savants, les lettrés ne sont plus les lettrés" quoted in Daniel Lançon, "Le destin du lettré Nicolas Perron, passeur des cultures arabes," in *L'Orientalisme des saint-simoniens* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2006).

¹¹¹ "Ni leur propre histoire, ni leur propre littérature (car le schaykh Alattar est mort)." Fresnel, *Lettres*, vii.

impoverished men of letters can rise up.”¹¹² Al-Tantawi possessed, in Fresnel’s opinion, an exemplary Arabic literary worldview coupled with an attention to detail he admired. Furthermore, Fresnel, like Edward Lane, depended on al-Tantawi for his career as a translator, as it was only through him that he could understand his source texts.

The Egyptians, according to Fresnel, first had to learn their own history and literature, before they engaged with European ideas. He saw Egyptians as lacking a sufficient understanding of their history and literature, and he believed that a necessary condition for Egypt’s progress was a restoration of the past through rigorous and detailed study. This would ideally constitute “what one calls *humanités, études classiques*,” because that “is the basis of all liberal education, of all civilizations.”¹¹³ Fresnel believed that the first step was a reassessment of the past, and for him this was the “pure” Arabian past of the Arabs. To this end, he needed a collaborator, selecting al-Tantawi, whom he singled out as “perhaps the only man of the Orient who has devoted himself to the restoration of the ancient monuments of Arabic literature.”¹¹⁴

Like Fresnel, Dr. Perron saw al-Tantawi as exceptional in this regard—a sort of beacon signaling hope for the future of the ‘*ulama*’ in Egypt. Dr. Perron provides an additional detail regarding the status of teaching pre-Islamic literature at al-Azhar in the notes to his translation of Muḥammad ‘Umar al-Tūnisī (1789–1857) travelogue (*riḥla*) to Darfur. Dr. Perron writes that “four years ago it was astonishing, unheard of, that cheykh Mohammed-Ayyād, the only one who knew the stories of the Pagan era in Arabia, and who was teacher to Mr. F. Fresnel and

¹¹² “Mais, à l'exemple de mon schaykh, ces lettrés avilis, appauvris, peuvent se relever.” Ibid.

¹¹³ He continues, “et chacun doit avoir fait ces études là dans son pays et dans sa langue avant de prétendre à quelque chose de mieux.” Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

myself, proposed to elucidate the collection of poems entitled the *Ḥamāsa*¹¹⁵ at the al-Azhar mosque. The indifference of the amateurs who took the lessons at this mosque forced him to give up his plan.”¹¹⁶ The specificity of Dr. Perron’s remarks is notable, as is the fact that al-Tantawi’s alleged attempt to teach pre-Islamic poetry was unsuccessful. As discussed in Chapter I, al-Tantawi proudly declared himself the first to teach the *Mu‘allaqāt* at al-Azhar.

If Fresnel and Dr. Perron felt indebted to al-Tantawi, the feelings were certainly mutual. Al-Tantawi for his part, describes his relationship with Fresnel in his autobiography in the following manner:

وأول من عاشرته من حضرة الخواجة فرنيل وهو يحب العربية بالطبع فكان يحثني دائماً على الاشتغال وهو الآن قنصل جدة وبسببه تقويت في العلوم الأدبية لأنني كنت أقرأها معه وهو من أهل التحقيق والتدقيق وله توقعات حسنة وبنات أفكار جميلة وقد كتب رسائل فيما كان يقرأ معي كترجمة الشنفرى وأيام العرب الخ ونوه بذكرى فيها ثم رغبني في اللغة الفرنسية

The first of whom I became acquainted [among Europeans] was Fresnel. He loves Arabic by nature and would always urge me to keep working. He is now Consul-General of Jeddah. Thanks to him, I improved in the literary sciences, because I would read them with him. He was among the people of precision and exactitude (*al-tahqīq wal-tadqīq*) and has good attention to detail and fine perceptive thoughts. He wrote articles about what he would read with me, such as a biography (*tarjama*) of al-Shanfarā and pre-Islamic battle tales (*Ayyām al-‘Arab*), etc., in which he makes extolling mention of me. Then he awakened a desire in me for [learning]

¹¹⁵ While the most famous texts by the name *Ḥamāsa* are the anthologies of Abū Tammām (d. 849) and al-Buḥturī (d. 897), it is unclear which edition he used, as many others compiled anthologies of the same *Ḥamāsa* genre. In any case, the *Ḥamāsa* genre typically drew heavily on early and pre-Islamic poetry. Perron and Fresnel both studied with al-Tantawi Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī’s (897–967) *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.

¹¹⁶ “Il y a quatre ans on trouva étonnant, inouï, que le cheykh Mohammed-Ayyād, le seul qui sache les récits des époques païennes de l’Arabie et qui fut notre maître à M. F. Fresnel et à moi, se proposât d’expliquer le recueil de poésies intitulé le Hamâḥah, à la mosquée El-Azhar. L’indifférence des amateurs qui suivent les leçons de cette mosquée le força de renoncer à son projet.” Muḥammad al-Tūnisī, *Voyage au Darfour*, trans. Nicolas Perron (Paris: B. Duprat, 1845), 451.

the French language, and he taught it to me, although lack of time prevented us from finishing.¹¹⁷

It is important to remember that when they met, al-Tantawi had only recently returned to Cairo from Tanta where he had claimed to be unable to focus on scholarship. Fresnel is praised for his encouragement of his younger recently bereft teacher. Moreover, the expression of indebtedness extends to his intellectual and professional life, as al-Tantawi acknowledges him to be the major force behind his own pursuit of literary sciences, as well as a means to connect with others, such as Edward Lane. As Fresnel mentions, al-Tantawi taught him the poem *Lāmiyyat al-‘Arab* by al-Shanfarā, the most well-known *ṣu ‘lūk* (brigand) poet of the pre-Islamic era, in conjunction with the commentaries of al-Mubarrad (d. 826) and al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144). Both commentaries remained with al-Tantawi among his papers at Saint Petersburg University.¹¹⁸ The colophon of the manuscript of al-Mubarrad’s commentary indicates that al-Tantawi read it in 1835, while he was working with Fresnel.¹¹⁹ The fruits of their collaboration in translating *Lāmiyyat al-‘Arab* appeared in the first installment of his *Lettres* in 1836.

In addition to crediting their collaboration with strengthening his own knowledge of the Arabic literary sciences, al-Tantawi also emphasizes Fresnel’s methods of critical textual analysis with the phrase “*tawaqqufāt ḥasana*.” In 1850 Kosegarten (the German orientalist who first published al-Tantawi’s autobiography in Arabic and translated it into German) wrote a *nachtrag* (addendum) to the autobiography. In this *nachtrag*, he asked al-Tantawi for further

¹¹⁷ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, “Autobiography.”

¹¹⁸ Saint Petersburg University MSS 780, 781. See also Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 205-6.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 206.

clarification on some expressions in his autobiography, and “*tawaqqufāt*” was among them.¹²⁰

Thus al-Tantawi himself defines *tawaqqufāt*, a quality he attributed to Fresnel above, stating:

“*Al-Tawaqqufāt* is skepticism and refusal to imitate (*taqlīd*) as one says, that knowledge is in

lingering, meaning that the scholar is the one who understands language insightfully so when he

spots a defect, he realizes it, or [if he sees] another difficulty, he seeks [a way] to eliminate it;

unlike he who perceives as it is and imitates.”¹²¹ Al-Tantawi’s praise of Fresnel shows how

indebted the shaykh was to his older student. One can imagine that al-Tantawi realized that, were

it not for Fresnel’s endorsement and their mutually beneficial relationship, al-Tantawi may not

have achieved such prominence in orientalist circles.

It is worth emphasizing just how well-connected Fresnel was in Cairo and how broadly

his network extended during his seven-year stay in Egypt. The easygoing and vivacious

Frenchman was a mainstay among the European orientalist crowd in Cairo. Indeed, al-Tantawi

credits Fresnel in his autobiography for the fact that he “became acquainted with others because

of him.”¹²² Fresnel and al-Tantawi’s network did not only overlap with Lane, Dr. Perron, and

Gustav Weil, but also with scholars and civil servants in Egypt. They included members of the

Russian Foreign Service, A. I. Medem, the Russian Consul-General in Alexandria, the agent

¹²⁰ Kosegarten acknowledges that after his translation, he needed clarification on some terms and expressions. “Ich bemerkte am Schlusse meiner Übersetzung jener Autobiographie, dass ich mich wegen einiger Ausdrücke, über deren Sinn ich zweifelhaft geblieben, noch bei dem Scheich erkundigen würde. Seine Antwort ist seitdem eingegangen, und ich theile daraus folgendes mit.” J.G.L. Kosegarten, “Nachtrag zur Autobiographie des Scheich Ettantawwi,” *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* no. 7 (1850): 197-200.

¹²¹ التوقفات التشكك وعدم التقليد ويقال عندنا العلم في الوقفة يعني أن العالم هو الذي يفهم الكلام كما يقتضيه Kosegarten, “Nachtrag,” 199.

¹²² Al-Ṭantāwī, “Autobiography.”

consul Buṭrus Buktī of Lebanese origin, and two dragomen associated with the Russian Consulate, N. Mukhine and Rudolf Frähn. Of the last two, Mukhine would ultimately accompany al-Tantawi to Saint Petersburg, and Rudolf Frähn was the son of Christian Martin Frähn, the director of Asiatic Museum in Saint Petersburg, discussed in Chapter IV.

Another aspect of al-Tantawi's relationship to Fresnel that must not go unnoticed is the financial compensation he received from the Frenchman. In his autobiography, al-Tantawi states, "I acknowledge that I am indebted to him for paying the *kharāj* tax. The people of Cairo are always late in [paying it] to the Pasha, so you always find them in debt."¹²³ Al-Tantawi mentions the financial gain of working with Fresnel in the context of the monetary hardship imposed by the Pasha's taxes. Moreover, the tax burden weighs not just on him, but as he explains, on his fellow countrymen as well. Al-Tantawi's comments align with his overall dissatisfaction with the Pasha's rule. More importantly, it is a reminder of the importance of the material transactions that accompanied intellectual exchange between al-Tantawi and his collaborators. Generally, I believe literary historians too often overlook the material motivations of orientalist and Egyptians alike when examining this period.

Returning to Fresnel and Perron, they saw stagnation and decline among the '*ulamā*' that resulted from foreign Ottoman-Turkish rule. The sense that the Egyptian '*ulamā*' were imperiled underlies their research and collaboration with al-Tantawi. Furthermore, we can speculate that over several years working with Fresnel, al-Tantawi had gained a sense of what the world of Oriental Studies looked like, and the methods that were valued. He did not agree to go to Saint Petersburg blindly, but rather through working closely with Fresnel, not to mention the large

وبالجملة فأنا أعترف بأنني مكسور له في دفع الخراج ودائما أهل مصر يماطلون الباشا في الخراج فتراهم¹²³ Ibid. عليهم البقايا دائما

network they forged, al-Tantawi got a glimpse into the professional world he would soon inhabit in Russia.

Edward Lane's Egyptian Nights

“[I was] received into their society on terms of perfect equality.”
- Edward Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights*.¹²⁴

In 1978 both Said's brief but strident critique of Lane in *Orientalism* and Leila Ahmed's monograph on him were published, bringing attention to discursive aspects of his works and their historical contingencies.¹²⁵ Leila Ahmed's work situated Lane within the Victorian social and literary context of England. Prior to 1978 the main sources on Lane were chiefly limited to his great-nephew's hagiographic biography and A.J. Arberry's cursory chapter on Lane's lexicographic pursuits.¹²⁶ More recently Jason Thompson's extensive biography of Lane draws on British archival materials, especially correspondence, drafts, and notes.¹²⁷ In painstaking detail, Thompson's 700 page biography provided, for the first time, a thick (though often uncritical) examination of the British orientalist's personal and professional life.

¹²⁴ Edward Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights, Commonly Called in England, The Arabian Nights' Entertainments. A New Translation from the Arabic, with Copious Notes* (London: Charles Knight and Ludgate Street, 1838-1841), ix.

¹²⁵ Leila Ahmed, *Edward W Lane: Study of his Life and Works and of British Ideas of the Middle East in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Longman, 1978). Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 160-5.

¹²⁶ Stanley Lane-Poole, *Life of Edward William Lane* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1877); A.J. Arberry, *Oriental Essays* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 87-121.

¹²⁷ Jason Thompson, *Edward William Lane: The Life of the Pioneering Egyptologist and Orientalist, 1801-1876* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2010).

Edward Lane (1801–1876), unlike many orientalists of his day, never formally studied Arabic or the east. After contemplating studying mathematics at Cambridge, he chose instead, at age 19, to work (like his elder brother Richard) as an engraver’s apprentice in London. Little, if anything, from his early life suggests he would go on to become one of the most prominent British orientalists of his era. Though they did not bring him fame, the visual arts played an important role throughout his life. He dedicated himself to precise engraving, etching, drafting, and sketching sometimes with the use of a *camera lucida*. As an engraver in London, he excelled at the meticulous and onerous process of warming copper plates, etching copied images, and thus producing a mold by which the original may be repeatedly copied.¹²⁸

After only several years of work as an engraver, Lane’s interest shifted dramatically to all things Egyptian. The reasons for this transition are not entirely clear. According to his first biographer and great nephew, Stanley Lane-Poole, it was health conditions, including recurring bouts of Typhus fever that forced Lane to give up engraving.¹²⁹ However, Ahmed and Thompson point to other important factors that likely influenced the young engraver to turn to Egypt. In the wake of the French invasion and the discoveries of ancient Egypt, “Egyptomania” was in full swing in much of Europe.¹³⁰ In Lane’s London of 1820–1822, the antiquities of the

¹²⁸ Jason Thompson summarizes the demanding process as follows, “First, the engraved plate had to be warmed; then after inking it, the apprentice carefully wiped its surface so that ink remained only in the grooves. Next the plate was put into a mechanical rolling press and applied it to the paper, which lay on woolen blankets. Under pressure the pliable wool pushed the paper into the grooves where the remaining ink printed onto it. This was repeated as many times as the printing run required or until the soft copper began to lose definition from the repeated pressured to which it was subjected.” Thompson, *Edward William Lane*, 15.

¹²⁹ Lane-Poole, *Life of Edward William Lane*, 18.

¹³⁰ Cf. Elliott Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

famous Italian explorer and Egyptologist, Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823) caused quite a stir with his sensational and colossal exhibitions in London. The large-scale exhibitions displayed all sorts of ancient Egyptian artifacts acquired by Belzoni—including the large head of Ramesses II and the tomb of Seti I at the “Egyptian Hall” at Piccadilly.¹³¹ Additionally, Belzoni’s description of his explorations and acquisitions in Egypt¹³² were being circulated at this time, and may have inspired Lane to study Egypt in the same way that it did for his future close friend and colleague, the Scottish Egyptologist Robert Hay (1799–1863).¹³³

During Lane’s first trip to Egypt (1824–1828), he travelled down the Nile, following in Belzoni’s wake, once in 1826, and a second time in 1827 with his friend, Robert Hay. The records of these trips made up the early drafts of his *Description of Egypt*.¹³⁴ Lane had wanted to title his book “Description of Egypt,” though his publisher refused, perhaps on the grounds that it was too similar to the famous *Description de l’Égypte*¹³⁵—the compilation of research conducted by the French during Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt. The importance of engraving in the preparation of the text would have interested the young Lane.¹³⁶ Furthermore, the *Description de*

¹³¹ According to Ahmed this sparked Lane’s fascination with Egypt. Ahmed, *Edward W Lane*, 9.

¹³² Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations in Egypt and Nubia; and of a Journey to the Coast of the Red Sea in Search of the Ancient Berenice, and Another to the Oasis of Jupiter Ammon* (London: J. Murray, 1820).

¹³³ Thompson, *Edward William Lane*, 18.

¹³⁴ Edward William Lane, *Description of Egypt: Notes and Views in Egypt and Nubia, Made during the Years 1825, -26, -27, and -28* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 1.

¹³⁵ Thompson, *Edward William Lane*, 268-9.

¹³⁶ The first edition of the *Description de l’Égypte* contained more pages of visual plates than text. Commission des sciences et arts d’Égypte, *Description de l’Égypte, ou, Recueil de observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l’expédition de l’armée française* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1809-1828).

l'Égypte coupled ancient and modern histories in ways that may have influenced Lane.

Regardless of its precise influence, it is safe to say it would stand as at least a reference point or benchmark for Lane. Lane produced several drafts of his own *Description of Egypt* and negotiated with his editor in England, but the publisher postponed and ultimately canceled the project. Only recently, in 2010, was it published for the first time.¹³⁷

In the opening sentences of Lane's *Description of Egypt*, he states his own motives for traveling to Egypt. Apparently, the opening lines underwent several revisions, which Thompson argues reflects the fact that Lane "vainly sought to disentangle a complex cluster of motives." While I agree it was not a simple issue for Lane, I do think we can read between the lines to shed light on Lane's view of himself as a traveler to and resident of Egypt. He first frames his motivation as one of "a zealous attachment to the study of oriental literature, and a particular desire to render myself familiar with the language of the Arabs, and with their manners and customs."¹³⁸ Lane, continues in his preface to *Description of Egypt* to make what I consider a crucial point for understanding Lane's initial involvement in Egypt:

But these were not my only motives. I had long entertained a wish to examine the antiquities of that most interesting country: and as I felt, even before I commenced my travels, that there was a probability of my publishing the observations that I might make; I purposed to execute a series of sketches of all the most remarkable objects that I might see; well convinced that a drawing, in many cases, is worth many pages of

¹³⁷ For the details surrounding the delay and abandonment of the project, see Thompson, *Edward William Lane*, 267-88. Lane revised selections from *Description of Egypt* and incorporated them into his next work, *Manners and Customs*.

¹³⁸ In the preface of *Manners*, Lane similarly contends he was motivated to go to Egypt to study the Arabic language "in its most famous school." In such an assertion, Lane ironically boasts about a school in al-Azhar that he was expressly not permitted to enter.

description: and to ensure the utmost accuracy in these, I determined to make use of the Camera Lucida.¹³⁹

Lane went to Egypt as an engraver in hopes of capturing the images of ancient Egyptian artifacts like those he had seen in the grand London exhibitions halls. Brandishing the new technology of a *camera lucida*, he was doing the work of a copyist in a sense—tracing the camera’s superimposed lines to produce a replica from the original.¹⁴⁰

The Edward Lane who came to Egypt was not a scholar but a diligent craftsman and aspiring autodidact eager to sell his visual work and writings about Egypt for British readers to consume. Unlike many of his European colleagues, Lane was not an Egyptologist, preacher, diplomat, or “dealer” in antiquities. After his failed attempt at publishing his draft of *Description of Egypt* in 1833, he sent a book proposal to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Established in 1826, the society’s charter lays out its purpose of “imparting useful information to all classes of the community, particularly to such as are unable to avail themselves of experienced teachers, or may prefer learning by themselves.”¹⁴¹ The publisher catered to a popular readership that Lane aimed to satisfy with his next venture, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*. Lane’s proposal contained several revised sections on contemporary Egypt taken from his unpublished draft of “Description of Egypt.” He included among the proposal, a note stating that “this brief account of the manners & customs of the Modern Egyptians was

¹³⁹ Lane, *Description of Egypt*, 1.

¹⁴⁰ If Lane’s *Description of Egypt* reached the printing press, some have speculated that it would have launched his career as an exceptional Egyptologist; however, in my view this amounts to a gross exaggeration. For example, Thompson states that had Lane’s *Description of Egypt* “been published in 1831-32, as originally planned, it would have been the best book about Egypt in English to appear until that time. It would have become a basic item in reading lists about ancient and modern Egypt, and for the Middle East in general.” Thompson, *Edward William Lane*, 274.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Thompson, *Edward William Lane*, 282.

written for insertion in a work on Egypt & its Antiquities; but the narrow limits within which I was confined prevented my doing justice to this subject. It is composed from notes which I made in Cairo in the years 1825, -26, -27 & -28. E.W.L.”¹⁴²

After the publisher approved his proposal, Lane returned to Egypt for his second stay (1833–1835), during which he worked on *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, the book that launched his career as an orientalist.¹⁴³ Lane likely began working with al-Tantawi in 1835, while completing his *Manners and Customs*, and beginning his next project. While it is unclear what role, if any, al-Tantawi played in Lane’s *Manners and Customs*, his mark is distinctly present in Lane’s translation of the *Arabian Nights*. Lane mainly based his bowdlerized¹⁴⁴ translation on the Bulaq Arabic edition printed in 1835.¹⁴⁵ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣafaṭī al-Sharqāwī (d. 1848), who worked at the Bulaq Press, collated and edited the manuscript for printing.

When Lane returned to Britain in 1835, the Bulaq Edition of *Arabian Nights* had yet to be printed. Accordingly, Lane gave money to his trusted friend Fresnel to handle the logistics of the affair by ensuring al-Tantawi received a copy to annotate and send to him. From a letter from Fresnel to Lane, we learn that “The Sch. Mouhammad [al-Tantawi] seemed extremely pleased

¹⁴² Ibid., 284. Edward Lane MSS 4.3.

¹⁴³ Edward Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, Written in Egypt during the Years 1833, -34, and -35, Partly from Notes Made during a Former Visit to that Country in the Years 1825, -26, -27, and -28* (London: C. Knight and Co., 1836).

¹⁴⁴ Many tales deemed unfit for publication were excluded by Lane, “I have thought it right to omit such tales, anecdotes, &c. as are comparatively uninteresting or on any account objectionable... Certain passages which, in the original work, are of an objectionable nature, I have slightly varied.” Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights*, xvii.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Safaṭī al-Sharqāwī, ed., *Alf Laylah wa-Layla* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1835). Lane’s copy with al-Tantawi’s annotations is held at Cambridge University Library, Rare Books, Adv. B, 88, 78-9.

with the offer of a thousand piastres [to annotate the Bulaq printed edition for Lane], but he is so much occupied by the Sch. Rifâah, the lecturer of the Mosque, his european [*sic*] pupils, &c &c that I am really afraid that his هوامش [marginalia] or حواشي [commentary] will go on very slowly.”¹⁴⁶ Several months later in a postscript to letter from Aḥmad al-Kutubī, Lane’s bookseller,¹⁴⁷ al-Tantawi writes that the printed edition has yet to appear, but will soon.¹⁴⁸ Finally, in 1837 it was completed and handed over to al-Tantawi who promptly began writing detailed notes in the margins of the text. Lane—himself under pressure from his publisher—needed al-Tantawi’s notes desperately before he could begin translation, an indication of how essential they were to budding British orientalist.

Eventually the annotated edition of the text made its way to Lane whose translation was first published in monthly installments, totaling 32, over the course of roughly two and a half years between 1838 and 1840. Shortly thereafter the installments were collected and published in a three volume edition. In the introduction to *Manners and Customs*, Lane had mentioned in a footnote the importance of this next project, stating, “there is one work, however, which presents most admirable pictures of the manners and customs of the Arabs, and particularly of those of the Egyptians: it is ‘the Thousand and One Nights,’ or Arabian Nights' Entertainments: if the English reader possessed a close translation of it with sufficient illustrative notes, I might almost have spared myself the labour of the present undertaking.”¹⁴⁹ In Lane’s view, the translation of

¹⁴⁶ Fulgence Fresnel to Edward Lane, 28 February 1836, Edward Lane MSS 5.1.20.

¹⁴⁷ The list books purchased by Lane are preserved in his notebooks, Edward Lane MSS 2.1.

¹⁴⁸ Edward Lane MSS 5.1.4. Printed in D. Richards, “Edward Lane’s Surviving Arabic Correspondence,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 9 (1999): 11.

¹⁴⁹ Edward Lane, *Manners and Customs*, v.

the *Arabian Nights*, would constitute a presentation of Egyptian culture to complement or even supplement his ethnographic account in *Manners and Customs*. In his introduction to the *Nights*, Lane states:

I consider myself possessed of the chief qualifications for the proper accomplishment of my present undertaking, from my having lived several years in Cairo, associating almost exclusively with Arabs, speaking their language, conforming to their general habits with the most scrupulous exactitude, and received into their society on terms of perfect equality.¹⁵⁰

Based on his experience in Cairo, Lane considered himself not only to be well-integrated, but indeed qualified to present a picture of Egypt—a figurative engraving if you will—to its British readers through a translation of the *Arabian Nights*. Lane’s contention that he has the authority to translate the tales due to his learning the language and living among Egyptians as “perfect equals” is an early indication of the way he presents himself in the context of the stories he translates. Lane’s translation operates under a fluid temporal understanding of the tales, as they at once date back to unspecified time, but are also constitutive of contemporary or “modern” Egyptian culture.¹⁵¹ Judging by the large number of reprints, Lane’s translation was quite popular in England. In contrast to the more romantic style of translating tales from the east, Lane brought to the task the guise of objectivity and scientific inquiry.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights*, ix.

¹⁵¹ Derek Gregory explores the temporally and spatial aspects of Lane’s *Nights*. Derek Gregory, “Performing Cairo: Orientalism and the City of the Arabian Nights,” in *Making Cairo Medieval* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005).

¹⁵² Cf., Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 23-35. Paul McMichael Nurse, *Eastern Dreams: How the Arabian Nights Came to the World* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2010). Geoffrey Roper, “Texts from Nineteenth-Century Egypt: The Role of E. W. Lane,” in *Travellers in Egypt*, eds. Paul and Janet Starkey (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

In the introduction to *Nights*, Lane acknowledged al-Tantawi's contribution in somewhat surprising detail, stating that his translation is "incomparably superior to any other now existing," because "it has been again revised and corrected, and illustrated with numerous manuscript notes, by a person whom I think I may safely pronounce the first philologist of the first Arab college of the present day, the sheykh Mohammad 'Eiyad Et-Tantawee."¹⁵³ From al-Tantawi's Arabic correspondence with Lane, and the annotated text itself, one can assume Lane meant by "philologist" the meticulous methods by which he annotated the text. Al-Tantawi filled the Bulaq Edition with marginalia containing explanations and context in addition to inserting short vowels to clarify homographic words and ambiguous syntax. As mentioned, these heavily annotated texts were of such necessity for Lane that he had to postpone the publication of his translation until he received the next batch prepared by al-Tantawi.¹⁵⁴

To accompany the translation of the *Nights*, Lane included, as its full title suggests, "copious notes" that in some installments exceeded the amount of translated text.¹⁵⁵ Lane emphasized the prominent role played by al-Tantawi in conveying meaning or interpreting the text. Throughout the lengthy *Nights*, especially in the notes—and footnotes to notes—Lane uses some form of his name or "my sheykh" scores of times to include al-Tantawi's words, sometimes quoted in translation, other times paraphrased.

¹⁵³ Ibid. Note Lane's original, to be kind, transliteration system, which would infamously frustrate publishers and reviewers alike.

¹⁵⁴ See Lane's correspondence with his publisher John Murray, Edward Lane MSS 5.1.75 to Edward Lane MSS 5.1.82. The correspondence is summarized in Thompson, *Edward William Lane*, 407.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 414

Lane further acknowledges al-Tantawi's contribution, even as he hedges and touts his own knowledge, writing that al-Tantawi's "notes are chiefly philological, and explanatory of words which do not belong to the classical language; and many of them are of very great assistance to me...His corrections of the text are numerous; and they would interest very few persons."¹⁵⁶ We can juxtapose Lane's view of al-Tantawi, with the shaykh's own words written on the colophon of the first volume, which he completed on 17 January 1840. Al-Tantawi writes that "this book was emended, annotated, made elegant, and embellished by Muḥammad 'Ayyād."¹⁵⁷ (See Figure III). To al-Tantawi, he did more than provide "philological and explanatory words," he provided the necessary clarifications of the Bulaq Edition, which was an invaluable contribution to Lane's translation.

Lane credits al-Tantawi's assistance in particular with respect to explicating Egyptian colloquial Arabic words, but, more importantly, Lane positions his teacher's voice in dialogue with his own—at times in concert and at others in conflict. Lane pits his own "intercourse with the people who speak [Egyptian Arabic]" against the knowledge of al-Tantawi that Lane expressly touts. According to Lane's imagination, he was a "perfect equal" to his Egyptian peers, but the notion of perfect equivalency is, almost needless to say, an orientalist fiction and a promotional ploy for his book. I agree with Said's assessment that Lane strives in *Manners and Customs* and more broadly in his work "to make Egypt and the Egyptians totally visible."¹⁵⁸ Without a doubt Lane's *Manners and Customs* and *Nights* aimed to please the British readers for

¹⁵⁶ Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights*, vol. 1, xvi.

¹⁵⁷ وقد تم تصحيح هذا الكتاب وتهميشه وتنميقة وترقيشه على يد محمد عياد *Alf Laylah wa-Layla*, vol. 1, 120. Cambridge University Library, Rare Books, Adv. B, 88, 78-9.

¹⁵⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 162.

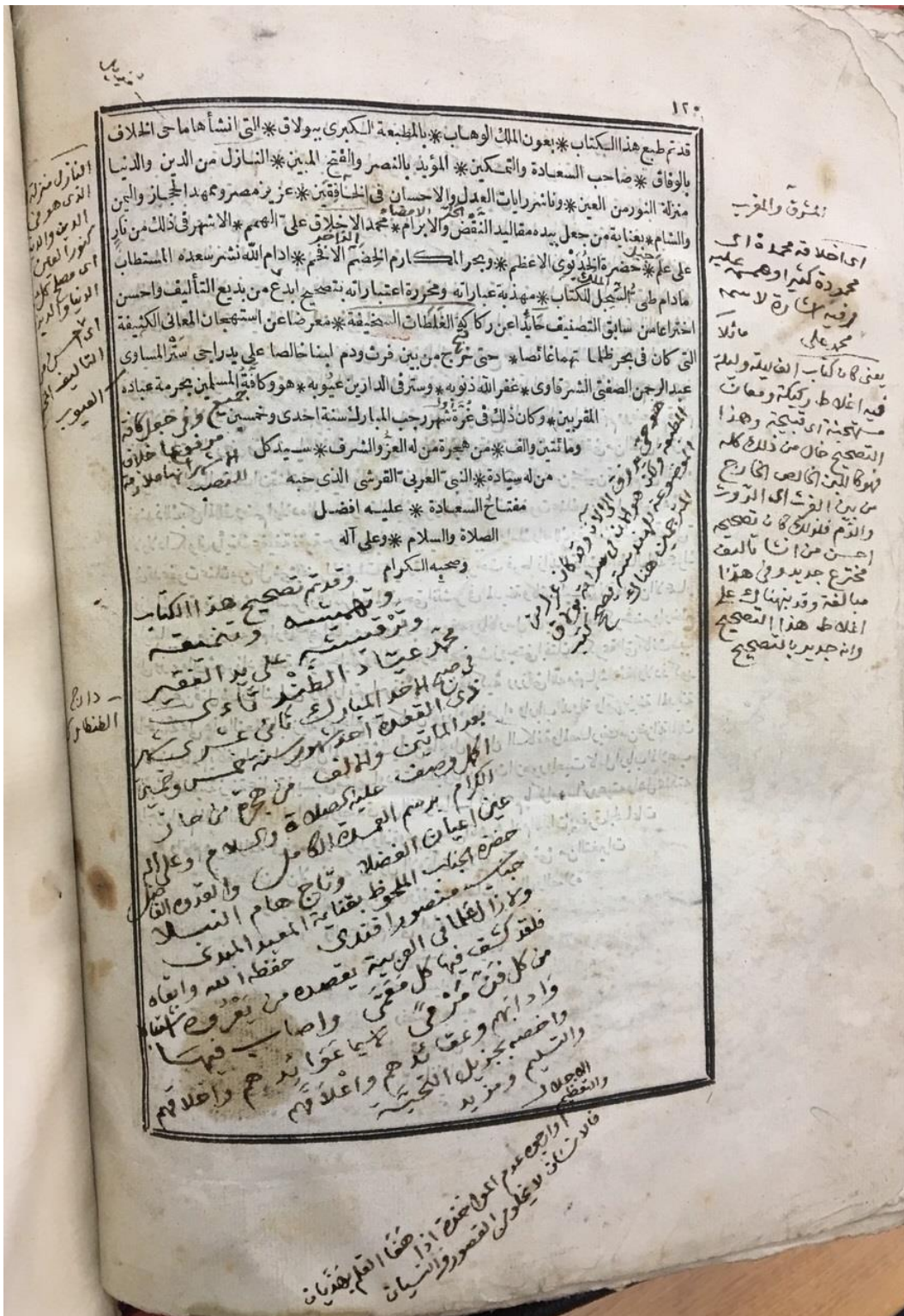


Figure III: Lane's Copy of the *Arabian Nights* with al-Ṭanṭāwī's Annotations
Cambridge University Library, Rare Books, Adv. B, 88, 78-9.

whom it was intended, as Leila Ahmed explores in-depth.¹⁵⁹ They wanted a scientific rendering with “perfect correctness,” not a romantic orientalist narrative. We can thusly account for Lane’s emphatically detached and pseudo-scientific style in *Manners and Customs* and its extension into his *Nights*. The demands of the publishers and Lane’s own financial struggles do not take away from Said’s critique of Lane’s disengaged, universalizing, and essentializing representations of Egypt and the Egyptians.¹⁶⁰ How then does al-Tantawi add to this discussion?

One may view al-Tantawi as undervalued in Lane’s translation—many Arabs have gone overlooked or had their contributions minimized in the transmission and translation of the *Arabian Nights*.¹⁶¹ Rather than ignoring him, Lane bolsters his credibility by drawing heavily on al-Tantawi as a source of knowledge. The literary magazine *Athenæum* and the *Foreign Quarterly*, specifically praise Lane’s *Nights* on account of the notes, deemed “the most important part” and said to “constitute the real value of the book.”¹⁶² Lane cited him frequently alongside a broad range of books and articles, some from Lane’s Arabic manuscripts including al-Maqrīzī and al-Jabartī,¹⁶³ and other works by European orientalists. When Lane left Cairo in 1835, he shipped many of the Arabic books and manuscripts he acquired in Egypt to London.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Ahmed, *Edward W. Lane*, 77-104.

¹⁶⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 176.

¹⁶¹ Paulo Horta addresses the unrecognized status of many of the early transmitters of the *Arabian Nights*, Paulo Horta, *Marvellous Thieves: Secret Authors of the Arabian Nights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

¹⁶² Quoted in Ahmed, *Edward W. Lane*, 141.

¹⁶³ Lane had included translated selections of Maqrīzī’s *Khīṭaṭ* and al-Jabartī’s *‘Ajā’ib* in his *Manners and Customs*. Roper, “The Role of E. W. Lane,” 245.

¹⁶⁴ Letter from Edward Lane to Aḥmad al-Kutubī, 22 February 1842, Edward Lane MSS 5.1.66. Also letter from Yuḥanna Masarra to Edward Lane, 12 August 1841, Edward Lane MSS 5.1.73.

Lane's collaboration with al-Tantawi represents an expansion and corrective to Said's treatment of the British orientalist. In the context of Lane, Said states that "the Orientalist can imitate the Orient without the opposite being true. What he says about the Orient is therefore to be understood as description obtained in a one-way exchange: they spoke and behaved, he observed and wrote down."¹⁶⁵ Not only does al-Tantawi imitate the orientalist in some forms, as becomes more apparent in Chapter IV, he also produced an exchange that was not "one-way." Rather it was a dialogue—the script of which is archived in their correspondence and elaborated in al-Tantawi's annotations. Moreover, Lane took al-Tantawi seriously as a source and engaged with his annotations with a rigor that challenges Said's claim of Lane's singular and unidirectional authority over knowledge.

One example of al-Tantawi and Lane's textual exchanges in the annotations can be seen in their interpretations of a poem recited by a fisherman in the "Tale of the Three Apples." Al-Tantawi interprets the verse from the fisherman as misplaced, because it would only be recited by a scholar (*'ālim*). Lane translates al-Tantawi's comment, but follows it by stating, "but perhaps, in writing this, [al-Tantawi] was actuated by a somewhat over-zealous regard for the honour of his own profession; for, when a poor man has acquired a little knowledge, his neighbours are apt to flatter him."¹⁶⁶ Lane engages thoughtfully and critically with al-Tantawi's comment. Because al-Tantawi had considered the supposed fisherman to be an Egyptian scholar, he interprets the poem within a Sufi poetic idiom. Accordingly, in the "*lā 'ilma illa ma' al-*

¹⁶⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 160.

¹⁶⁶ Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights*, vol. 1, 305

maq dara,” al-Tantawi glosses “*maq dara*,” as an obliteration of self (*fanā*’).¹⁶⁷ By contrast Lane translates *maq dara* as power, “there is no knowledge without power.”¹⁶⁸

The fact that al-Tantawi resettled in Saint Petersburg in 1840 did not stop him from continuing to send annotated copies of the *Arabian Nights* to Lane, for which he was compensated and given a bonus payment for his work.¹⁶⁹ Al-Tantawi’s assistance and Lane’s gratitude demonstrates the degree to which al-Tantawi was essential to Lane. Lane would return to Cairo for his third, final, and longest stay (1842–1849) in Egypt. With al-Tantawi already in Saint Petersburg, he sought out a new collaborator for what would become his famous lexicon. At the recommendation of Fresnel, Lane partnered with Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī, a friend and colleague of al-Tantawi.¹⁷⁰ One can only imagine that had al-Tantawi stayed in Egypt, he, instead of al-Dasūqī, would have been Lane’s chief collaborator on that large-scale lexicographic project.¹⁷¹

With respect to al-Tantawi’s interactions with orientalists, I have alluded to the need to probe the role of folklore in this period. Edward Said, in his forward to the English translation of Raymond Schwab’s *Oriental Renaissance*, noted that “while it avoids the disorienting aspects of

¹⁶⁷ الفناء فالعالم الفقير كالعدم *Alf Laylah wa-Layla*, vol. 1, 51. Cambridge University Library, Rare Books, Adv. B, 88, 78-9.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 251.

¹⁶⁹ Letter from al-Ṭanṭāwī to Lane, 7 March 1841. Edward Lane MSS 5.1.74.

¹⁷⁰ Lane’s collaboration with al-Dasūqī was famously recounted by ‘Alī Mubārak in his *Khiṭaṭ Tawfīqiyya*. ‘Alī Mubārak, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-Jadīda li-Miṣr al-Qāhira wa-Muduniḥā wa-Bilādihā al-Qadīma wal-Shahīra* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1887), vol. 11, 9-13. On Lane and al-Dasūqī see also, Aḥmad Amīn, “Al-Shaykh al-Dasūqī wa-Mistar Lane,” in *Fayḍ al-Khāṭir* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1965), 39-50.

¹⁷¹ Edward Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863-93).

the European experience in the East, also it tends to shun the other great Romantic appetites of nature, the macabre, heightened consciousness, folk culture.”¹⁷² Somewhat ironically, Said himself ignored the role of folk culture in his treatment of Edward Lane in *Orientalism*. Though hardly a romantic, Lane, was intimately involved in an early and eccentric brand of “folkloristic discourse in popular publications.”¹⁷³ The study of folklore is an interesting avenue to pursue in the case of al-Tantawi to understand his own writings, as well as how the orientalist saw him.¹⁷⁴

Conclusion

Al-Tantawi and his European interlocutors shared a linguistic and cultural distance from Egypt’s Ottoman and Turkic rulers. The Europeans, particularly Edward Lane, Fulgence Fresnel, and Dr. Nicholas Perron, about whom I write in this chapter, worked closely alongside other Arab-Egyptians who were employed in Mehmed Ali’s forays into institution building, particularly in the fields of education, health, and military development. The political dynamics of Mehmed Ali’s Egypt demand that we foreground al-Tantawi and the state institutions of learning in a particularly Ottoman-Egyptian context rather than assuming too easily a European colonial model.

Through an analysis of diverse contemporary sources in Arabic, English, and French, this chapter has examined the life of al-Tantawi prior to his departure from Egypt in 1840 with the

¹⁷² Edward Said, forward to Raymond Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance*, xi.

¹⁷³ Jennifer Schacker-Mill, “Otherness and Otherworldliness: Edward W. Lane’s Ethnographic Treatment of The Arabian Nights,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 113, no. 448 (2000): 164-84.

¹⁷⁴ Soha Abboud-Hagggar, professor at the University of Madrid, has recently explored the folkloric aspects of al-Tantawi’s tales (*ḥikāyāt*) in two articles. Soha Abboud-Hagggar, “Egyptian Tales in Shaykh al-Ṭantāwī’s Handwritten Notebook,” in *Alf Lahġa wa Lahġa* (Vienna: LIT, 2014). Soha Abboud-Hagggar, “El Refranero de al-Šayj al-Ṭantāwī, Maestro de Orientalistas en San Petersburgo, y sus Apuntes Folclóricos,” *Miscelánea de Estudios Arabes y Hebraicos* no. 67 (2018): 3-28.

aim of situating him within the circles of scholars and colleagues he traversed. I have demonstrated his commitment to *adab* of various types, including the pre-Islamic past and shed light on the implications this had for both his orientalist and Egyptian peers. Al-Tantawi was steeped in a literary-cultural *milieu* that was open to *khurāfāt*, motifs of *mujūn*, vernacular Arabic, and the study of the pre-Islamic past, for which he was singled out by Lane, Fresnel, Dr. Perron, and others. Furthermore, they distinguished al-Tantawi from his peers in rather stark terms: in the eyes of the orientalists al-Tantawi brandished scholarly principles of reason and criticism, and possessed a rare devotion to classical and pre-Islamic Arabic *adab*.

I have shown how the bubbly polyglot Fresnel sought to expand on the work of his teacher de Sacy, by studying al-Shanfarā and other pre-Islamic poets in conjunction with Arabic commentaries. For the Frenchman, the ‘*ulamā*’ of Egypt suffered under the Pasha’s grip, and he believed they could only be rescued by properly studying their origins in the pre-Islamic past. Unlike Lane, Fresnel’s passion lay not in Egypt itself, but rather in what he saw as the true and “pure” culture of the Arabs. Accordingly, Egypt served as base of operations and preparation for living with and studying the Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula.

Whereas Fresnel firmly believed in the decline of Arabic-Islamic civilization, and sought to rescue it, al-Tantawi—who denounces the translation movement in Egypt—does not acknowledge any need for renewal, nor does he subscribe to any paradigm of cultural or literary decline. The specter of decline for al-Tantawi rested not with the state of his own literary culture or in any orientalist intervention, but rather the potentially devastating consequences that the growing translation movement could have on the trajectory of Arabic literature.

In contrast to Fresnel, Lane was swept up quite incidentally by the lure and profitability of Egyptomania in Britain, which took him to Cairo with little knowledge of its contemporary

language or culture. The distant and reclusive Lane was motivated by material gain through his (pseudo)scientific presentation of Egyptian culture to a British reading public. Significantly, Lane flattened the temporal relationship between the tales of the *Arabian Nights* and the contemporary Egyptian culture that he visited and observed. As a result, the Egypt that al-Tantawi related to him, was the same Egypt of his *Nights* and his *Manners and Customs*. His amply annotated translation of the *Nights* clearly demonstrates his reliance on al-Tantawi; however, perhaps even more significantly, it shows that Lane's excavation of Arabic literary past was firmly rooted in Egypt's present.

Finally, I have sought to show that al-Tantawi possessed a relationship to Europe and Europeans that scholars of this period typically overlook; that is, al-Tantawi interacted with them without a whiff of cultural inferiority, admiration, or seduction. The Europeans were no more civilized or capable than anyone else, nor did they possess a roadmap for reform in his eyes. Rather, he collaborated on projects in line with his own interests, at once literary and professional.

John Rodenbeck has written of Lane's "desire to record traditional ways of living that he and his audience knew were likely to disappear."¹⁷⁵ In this regard, Lane is reminiscent of al-Maqrīzī (1364–1442), who, as Nasser Rabbat has persuasively argued, constitutes a *lieu de mémoire* of topographies and biographies of Cairo's scholars, builders, and patrons during a time of descent, falling from greatness at the hands of cruel Mamlūk rulers.¹⁷⁶ How or to what degree

¹⁷⁵ John Rodenbeck, "Edward Said and Edward William Lane," in *Travellers in Egypt*, ed. Paul and Janet Starkey, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 235. In his short article, Rodenbeck presents arguably the harshest criticism of Said's treatment of Lane. Like Leila Ahmed would, he ultimately questions whether Said had read Lane's work.

¹⁷⁶ See Rabbat's valuable work on al-Maqrīzī. Cf., Nasser Rabbat, "The Medieval Link: Maqrizi's *Khīṭaṭ* and Modern Narratives of Cairo," in *Making Cairo Medieval* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005).

Lane and his ilk viewed Egypt and Mehmed Ali in the early 19th century as a remnant, vestige, or revival of a Mamlūk past is a question for continued research.

Chapter III: Seek Knowledge, even in Russia

Introduction to a Rarely Read *Rihla* (Travelogue)

سرت لا ألوي على أهل ولا وطن

“I set off, not inclined to a people (*ahl*) or a homeland (*waṭan*)”
-Al-Tantawi, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*, 50.

This chapter analyzes al-Tantawi's *riḥla* from Cairo to Saint Petersburg, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā* 'bi-Akḥbār Bilād al-Rūsiyā (A Gift for Discussion about the Land of the Russians). The *riḥla* stands as arguably al-Tantawi's most valuable and intriguing literary work. Its intrigue derives from its understudied status, context of composition, and intertextual connection with Rifā'a's immensely popular and well-studied travelogue, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīz*¹⁷⁷ (The Extraction of Gold in the Distillation of Paris). The overwhelming predominance of Rifā'a work in the historiography of the Nahḍa cannot be overstated.¹⁷⁸ This chapter endeavors to decenter Rifā'a's narrative of modernity by putting his *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* in conversation with al-Tantawi's rarely read *riḥla*, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*.

¹⁷⁷ Originally published as Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Hādhihi Riḥlat al-Faqīr ilā Allāh Ta'ālā Rifā'a Badawī Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī ilā Diyār Farānsā al-Musammāh bi-Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz ilā Talkhīṣ Bārīz aw al-Dīwān al-Nafīs bi-Īwān Bārīs* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1834). I use the text and pagination of 1958 edition, Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīz*, eds. Maḥdī 'Allām, Aḥmad Aḥmad Badawī, and Anwar Lūqā (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1958).

¹⁷⁸ Among the many works in Egyptian historiography devoted to Rifā'a's achievements, see Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, *Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1988). Ḥusayn Fawzī Najjār, *Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī: Rā'id al-Fikr wa-Imām al-Nahḍa* (Cairo: Al-Dār al-Miṣriyya lil-Ta'lif wal-Tarjama, 1966). Aḥmad Aḥmad Badawī, *Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Bayān al-'Arabī, 1959). Muḥammad 'Imāra, *Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī: Rā'id al-Tanwīr fī al-'Aṣr al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo: Dār al-Mustaḥbal al-'Arabī, 1984). Maḥmūd Fahmī Ḥijāzī. *Uṣūl al-Fikr al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth 'inda al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, ma'a al-Naṣṣ al-Kāmil li-Kitābihi Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-'Āmma lil-Kitāb, 1974).

Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā’ chronicles al-Tantawi’s travel from Cairo to Saint Petersburg, spanning his departure down the Nile on 26 March 1840 to his arrival in the Russian metropolis on 30 June of the same year. The colophon of *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā*’ indicates that al-Tantawi completed the manuscript of 194 folios 10 years later in 1850.¹⁷⁹ Significantly, he did not seek to publish it, instead dedicating it to the Ottoman Sultan Abdulmejid I (r. 1838–1861). It seems to have gone unnoticed prior to the 1920s when the German-Turkish Orientalist Oskar Rescher (1884–1972) found a copy at a mosque in Istanbul.¹⁸⁰ Then several years later in 1929, Ignati Krachkovski himself came upon a second manuscript of the *riḥla* by unlikely happenstance at the University of Saint Petersburg.¹⁸¹ It was made available in print for the first time nearly 70 years later in 1992, when Muḥammad ‘Īsā Ṣāliḥiyya, a professor at Yarmūk University, edited and published the text.¹⁸²

This chapter charts the two travelogues’ complex textual relationships and differences in the styles, techniques, and methods that they used to convey knowledge about France and Russia, respectively. I contend that al-Tantawi’s *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā*’ represents a redirection of Rifā‘a’s *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, wherein al-Tantawi adopts a different method for acquiring and presenting knowledge about Russia, a method centered on his own curiosity and experience. Both texts had expressly didactic ambitions, as we will see in more detail below. Whereas Rifā‘a advocated for French sciences that he saw lacking in Egypt, al-Tantawi translates Russia through

¹⁷⁹ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā*’, 224.

¹⁸⁰ Krachkovski contends that this copy was intended for Abdulmejid I, and may subsequently have found its way to a mosque in the Ottoman capital. Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 159.

¹⁸¹ In his memoirs, Krachkovski tells of the bizarre circumstances by which he came across the manuscript. Krachkovski, *Among Arabic Manuscripts*, 117-20.

¹⁸² Ṣāliḥiyya’s translation used the Istanbul manuscript without consulting Saint Petersburg University draft. Al-Ṣāliḥiyya, introduction to *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā*’, 21-2.

his own observations, curiosity, and the motifs of his literary worldview. Thus al-Tantawi adopts the template of the supposedly modern and certainly widely read *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, not to impose, reconcile, or integrate European sciences, but to portray Russian history and society with the aim to offer a pragmatic, observation-based vision or version of progress. Al-Tantawi's observations about Russian society demonstrate a remarkably open-minded curiosity towards the new and unknown. In exploring this comparison, I shed valuable light on two methods for presenting the knowledge they acquired in the cities and empires that they traversed and inhabited.

Al-Tantawi, ten years Rifā'a's junior, models his work on Rifā'a's template and on his encounter with France and French science and thought. However, even though he adopts some elements from the template of Rifā'a, al-Tantawi composed a very different travelogue that I argue should be viewed in light of the following contextual elements: the context of early 19th century Oriental Studies in Saint Petersburg and al-Tantawi's own status as Professor of Arabic at the University of Saint Petersburg, which afforded him great leeway and freedom in his academic pursuits. Though not devoid of them, he had much less mediation and institutional regimentation than Rifā'a, who studied under the strict supervision of Edme-François Jomard (1777–1862), Caussin de Perceval (1795–1871), Joseph Agoub (1795–1832), and others at the École in Paris. Rifā'a's rigorous routine of French study and translation has been studied extensively, and much of the source material for this has been taken directly from his own descriptions in *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*. Moreover, Rifā'a was dually fettered by his French teachers and his patron, Mehmed Ali, who undoubtedly had his hand in the text as well. *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* underwent several significant revisions and augmentations, which are indicative of the degree to which Mehmed Ali and Rifā'a's French teachers shaped the final product before its publication at the Bulaq Press.

In this chapter, I focus on a close reading of both travelogues in order to make the argument that al-Tantawi deploys particular textual techniques by which he seeks to outdo his more famous counterpart. Whether he succeeded or not depends on one's definition of success—if it is influence, attention, and readership, then certainly Rifā'a had the lion's share. However, al-Tantawi's text provides a different vision for presenting knowledge with the goal of reform.

Situating the 19th Century Arabic *Rihla*

The genre of the *rihla* in Arabic literature encompasses a broad range of styles and forms. A comprehensive history of the genre lies beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I highlight several trends in the development of Arabic travel writing to understand the generic origins and textual influences on Rifā'a and al-Tantawi. The primary structuring principle is one of chronicled movement over terrain usually unfamiliar to the author. It should be emphasized that unlike *jughrāfiyā*, a widely pursued genre from the 10th century onwards, the *rihla* is considered a work of *adab*. Accordingly, travelogues tended to include a wide variety of literary forms to capture and convey knowledge to the reader. The narrative is guided by the authors' movement and 'iyān (personal observation),¹⁸³ around which poems, historical information, biographies, and geographic data are interspersed. Arabic travelogues, which were usually put to paper well after the trip, tended to bear didactic qualities, aiming to edify and inform the reader in erudite and often poetic language about the landscape, peoples, cultures, and practices of foreign lands. Some travelogues sought also to entertain with accounts of *al-'ajā'ib wal-gharā'ib*, the wonders and strange occurrences one takes in or hears of during the journey.

¹⁸³ On the literary concept of 'iyān, see Roxanne Leslie Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), especially 73-5.

The classical and canonical travelogues of Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217) and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1377) establish the contours of a tradition that would grow in scope and diversity. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travelogue exhibits *al-'ajā'ib wal-gharā'ib* more so than Ibn Jubayr, as the former "was designed for the propagation of myths which might enhance a returning traveler's reputation and massage an already large ego."¹⁸⁴ On the other hand, Ibn Jubayr, writing in a more sober vein, concentrates more on the scholarly networks and rites of pilgrimage he performed or observed. The purported aim for Ibn Jubayr, and indeed many other travel writers especially from North Africa,¹⁸⁵ was to perform the *ḥajj*; however, other motivations clearly compelled them to journey much farther.

Here one should distinguish between the motivations to travel on the one hand and those of recording it on the other. The issues of patronage, pilgrimage, acquisition of knowledge, and readership play important roles in shaping why and how travelogues are composed, as we will see below in more detail for al-Tantawi and Rifā'a. Indeed, in 1846, al-Tantawi read selections from Ibn Jubayr's *riḥla* that were published in the *Journal Asiatique* by the Italian Orientalist and specialist on Sicily, Michel Amari (1806–1889). Al-Tantawi wrote a response with his corrections for the editor and translator "to bring out, even more, the value of this work."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Ian Richard Netton, "Basic Structures and Signs of Alienation in the 'Rihla' of Ibn Jubayr," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 22 (1991): 21-37.

¹⁸⁵ This type of *riḥla* was typically referred to as a *riḥla hijāziyya*.

¹⁸⁶ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, "Observations sur l'extrait du voyage d'Ebn Djobaïr extraites d'une lettre adressée à un membre de la commission du journal asiatique," 9, no. 4 *JA* (1847): 351. "La traduction de M. Amari est en général exacte, et mes petites observations ne serviront qu'à faire ressortir encore plus le mérite de ce travail." The earliest and most widely circulated edition and translation of Ibn Jubayr's *Riḥlat Ibn Jubayr* = *The Travels of Ibn Jubair*, trans. William Wright (Leiden: Brill, 1852); Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 170.

To posit simply two types of Arabic travelogues, the classical and modern, is insufficiently nuanced for the development of the genre. In probing the later so-called post-classical period of development, we are better able to situate the contributions of Rifā‘a and al-Tantawi as Egyptian travel writers.¹⁸⁷ To exemplify the development of the interpretive aspect of the genre, I draw attention to the travelogue of one of the most prominent and prolific Sufi scholars, the Damascene-born ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641–1731). Many of the texts he studied, such as Ibn al-‘Afīf al-Tilimsānī’s *dīwān*, were part of Rifā‘a and al-Tantawī’s intellectual formation as well.

Al-Nābulusī’s travelogue¹⁸⁸ chronicles his pilgrimage focusing on both the physical environment, including the virtues (*faḍā’il*), of cities and palaces and the biographies of the scholars with whom he studied. The literary mapping of the land emphasizes connections of transmission and scholarly exchanges often regarding religious matters. The *riḥla* developed as a genre in which the acquisition of knowledge and personal reflection on intellectual matters entered into contact, in this case, with matters of religion and faith. Al-Nābulusī remained highly influential and played an important role in the scholarly networks of the 18th century ‘ulamā’.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ For more on the development of the *riḥla* to Europe see Nabil Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians: Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁸⁸ ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Al-Ḥaqqīqa wal-Majāz fī Riḥlat Bilād al-Shām wa-Miṣr wal-Hijāz* (Damascus: Dār al-Ma‘rifa, 1998).

¹⁸⁹ Samer Akkach demonstrates the originality of his ideas and writings within the intellectual networks he cultivated. The travelogue contains an extensive collection of treatises on religious and literary sciences in which he actively engaged. Samer Akkach, *‘Abd Al-Ghani Al-Nabulusi: Islam and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007). Akkach further discusses al-Nābulusī legacy, which ultimately wanes in the 19th century in Samer Akkach, *Intimate Invocations: al-Ghazzi’s Biography of ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (1641-1731)* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

Unlike al-Nābulusī, al-Tantawī and Rifā‘a do not make many references to pilgrimages or visits to give their blessings (*barakāt*) at various sites of ritual piety. In fact, it appears Rifā‘a felt a good deal of anxiety about this particular issue. In an unpublished draft of Rifā‘a’s travelogue he made mention of some shrines in the Nile Delta, though it was not included in the printed version. In the introduction to the 1956 edition of *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, the editors quote from Rifā‘a’s draft where he writes, “severe distress came over me because of Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī’s unease concerning my pilgrimage [to shrines].”¹⁹⁰ Because this remark occurs in the context of his travel from Cairo to Alexandria, they maintain that al-Dasūqī and therefore Rifā‘a objected to the visitation or pilgrimage to shrines as being exceedingly naïve (“*ifrāṭan fī al-sadhāja*”).¹⁹¹ Even though al-Tantawī adopts imagery and motifs of Sufism, he does not mention pilgrimages or visitation to shrines either.

Rifā‘a and al-Tantawī penned travelogues that departed quite starkly from the Arabic tradition (*turāth*) of travel writing described above. Notably, the purpose of travel for Rifā‘a and al-Tantawī was no longer an account of ritual piety or practice. The exchange and acquisition of knowledge so central to the *riḥla* of al-Nābulusī’s generation took on a new distinct didacticism. Through the *riḥla* genre, Rifā‘a and al-Tantawī sought to portray their travel and residence abroad to convey a potential roadmap for different sorts of reform within the Egyptian, Ottoman, and Arabic-Islamic contexts.

¹⁹⁰ حصل لي الغم الشديد بعدم تيسر زيارتي سيدي إبراهيم الدسوقي وهو من قرب دسوق Quoted from fragments of Rifā‘a’s draft in Maḥdī ‘Allām, Aḥmad Aḥmad Badawī, and Anwar Lūqā, introduction to *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 37.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

Background to the Travelogues

One finds many similarities between al-Tantawi and Rifā‘a, from their early intellectual formation to their shared teachers at al-Azhar, as discussed in Chapter I. The Azharī roots of both authors and their familiarity with the poetic tradition is evident in their respective travelogues. Al-Tantawi, like Rifā‘a before him, composed a *riḥla* influenced by the changing styles and genres of the first half of the 19th century. Unlike Osman Nureddin and Niqūlā Musābikī, who were part of the earliest missions sent by Mehmed Ali to Europe, discussed in Chapter I, Rifā‘a was part of a more organized mission to the École in Paris that lasted five years (1826–1831).

The background and circumstances of the 1826 Egyptian mission to France have been studied extensively by scholars from a range of disciplines.¹⁹² The mission at the École in Paris had been in the works for many years before Rifā‘a would study there. Edme-François Jomard (1777–1862), the practical and ideological leader of the school, was an integral part of its founding and management. The French engineer and architect, who landed on the shores of Egypt as part of Napoleon’s team, led the effort to compile the famous *Description de l’Égypte*. In the years following his return to France he advocated for the establishment of a school to bring Egyptians to study French language and scientific works. Jomard had pressured Mehmed Ali in the 1810s to establish an ongoing mission, but the Pasha refused on account of his subjects’ lack of preparation.¹⁹³

¹⁹² For an account of the establishment of the École, cf., Anouar Louca, *Voyageurs et écrivains égyptiens en France au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1970), 34-54. Silvera, “The First Egyptian Student Mission to France,” 1-22.

¹⁹³ Alain Silvera, “Edme-François Jomard and Egyptian Reforms in 1839,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 7, no. 3 (1971): 301-16.

Only in 1826 would the project come to fruition. As Ian Coller argues, France's "loss of Egypt had been ideologically transformed into a victory, but a cultural victory."¹⁹⁴ In colorful language, Tageldin argues that Jomard managed to extend the "severed arm" of the colonial French campaign with "the prosthesis of imperial education."¹⁹⁵ When Mehmed Ali gave his approval for the mission of just over 40 men to be sent off to Paris, Rifā'a was not initially included among the members. It was a last minute affair, wherein his former teacher Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār urged Mehmed Ali to include his promising student, who was only 25 years old at the time. Most of the members of the mission spoke Turkish or Arabic and none of them had a background in French.¹⁹⁶ Even before leaving the banks of the Nile, Rifā'a's began his monumental task of composing *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*. He would continue writing through his five year stay in France where he took notes from his lessons, which make up the bulk of his book.

Al-Tantawī, as we know, wrote his travelogue from Saint Petersburg, where he worked as a professor, editor, and philologist. Rifā'a and al-Tantawī may be considered among the first generation of Egyptian intellectuals who traveled to Europe, recording their experiences and interpretations of other peoples to explicitly facilitate societal advancement. The results are Arabic travelogues that bear some remarkable similarities.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Ian Coller, *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 101.

¹⁹⁵ Tageldin, *Disarming Words*, 114

¹⁹⁶ For more information on the other students, Cf., Ṭūsūn, *al-Ba'athāt al-ʿIlmiyya*, 34-48.

¹⁹⁷ According to Daniel Newman, Rifā'a's *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* was the only Arabic travelogue published between 1800 and 1850. Daniel Newman, "Myths and Realities in Muslim Alterist Discourse: Arab Travellers in Europe in the Age Nahda (19th C.)," *Chronos* 6 (2002): 58.

With respect to reception, Rifā‘a’s *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* had a much different fate than al-Tantawi’s *riḥla*. It achieved wide distribution and influence during his lifetime and maintained an enduring legacy. Mehmed Ali commissioned an Ottoman translation of the travelogue by Rustum Efendi Basim, *Sefarat Name-ye Rifa‘at Bey*, which was published by the Bulaq Press in 1839.¹⁹⁸ The Pasha then distributed the book to his top officials and sent a copy to Istanbul. *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* was composed over roughly seven years and was published for the first time in Arabic in 1835 at the Bulaq Press, roughly three years after Rifā‘a’s return to Egypt. A second edition of the Arabic was published in 1849 and reprints and translations continue to the present.

Comparing the Travelogues

Comparing the Travelogues’ Structures

The overall structures and contents of *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* and *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā’* fall into essentially the same four parts. First, the preface and introduction, which frame and set out the goals of the journeys. Then, the travel narrative, which recounts their journeys from Egypt to Paris and Saint Petersburg respectively. The third part is a presentation of culture and society in many forms, including the habits, infrastructure, rites, and social events of the societies within which they lived. The table below shows the commonalities in the structure of the two texts:

<i>Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā’</i>	<i>Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz</i> (first draft)
Preface and Introduction: Goals and Travel Narrative	Preface and Introduction: The goals and geographical survey of the world
Chapter One: Early Establishment of Russia	Essay One: Travel from Cairo to Marseille
Chapter Two: History of Saint Petersburg	Essay Two: Travel from Marseille to Paris
Chapter Three: On Russian culture	Essay Three: On French culture

¹⁹⁸ Mohammed Sawaie, “Rifa‘a Rafi‘ al-Tahtawi and His Contribution to the Lexical Development of Modern Literary Arabic,” *International Journal Middle East Studies* 32, no. 3 (2000): 406.

Many people had a hand in the crafting of Rifā'a's text in the course of the roughly seven years before it reached the Bulaq Press, so this was not the original structure. The editors' detailed introduction to the 1958 edition of *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* explains how the text was compiled from an earlier draft that was heavily expanded on. According to Rifā'a in the earlier draft, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* was to have a core (*maqṣid*) containing four essays (*maqālāt*): the first two being his travelogue to Marseille and then Paris, while the third is his observations of the French. He considered the latter to "constitute the primary aim behind the writing of this *riḥla*, which is why we have striven to provide as much detail as possible."¹⁹⁹ The fourth section, a later addition, was aimed at providing "brief surveys of the skills and crafts" that he had enumerated in his introduction. As mentioned, al-Tantawi structured his travelogue in the mold of Rifā'a's *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*. By this, I mean that he too begins with an introduction, then a travel section, followed by histories, topographies, and biographies, culminating in a presentation of Russia culture as he experienced it.

Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā' begins with an introduction (*muqaddima*), which includes his travel narrative, followed by three chapters (*abwāb*). The first chapter is on the establishment of Russia (*fī mansha' Rūsiyā*) and consists of a short history of the early origin (*aṣl*) of several Russian provinces. This brief chapter is a translation of Nikolay Gerasimovich Ustryalov's (1805–1870) work on the history of Russia that was published in four volumes from 1839 to 1841.²⁰⁰ The

¹⁹⁹ Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 135.

²⁰⁰ Ustryalov was an influential professor and dean of the faculty of history and philology at Saint Petersburg University (1839–1855), and played an important role in the formation of Russian historiography. A deeper analysis of this section would demand a familiarity with Russia and Russian history that the author of his dissertation does not pretend to possess. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Ustryalov's histories of Russia replaced those of Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin (1766–1826) as the

second chapter is on the history of Russia centered on St. Petersburg, which is divided into three sections (*fuṣūl*) that cover topographical and geographical aspects of the city, Peter the Great and his accomplishments, and the history of St. Petersburg from 1725 to 1850. The final chapter examines the social and cultural life of Russia and is divided into 10 sections, the first of which is untitled. 1) [The ranks of the Russians]; 2) Clothing; 3) Religion; 4) Marriage; 5) Baptism, birth, names and funerary customs; 6) Holidays; 7) Theater, balls, and dancing; 8) Progress in the sciences and arts; 9) Residence of Russians; and 10) Russian language.

Comparing the Travelogues' Prefaces

Both of the travelogues of Rifā'a and al-Tantawi contain a preface in which they express gratitude, extol the virtues of knowledge and travel, and explain the motivations for composing the works. Al-Tantawi begins *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā'* with only a few lines in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad, quickly transitioning to the virtues of 'ilm and those who seek its vastness outside of the homeland, a common feature of the *riḥla* genre. The purpose of travel to Russia is stated clearly: Russia offered him the position, and he “set off, not inclined to a people (*ahl*) or a homeland (*waṭan*).”²⁰¹ On the other hand, Rifā'a, after a typical encomium to God, transitions to lavish praise of Mehmed Ali, who is described as “he whose efforts have rejuvenated the sciences, and who has re-established the marks of Islam through war and exertion; he who holds

official history textbooks in Russia. One difference worth noting is that whereas Karamzin had emphasized the role of Ivan the Great (r. 1462–1505) who defeated the Golden Horde, Ustryalov centered his work more on the reforms of Peter the Great (r. 682–1725). Al-Tantawi, at the end of this of his translation Ustryalov, urges his reader who wants to know more about the origin of Russia, to read his translation, but Krachkovski — who most thoroughly studied and catalogued al-Tantawi's work manuscripts — concedes that he was unable locate this translation to which al-Tantawi refers. Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 161.

²⁰¹ وسرت لا ألوي على أهل ولا وطن Ibid. 50.

outstanding wisdom; the conqueror of the holy sites.”²⁰² The sciences he rejuvenated—which refer to the translations of European texts into Arabic—are linked seamlessly with the traditional virtues he ascribes to the Pasha as a renewer, conqueror, and guardian of the holy religious sites.

Rifā‘a, following convention, directs most of his praise towards God and the Prophet, but also his patron Mehmed Ali who sent him on the mission, and Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār who had recommended him for the position of leader (*imām*). Both Rifā‘a and al-Tantawi identify their friends’ encouragement as the initial reason for recording their travelogues. We need not give too much credence to the stated impetus to compose travelogues, and the urging of one’s friends is a very common reason to record one’s trip in the tradition of Arabic travel writing. However, the particular ways in which the authors make this statement demands closer attention. The parallel structures and types of attributions to others are interesting. Even in light of the fact that it was at al-‘Aṭṭār’s recommendation that Rifā‘a serve as leader (*imām*) for the mission, the choice to single out this particular teacher is important.²⁰³ Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār, while not well-known in Europe, was an established leader among Egyptian ‘*ulamā*’—albeit not one without controversy, as discussed in Chapter I. Now, let us turn to the text itself, which states:

فلما رسم اسمي في جملة المسافرين وعزمت على التوجه أشار علي بعض
الأقارب والمحبين، لا سيما شيخنا العطار فإنه مولع بسماع عجائب الأخبار
والاطلاع على غرائب والآثار أن أنبه على ما يقع في هذه السفارة وعلى ما أراه
وما أصادفه من الأمور الغريبة، والأشياء العجيبة وأن أقيده ليكون نافعا في كشف
القناع عن محيا هذه البقاع، التي يقال فيها إنها عرائس الأقطار، وليبقى دليلاً يهتدي
به إلى السفر إليها طلاب الأسفار

²⁰² Newman, 102

²⁰³ Al-‘Aṭṭār, as we saw in chapter one took part in Mehmed Ali’s literary experiments as chief editor of the *Waqā‘i Miṣriyya* newspaper for the Pasha. When Rifā‘a returned to Egypt in 1831, Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār was also Rector of al-Azhar (*Shaykh al-Azhar*) until his death in 1835 at the age of 70.

When my name was entered among the travelers, and I prepared to go, some friends and loved-ones, especially al-‘Aṭṭār—who was eager to listen to interesting stories (*akhbār*) and become acquainted with wonders and monuments (*āthār*)—advised me to focus on what happened during this journey, and on what I saw and encountered that was strange and intriguing, and to record it so that it would be useful in revealing the face of this region, and to be a guide for travelers.²⁰⁴

Rifā‘a singles out al-‘Aṭṭār in a parenthetical manner, linking him in particular to the tradition of ‘*ajā’ib wal-gharā’ib*. The choice to associate al-‘Aṭṭār with this more traditional aspect of travel writing is noteworthy in part due to al-‘Aṭṭār’s prominence among both the ‘*ulamā*’ in general and Mehmed Ali in particular. Furthermore, Rifā‘a had studied classical Arabic geographical works, such as Abū al-Fidā’s (d. 1331), with al-‘Aṭṭār before his trip to France.²⁰⁵

The use of the book as guide is conventional theme in tourist and travel writing in many traditions, even if much of the book would hardly be of use to a traveler to France. We may compare this with al-Tantawī’s similarly structured account, but tellingly different occasion to record his travelogue:

عند إبرام العزم على الظعن إلى هذا القطر الحسن سألني جمع من الاصدقاء
والمعارف وجم من أهل المعارف أن أسطر في سفري هذا كتابا أودع فيه ما يعذب
مذاقا ويطيب شرابا من بدائع البلاد وغرائب العباد مع شذرة علمية ونكات أدبية
وطرف استحسانية وملح اختراعية

²⁰⁴ Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Talkhīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 104.

²⁰⁵ Peter Gran, eschewing the impact of the West on the development intellectual history, overemphasizes the role of al-‘Aṭṭār’s teachings on Rifā‘a while minimizing the impact of his studies in France. Gran, *Islamic Roots*. John Livingston notes, by seeking to write an intellectual history devoid of Western influence up, Gran downplays the influence of the French and over-credits al-‘Aṭṭār for Rifā‘a’s knowledge of rational sciences. John W. Livingston, “Western Science and Educational Reform in the Thought of Shaykh Rifā‘a Al-Tahtawi,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no. 4 (1996): 543-64. Livingston, for his part, unfairly concludes of Gran’s book that it is “as historically perverse as Orientalism itself.” *Ibid.*, 561.

When I was set to journey to this great nation (*qaṭr*), many scholars (*ahl al-ma'ārif*) asked me to pen a book about my travels. In it I deposit what delights the tastes and cleanses the waters regarding the novelties (*badā'i*) of the countries, and the wonders of the people, with a small scientific nugget (*shadhra 'ilmiyya*), literary witticisms, embellished novelties, and inventive entertaining stories.²⁰⁶

Al-Tantawi thus claims to have written about his travels at the request of scholars “*ahl al-ma'ārif*” who wanted to hear his tales of travel. Both Rifā'a and al-Tantawi begin by proclaiming their readiness for travel, which is described in terms of resolve with words of the root 'z-m. One can glean from this similar language a shared expression of the uncertainty that presages the perils of their respective travels. Although they both acknowledge the urgings of others, where Rifā'a mentions some relatives and loved ones (*ba'd al-aqārib wal-muḥibbīn*) and singles out one prominent teacher, al-Tantawi includes a larger crowd who requested him to write. Furthermore, al-Tantawi urges the reader to enjoy the pleasure of its contents in a lyrical style. The book is presented as intending to bring joy to its reader. Al-Tantawi mentions that his text contains a scientific nugget (*shadhra 'ilmiyya*). *Shadhra* may refer to small piece of unrefined gold or beads, a possible reference to the extracting of pure gold in the title of Rifā'a's *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*. Regardless, al-Tantawi emphasizes that his travelogue will serve as a book in which he archives entertaining, humorous, and even inventive entertaining stories (*mulaḥ ikhtirā'iyya*).

After lavishing Mehmed Ali with glowing praise, Rifā'a proceeds by stating:

ووشحتها بعض استطرادات نافعة، واستظهارات ساطعة وأنطقتها بحث ديار
الإسلام على البحث عن العلوم البرانية والفنون والصنائع فإن كمال ذلك ببلاد
الإفرنج أمر ثابت شائع... وإيّاك أن تجد ما أذكره لك خارجاً عن عادتك، فيعسر
عليك تصديقه فتظنه من باب الهذر والخرافات، أو من حيز الإفراط والمبالغات

I adorned it with some useful digressions and clear expositions, and I articulated it to urge the Islamic World to examine the foreign sciences

²⁰⁶ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*, 51.

(*'ulūm barrāniyya*), the arts, and industries as their perfection in the land of the Franks is uncontested and well-known...Beware of finding that which I relate to you as being against your customs (*khārijan 'an 'ādatik*) and thus difficult to believe, nor should you consider it nonsense or legends (*khurāfāt*), nor within the realm of exaggeration or hyperbole.²⁰⁷

Rifā'a deploys the language of adornment (*washshaḥtuhā*) to express the purported utility and clarity of what he added to the *riḥla*. His central goal of urging Muslims to adopt Western or rather French sciences is made abundantly clear. The original goal placed in the mouths of his friends and loved ones to produce a guidebook for future travelers full of *'ajā'ib wal-gharā'ib* seems hardly sincere. Instead, the voice of Mehmed Ali pervades the text, apparent in the use of the second person and stern command to obey. The preface purports to offer a tool, or an account of truth that his readers should not question.

Turning to al-Tantawī, he too switches to the past tense, stating his markedly different intention of what will be done with the text. In response to the request of his companions to pen the travelogue, he states:

فأجبت السؤال وبادرت الامتثال وشرعت في هذا التعليق البديع الأنيق وسميته
تحفة الأذكياء بأخبار مملكة روسيا ولما حان تمامه وبدا بعد النقض حسن إبرامه
أردت أن أشرف ديباجه وأزين فاتحه باسم ذكر مولانا أمير المؤمنين

I agreed to the request, hastening to obey, and began this elegant novel commentary. I entitled it *Tuḥfat al-Adhiyā' bi-Akḥbār Mamlakat al-Rūsiyā*. When it was completed and appeared well-strung together, I wished to venerate [the book] with a brocade (*dībāj*) and adorn its opening with the name of our Lord, Commander of the Faithful.²⁰⁸

Writing in the 1840s, al-Tantawī clearly directs his *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'* not to the *'ulamā'* of Egypt nor to the patron and Pasha, Mehmed Ali, as Rifā'a did. Instead, al-Tantawī offers his

²⁰⁷ Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 57

²⁰⁸ Al-Ṭaṭṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'*, 51.

riḥla as a gift to the Ottoman Sultan Abdulmejid I (1823–1861) for whom he composes a lengthy poem to conclude his preface. In it, he lavishes praise on the leader in classical Arabic poetic motifs. The poem opens on the beauty of the gazelle (*ḡaby*) that enthralls the poet whom the censure (*‘ādhil* or *raqīb*) rebukes, but the poet insists that blame is useless (*“al-lawm ḡhayr mufīd”*). The poem endows the Ottoman Sultan with the qualities of leadership, generosity, justice, steadfastness, and power, all earning the poet’s greatest deference in the final verses.²⁰⁹ It is important to note that by the time al-Tantawi completed his travelogue in 1850, Mehmed Ali had passed away, and his grandson Abbas Hilmi Pasha (1812–1854) ruled Egypt. How this may have affected the attribution of praise to the Ottoman Sultan is difficult to determine. Nonetheless, al-Tantawi makes only passing reference to Mehmed Ali and none to his grandson, instead reserving his praise for the Ottoman Sultan.

Comparing the Travelogues’ Introductions

After the preface, al-Tantawi relates his journey from Cairo to Saint Petersburg. Rifā‘a by contrast introduces his travelogue with an essay heavily influenced by European geographical and anthropological traditions. According to his mentors, he excelled at French in particular and had begun translations Georges-Bernard Depping’s (1784-1853) *Aperçu historique sur les mœurs et coutumes des nations* (1834),²¹⁰ and Conrad Malte-Brun’s (1775-1826) *Géographie*

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 52-3.

²¹⁰ Rifā‘a translated Depping’s *Aperçu historique* into Arabic as *Qalā’id al-Mafākhir fī Ḡharīb ‘Awā’id al-Awā’il wal-Awākhir*. Cf. Index One in al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-Tarjama*. When Jomard asked Rifā‘a to translate the text, the teacher allegedly told his student to leave out “those things derogatory or defamatory to Islamic customs.” Quoted in Daniel Newman, introduction to *An Imam in Paris* (London: Saqi, 2004), 95.

universelle (1838),²¹¹ among others.²¹² These two texts on anthropology and human geography respectively influenced Rifā‘a’s understanding of how to describe other people and places. Lisa Pollard examines Rifā‘a’s engagement with Depping’s criteria for social progress and Malte-Brune’s universalizing system for geographical and topographical human classification.²¹³ It is important to note that Rifā‘a had also availed himself to Arabic texts of geography, in particular Abū al-Fidā’s (d. 1331) *Taqwīm al-Buldān*, which he read with Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār.²¹⁴

In line with the works of French social science and geography in which he was immersed, Rifā‘a applies an ethno-essential hierarchy in his classification of regions and cultures. In his introduction, he locates, at the lowest point of the hierarchy, wild savages (*hamal mutawahhishīn*), followed by crude barbarians (*barābira khashīnīn*), and finally “the people of utmost culture and elegance, and of sedentary, sophisticated, and urbanized civilization.”²¹⁵ The simplistic tripartite hierarchy is significant in that it reflects one of the primary methods, used frequently in his *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, of classifying and characterizing people and places along a spectrum of superiority.

Regarding the Islamic world, Rifā‘a writes, “Islamic countries for their part distinguished themselves in the legal sciences and their application, and in the rational sciences, but neglected

²¹¹ Rifā‘a translated it as *al-Jughrāfiyya al-‘Umūmiyya* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1838). Cf. Index in al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-Tarjama*.

²¹² For example, his translation of Prosper Brard’s *Minéralogie populaire* was published the year after his return to Egypt in 1832. Ibid.

²¹³ Lisa Pollard, “The Habits and Customs of Modernity: Egyptians in Europe and the Geography of Nineteenth-Century Nationalism,” *The Arab Studies Journal* 7, no. 2/1 (1999): 52-74.

²¹⁴ In 1833 al-‘Aṭṭār composed a commentary on the work. Gran, *Islamic Roots*, 204.

²¹⁵ أهل الأدب والظرافة والتحضر والتمدن والتمصر المتطرفين Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 57

the positivist or metaphysical sciences (*‘ulūm ḥikmiyya*) entirely, and so they needed western countries to acquire what they did not know.”²¹⁶ The notion that Muslims excelled in juridical matters was a widely held view.²¹⁷ However, he identifies a deficiency that must still be remedied—Islam neglected many branches of science, many of which he enumerates later in his introduction.²¹⁸ These branches of knowledge that Rifā‘a sees as lacking in Islam include a wide array of social, physical, mechanical, biological, chemical, and natural sciences, in addition to state administration and translation. The topics align with the types of books that Rifā‘a was studying and translating in France under the supervision of his teachers at the École.

In the introduction to *Takhlīs al-Ibrīz*, Rifā‘a summarizes in a disjointed manner the geography of much of the world. The introduction is a hodgepodge of ideas whose provenance matters little to this study. What does matter is the choice to frame his introduction as a global classification of peoples, nations, and cultures. As the above-mentioned hierarchy indicates, progress, however defined, is the underlying criteria for nations.²¹⁹ We may compare this with al-Tantawi, who forgoes both a summary of global geography and a delineation of civilizational progress. In the early part of his travel narrative, al-Tantawi relates a brief anecdote that demonstrates a tellingly different perspective on global interaction. In the context of his brief stay with A. I. Medem (1801–1877), Russian Consul-General in Alexandria, al-Tantawi states:

وأهملت العلوم كما أن البلاد الإسلامية قد برعت في العلوم الشرعية والعمل بها، وفي العلوم العقلية والحكمية بجملتها فلذلك احتاجت إلى البلاد الغربية في كسب ما لا تعرفه Al-Ṭaṭṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*, 61.

²¹⁷ For example, Fulgence Fresnel writes, “ils savent bien leur droit canonique, civil, politique, etc.; c'est précisément ce que nous savons le moins.” Fresnel, *Lettres*, vi.

²¹⁸ Al-Ṭaṭṭāwī, *Takhlīs al-Ibrīz*, 66-8.

²¹⁹ Cf., Lisa Pollard, “The Habits and Customs of Modernity.”

(ميدم) هو الذي هيجني حين كان في مصر على الذهاب إلى بلاد الروس وذلك أن
الأمم منذ تقدمت في التمدن علمت فائدة ارتباطهم بعضها ببعض وأنشدت قول
الشاعر:

الناس بالناس فلا تنفرد وكن أخا حزم وتعيش
ما لقوي عن ضعيف غنى لا بد للسهم من الريش

[Medem] is the one who excited me, when he was in Egypt, about going to
Russia, given that since nations (*umam*) have advanced towards cosmopolitan
advancement (*tamaddun*) they have learned the benefit of connecting with each
other. I recited the words of the poet:
All people are intertwined, so do not isolate yourself
be a brother of wisdom, and live!
The powerful cannot do without the weak
just as the arrow needs its quill²²⁰

The world is not divided into categories of progress as in *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*. In *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā'*, al-Tantawi acknowledges that people are unified precisely by their inevitably interconnected nature. According to al-Tantawi, nations (*umam*) have progressed, and since then, an unspecified time, they have also known the benefit of interacting (*fā'idat irtibāṭ*). The poem by al-Tantawi emphasizes the moral imperative to “be a brother of wisdom,” and figuratively the co-necessity and co-presence of all people, regardless of strength. One should not romanticize al-Tantawi’s views of the world based on these brief words, but it is worth noting that he eschews civilizational hierarchies, and implicitly sees intermixing as part of societal and cosmopolitan advancement (*tamaddun*).

Embarking by Steamship

In *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, after the introduction, one reaches the middle section of the book, that he calls the core (*maqṣid*). Rifā'a's opening to his travel section reads:

²²⁰ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā'*, 57.

في مدة السفر من مصر الى باريس وما رأيناه من الغرائب في الطريق أو مدة
الإقامة في هذه المدينة العامرة بسائر العلوم الحكيمة والفنون والعدل العجيب
والإنصاف الغريب الذي يحق أن يكون من باب أولى في ديار الإسلام

[The *maqṣid* chapter] is about the journey from Egypt to Paris and the strange things we saw on the way. Also [the *maqṣid* is about] my stay in this city brimming with all the positivist/philosophical sciences (*‘ulūm ḥikmiyya*) and arts (*funūn*),²²¹ and astounding justice and surprising equity that ought to be a priority in the lands of Islam.²²²

Al-Tantawi adopts a similar style to Rifā‘a for the opening of his travel narrative, yet the contents are quite different. He states:

في سفري من مصر المحروسة إلى بتربورغ المحمية وما رأيت من البحار
والجزائر والبلاد البهية مع تحلية ذلك بما قلته من الأشعار المطربة في البدائع
المستغربة

Regarding my journey from Cairo, the guarded (*mahrūsa*), to Petersburg, the protected (*maḥmiyya*), and the seas, islands, and the magnificent regions I saw and embellished with delightful poetry that I composed about the surprising novelties.²²³

One can see the similarities between the opening statements as they both summarize what is to come, functioning as essentially subtitles to the travel narrative. Al-Tantawī, as he frequently does, refers to Egypt and Russia or Saint Petersburg with parallel praising adjectives. Where Cairo is “guarded,” Saint Petersburg is “protected,” which extends an equivalency between the two capitals. Al-Tantawī acknowledges his role in embellishing (*taḥliya*) what he sees on the trip with his own poetry. Moreover, he emphasizes himself as the one transmitting his experience through the use of the first person (*safarī* versus *al-safar*; *ra’aytu* versus *ra’aynā*).

²²¹ Rifā‘a is likely referring to arts and skills. On the meaning of *fann*, see Adam Mestyan, “Arabic Lexicography and European Aesthetics: The Origin of ‘Fann,’” *Muqarnas* 28 (2011): 69-100.

²²² Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 82.

²²³ Al-Ṭaṭṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*, 55.

Rifā'a uses the paired adjectives of *gharīb* and *'ajīb* to refer to the justice in Paris. Rifā'a dresses the supposedly more modern and scientifically advanced Paris in the terms, or perhaps the disguise, of the traditional *riḥla* topos of *'ajā'ib wal-ghār'ib*.

As opposed to progress predicated on Europe's superiority, al-Tantawi emphasizes the landscape, the seas and islands, witnessed on his journey. The new things he encounters are not justice and equity as with Rifā'a, but rather surprising novelties (*badā'i' mustaghriba*). The new and strange motivate al-Tantawi, and it is implied that his *riḥla* would be based primarily on his observations and embellishments, complemented by his presentation of Russian history and culture. Where al-Tantawi's tone is personal and self-oriented, that of Rifā'a is often abstruse and judgmental.

In the early part of the travel narrative in *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'*, al-Tantawi recounts his stay in Alexandria for one week before departing by steamship to Istanbul and onwards. Interestingly, Rifā'a too, stopped in Alexandria, and stayed for 23 days at Mehmed Ali's palace.²²⁴ In comparison to Rifā'a, al-Tantawi says little of Mehmed Ali. Al-Tantawi recounts their meeting during which the Pasha declared his approval for his trip to Russia. Then, instead of extending praise to the Pasha, al-Tantawi includes a poem that he composed, "yearning for Egypt and my people".²²⁵

لتناءي صحابة وحميم	فاض جفني بماء دمع حميم
ومباني علومها والفهوم	حيث فارقت غير قالٍ دياري
بي ثياب الصبا وبرد النعيم	حيث نيطت عمائمي وألمت
تتوالى وتارة في النجوم	تعتريني الخطوب منكدرات

²²⁴ Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 83.

²²⁵ متشوقا لمصر وأهلي Ibid., 58.

لثغر الاسكندرية يمت	لطرده العنا وصرف الهموم
بلد أهله حماة دمار	لم يكونوا كمثل ذا من قديم
ودعاني عزيز مصر إليه	حباني بالعز والتكريم
قال لا تضع زمانك إلا	في اكتساب العلوم والتعليم
فيمينا لأرحلن سريعا	لبلاد الشمال أفق النسيم
أنا نجم وكم بمصر شمس	ومع الشمس كيف مرأى النجوم
فلهذا برزغت نحو بلاد	أنا فيها شمس لكشف الغيوم
في سفين النيران قالوا ولكن	هي عندي تدعى سفين النعيم
جنة جنة تجود في البحر	ولو هاج مثل خيل هيم
ما شراع بها فيخرقه الريح	وتلقى حملا كحمل الدهيم
مثل ما قد عانيت في نيل مصر	حيث كنا تحت العناء الوخيم
كم سفين هوت بما كان فيها	لا اعتساف الملاح من سوء خيم

- 1 My eyes overflowed with warm teardrops,
as I parted ways with friends and loved ones
- 2 Free from regrets, I left my abode
and its bastions of knowledge and insight,
- 3 Where my turbans had hung and
the robes of youth and cloaks of comfort had clung to me.
- 4 Dark calamities enveloped me
one after another, at times in the stars
- 5 Towards the port of Alexandria, I set off by boat
to drive away distress and worries,
- 6 To a country whose people are its protectors,
though long ago, it was not so.
- 7 The 'Azīz of Egypt²²⁶ summoned me,
bestowing upon me honor and esteem.
- 8 He said: Do nothing with your time
but acquire and share knowledge.
- 9 Having sworn my oath, I quickly set off
to the lands of the north, to the farthest edge of the wind.
- 10 I am a star, and in Egypt there are many suns—
amidst such suns, how can one see the stars?

²²⁶ 'Azīz Miṣr (the mighty of Egypt) is a common title given to Mehmed Ali as well as the biblical Potiphar.

- 11 So I journeyed to the northern lands
 where I am the sun that burns away the fog.
12 They called it a steamship, but for me
 it was a heavenly ship,
13 For Paradise rained protection down on the seas,
 even when it reared and bucked like a wild horse.
14 If it had a sail, the wind would rend it,
 casting off its cargo like the burdens of al-Duhaym.
15 Just as I had suffered in Egypt's Nile,
 where we were beset by hardships.
16 Many a ship and all it carries has been lost
 at the inept hands of a foolish captain²²⁷

This poem displays al-Tantawi's skillful use of wordplay and manipulation of poetic motifs to express his ambivalent feelings about Egypt, the pain of leaving his loved ones, and the confidence he asserts at his departure from Egypt. The flowing tears with which the poem begins reference the prelude (*nasīb*) and halting upon ruined campsite of the beloved (*al-wuqūf 'alā al-aṭlāl*) portion of the classical Arabic ode (*qaṣīda*), in which the poet laments and reflects upon on his fate. By departing willingly (*ghayr qālin*), verse 2 affirms the resolute stance and steadfastness with which al-Tantawi left his homeland. Furthermore, the abodes of his youth are not campsites or ruins, but rather bastions (*mabānī*) of knowledge. The *mabānī* are firmly rooted structures, quite unlike the ephemeral encampments of the departed beloved that appear frequently in the *nasīb*. I maintain the imagery deployed gestures towards al-Tantawi's participation in and respect for scholarly life in Egypt.

Verses 3 and 4 portray his pleasant youth with the imagery of garments, interrupted by unspecified distresses that compel him to leave Egypt. Al-Tantawi's nostalgia for his homeland is expressed as sadness only at the start of the poem. Afterward, instead of extoling the virtues of Egypt, he emphasizes the hardships that confined him there. He repeats the action of departing

²²⁷ Ibid., 58.

Egypt in verses 2, 5, 9, and 11. His travel section (*raḥīl*) begins as an escape from distress and expressly from Mehmed Ali's command to acquire knowledge.

Verse 6 interestingly describes his destination as a country whose people are only recently its protectors. I argue that this refers to Russia's rise in power over the previous century beginning with Peter the Great's reign. Verse 10 expresses the sentiment of being overshadowed by suns (*shumūs*), common imagery of beauty; however, here it appears that al-Tantawi is bemoaning the prestige and undeserved esteem granted to others at his expense. As an obscured star in Egypt, he must travel north to receive his due visibility and prominence.

The remaining verses (12-16) are devoted to the emotive and vehicular experience of travel by steamship. The travel section (*raḥīl*) that is typically associated with descriptions of the mount or the beloved, are applied instead to the steamship. The new technology of steam powered sea travel is expressed by way of antithesis (*tibāq*) on the lexical and semantic levels. By this I mean that what others have called it and what al-Tantawi calls it are pitted against each other. For them it is a "*saḥīn al-nīrān*"²²⁸ (literally, ship of fire) and for al-Tantawi it is "*saḥīn al-na'īm*" (a ship of paradise). Thus, the two names for ship are expressed antithetically as hellfire and paradise. The imagery of paradise is then carried over to the sea in verse 13. As the steamship is represented in the imagery of al-Duhaym, a she-camel of pre-Islamic lore, thrashing violently. In the final verse, al-Tantawi shifts from a tone of optimism and self-assertion, to one of uncertainty and looming peril.

The distress associated with travel by ship also enters Rifā'a's travelogue. The sea travel engendered fear as Tarek El-Ariss explores in his treatment of *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, stating:

²²⁸ Al-Tantawi uses a less common term steamship, as opposed to the more common words *wābūr* or *saḥīnat al-bukhār*.

The stormy weather associated with the trip to Europe causes al-Tahtawi's personal trials and reflects his psychological state. The sea's turbulence, aligned with those of the Nile at the time of the French invasion, shatters al-Tahtawi's attempts to familiarize and attenuate the experience aboard the ship. In this way, al-Tahtawi's modern encounter constitutes a site of new knowledge the acquisition of which involves trials, tribulations, and a near-death experience.²²⁹

El-Ariss emphasizes the emotive aspects of Rifā'a's poetry, including the feelings of danger and fear experienced in his encounters with modernity, including the steamship on which he traveled. One of the poems Rifā'a (and El-Ariss) cites was inserted by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Safā'ī al-Sharqāwī,²³⁰ who at the Bulaq Press played an important role in collating Lane's copy of the *Arabian Nights*, as discussed in Chapter II. Al-Sharqāwī himself claimed to have included the poem by Abū Nuwās as jest (*hazl*). I would argue that this is one of many moments where other voices are inserted in *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* as means to entertain with motifs of ribaldry (*mujūn*).

Al-Tantawi, like Rifā'a, expresses the fears associated with sea travel in poetic form. While El-Ariss locates this emotive response within a framework of unfamiliarity with modernity in *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*,²³¹ I see in al-Tantawi a more self-possessed and resolute declaration of himself in relationship to the technology and machinery of modernity. He determines the terms of this encounter: you may call the steamship one thing, but I call it another. The fear and peril associated with the start of their journeys should, I contend, be viewed as the liminal stage of his voyage, expressed in the poetic motifs of the *riḥla* with manipulated aspects of the classical Arabic *qaṣīda*. However, this immediate encounter with

²²⁹ Tarek El-Ariss, *Trials of Arab Modernity: Literary Affects and the New Political* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 32.

²³⁰ Al-Sharqāwī is unnamed in some editions, compare al-Taḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 89, and *An Iman in Paris*, 143.

²³¹ El-Ariss, *Trials of Arab Modernity*, 29-33.

modernity is less a rupture or disruption than a literary gesture to the liminality and uncertainty of what awaits them as they traverse the Mediterranean Sea.

Landing Ashore: Al-Tantawi's Istanbul

Al-Tantawi admires many aspects of Istanbul, the beauty of its buildings, mosques, gardens, and markets. Furthermore, al-Tantawi sees Istanbul as having the best geographical location, because it sits at the meeting place (*multaqā*) of Europe and Asia and the Black and Mediterranean Seas.²³² The diversity of Istanbul's inhabitants is highlighted, including the presence of many Arabs, many of whom are "servants, mendicants, and doorkeepers."²³³

The infrastructure and natural beauty, a common feature of al-Tantawi's travel narrative, is of particular note in the case of Istanbul. The beauty and precision (*iḥkām*) of the buildings near the Sultan's palace aroused astonishment for al-Tantawi, prompting him to quote a poem by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir (d. 961):²³⁴

إن الملوك إذا أرادوا ذكرهم من بعدهم فبالسن البنيان
إن البناء إذا تعاضم قدره أضحى يدل على ارتفاع الباني

Kings who wish to be remembered
long after they are gone, write their legacies in the tongue of edifices
For an edifice that rises high and mighty,
reflects the eminence of the builder²³⁵

²³² Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*, 63.

²³³ الخدمة والفقراء والبوابين Ibid., 78.

²³⁴ First Umayyad Caliph of Cordoba in al-Andalus.

²³⁵ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*, 64.

Here al-Tantawi deploys poetry praising *Madīnat al-Zahrā*²³⁶ of Cordoba in al-Andalus in connection to the Ottoman architectural grandeur that he encountered in Istanbul. The kings' legacy is tethered to the monuments that he has built or commissioned. After the fall of Granada in 1492, al-Andalus became increasingly a point of reference, or more precisely a site of nostalgia and *lieu de mémoire* in the Arabic poetic tradition.²³⁷ After displaying such praise and admiration for Istanbul, al-Tantawi mentions some aspects of the city to which he objects:

لم أستكر في اسلامبول إلا قواويق الأرمن التي هي كالبوش وزى النساء في
 الأسواق ومسألة الذوق لا حرج فيها وكل حزب بما لديهم فرحون:
 لا تعذل الإنسان في شهواته في الناس من يلتذ طعم الحصرم
 كذلك صعوبة الطرقات في بعض الجهات بحيث يعسر فيها مشي العربات ولذلك
 الغالب فيها المشي أو ركوب الخيل فهي أجدر بأن تكون جحيم الخيل وقلت في
 مدحها:

قد عاب اسلامبول من لم يدرها وكذا المليحة عند ذي عنة
 ما ضارها إن كان بعض طريقها مثل الصراط فإنها جنة

In Istanbul I only disapprove of the Armenians' caps (*qawāwīq*) which are like those of the riffraff, and of the women's clothing in the markets. I make no objection on the question of taste (*dhawq*), as each group rejoices in its own proclivities:

Do not reproach anyone for his desires (*shahawāt*)
 as there are people who savor the taste of sour grapes.²³⁸

Also there are rough spots on the roads in some areas to the degree that it is difficult for carriages to move. Thus, most people walk or ride horses. [Istanbul] should be the hell for horses. I recited in praise of it:

Shame on him who does not know Istanbul

²³⁶ The expansive fortified city near Cordoba

²³⁷ See William Granara, "Extensio Animae: The Artful Ways of Remembering 'Al-Andalus,'" *Journal of Social Affairs* 19, no. 75 (2002): 45-72. Alexander Elinson, *Looking Back at Al-Andalus: The Poetics of Loss and Nostalgia in Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

²³⁸ The verse is by Ibn Mammātī (1149-1209), an Egyptian poet and administrator.

Like an impotent man with a beautiful woman.
What's the harm if some of her streets are narrow
Like the *şirāt* [straight and narrow path], she is paradise.²³⁹

This brief section contains al-Tantawi's only criticism of Istanbul, if one can even call it that. In general, the travel section of *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā* relies heavily on description through 'iyān, topographical and historical remarks about location, and poetry, less than it does on assessing the faults and virtues of different societies. In the case of Istanbul, the laudatory depiction of the Sublime Porte may have compelled him to add something negative to contrast with this—in the same way that Rifā'a valorizes French scientific learning and built environment, but denounces aspects of French social and moral customs. I understand these lines in intertextual connection with Rifā'a's description of sartorial habits of the French, to which he devoted the entirety of the sixth section (*faṣl*) of the third essay (*maqāla*).²⁴⁰ With parodic frivolity, al-Tantawi quibbles about the caps of Armenians and the clothing of women in the markets. But then he backtracks, conceding that these are matters of taste (*dhawq*), they should not be objected to ("lā ḥaraj"). In other words, the permissibility of these practices need not be determined legally or morally. Thus, al-Tantawi locates clothing as a matter of taste (*dhawq*), joining it with that of the appetite for food to justify an open-minded attitude to what one wears.

Next, al-Tantawi criticizes the state of the roads in Istanbul, making it difficult for carriages, and thus forcing people to walk or ride horses. As a result, it is Istanbul that is the "hell for horses." The expression of which there are many variations has its origin in the 17th century. Rifā'a had famously declared Paris to be "paradise for women, purgatory for men, and hell for

²³⁹ Ibid., 69.

²⁴⁰ Rifā'a had structured the fourth, fifth, and sixth *fuṣūl* of his third *maqāla* in accordance with the first three sections of Deppings' *Aperçu historique*, one of the books he translated in France.

horses.”²⁴¹ Al-Tantawi thus puts Istanbul in conversation with Rifā‘a’s Paris, as Istanbul is worse for horses given the condition of the roads, providing further evidence that al-Tantawi was writing in conversation with Rifā‘a’s text. The importance of built and natural environment figures prominently in al-Tantawi’s work, drawing on diverse spatial idioms found in literary, historical, and topographical works, such as the *khiṭaṭ*.

Delineating and Enacting Societal Advancement (*taqaddum*)

It is fruitful to approach *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā’* and *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* through the lens of *taqaddum* (societal advancement),²⁴² because it is one of the primary ways in which al-Tantawi and Rifā‘a frame and understand their own works, as we have seen already in this chapter. This section offers a reading of al-Tantawi’s understanding of societal advancement in the context of Russia. How and when did it progress? How does al-Tantawi compare Russia to Egypt and the Islamic world? The first chapter of *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā’* recounts the establishment of Russia (*fi’ Mansha’ al-Rūs*), which is by far its shortest, consisting of only seven folios, much of which is a translation of Ustryalov’s (1805–1870) history of Russia.²⁴³ Al-Tantawi chose to include his translation from a Russian history book that was not only recently published but was well-received and widely used as a textbook for decades at Russian schools.

The chapter begins with a presentation of the first inhabitants of what is now Russia, described as the vast land bordered by the Steppe (“*al-Ṣaḥārā*”). They are represented as warring

²⁴¹ إن باريس جنة النساء وأعراف الرجال وجحيم الخيل Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 126

²⁴² I translate *taqaddum* as “societal advancement,” instead of “progress,” to shift away from the latter’s teleological or universalizing connotations and to emphasize the role of society.

²⁴³ See lengthy footnote above on Nikolay Gerasimovich Ustryalov (1805–1870).

pagans, pitiful (*masākīn*) as he writes, because they did not know God. They were brave, but uncivilized and cruel.²⁴⁴ Different groups of the “*ṣaqlab*” emerge and it is from them that the Russians are descended. This first chapter, with which al-Tantawi would be least familiar, is the one that he offers in translation without interruption. It sets up a lengthy second chapter that views Russia squarely from the imperial metropolis of Saint Petersburg. It gives the details on the freezing patterns and floods of the Neva; the development of the infrastructure of the city; the wars with neighboring regions, especially the Great Northern War (1700–1721) between Russia and Sweden that brought fame to Peter the Great; and Saint Petersburg’s “continuity as the seat of Russia, ...the greatness of its precision, organization, and development, ongoing to the present.”²⁴⁵ The chapter is a mix of translated Russian sources and al-Tantawi’s observations which serve as an extension of his travel narrative. For example, when presenting Russia’s defeat of the Swedish Empire in the Finnish War (1818–1819), al-Tantawi describes his own visit to Helsinki.²⁴⁶ By doing so, he connects himself and his observations to the rise of the Russian Empire.

What is interesting about the second chapter is that it chronicles what is considered a period of great reform, through a mix of biography, history, and personal experience (*‘iyān*). Still, al-Tantawi’s experience is interspersed to show how the events of the past are present in

²⁴⁴ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā’*, 99.

²⁴⁵ وصيرورتها تخت روسيا وتوسيع طرقها وحسن إحكامها وتنظيمها وترقيها يوما فيوما إلى وقتنا هذا Ibid., 105

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 143.

Saint Petersburg. This style resembles that of the *khiṭaṭ*, which al-Tantawi likely read.²⁴⁷

However, unlike al-Maqrīzī, who presented Cairo in the context of impending decline, al-Tantawi sees the achievements and progress enacted by Peter the Great in the city as ongoing and present in its built form. Al-Tantawi shows the military acumen of Peter the Great in learning from defeats how to better make use of the Neva River and Saint Petersburg's geography in future battles.²⁴⁸ The Russian ruler is tied to his imperial namesake of Saint Petersburg, and his enduring legacy is expressed in its built form.

Al-Tantawi also presents elements of advancement evident in various aspects of Russian society and culture. In a section entitled “on their progress in sciences and arts,” al-Tantawi touts Russia's place among European powers. He argues that “Russia did not stop competing against other European [countries] in sciences and industry until it advanced (*taqaddama fī dhālik*)”²⁴⁹ The comparison is framed as a rivalry between Europe and Russia without mention of Egypt or the Ottoman Empire. Russia managed to outdo its European counterparts, and the roadmap for how it accomplished this is deposited, he hopes, in the pages of his book.

In laying out the broad contours of the Russian education system, al-Tantawi shows the degree to which education is central to societal advancement. After noting the extent to which he was impressed with Russia's schools for girls, he takes an interesting turn. He looks to Russia's treatment of and special schools for the deaf and blind (*al-ṣumm wal-bukm*). In continuing with the thread of how Russian society treats marginalized or vulnerable people, he considers

²⁴⁷ Some selections from al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* are found in his manuscript collection. Saint Petersburg University MSS 838, folios 41-50. As we saw in Chapter II, Edward Lane too read and included al-Maqrīzī in translation in his works.

²⁴⁸ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā'*, 133.

²⁴⁹ لم تزل الروس يوما فيوما تنافس غيرها من الأوربيين في العلوم والصنائع حتى تقدم في ذلك Ibid., 216.

foundlings (*luqaṭā'*), regarding whom he makes an illuminating comparison between Russia and the Islamic world. He mentions how Russia has homes where they are raised. The males become soldiers and the girls work at the schools for elite. He continues by stating:

وهذا من الخيرات والمصالح إذا اللقيط منبوذ لا كافل له فمن لم يكفله بيت المال فمن
كافله؟ وهب أنه ابن حرام فماذا ذنبه؟ والعجب أنه إلى الآن لم يعمل بيت للطقاء في
ديار الإسلام مع تقدم التمدن واقتضاء الشريعة

[Protecting foundlings] is one virtuous and beneficial aspects [of Russian society]: If foundlings are cast out without a guardian (*kāfil*), and the *Bayt al-Māl*²⁵⁰ does not take care of them, then who will? Suppose one were born out of wedlock (*ibn al-ḥarām*), what is his misdeed? It is surprising that to this day, a home for foundlings was not been made in the Islamic world, even with societal advancement (*taqaddum al-tamaddum*) and accordance with the *sharī'a*.²⁵¹

Al-Tantawi explains the social importance of guaranteeing the institutional support for outcasts, something that he couples explicitly with progress. While I do not wish to romanticize al-Tantawi's discussion of vulnerable groups, I do believe that it gives us insight into al-Tantawi's values and the social world that he inhabited in Russia. Moreover, the Islamic world is put on equal footing, as it too, al-Tantawi notes, has achieved progress by building hospitals and other services for the unwell.²⁵² Here again societal advancement (*taqaddum*) is linked to institution building, which serves the people, rather than serving the Pasha. In al-Tantawi's view, the Ottoman-Islamic world possessed no incompatibility or scientific lacking that prevented

²⁵⁰ *Bayt al-Māl* refers to a government body with social and financial responsibilities.

²⁵¹ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'*, 217.

²⁵² وهذا مثل المارستانات والقشل والاوسهاليات التي هي كثيرة في هذه الديار كذلك في ديار الإسلام بمعونة الدولة العلية Ibid.

Muslims from enacting similar reforms. From al-Tantawi's perspective, the rift between the cultures is far narrower than Rifā'a's work suggests, as we have already seen in this chapter.

Al-Tantawi and Rifā'a address the status and role of women in society in France and Saint Petersburg, respectively, while also comparing this to the situation in Egypt. The status and treatment of women is often seen as a marker of progress in national and civilizational discourses of al-Tantawi's time. Al-Tantawi praises the way in which Russia allows for the visibility and intermixing of men and women. For example, in a discussion of Russian dancing, he sees not temptation or seduction, but rather "merely movements devoid of indecency (*fahsh*)."²⁵³ He credits Peter the Great with the beginning of the development of Russian dance, by borrowing from the Europeans, especially the French. Dancing, he argues, entails courteous behavior (*mulātama*), which he argues is a consequence of increased intermingling of men and women. He continues, "if the fruitful results of men and women intermingling were only that we do not stare at them and do not associate with servant boys (*ghilmān*), that would be sufficient, but there are other benefits, such as intimacy (*'ishra*) and fine etiquette (*husn al-adab*)."²⁵⁴ This line is reminiscent of Rifā'a's observation and endorsement of the practice of the French who changed the gender of the beloved from male to female when translating Arabic poems.²⁵⁵ Both authors are critical of the poetic convention in which they are steeped with respect to the practice of

²⁵³ Ibid., 209 ليس إلا حركات خالية من الفحش

²⁵⁴ ولو لم يكن من ثمرات اجتماع النساء بالرجال إلا قصر النظر عليهن وعدم تعلق بالغلمان لكفى, كيف Ibid. وفيه فوائد أخرى من العشرة وحسن الأدب وغير ذلك

²⁵⁵ Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 123.

associating with *ghilmān*; however, al-Tantawi sees increased mixing, communication, and intimacy as the way forward.

By contrast, women appear several times in Rifā‘a’s *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* as objects of pseudo-scientific assessment. He characterizes them using sweeping statements that at once compliment their “beauty and charm” and denounce their lack of chastity, inordinate (and ostensibly undeserved) power, and deceitful ways.²⁵⁶ Rather than assessing women as objects of moral inquiry, they appear in al-Tantawi’s text dozens of times as objects of poetically constituted beauty. Their features, *accoutrements*, movements, and fragrances prompt al-Tantawi to recite Sufi poems concerning beauty. This is the poetry that he and his contemporaries would write quite often to each other—the style of his poems is similar to those he exchanged with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Safaṭī and those he includes as examples in his language learning book. The poetry is triggered by the beauty of women in nearly every town al-Tantawi passes through on his journey. The difference between the representation of women in *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā’* and *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* is important, because it shows that new sights of less covered women did not elicit judgement or condemnation from al-Tantawi, but rather poetic elaboration linking Russia to Egypt. Second, they show the degree to which al-Tantawi expresses his experience of Russia in the poetic idiom with which he was familiar, rather than through the voice of an assessor of morality or pseudo-social scientist.

Conclusion: A Letter to Rifā‘a

In the preceding analysis, I have drawn a comparison between the two travelogues, the precedent for which exists in an undated letter from al-Tantawi to Rifā‘a, printed in 1848 as part

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 122-4

of al-Tantawi's Arabic language learning book. The language book was a joint project with his students and colleagues who aided in the page-by-page French translation. I analyze the text in Chapter IV, but here I draw attention to al-Tantawi's letter to Rifā'a to show the intertextual relationship of the travelogues. Furthermore, the letter establishes the link between the scholars, but the fact that al-Tantawi acknowledges his friend's work with a hint of competition supports my contention that al-Tantawi sought to improve on or outdo *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*. Al-Tantawi's letter to Rifā'a reads:

أنا مشغوف بكيفية معيشة الأوروبيين وانبساطهم وحسن إدارتهم وترتيبهم
خصوصا ريفهم وبيوته المكددة بالبساتين والأنهار إلى ذلك مما شاهدتهم قبلي بمدة
في باريز إذ بطرسبورغ لا تنقص عن باريز في ذلك بل تفضلها في ذلك كاتساع
الطرق وأما من قبل البرد فلم يضرني جدا إنما ألزمني ربط منديل في العنق وليس
فروة إذا خرجت وأما في البيت فالمدافئ متينة معدة لإدفاء الأرض ولطالما أنشدت
عند جلوسي قرب النار:

النار فاكهة الشتاء فمن يرد أكل الفواكه شاتيا فليصطل

تذكرت قول الاعرابي في يوم بارد

فإن كنت يوما مدخلي في جهنم ففي مثل هذا اليوم طابت جهنم

I am fascinated with the way Europeans live, their openness (*inbisāt*), their fine administration and organization, especially in the countryside with houses lined with gardens and rivers, etc., which you saw before me some time ago in Paris. Saint Petersburg does not fall short in that respect. In fact, it outdoes [Paris] in the width of the roads. As for the cold, it does not bother me much, rather it compels me to tie a scarf around my neck and wear fur clothing when I go out. As for at home, the sturdy heaters are designed to warm the earth. Sitting near the fire, I often recite:

Fire is winter's fruit, so he who wishes
to eat fruit in winter, must warm himself by the fire.

I recalled the verse of al-A‘rābī²⁵⁷ about a cold day:
If someday I go to hell,
on a day like this, hellfire would be a pleasure²⁵⁸

Al-Tantawi mentions what amounts to admiration for Europeans, and situates Saint Petersburg as part of the Europe that Rifā‘a had explored before him in France. The aspects of Europe that al-Tantawi compliments are not the European or French sciences that Rifā‘a had diligently studied and translated under Jomard and others. Rather, al-Tantawi praises their openness (*inbisāṭ*) and administrative organization. Al-Tantawi does not believe that progress is a matter of adopting or translating scientific knowledge from West to East, or Europe to Egypt. Instead, al-Tantawi, however implicitly, positions what is to be gained or learned from Russia in terms of reform concerns infrastructure, organization, and openness. One cannot help but recall al-Tantawi’s criticisms of Mehmed Ali’s less than appealing state building ventures, in which he refused to participate, as discussed in Chapter I.

Al-Tantawi devotes the remaining lines of his letter to the topic of climate, wherein he engages directly with Rifā‘a’s *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*. With respect to weather and heating in Paris, Rifā‘a had written of the Russian heathers (*madākhin musqūbiyya*), which according to Daniel Newman is a mistranslation of “*cheminée à la prusse*.”²⁵⁹ Rifā‘a had cited the same verse in *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*,²⁶⁰ which was an often quoted verse that fire is the fruit of winter. One could interpret al-Tantawi’s choice to quote the same verse about the cold weather in several ways. I

²⁵⁷ Muḥammad b. Ziyād b. al-A‘rābī (d. 846) was a Kufan philologist and transmitter who served as an important link between his teacher al-Mufaḍḍal (d. 786) and his students who included Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 838), Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 858), and Tha‘lab (d. 904). Cf., EI³, “Ibn al-A‘rābī.”

²⁵⁸ Al-Ṭaṭṭāwī, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, 168-71.

²⁵⁹ Newman, *An Iman in Paris*, 170.

²⁶⁰ Al-Ṭaṭṭāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, 111.

only tentatively venture that al-Tantawi is highlighting the degree to which Saint Petersburg, north of Paris, possessed a colder temperature, therefore the verse is more suitable for al-Tantawi's *riḥla* than Rifā'a's.

To conclude this chapter, I want to refine my arguments regarding the didactic qualities of al-Tantawi's *riḥla*. Both authors sought to present information to facilitate the advancement of the societies and cultures with which they identified. To that end, both deployed the *riḥla* genre to present a path forward for their homeland, be it Egypt, Ottoman lands, or the Islamic world. In his didactic gesture, Rifā'a firmly upholds the French's scientific and intellectual superiority, and advocates for reform by translating and imitating their achievements. Accordingly, Rifā'a's work tends towards prescription, whereas al-Tantawi's work, guided by exploration and curiosity, is far more descriptive.

This chapter has emphasized *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*'s heavy-handed imperative to take up French sciences. We may compare that with al-Tantawi's concluding remark on the colophon of his manuscript (see Figure IV). In it, he declares his hope for what comes of his *riḥla*:

وَأَلَّهُ أَسْأَلُ وَبِنَبِيهِ أَتَوَسَّلُ أَنْ يَكُونَ هَذَا التَّعْلِيقُ مَقْبُولًا عِنْدَ السَّيِّدَةِ الْعَلِيَّةِ وَالْعَقْبَةِ الْخَاقَانِيَّةِ وَأَنْ
يَنْظُرَ إِلَيْهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ الْأَعْلَامُ بِعَيْنِ الْإِنْصَافِ وَأَنْ يَحُودُوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ الْإِعْتِسَافِ فَمَا قَصْدِي إِلَّا
التَّبْصِيرُ وَمَا مَرَامِي إِلَّا التَّنْكِيرُ وَإِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ

By God, I implore that this exposition is acceptable to the Sublime Porte and high-ranking Ottoman officials (*al-'Aqaba al-Khāqāniyya*), and that distinguished 'ulamā' look upon it fairly and not engage with it haphazardly. My intention is simply to bring visibility/awareness (*tabṣīr*) and retrospection (*tadhkīr*), only in hope of reform (*iṣlāḥ*).²⁶¹

²⁶¹ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*, 224.

وحيث ينبغي ان يتنبه له ان المترجم من لغة لا بد ان يحفظ
ما يكون مقبولا في اللغة الاخرى ولا غير كما فعلت في هذا الشعر الاخر
فان ان عرشفه في المصطلح القامه بالنحلة الهندية وهذا بديع
في اللغة (اروسي) ستهج في العربي فلذا غيرته الى الباء والمودى وله
وهنا حسنت عناء القلم وله قلت

يراعى كفى الخوض في البحر زاهر ولا تتجارك قد جرى فلك ما يكفي
وانه حال وبنييه اتوسل ان يكون هذا التعليق مقبولا
عند السادة العلية والعتبة الخاقانية وان ينظر اليه العلماء
المعلم بعينه بالانصاف وان يجودوا عن سبيل الاعتساف
فما قصدت الا التبصير وما مر ان الا التذكير ان اريد المصالح
ما استطعت وما توفيقى الاباء عليه توكلت واليه انيب
وقدم بحمد الله تبيينه في اوائل شهر ربيع الاول سنة ١٢١٦ من الهجرة النبوية
على صاحبها وآله وصحبه افضل الصلوة وازكى التحية الموافق ذلك
لاوائل كانون الثاني سنة ١٢١٦

من المبلد والله ولي السداد

عليه مصنف الفقير محمد

الطنطاوي

المصري

ببرونه

Figure IV: Colophon of al-Ṭaṭṭāwī's *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā'*
Istanbul MSS 766. Microfilm courtesy of Kaj Öhrnberg.

Chapter IV: Al-Tantawi in Russia: Ascent in Orientalist Circles

“Now you can learn to speak perfect Arabic without leaving St. Petersburg.”
-*St. Petersburg Vedomosti*, 1840.²⁶²

Introduction

This chapter examines several important and interrelated aspects al-Tantawi’s life, writings, and career in Russia. First, I trace the development of discourses surrounding Russian Orientalism through perhaps its most avid and influential architect, the Russian statesman Sergei Uvarov, as well as several orientalists who worked at the institutions primarily in Russia and Eastern Europe. Then I move from discourses to the institutions themselves, which al-Tantawi would inhabit after resettling in Saint Petersburg. The second half of this chapter then turns specifically to al-Tantawi’s relationship with one of his first students, Georg Wallin, as an entry point for observing al-Tantawi’s ascent in orientalist circles. Lastly, I consider al-Tantawi’s rise relative to his landmark language learning book, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab fī Ma’rifat Lisān al-‘Arab* (The Finest Selections for Learning the Arabic Language), which earned him a reputation as a pioneer in the study of colloquial Arabic.

Excitement about the Orient—usually a mix of scholarly, romantic, or exotic impulses—was in full swing in Russia as it was in much of Europe in the early 19th century.²⁶³ The question of the utility of studying the Orient and its languages and cultures was an issue that had great

²⁶² *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti*, August 22, 1840, No. 189, 868-9. See Appendix II for the full translated article.

²⁶³ Raymond Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance: Europe’s Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

significance for shaping political platforms and education policy, as we will see below. Could the Orient, to which the Russian Empire was nearest among its European counterparts, provide a way forward for Russia? A discourse about renewal through an Oriental Renaissance had been circulating among intellectuals since before the 1800s, and the demand for speakers of its languages, scholars of its civilizations, and preservationists of its materials, had only grown more intense with time.

The Development of Russian Orientology

“The best means to counteract the influence of the west is to rely on the study of the east”
- Vasili Vasilevich Grigorev, 1837.²⁶⁴

During the decades leading up al-Tantawi’s arrival in Saint Petersburg in 1840, the Russian educational system was undergoing significant reforms and restructuring in the field of Oriental Studies. Sergei Uvarov²⁶⁵ (1786–1855) played an important role in these reforms and understanding his perspective, even cursorily, will help to bring into focus the ideologies, discourses, and policies that would ultimately lead to al-Tantawi’s appointment and ascent within Russian Eastern European orientalist circles. Uvarov occupies an important position in the history of the Russian education system and the growth of Oriental Studies during the first half of the 19th century. He was an eloquent ideologue and polished statesman who served as Minister of Education from 1833 to 1849. In his youth, long before he became Minister, Uvarov was a

²⁶⁴ Quoted in Nathaniel Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg, 1851-1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?” *Slavic Review* 59, no. 1 (2000): 80.

²⁶⁵ Soviet historiography has not looked kindly upon him due to his association with Nicholas I. See David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 154.

Russian diplomat, popular in the literary salons of Eastern Europe, including Göttingen and Vienna.

In Vienna, Uvarov became acquainted with Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829). Schlegel contended in his influential *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*,²⁶⁶ published in 1808, that all of human civilization originated from India. Furthermore, he argued, translation and philological study of Sanskrit thought would constitute a rebirth and renaissance akin to the Italian one.²⁶⁷ In 1810, back in Russia, Uvarov published an influential and well-received²⁶⁸ essay, “Projet d’une académie asiatique,” advocating for the establishment of an Asiatic Academy in Saint Petersburg. Uvarov presents India and the Orient more generally as a timeless region brimming with enchanting and mysterious power that can be harnessed through its study to the benefit of Russia. Putting Russia in rivalry with its Western national counterparts, he asks, “In the age of the renaissance of Oriental Studies, could it be that Russia lags behind all the nations of Europe?”²⁶⁹

The Empire needs the Orient’s timeless guiding light, Uvarov argues, to keep Russia strong and to defend itself against Western Europe’s instability, penchant for revolution, and

²⁶⁶ Friedrich von Schlegel, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier. Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Alterthumskunde* (Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer, 1808). On Schlegel see Cf., Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance*, 67-78.

²⁶⁷ Cf., Van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, 156.

²⁶⁸ It earned the praise of Napoleon, Goethe, Friedrich Schlegel, among others. Cf., Cynthia H. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education: An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786-1855* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), 23.

²⁶⁹ “Au moment de la renaissance des études orientales, la Russie pourrait-elle rester en arrière de toutes les nations de l’Europe?” Sergei Uvarov, *Projet d’une académie asiatique* (Saint Petersburg: Pluchart, 1810), 9.

radicalism. In studying and translating the Orient, Uvarov hoped Russia would rejuvenate what he deemed the stagnant and declining intellectual climate of the time.

According to Cynthia Whittaker, Uvarov's article "provides a revealing example of the impact that the Oriental Renaissance had upon all European intellectuals, including Russians."²⁷⁰ Uvarov deployed the language of the Oriental Renaissance as a justification for the founding of the proposed academy. Oriental Studies could offer an unmediated and promising new interaction: "where we might see the European critic beside the Asian Lama."²⁷¹ One can easily discern in Uvarov's romantic tone the influences of the likes of Schlegel and other German orientalists.²⁷² However, it was not all a matter of an idealized and romantic search for Oriental purity, because teaching eastern languages would also serve the practical goals of training students in languages necessary for diplomatic missions. Uvarov's appeal for this "Asiatic Academy" was not immediately successful, but the role he played in shaping the ideological underpinnings and practical policies of Russian Orientalism is significant.

Returning to the state of Oriental Studies in Saint Petersburg, Russian orientalists often shared with their German colleagues' an interest in Asian influences on their own culture. However, "if their Teutonic counterparts looked to ancient India in the distant past for traces of their origins, Russians could detect much more tangible traces of the Eastern inheritance in the cultural, political, and racial imprint on their own history of the relatively recent Mongol

²⁷⁰ Cynthia H. Whittaker, "The Impact of the Oriental Renaissance in Russia: The Case of Sergei Uvarov," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 26, no. 4 (1978): 511.

²⁷¹ "Où l'on verrait le critique Européen à côté du Lama asiatique." Uvarov, *Projet d'une académie asiatique*, 9.

²⁷² On German Orientalism, see Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

yoke.”²⁷³ Despite Uvarov’s lofty praise of Sanskrit as a vital part of Russia’s supposed Oriental Renaissance, he notably did not include it among the initial languages to be studied at the University of Saint Petersburg. This decision to forego Sanskrit after having insisted on its importance indicates the tension between the justifications for studying the East and the practical and strategic ambitions of the Russian Empire.

The Saint Petersburg School of Oriental Studies

While the origins of Oriental Studies in Russia are often traced back to the reign of Peter the Great, it was not until the 1810s and the Uvarov-led reforms that we may speak of a Saint Petersburg School of Oriental Studies. The year 1818 was important for Uvarov for several reasons. First, he was appointed head of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (now: Russian Academy of Sciences), which gave him broad powers in shaping the direction of Oriental Studies in Saint Petersburg. Second, he established not an “Asiatic Academy,” as his influential essay called for, but rather the Asiatic Museum. It was located within the Kunstkamera building that Peter the Great had established in 1727 as a museum or so-called cabinet of curiosity looking upon the Neva River in downtown. The Asiatic Museum²⁷⁴ was to become Saint Petersburg’s primary depository for manuscripts, coins, and *objects d’art* of all kinds from the Orient, including an extensive collection of Arabic manuscripts purchased from Louis-Jacques Rousseau (1780–1831), the French consul at Aleppo and Tripoli.²⁷⁵ The collection from Rousseau would be merged with the roughly 20,000 items of *Orientalia* preserved in the

²⁷³ Van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, 99.

²⁷⁴ In 1930 it was renamed the Institute of Oriental Studies, and again in 2007 as Institute of Oriental Manuscripts.

²⁷⁵ Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education*, 208.

Kunstkamera. Uvarov, in his quest to promote the study of the Orient, ordered the transfer of these items of curiosity to the Asiatic Museum, which was conveniently located in the Kunstkamera complex until 1861.

Most important for al-Tantawi, Uvarov appointed German-born orientalist and specialist in Eastern numismatics, Christian Martin Frähn (1782–1851), to direct the Asiatic Museum, where the materials were to be deciphered, catalogued, and studied. He would become an important part of al-Tantawi's network in Saint Petersburg, as we will see below. A third and final reason 1818 was important for Uvarov was that he was instrumental in establishing the University of Saint Petersburg and hiring orientalists to teach Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. To this end, he sought Silvestre de Sacy's guidance, and appointed two of his former students, François-Bernard Charmoy (1793–1869) to teach Turkish and Persian and Jean-Baptiste Demange (1789–1839) to teach Arabic.²⁷⁶

To Uvarov's consternation, the two Frenchmen brought to Saint Petersburg would become caught up in a wide-scale purging of Western European professors from the university in 1822. Uvarov's popularity among many European elites did not extend to his Slavophile counterparts, who through shrewd political maneuverings sought to rid the university of what they saw as corrupting and destructive ideologies borrowed from Western Europe.²⁷⁷ The purge resulted in the firing or voluntary departure of roughly half of the University's professors and students.²⁷⁸ Unsurprisingly, the protest against Western European influence in the university did little to curb the increasing demand for studying Oriental languages in the Russian Empire.

²⁷⁶ Lorraine de Meaux, *La Russie et la tentation de l'Orient* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), 110-12.

²⁷⁷ Cf., Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education*, 81-3.

²⁷⁸ Van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, 99.

While the University of Saint Petersburg dealt with periodic turmoil, the two Frenchmen Demange and Charmoy easily found employment nearby across the Neva River at the Institute of Oriental Languages. Whereas the university and the Asiatic Museum were controlled by the Imperial Academy of Sciences and the policies of Uvarov, the Institute of Oriental Languages was founded in 1823 under the auspices of the Asian Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The institute was intended to provide language instruction in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, to university graduates who aspired to serve the Empire in diplomatic missions. In practice, the institute also served as a specialized counterweight to the tumultuous climate of the university, ensuring that there would be no disruptions to the teaching of these valuable languages. Health concerns took Charmoy back to France in 1835 where he remained, but Demange continued teaching Arabic in Saint Petersburg until his death in 1839, which produced the vacancy that al-Tantawi filled the following year.

With the founding of the institute in 1823, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs selected Georgy Mikhailovich Vlangali (1781–1834) to be its head and teach Turkish. Vlangali was born in Istanbul to a Greek family. Fluent in Persian and Turkish, in 1820 he began serving the Russian Empire in the ongoing Russian-Circassian wars as chief interpreter for the governor of the Province (Guberniya) of Georgia, Alexei Petrovich Yermolov (1777–1861). After only two years in Saint Petersburg at the institute, he was called back into service where he worked as an interpreter for the Russo-Persian War of 1826–1828 and the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–1829. In the case of Vlangali the empire's military needs mattered more than his teaching in Saint Petersburg. Vlangali demonstrates another common challenge in maintaining teachers of Oriental languages—the Russian Empire would often dispatch its finest speakers to serve in military and diplomatic capacities.

With the departure of Vlangali, the Institute of Oriental Languages needed a new director and a new teacher of Turkish. A German born linguist and historian, Friedrich von Adelung (1768–1843), was appointed director and remained in that position until his death 20 years later in 1843. Unlike his predecessor, Adelung's role at the institute was one of research and writing rather than teaching. He focused on the languages and cultures that made up pre-Petrine Russia, including Sanskrit.²⁷⁹ As for the teaching of Turkish, that duty belonged to an Azeri, Mirza Jafar Topchubashi (1790–1869) who was born in Ganja and moved to Tiflis (now: Tbilisi). In 1811, he joined an envoy to Saint Petersburg where he enrolled in the Foreign Ministry and taught at the University of Saint Petersburg starting in 1823. With the departure of Vlangali, he would also teach Persian and Turkish at the Institute of Oriental Languages where he would become al-Tantawi's friend and colleague in the Russian metropolis. Topchubashi was one of several Azeris whom the Russian Empire was able to take from its borderlands and incorporate into its educational missions.

The Institute of Oriental Languages, University of Saint Petersburg, and the Asiatic Museum were the three primary institutions that make up the Saint Petersburg School of Oriental studies in the early to mid-19th century. As we have seen, the borders between the university and the institute were porous, allowing for teachers to transfer when vacancies arose.

The Kazan School of Oriental Studies and Christian Martin Frähn

We have examined the development of the three primary institutions of the Saint Petersburg School of Oriental Studies, but before 1855, the Russian capital played second fiddle to Kazan. Many of al-Tantawi's network of scholars in Russia came from the Kazan School of

²⁷⁹ Friedrich von Adelung, *Kritisch-literarische Übersicht der Reisenden in Russland bis 1700, deren Berichte bekannt sind* (Saint Petersburg: Eggers, 1846).

Oriental Studies, including Alexander Mirza Kazem-Bek (1802–1870) and Christian Martin Frähn (1782–1851). Kazan rests on the banks of the Volga River, approximately 1500 kilometers to the south-east of Saint Petersburg and 800 km east of Moscow. Its proximity to the south-eastern fringe of the Empire meant that it was centrally located among Russia’s Turkic and Circassian minorities. Of these minorities, the Tatars deserve special mention, as a Turkic minority native to the Volga-Ural region of which Kazan was the provincial capital. The Theological Seminary in Kazan had long been engaged in missionary activities to convert non-Christians in the religiously and ethnically diverse Volga-Ural region. Kazan’s location and connection to Russian missionary activity also entailed an emphasis on the practical study of Turkic and Persian languages in particular.²⁸⁰

Alexander I’s 1804 educational reforms founded the University in Kazan, endowing it—along with the University of Kharkov and Moscow—with chairs in Arabic and Persian. The 1804 reforms of the university system placed them under the newly created Ministry of Education with the goal of improving the training of Russian gentry for work in service of the Empire.²⁸¹ Until its transfer to the University of Saint Petersburg in 1855, Kazan was the largest and most influential center of Oriental Studies in Russia.²⁸² Saint Petersburg, in contrast to Kazan, was further divorced from the East and more integrated into French and Germanic spheres of Orientalism.

²⁸⁰ David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, “Mirza Kazem-Bek and the Kazan School of Russian Orientology,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle* 28, no. 3 (2008): 443-58.

²⁸¹ James Flynn, “The Universities, the Gentry, and the Russian Imperial Services, 1801-1825,” *Canadian Slavic Studies* 2, no. 4 (1968): 488.

²⁸² Van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, 93-122.

Christian Frähn is representative of this Germanic training and he provides insight into the formation of Russian Orientalism, ultimately playing a vital role in bringing al-Tantawi to Saint Petersburg. Frähn had studied Classical Arabic and Biblical Hebrew at the University of Rostock under Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815), a semiticist and prominent specialist in Islamic numismatics. Frähn, well-traveled in Germanic Oriental Studies circles, also read at University of Göttingen and of Tübingen. His adviser at Rostock recommended him for a professorship at the newly established Oriental Studies department at the University of Kazan.²⁸³ His choice to leave German academic circles of Oriental Studies in favor of Kazan is significant, as is his ensuing career and connection to al-Tantawi.

Frähn arrived in Kazan in 1807 to teach, but the well-recommended Orientalist did not have the language skills necessary to succeed. His knowledge of Semitic philology did not, predictably, translate into effective teaching in Kazan where Latin and German were of little to no use to the largely Russian and Tatar-speaking population.²⁸⁴ He was thus forced to teach Arabic using the classical language he had read in Rostock. He also pursued his usual philological research, turning his attention to amassing and cataloguing a large amount of valuable historical materials from the region, especially coins.²⁸⁵ When Uvarov opened the Asiatic Museum in Saint Petersburg in 1818, he appointed Frähn as its director, prompting his transfer to the Russian capital, where he would remain in charge until his death in 1851. After

²⁸³ Gabriele Zithen, “Christian Martin Joachim v. Fraehn (Rostock 1782-St. Petersburg 1851) – his life as documented by the records from German archives,” *Manuscripta Orientalia: International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research* 10, no. 2 (2004): 57-70.

²⁸⁴ Van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, 97.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 98. Furthermore, he printed during his time in Kazan in Arabic two pre-Islamic poems by *ṣa‘ālīk* (sing. *ṣu‘lūk*) al-Shanfarā and Abū Dhu‘ayb al-Hudhalī. Christian Frähn, *Al-Qaṣīdatān al-Lāmiyyatān* (Kazan, 1814).

Frähn's transfer to Saint Petersburg, a Persian Azari and convert to Christianity would soon rise in the ranks of the University of Kazan. By birth Mirza Hajji b. Qasim-Ogly, he would become known as Alexander Mirza Kazem-Bek (1802–1870) in Russia after his conversation to Christianity and gradually rise as a teacher and academic in Kazan. He is credited with much of the early success of the Kazan School and with advocating for a practical approach to training in languages.²⁸⁶ In 1849 he, like Frähn, was transferred to Saint Petersburg, where he would become a colleague and friend of al-Tantawi.

Returning to Christian Frähn, it was important that he experienced in Kazan the practical problems of language instruction. His training in classical Semitic languages at Rostock were of less value than his expertise in numismatics. Therefore, it is unsurprising that when the opportunity arose, he embarked on a new career at the Asiatic Museum in Saint Petersburg. There he would undertake the ambitious project of cataloguing the centralized collection of manuscripts and artifacts from the east. He would need the help of others, and certainly a native speaker with a keen eye for Arabic philology and lexicography would be a boon to the erudite Frähn as he painstakingly deciphered and catalogued the vast collection. This is one of the vital roles that al-Tantawi would play when he settled in Saint Petersburg.²⁸⁷ How did al-Tantawi come to serve that function for Frähn? What was Frähn's involvement in recruiting al-Tantawi?

²⁸⁶ Van der Oye, "Mirza Kazem-Bek," 454.

²⁸⁷ The director of the museum following Frähn was Boris Andreevich Dorn (1805-1881), another German-born and trained Russian orientalist who held the position for nearly 40 years (1842–1881). He published a list of its vast holdings, as well as a collection of articles and catalogues that his predecessor, Frähn, had written in which the assistance of al-Tantawi is mentioned. Boris Dorn, "Catalogue des ouvrages arabes, persans et turcs: publiés à Constantinople, en Égypte et en Perse, qui se trouvent au Musée Asiatique de l'Académie," *Bulletin de l'Académie Imperiale des Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg* 10 (1866): 168-213. In the following work, we can see not only the breadth of the collection at the Asiatic Museum, but that al-Tantawi had assisted Frähn in his work. Bernhard Dorn, *Das Asiatische Museum* (Saint Petersburg: Kaiserl. Akad. d. Wiss, 1848), 649, 653.

Coming to Russia

The Invitation to Teach at Saint Petersburg

To understand al-Tantawi's appointment to teach in Saint Petersburg, we must review both the means by which he received the invitation, and the workings of the institutions to which he would belong in Saint Petersburg. As we saw in Chapters I and II, al-Tantawi developed a large network of European Orientalists with whom he worked in Cairo. These connections played a crucial role in securing his invitation. However, it is ultimately difficult to determine with certainty how it all transpired. As a teacher and co-editor, al-Tantawi earned a reputation as an astute teacher of texts that other '*ulamā*' would not normally teach. This reputation as authentically Egyptian, erudite, and open-minded in terms of what he studied, proved essential to his appointment to teach Arabic at the Institute of Oriental Languages.

The aforementioned Frenchman, Jean-Baptiste Demange (1789–1839), a former student of Silvestre de Sacy and teacher of Arabic at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, died in 1839, and his passing produced a vacancy that had to be filled. It is worth noting that the demand for Arabic-speaking diplomats in Russia was high at this time, and the world of European Oriental Studies was not adequately preparing its students to study, not to mention teach, vernacular Arabic.

While the circumstances under which al-Tantawi received an invitation to teach in Saint Petersburg cannot be determined with certainty, we have several sources that provide insight into how the process transpired. One source is the narrative of the events written by al-Tantawi himself in his travelogue. According to al-Tantawi, it was the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karl Nesselrode (1780–1862), who charged Medem, the Russian Consul-General in Alexandria, with the task of filling the vacancy with an Egyptian scholar. Al-Tantawi claims to

have met Medem through Fresnel several years prior to 1840. This is unsurprising if we consider Fulgence Fresnel's vibrant social life and high status among Europeans of all stripes residing in Cairo, as well as the fact that he was al-Tantawi's closest and most trusted European friend, through whom he became acquainted with Edward Lane, Dr. Perron, and others. After agreeing to go to Russia, apparently without any hesitation, Medem sought Mehmed Ali's permission to make matters official.²⁸⁸

In his travelogue, al-Tantawi describes one important aspect of the circumstances leading to his invitation to teach in Saint Petersburg. Unlike in other parts of Europe, the Russia sought out native speakers for each language at the Institute, as al-Tantawi explains:

اعتنى وزير الغرباء سعادة الكونت نسل روض بالألسن الشرقية فأنشأ لها مدرسة
مخصصة غير قانع بالمدرسة العمومية لشدة الاحتياج إلى الألسن الشرقية ففي هذه
المدرسة معلمون لهذه الألسن لا كما في الأوربا بل كل لسان له معلم من أبناء
جنسه

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nesselrode, was devoted to eastern Languages. He established a special school for them [the Institute for Oriental Languages], as he was unsatisfied with the state school²⁸⁹ due to the intense need for [learning] Eastern Languages. In this school there are teachers of these languages, but not like Europe. Rather, each language has a teacher who is a native speaker of it.²⁹⁰

We should not interpret native command of Arabic, Turkish, or Persian as strict requirements to teach at the Institute of Oriental Languages, given the exceptions.²⁹¹ However,

²⁸⁸ For this narrative of the events in al-Tantawi's own words, al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'*, 57.

²⁸⁹ Referring likely to Saint Petersburg University.

²⁹⁰ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'*, 57.

²⁹¹ Al-Tantawi himself acknowledges the exception of Jean-Jacques Pierre Desmaisons (1807–1873) who taught Turkish and Persian periodically at the institute. Ibid.

the fact that al-Tantawi understands his status as a native speaker of Arabic as a qualification is illuminating, especially given that he situates the supposed Russian policy in opposition to Europe, likely France in particular. It is worth repeating that Russia's expansionist ambitions and territorial gains in the Caucasus meant that they could more easily "poach" speakers of Turkic languages and Persian from regions they bordered or had conquered. However, the same cannot be said for speakers of Arabic, the last of the three languages taught at the institute. One is left to wonder what role this geo-political element played in al-Tantawi's invitation to teach.

Krachkovski, who had access to a good deal of Russian archival materials, casts doubt on the version of events as related by al-Tantawi. Instead of Nesselrode and Medem, Krachkovski argues we ought to look to al-Tantawi's connection to the two dragomen of the Russian Consulate in Egypt to understand the true reason he was selected. As far as I have seen, aside from Medem,²⁹² Mukhine and Rudolf Frähn were the only Russians who al-Tantawi knew well in Egypt. They had both studied at the Institute of Oriental Languages in preparation for their diplomatic work, and they remained in contact with the Ministry while they served the Empire abroad. It should be stressed that even though they received training in Oriental languages, Mukhine and Rudolf Frähn worked chiefly in diplomatic capacities as dragomen, interpreters, and "dealers" in coins, antiquities, and manuscripts. They were not Orientalists of the likes of Lane, Fresnel, and Dr. Perron.

While working as dragoman for the Russian Consulate in Alexandria, Mukhine had studied with al-Tantawi in Egypt sometime between 1835 and 1837. In *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'* al-Tantawi writes that he taught the dragoman pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, and accounts (*akḥbār*)

²⁹² Aside from al-Tantawi's account in *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā'*, I have not located any other sources that link al-Tantawi to Medem.

about the poets, likely from the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, which he also taught to Fresnel and Dr. Perron.²⁹³ When Mukhine was transferred to Istanbul in 1837, Rudolf Frähn took his place at the Russian consulate in Alexandria. It so happened that this Rudolf Frähn was the eldest son of Christian Martin Frähn, the director of the Asiatic Museum in Saint Petersburg discussed above. According to Krachkovski, it was on the recommendation of these two relatively young Russian diplomats that Christian Frähn encouraged Foreign Minister Nesselrode to seek out al-Tantawi.²⁹⁴

The textual evidence available to me that supports Christian Frähn's involvement is admittedly rather scant, consisting only of a line in a newspaper article published upon al-Tantawi's arrival in Saint Petersburg. At the end of the article, its author states "one of the main people behind *Sheikh Mukhammed*'s invitation was our academician Frähn, whose famous name is associated with all of Russia's successes in eastern philology: he was the first to have the idea and proposed it to the Vice Chancellor Count Nesselrode, head and founder of the Institute."²⁹⁵ By the late 1830s, Frähn was indeed one of the highest ranking orientalists in Saint Petersburg, and may very well have orchestrated the hire.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Al-Ṭanṭāwī. *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyā*, 71.

²⁹⁴ Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 97-100.

²⁹⁵ *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti*, 22 August 1840, No. 189, 868-869. See Appendix II for the full text of the article. Between the years 1825 and 1843 Friedrich von Adelung (1768–1843) was the head of the Institute for Oriental Languages, whereas Nesselrode was Minister of Foreign Affairs.

²⁹⁶ Svetlana Kirillina, without citing a source, writes that "the idea of inviting Tantawi to St. Petersburg belonged to a prominent Arabist, member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and leader of the Russian orientalists of the first half of nineteenth century Christian Martin Frähn (1782–1851). He recommended the minister of Foreign Affairs Karl Nesselrode to issue an order according to which a new teacher of Arabic should be found among 'the educated Arabs.'" Kirillina, "Arab Scholars from the Ottoman Empire in Russian Universities," 166. I was unable to locate evidence for this in Nesselrode's 11 volumes of

The published Russian archives under Mehmed Ali include an important letter dated 27 July 1839 from N. Bouteneff (1789–1867), the Russian Consul-General in Istanbul, to Medem. The letter confirms the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for al-Tantawi to come to teach in Saint Petersburg, describing him as “the learned Arab shaykh Mohammaed Tantahwy resident of Alexandria [*sic*] and enjoying the reputation of a distinguished philologist.”²⁹⁷ In the letter, we also learn that Medem had submitted a proposal to the Foreign Minister, Nesselrode, who received approval from the Russian Emperor, Nicholas I (r. 1825–1855). The letter also lays out the logistics and financial details of the appointment: a three-year contract with an annual salary of 6/m rubles plus compensation for his travel and relocation. Additionally, the Ministry designated Mukhine, former dragoman for the Russian Consulate in Egypt, to accompany al-Tantawi on the journey from Alexandria to Saint Petersburg.²⁹⁸

A Controversial Arrival

Al-Tantawi arrived by carriage to Saint Petersburg on 30 June 1840, after a journey of over two months. According to the Russian archives, al-Tantawi would begin giving lessons at the Institute of Oriental Languages in early August of 1840.²⁹⁹ His arrival was not without a touch of controversy. Al-Tantawi, as we have seen, was a rare or even unique case in this time period, as an Arab Muslim invited (sight-unseen) to teach his tongue to Orientalists and

published correspondence. Karl Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers du chancelier comte de Nesselrode, 1760-1850; Extraits de ses archives* (Paris: A. Lahure, 1904).

²⁹⁷“Le savant scheikh arabe Mohammed Tantahwy résident à Alexandrie et jouissant de la réputation d’un philologue distingué.” René Cattai, *Le règne de Mohamed Aly d’après les archives russes en Égypte* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, 1931), vol. 3, 322-3.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 323.

²⁹⁹ Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 110.

diplomats in the cosmopolitan imperial capital. Naturally, the Russian press was quick to take interest in the shaykh and teacher.

The Slavophile statesman, journalist, and Orientalist, Pavel Stepanovich Savelev (1814–1859) penned an article announcing al-Tantawi’s arrival in the daily newspaper, *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti* (see Figure V).³⁰⁰ Soon after an abridged extract of the article appeared in French translation in the *Journal de Saint-Pétersbourg*.³⁰¹ When he wrote the article, Savelev was establishing himself as a journalist and Orientalist. In 1837 he graduated from the very institute where al-Tantawi would begin his teaching career in Russia. He worked alongside Christian Martin Frähn to publish works on Eastern coins that they were gathering and classifying.³⁰² In addition to his scholarship, Savelev worked for the Empire in the Committee of Foreign Censorship and for the *Journal of the Ministry of Public Education*. Vasili Vasilevich Grigorev (1816–1881), a student of al-Tantawi, collected and published Savelev’s writings and correspondence, giving us an interesting lens through which to view the spectacle that was al-Tantawi in Saint Petersburg.

³⁰⁰ *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti*, August 22, 1840, No. 189, 868-869. Peter the Great established the newspaper under its original name, simply *Vedomosti*, to circulate happenings and events of the empire. After his death, the newspaper was run by the Russian Academy of Sciences.

³⁰¹ *Journal de Saint-Pétersbourg*, 27 August 1840, 2, no. 179.

³⁰² Savelev published Frähn’s work on Arabic coins in Russia, Pavel Savelev, *Notiz über fünfzehn neue Ausgrabungen kufischer Münzen in Russland, als Ergänzung zu Ch. M. Fraehn’s Topographischer Uebersicht der Ausgrabungen von altem arabischen Gelde in Russland* (Saint Petersburg: Kaiserl. Akad. d. Wiss., 1844).

MARDI, 27 AOÛT.
7 SEPTEMBRE.

DEUXIÈME SÉRIE, N° 179.

ANNÉE 1840.

JOURNAL DE SAINT-PETERSBOURG.

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NOUVELLES DE L'INTÉRIEUR.

St.-PETERSBOURG, 26 Août.

*L'Invalide Russe donne aujourd'hui, en supplément extraordinaire, la dépêche télégraphique suivante de Varsovie, adressée à M. le ministre de la guerre:

« S. M. L'IMPÉRATRICE, et LL. AA. MM. le Césarinevitch Grand-Duc HÉRITIER, Madame la Princesse MARIE de Hesse-Darmstadt. Son auguste Fiancée, et Madame la Grande-Duchesse OLGA, sont arrivés en parfaite santé le 24 août à Varsovie. Leur entrée solennelle, favorisée par le plus beau temps, a eu lieu au milieu d'un immense concours de spectateurs; l'ordre le plus parfait a régné pendant cette cérémonie, dont tous les détails ont mérité l'entière satisfaction de S. M. L'EMPEREUR. »

Par des rescrits du 1^{er} de ce mois, publiés dans l'Invalide Russe de samedi dernier, S. M. L'EMPEREUR a daigné conférer l'ordre de St.-Stanislas de la 1^{re} classe aux généraux-majors Poukhinsky, commandant de la 2^e brigade de la 2^e division de grenadiers, Mandernstern 2, commandant de la 1^{re} brigade, et Grabbe 2, commandant de la 2^e brigade de la 3^e division de la même arme.

L'Abeille du Nord annonce la mort de M. le conseiller privé et sénateur Kartashevsky, décédé le 5 août dans cette capitale.

Le conseiller de collège Lokhtine, membre de la commission des finances et du trésor du royaume de Pologne et directeur de la chancellerie particulière du directeur-général président de cette commission, a été promu au rang de conseiller d'état.

— Le conseiller d'état Demange, professeur à l'institut des langues orientales du ministère des affaires étrangères, vient d'être, sur sa demande, admis à la retraite avec pension.

Depuis quelque temps on remarque à St.-Petersbourg un bel homme en costume oriental, portant un turban blanc et se promenant d'un pas grave dans la perspective de Nevsky; c'est un égyptien récemment établi dans la capitale, le célèbre Scheik-Mohammed-Tantaoui. Son nom entier est Mohammed-ibn-Saad-ibn-Souleiman-Eyad-el-Tantaoui. El Tantaoui, ou tout simplement Tantaoui sans l'article El est son surnom et signifie natif de Tanta, en Egypte.

Le nom du Scheik-Mohammed-Tantaoui est connu de quiconque s'occupe de la langue arabe, quoiqu'il n'ait jamais rien écrit; mais sa réputation a été propagée en Europe par les voyageurs qui ont profité avec reconnaissance de ses leçons et qui lui sont en partie redevables de leurs succès et de leurs découvertes.

Il existe au Caire, à la grande mosquée d'El-Ekhar, une école qui passe pour une des meilleures, si elle n'est pas même la meilleure de toutes celles d'Egypte. Là les professeurs s'établissent au pied des colonnes qui soutiennent une voûte immense, et leurs auditeurs forment demi-cercle devant eux. Une de ces colonnes était toujours entourée d'un groupe plus nombreux, et composé d'éléments plus divers que les autres; on y voyait même de jeunes européens curieux d'étudier à fond la langue arabe; c'était la chaire du Scheik-Mohammed-Eyad-el-Tantaoui, l'un des hommes les plus savants du pays, profondément versé dans la littérature et l'histoire nationales, le même que nous voyons maintenant à St.-Petersbourg.

Deux orientalistes ont plus particulièrement rendu célèbre en Europe le nom du Scheik-Mohammed-Tantaoui. Tous deux avaient été ses élèves à la mosquée d'El-Ekhar et se sont ensuite distingués par leur connaissance approfondie de la langue arabe tant écrite que parlée. L'un est M. Fulgence Fresnel, maintenant consul de France à Djiddah en Arabie,

et auteur des Lettres sur l'Histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme (1836); l'autre est M. Gustave Weil, ancien professeur à Heidelberg, traducteur des Mille et une Nuits, et auteur d'un ouvrage sur la poésie des Arabes avant Mahomet. De l'avis même des auteurs, ces deux ouvrages sur l'Arabie antérieure à l'Islamisme doivent leur existence au savant Scheik, sans le secours de qui ils n'auraient pu paraître. « C'est « peut-être le seul homme de l'Orient qui se soit voué « à la restauration des anciens monuments de la lit- « térature arabe, » dit, en parlant de lui, M. P. Fresnel.

On voit par ce qui précède, quelle importante acquisition a faite l'institut des langues orientales de St.-Petersbourg, en invitant le Scheik-Mohammed-Tantaoui à venir y remplir la chaire de langue arabe. (Extr. de la Gaz. de l'Académie.)

Dans le courant de l'année 1839, la fabrique de cartes à jouer d'Alexandrovsky a produit 140,701 douzaines de jeux de cartes.

Du 15 au 21 de ce mois, il est encore arrivé à St.-Petersbourg quinze cargaisons de grains, dont la Gazette de la Police donne le détail dans son dernier numéro.

On écrit de Bessarabie au Journal d'Odesa, que les 18 juin et 13 juillet deux paysans du district de Jassy ont été tués par la foudre.

On lit dans la Gazette du Commerce:

« A l'exception de la navette, toutes les productions des champs sont bien venues cette année dans le royaume de Pologne; seulement dans quelques localités les grains ont souffert à l'époque de la moisson. Toutefois on est en général très satisfait de la récolte, dont le produit a été de 50 pour cent plus abondant qu'à l'ordinaire, à en juger par les battages de grains qui ont été faits pour ainsi. »

Figure V: Journal de Saint-Petersbourg, 27 August 1840, 2, no. 179
See Appendix II for the translation of the article about al-Tantawi's arrival.

Savelev composed his article about al-Tantawi in a romantic and sentimental style characteristic of the era:

You ask me who is this handsome man in Eastern garb, with a white turban, a beard as black as pitch, animated fiery eyes and features expressing intelligence, tanned, as one can notice immediately, not by the pale sun of our North. You have met him twice already, striding with a proud step along the pavement on the sunny side of the Nevsky Prospect, and as an habitué of the Nevsky Prospect in fine weather, you noticed him at once and are determined to find out who he is.³⁰³

Savelev simultaneously affirms al-Tantawi's "intelligence" and portrays him as an alluring mystery. Importantly, the article locates al-Tantawi on the famously cosmopolitan Nevsky Prospect, the avenue that is the fictive site of Nikolai Gogol's (1809–1852) eponymous short story. The shaykh is now near, embodied with fiery eyes and a particular gait—he is situated within anyone's grasp in the most prominent of public locations in Saint Petersburg.

Savelev stressed that it was al-Tantawi's reputation that earned him the position, crediting two of his orientalist students, Fulgence Fresnel and Gustav Weil, for their recommendations. As the author mentions, both had published in the preceding years on the topics of pre-Islamic poetry³⁰⁴ and for Weil, a German translation of the *Arabian Nights*.³⁰⁵ Savelev quotes praise from Fulgence Fresnel's essay wherein he states, "he's perhaps the only man devoted to the restoration of ancient monuments of Arabic literature."³⁰⁶ Savelev, by way of

³⁰³ *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti*, August 22, 1840, No. 189, 868-869. See Appendix II for the full translation of the article.

³⁰⁴ Fulgence Fresnel, *Lettres sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'islamisme* (Paris: T. Barrois père et B. Duprat, 1836). Gustav Weil, *Die poetische Literatur der Araber vor und unmittelbar nach Mohammed* (Tübingen: J.G. Cotta, 1837).

³⁰⁵ Gustav Weil, *Tausend und eine Nacht: arabische Erzählungen* (Stuttgart: Classiker, 1838-1841).

³⁰⁶ "C'est peut-être le seul homme de l'Orient qui se soit voué à la restauration des anciens monuments de la littérature arabe." Fulgence Fresnel, *Troisième lettre sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'islamisme*, *JA* (1838), 63.

Fresnel, casts al-Tantawi as a rare scholar among his peers. We encountered similar comments regarding al-Tantawi's status among other orientalist in Cairo, such as Edward Lane and Dr. Perron, as discussed in Chapter II.

Regardless of how well-intentioned Savelev's attempt at honoring the shaykh may have been, al-Tantawi interpreted his words otherwise. Savelev's backhanded compliment that al-Tantawi was well-known due to his reputation carried the irksome stipulation, "even though he has never written anything."³⁰⁷ After reading the French excerpt in the newspaper, al-Tantawi wrote or dictated to his students a rebuttal to Savelev's article. The students in turn translated the "direct words of our venerable Sheikh" into Russian. They added a brief introduction and the response appeared in the back pages of the *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti* on 27 August 1840.³⁰⁸ The two important mistakes that al-Tantawi identifies in Savelev's article relate to the permissibility of Europeans attending lessons at al-Azhar, as well as his own status as an author. His students defend him by declaring the former "a strange mistake," and the latter, "unfair." With respect to al-Azhar, Savelev betrays his ignorance by painting a romantic image of al-Tantawi surrounded in al-Azhar by all types of scholars, when in fact it was quite well-known among Europeans in Cairo that they were not permitted to attend lessons there.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ See Appendix II.

³⁰⁸ *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti*, 13 September 1840, no. 207, 948. See Appendix III for the full translated text.

³⁰⁹ Because they were prohibited from entering al-Azhar, orientalist, such as Dr. Perron, had sought out al-Tantawi to inform them about the teaching at al-Azhar. In a letter to Jules Mohl, Dr. Perron writes, "j'ai besoin de notre Schaykh Mohammad Ayyad pour les notions à avoir sur l'instruction donnée dans les Mosquées." Dr. Perron, *Lettres du Dr Perron du Caire et d'Alexandrie à M. Jules Mohl, à Paris :1838-1854* (Cairo: F. Diemer, 1911), 47.

The question of authorship is more delicate. Al-Tantawi asserts himself as a prolific author, stating, “Here are some of my compositions, such as a collection of poems and a book on prosody, and another about the proper names of people and famous breeds of horses... Moreover, I have written on grammar, rhetoric, and many other essays, when I was in Cairo with my Azharī students.”³¹⁰ The large body of scholarship that al-Tantawi produced—some of which was published in the work of Lane, Fresnel, and Dr. Perron—certainly amounted to something, not to mention his extensive collection of unpublished manuscripts. Savelev privileged the printed book over the manuscript, exposing a tension between different definitions of authorship. In the concluding lines of the article, a student of al-Tantawi, a certain N. Stoupine,³¹¹ attempts to ease the tension by asserting that “to not print doesn’t mean to not write; compositions can also be as effectively distributed by many handwritten copies, as by printing books, and this method for the most part has been used, and is still used to this day in the East.”³¹² It is true that in 1840 al-Tantawi had primarily engaged in scholarship by transmitting knowledge through oral and aural lessons and the study and circulation of manuscripts. Considering his harsh criticisms of the activities of the printing and translation movement of Mehmed Ali, we may venture that to al-Tantawi the printed word was no more reliable than the written one.

The ado surrounding Savelev’s article abated rather quickly, and al-Tantawi began to settle into his new life in Russia where he would ascend in orientalist circles. Savelev’s article

³¹⁰ See Appendix III for the full translated article.

³¹¹ Krachkovski mentions that he found a note written by al-Tantawi in French on one edition of his language learning book, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, that reads, “A Madame Stoupine de son dévoué serviteur l’auteur.” (To Mrs. Stoupine, from your devoted servant, the author). Krachkovski, like myself, was unable to identify this certain Stupine. Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 114.

³¹² Ibid.

concluded with the dramatic line “Now you can learn to speak perfect Arabic without leaving St. Petersburg.” One could interpret this as simply in line with the sentimental style of the piece but there is some truth to statement. “Now,” unlike before, Arabic was being taught by a native speaker of the language. The state of Arabic instruction in Europe in general and Saint Petersburg more specifically was not well developed by 1840, and al-Tantawi’s presence was a new and intriguing boon to Russian Oriental Studies. As for al-Tantawi, he considered it more of the same, writing in his rebuttal, “I taught my Azharī students just like I now teach you.” The only difference, he notes, was in the use of chairs.³¹³

Professing Arabic in Saint Petersburg:

إني رأيت عجا في بتربورغ شيخ من المسلمين يضم في الصدر حنه

“I indeed saw a wonder in Saint Petersburg
A Muslim shaykh presses Anne to his chest”
-Al-Tantawi, *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā*, 188.

The details of al-Tantawi’s life in Saint Petersburg are difficult to reconstruct with precision, but with the sources available we can sketch some of his contributions and achievements from 1840 until his death in 1861. He began by teaching spoken Arabic at the Institute of Oriental Languages, where he would meet Georg Wallin, discussed below. According to Krachkovski’s archival work, al-Tantawi began by teaching Arabic at various levels for 12 hours per week.³¹⁴ Some of these lessons apparently took place at his home, as was the case with Wallin. However, most of his teaching was downtown at the Institute of Oriental

³¹³ See Appendix III for the translated article.

³¹⁴ Krachkovski, *Hayāt al-Shaykh*, 120.

Languages located near the Asiatic Museum in Kunstkamera building. With time, al-Tantawi would also give lessons on other topics, such as Arabic grammar, proverbs, codicology, and translation.³¹⁵ In 1855, when the University of Saint Petersburg established a separate department for Oriental Studies, al-Tantawi began lecturing on the history of the Caliphate before the Mongol invasion of the 13th century. From his lesson notes, it appears he used selections from al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 956), Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), and al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505).³¹⁶ This section will first chart al-Tantawi’s relationship with one of his first students, then analyze his language learning book, for which he would become known across Europe in 1848.

Forging a New Scholarly Network: Settling in with the Finn, Georg Wallin

From al-Tantawi’s arrival in Saint Petersburg in 1840, he began his gradual ascent in circles of Russian and Eastern European Oriental Studies. An important part of participation in a new scholarly *milieu* is forging relationships with one’s colleagues. Accordingly, this section views his ascent through the aperture of his relationship with Georg Wallin (1811–1852), one of his early students and contacts in Russia. Wallin was born in the town of Sund in the Baltic Sea islands of Åland. These islands were part of the Grand Duchy of Finland (1809–1917), which Russia had seized as a result of the Finnish War with Sweden and the ensuing 1809 Treaty of Fredrikshamn (also, Treaty of Hamina). The Grand Duchy of Finland remained a semi-autonomous region of the Russian Empire until the 1917 Revolution. As Russian influence

³¹⁵ Saint Petersburg University MSS 833.

³¹⁶ Though not analyzed in this dissertation, this represents a possible avenue for future study, as the materials and notes he made use are preserved in al-Tantawi’s collections. Saint Petersburg University MSS 838. Krachkovski considers the notes to have no significance, though I argue they offer insight into the way he represents Islam to students in Russia. Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 122.

expanded in its newly acquired Finnish land, the capital was transferred eastward from Turku to Helsinki in 1812, and the road from Helsinki to Saint Petersburg became more accessible for Finns like Wallin.³¹⁷

Wallin moved to Helsinki in 1828 to begin studying at the Alexander Imperial University (now: University of Helsinki). The University had only recently been moved to the capital after a fire in Turku, and the offerings for Oriental Studies were quite limited. Nevertheless, he pursued a doctorate in Oriental Studies under the guidance of Gabriel Geitlin (1804–1871), who joined the faculty in 1835 and with whom Wallin would remain in contact with for the rest of his life. Wallin’s dissertation focused on the use of various Arabic forms in popular Arabic literature, in particular the *Arabian Nights*.³¹⁸ In the opening remarks to his oral defense (*lectio praecursoria*) he credits the tales of the *Arabian Nights* with their mixed registers as the inspiration for his project. For his teacher Geitlin, Christian Martin Frähn, and indeed many European orientalisks, Arabic was not treated as a spoken language. In contrast, Wallin firmly rejected this view, stating that “one commits a great error in supposing, as many often do, that Arabic is a dead language.”³¹⁹

Wallin wished to continue studying languages of the east with the hope of living among the Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula. Though much more ornery and stubborn than Fulgence

³¹⁷ Although I refer to Wallin as Finnish and he was born as Yrjö Aukusti Wallin, he did not write (or even likely speak) in Finnish, but rather Swedish and German, the predominant languages of northern Europe at the time.

³¹⁸ Wallin’s dissertation was printed in its entirety in Latin with some Arabic in Georg Wallin, *Skrifter* (Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2010), vol. 1, 287-336.

³¹⁹ Georg Wallin quoted in Patricia Berg, “George August Wallin: A Finnish Sailor Stranded on the Arabian Peninsula,” in *Dolce Far Niente in Arabia: Georg August Wallin and his travels in the 1840s*, trans. David McDuff (Helsinki: Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, 2014), 28-9.

Fresnel, Wallin, like the Frenchman, was driven to Bedouin life for similar romantic reasons. Wallin craved a certain “pure” Arab authenticity to commune with that al-Tantawi could not afford him. Still, unlike Edward Lane, Wallin saw fit to prepare extensively for such a venture. After having exhausted his options to study Arabic in Helsinki, and all the Grand Duchy of Finland for that matter, Wallin made the short trip to Saint Petersburg. Arriving in the autumn of 1840, he began attending lectures at both the University of Saint Petersburg and the Institute of Oriental Languages, where he first met al-Tantawi. Wallin and al-Tantawi quickly bonded and would remain close friends until Wallin’s untimely death 12 years later. In the autumn of 1841 Wallin sent a letter to his former teacher, Gabriel Geitlin, that provides insight into the Finn’s early relationship with al-Tantawi:

Three days a week I have worked at home in the house of al-shaykh, [al-Tantawi]... We have now begun to converse in the evenings. One evening we speak only German³²⁰ (and he is gradually beginning to make a little progress), and the next evening we speak only Arabic and avail ourselves of each other’s knowledge of literature, etc. His good-natured, pure and almost childlike character, his ingenuity and sincerity are increasingly gaining my esteem and friendship; and now at last we are no longer on the narrow terms of teacher and disciple, but on terms that is quite that of friends. First we drink tea together and then we get our teeth into his great Divan, and his endless tales of his beloved Egypt, its storytellers, singers, and dance maidens, and all its other delights, have, if possible, aroused even further my inclination and desire to go there.³²¹

Regardless of the extent to which Wallin projects his exoticized view of Egypt, the connection between the two men appears genuine, solidified over the many hours spent discussing each other’s culture and language. Their enduring professional and personal

³²⁰ Al-Tantawi had several Germanic students in Cairo, including Gustav Weil. More importantly, upon arriving in Saint Petersburg, al-Tantawi likely witnessed firsthand that in addition to French, German was of great importance to the orientalist spheres of Eastern Europe in which he was ingratiating himself.

³²¹ Quoted in Berg, “George August Wallin, 64.

relationship is somewhat surprising, considering the Finn's rather misanthropic personality.³²²

Wallin would describe al-Tantawi in quite complimentary terms a few years later, stating "the shaykh al-Tantawi was happy and joyful, as usual, and everyone loves him here, just as they love him everywhere."³²³

Like Fresnel and some of his orientalist ilk, Wallin had a penchant for adventure and applied for a research grant from the University of Helsinki to study Arabic in Egypt with the eventual goal of traveling to the Arabian Peninsula to live among the Bedouins and research their dialects. For the grant application process, al-Tantawi composed a letter of recommendation to submit to the University, which was translated into Swedish by Wallin's former teacher, Geitlin. In the recommendation dated 2 November 1841, one can detect al-Tantawi's confidence in both himself and his student when he writes, "to the present he has been working with me, and therefore he developed an extraordinary mastery [of Arabic], and he has begun to read, write, and speak with ease."³²⁴ Wallin was awarded the scholarship and returned to Helsinki to begin preparations for his trip.

Wallin's plan was to disguise himself as a Muslim doctor from Samarqand, which would account for his imperfect Arabic accent. Furthermore, in his imagination at the least, it would facilitate his assimilation among the Arabs. In preparation, he studied basic medicine in Helsinki

³²² For example, based on his correspondence with others (not al-Tantawi), Patricia Berg characterizes Wallin as "a very stubborn man with a strong will. He comes across as someone who was not afraid to offend others." Berg, "George August Wallin," 27.

³²³ Georg Wallin. *Georg August Wallins Reseanteckningar Från Orienten Åren 1843-1849*, ed. S.G. Elmgren, (Helsinki: Litteris Frenckellianis, 1864), vol. 1, 1.

³²⁴ لازمني في الدروس التي أقرأها في الدراسة الشرقية لتلاميذة بتربورغ المحمية مذ سنة إلى الآن يشتغل Al-Ṭanṭāwī, in Wallin, *Skifter*, vol. 1, 348.

and kept in close correspondence with al-Tantawi, who encouraged him to adopt the disguise and change his name to ‘Abd al-Wālī: “[an Egyptian] asked my name and I uttered ‘Abd Wali—a name sheikh Tantawi advised me to accept.”³²⁵ The name he suggests for Wallin humorously references Mehmed Ali, whose Arabic title was *Wālī* (viceroy) and the Finn’s own first name.

Indeed, Wallin even tried to convince al-Tantawi to join him for the journey to Egypt in several of his letters,³²⁶ but he remained occupied with his teaching duties in Saint Petersburg. Instead, in 1843, Wallin decided to make the trip from Helsinki to bid his friend farewell, “the European way, with a handshake and a kiss from his bushy bearded lips and a *ma’a al-salāma*,” as Wallin relates the events.³²⁷ Once in Egypt he sought out al-Tantawi’s friends, Qutṭa al-‘Adawī (d. 1864) and Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī (d. 1883), whom he liked as well. However, this did not prevent him from repeating the lines, “I have not found anyone like al-Tantawi [in Egypt].”³²⁸ Wallin used Cairo as a base of operations from which he would undertake three lengthy sojourns and explorations of the Arabian Peninsula from 1845 to 1849. Like Fresnel, he saw his primary human and moral connection to the Orient as tied less to Egypt than to Bedouin life of Arabia, with which he hoped to commune in meaningful ways. For the generally disgruntled Wallin, the Bedouin’s “pure” culture was a haven from the European decadence that he frequently bemoaned.³²⁹

³²⁵ Wallin, *Georg August Wallins*, 180-1.

³²⁶ See the Wallin’s Arabic letters to al-Tantawi dated 21 September 1842; 31 December 1842; 4 April 1843. Printed in Wallin, *Skrifter*, vol. 1, 233-4, 235-6, 239.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 292.

³²⁹ George Wallin, “Notes Taken during a Journey through Part of Northern Arabia in 1848,” *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 20 (1850): 293-344.

Al-Tantawi and Wallin continued to work together on philological endeavors over the ensuing years. Al-Tantawi provided corrections for his former student of early drafts of what would be the among the first publication of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's (d. 1234) *Qaṣīda Ḥā'iyya* with 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī's (d. 1731) commentary (*sharḥ*) in 1850 in fulfillment of his second doctorate from the University of Helsinki.³³⁰ The Sufi poem follows the journey of a lover in search of the beloved, abounding with references to place names along the pilgrimage route from Cairo to Mecca. Wallin's own romanticized travels in the Arabia Peninsula and al-Tantawi's interest in *adab*, including Sufi poetry, made the publication a fitting joint venture. The letters that al-Tantawi and Wallin exchanged in 1850 are a testament to the reliance of the Finn on the explanations of Sufi figurative imagery. For example, Wallin expresses his confusion regarding several verses of poetry, asking al-Tantawi, "What does the reed ('ūd) of highness mean? How does God strike with it upon drums of people? What are the drums of people?"³³¹ Al-Tantawi responded about a month later with detailed explanations to assist Wallin. Regarding the meaning of the imagery above, al-Tantawi writes:

هذا من المجاز فان المغني اذا أمسك الطبل وضرب عليها بالعود ثم غنى القصائد وفي البيت
فالطبل مسخر له بالعود وكذلك هنا علاء الله وكبرياؤه قاهر ومسخر للملا وللخلق هذا كناية
عن الخلق يعني أن الله ضرب بيده على الخلق فخرجت من هذه ضربة العالم
كالقصائد... للصوفية مجازات وكنائيات لا يدريها كثير من الناس... وارجوكم ان تستمروا
على المراسلة والسؤال عن كل ما يبدو لخطرركم والسلام
مخلص الوداد الشيخ محمد عباد

³³⁰ Georg Wallin, *Carmen elegiacum Ibnu-l-Faridi cum commentario Abdu-l-Ghanyī* (Helsinki: Litteris Frenckellianis, 1850). The next publication appeared in 1853 in Marseille edited by the Lebanese Christian Rashīd b. Ghālib, *Sharḥ Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*. (Marseille: Maṭba'at Arnūd wa-Shurakā', 1853).

³³¹ ايش معنى عود العلا؟ وكيف يضرب به الله على طبل الملا؟ وطبل الملا ايش؟ Letter from Georg Wallin to al-Tantawi, 22 June 1850. Published in Wallin, *Skrifter*, vol. 7, 63-5.

This an example of figurative language (*majāz*). When the singer holds the drum and strikes it with a stick, he then recites poems (*qaṣā'id*). In the verse, the drum is rendered subservient by the stick. Similarly, God's highness and grandeur are overpowering and subjugating to people and creation. This is a figurative expression of creation, meaning that God struck with his hand upon creation, and from this blow, the world emerged, like poems (*qaṣā'id*)...Sufism has figurative and indirect expressions that many people do not know...I hope you remain in correspondence and ask about anything that comes to mind.
Your loyal friend, Shaykh Muḥammad 'Ayyād.³³²

This exchange shows the ways in which the motifs and deployment of figurative language represented a major challenge for Wallin in his translation of Ibn al-Fāriḍ. However, their exchanges were not limited to corrections and explanations that benefited Wallin. Two years earlier, al-Tantawi had published his language learning book in Leipzig, and attempted, through Wallin, to send the book to London in hopes of attracting the attention of British scholars and booksellers.³³³

Al-Tantawi's relationship to Wallin is important to the present study for several reasons. Of al-Tantawi's many students, Wallin was among his first; he also recorded their relationship in detail. In recent years, Finnish scholars, led by Kaj Öhrnberg, have made available his complete works, including his Arabic correspondence. Al-Tantawi and Wallin each experienced Egyptian cultural and intellectual life at different times, but in connection with each other. Al-Tantawi was his teacher and garnered not only credibility but power from his authenticity as a learned shaykh from Egypt. Wallin held him in great esteem and considered him a teacher, friend, and colleague, more so than he did a native informant. However, I would not paint an idealistic picture of their relationship. To be sure, Wallin's primary motivation to study Arabic and travel to the Arabian Peninsula was fraught with a romantic orientalist fascination with what he saw as primitive

³³² Letter from al-Tantawi to Georg Wallin, 29 July 1850. Published in Wallin, *Skrifter*, vol. 7, 74-6.

³³³ Letter from Georg Wallin to al-Tantawi, 8 September 1850. Published in *Ibid.*, 81.

Bedouin life. Putting those issues aside, this section shows the power and authority that al-Tantawi derived from his position at the Institute of Oriental Languages by focusing on one of the students he encountered early in his teaching career in Russia. Furthermore, it casts light on the ways in which he ingratiated himself to his students and the institutions where he worked.

Situating *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*: Between Chrestomathy and *Inshāʾ*

The year 1847 was momentous for al-Tantawi, as it not only marks the year of his appointment to the position of professor *extraordinarius* at Saint Petersburg University, but also the year he would finish writing the first and only book printed in his lifetime.³³⁴ This book bears the dual titles of *Aḥsan al-Nukhab fī Maʾrifat Lisān al-ʿArab* (The Finest Selections for Learning the Arabic Language) and *Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire* (Exposition on Commonly Used Arabic). *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, printed in Leipzig in 1848, had been in the works for years. It contained many of al-Tantawi's lesson notes that he used as a teacher, in addition to letters and sayings he compiled since his arrival in Saint Petersburg.³³⁵ The book includes line-to-line French translation by the diplomat and orientalist, Jean-Jacques-Pierre Desmaisons (1807–1873).³³⁶

I analyze *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* to draw into focus al-Tantawi's linguistic ideology and the contents of what constitutes his creatively structured and compiled literary archive. In doing so, I attend to two important aspects of the text: its literary-linguistic vision on the one hand, and on

³³⁴ The manuscript of his travelogue, *Tuḥfat al-Adhkiyāʾ* was published in 1992, see Chapter III.

³³⁵ Saint Petersburg University MSS 833, folios 172-81.

³³⁶ In light of Desmaisons's intermittent diplomatic career that took him away from Saint Petersburg, it is likely other students and colleagues assisted al-Tantawi with the French translations. On Desmaisons, see Cathérine Poujol, "Desmaisons, Jean-Jacques-Pierre," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, Vol. 7, 331.

the other, al-Tantawi's presentation of himself as an authoritative voice in the transmission of Egyptian spoken Arabic and of a vast array of cultural knowledge.

I argue that we ought to situate *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* in light of two genres of writing that al-Tantawi knew quite well, the chrestomathy and *inshā'*. A chrestomathy is a compilation of exemplary words, phrases, and texts of a language with the aim to facilitate its gradual acquisition. Through the 19th century and onwards, Silvestre de Sacy's famous *Chrestomathie arabe* achieved great success in departments of Oriental Studies throughout Europe.³³⁷ In fact, when al-Tantawi arrived to teach Arabic at the Institute of Oriental Languages, selections from de Sacy's work were being used to study Arabic.³³⁸ De Sacy's carefully culled bilingual chrestomathy would serve as a manual for students keen on studying the language, history, and culture of the Arab-Islamic tradition; however, a study of its particular features lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. The Frenchman's *Chrestomathie arabe* and *Grammaire arabe*, while meticulously culled, reflected little concern for Arabic as it was spoken by contemporary Arabs.

Within the Arabic tradition, *inshā'* (writerly manuals), began as a genre to train the administrative class in proper language of the chancellery, scribal, and epistolary arts. By the 19th century, al-Tantawi was likely acquainted with *inshā'* from Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār's book *Kitāb al-Inshā'*, printed at Bulaq in 1835.³³⁹ The work has been interpreted by Peter Gran and others as an

³³⁷ Silvestre de Sacy, *Chrestomathie arabe, ou, Extraits de divers écrivains arabes, tant en prose qu'en vers, avec une traduction française et des notes, à l'usage des élèves de l'école royale et spéciale des langues orientales vivantes* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1826).

³³⁸ Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 119. With his usual precision, al-Tantawi identified many inaccuracies in the text, and published corrections to the Frenchman's much-lauded textbook. Al-Ṭanṭāwī, "Observations sur la traduction de quelques vers arabes," *Bulletin historique-philologique* 9 (1851): 133-51. Reprinted the following year in *Mélanges asiatiques* 1 (1852): 474-95.

³³⁹ Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār, *Kitāb al-Inshā'* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1835).

attempt to train Egypt's 'ulamā' to privilege meaning over form by reducing or refining the use of rhymed prose (*saj'*).³⁴⁰ To this end, al-‘Aṭṭār provides a series of examples of how to begin letters, then proceeds to legal and contractual documents (*ṣukūk*), which al-Tantawi also includes in his work. Al-Tantawi's textbook, however, differs from al-‘Aṭṭār's in several essential ways. First and most obviously, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* seeks to teach Arabic to non-native speakers using page by page bilingual French translation (see Figure VI). Second, it purports to teach vernacular Arabic, though it draws on wide-ranging registers.³⁴¹ Third, al-Tantawi includes largely his own voice in the form of phrases, poems, letters, and other genres rather than quoting canonical works.

The introduction, written by al-Tantawi in French, emphasizes the importance of learning Egyptian Arabic. Vernacular Arabic, he argues, was not only needed for spoken communication by all Arabs and Egyptians regardless of class, but also as a prerequisite for understanding Arabic literature.³⁴² He had seen the struggles of Lane and Wallin, among others, who tried to read early printed editions or manuscripts full of regionally specific colloquial words. Al-Tantawi acknowledges that while formal Arabic carries prestige in the religious domain, those

³⁴⁰ Gran, *Islamic Roots*, 156.

³⁴¹ The dialectologist, Manfred Woidich carefully analyzes the book's linguistic properties. Woidich locates it among central Nile delta dialects, the regional vernacular that al-Tantawi would have acquired during his youth in and around Tanta. Manfred Woidich, "Das Kairenische im 19.Jh.: Gedanken zu Tantawi's 'Traite de Langue Arabe Vulgaire,'" in *Dialectologia Arabica: A Collection of Articles in Honour of the Sixtieth Birthday of Professor Heikki Palva* (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 1995).

³⁴² Al-Ṭantāwī, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, iii.

who speak that way are mocked with the pejorative “*muḥaflit*,” an Egyptian Arabic word for pedant, someone extravagant or exaggerated in speech.³⁴³ The book, al-Tantawi hopes, will help

³⁴³ Al-Tantawi frames the book against this verbal pedantry, and to illustrate the ridicule, he relates an anecdote about a *muḥaflit* who falls in a ditch and cannot speak in a language sufficiently comprehensible to call for help from the locals. Ibid.

اثنين تجار غنيين	البيتين كبار
Deux marchands riches.	Les deux maisons sont grandes.
الاثنين التجار غنيين	الاثنين التجار الغنيين
Les deux marchands sont riches.	Les deux marchands riches.
للحارتين عراض	للحارتين العراض
Les deux rues sont larges, les deux rues larges,	deux rues larges.
الشجر كبير	الشجر الكبير
Les arbres sont grands, les grands arbres,	de grands arbres.
الكتب نافعة	الكتب النافعة
Les livres sont utiles, les livres utiles,	des livres utiles.
متواضع أكثر	مجتهد أكثر
Plus modeste, plus appliquée,	plus appliqué, meilleur, e.
انفع	أكبر
Plus utile, plus large, plus haut, plus grand, plus modeste, fém.	
بيضا عن	انظف
Plus blanche que, plus blanc que, plus propre, plus joli.	
Meilleur qu'un père.	أحسن من أب
Un arbre plus haut que la maison.	شجرة أعلى من البيت
Un fleuve plus large que la Néva.	نهر أعرض من النيفا
Un homme plus savant que le moufti.	رأجل أعلم من المفتي
Un enfant plus appliqué que le fils du marchand.	ولد مجتهد أكثر من ابن التاجر
L'arbre est plus haut que la maison.	الشجرة أعلى من البيت
Le fleuve est plus large que la Néva.	النهر أعرض من النيفا
Le juge est plus savant que le moufti.	القاضي أعلم من المفتي
La Néva est-elle plus large que la Seine?	يعنى النيفا أعرض من السين
Le juge est-il plus savant que le moufti?	يعنى القاضي أعلم من المفتي
Les chevaux arabes sont plus forts que les chevaux persans.	خيل العرب أقوى من خيل الفرس

Figure VI: Al-Ṭantāwī's Language Learning Book. Al-Ṭantāwī, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab fī Ma'rifat Lisān al-'Arab* = *Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire* (Leipzig: G. Vogel fils, 1848).

to remedy the basic linguistic pitfall facing learners of Arabic, namely that they did not have proper exposure to and training in colloquial Arabic. To be sure, many of al-Tantawi's students in Russia were learning the language as they prepared for diplomatic and consular endeavors in Arabic-speaking regions. For these students, Arabic was a spoken language of practical need rather than a language of research or civilizational inquiry, as discussed above in this chapter and in Chapter II.

If opened from the left to the French side, one finds the introduction, but if opened on the Arabic side, a 25-verse praise greets the reader. It is a *ta'rīkh* (chronogram poem) composed by al-Tantawi to mark the occasion of the birth of tsar-apparent Nicolas Alexandrovich (1843–1865). In this poem, he extols Russia's strength and the auspicious future of the royal family. The praise poem serves as a both testament to al-Tantawi's formal poetic capabilities and a means of linking himself with the highest echelons of power in the Empire.

The first half of the book consists of the incremental presentation of Egyptian colloquial Arabic through words, phrases, expressions, and proverbs organized in an unconventional mix of linguistic traditions. The opening pages are devoted to examples of essential grammatical structures, including demonstratives, relative clauses, prepositions, and interrogatives. What stands out, aside from a list of Egyptian proverbs,³⁴⁴ is a lengthy collection of Egyptian Arabic phrases that conveys, by way of translated examples, the meaning of various French and Arabic *ḥurūf* (here: particles), including prepositions, adverbs, and connectors (such as, *hattā*, *idha*, *inna*, *anna*, *an*, and *innamā*). The utility of this section earned al-Tantawi praise from some

³⁴⁴ Al-Tantawi had read and copied the famous collection of classical proverbs by *Majma' al-Amthāl* by al-Maydānī (d. 1123) during his life in Egypt. Selections that he brought with him to Saint Petersburg can be found in his manuscript collection. Saint Petersburg University MSS 823.

reviewers, but given the vernacular nature of much of the first half of *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, it suffered from a lack of vocalization.³⁴⁵

The second half of *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* includes a wide array of Arabic writerly and literary genres not limited to colloquial Arabic, including legal and administrative formulations for deeds, contracts of sale, receipts, and chits.³⁴⁶ In contrast to al-‘Aṭṭār’s *Kitāb al-Inshā’* al-Tantawī’s sample legal and commercial documents include colloquial Arabic and often do not begin with a preface of rhymed prose (*saj’*). If al-‘Aṭṭār had sought to minimize or tailor *saj’*, al-Tantawī does away with it completely in many of his examples. Like al-‘Aṭṭār’s *Kitāb al-Inshā’*, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* contains generic sample letters ostensibly composed by al-Tantawī and tailored to different strata of Egyptian society, for example, to a legal expert (*mufti*), judge (*qāḍī*), or even a peasant (*fallāḥ*).³⁴⁷

Letter writing (*murāsala*) conventions, an important practical literary skill, receive the bulk of his attention in the second half of his book. Al-Tantawī includes a note that, unlike the vast majority of the text, is left untranslated. In it he explains that a letter has an opening (*ṣadr*), which is the place for *ta’annuq* (embellishment) and an *‘ajz* (second part), which he leaves undefined. However, from his many examples we may infer that it is the content or intention of the letter. He explains that it is the custom to embellish the opening section, and if the authors are

³⁴⁵ See Mikhail Timofeevich Navrotsky (1823–1871) review of *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* quoted and translated in Krachkovski, *Ḥayāt al-Shaykh*, 169. In another review, Jules Mohl says of *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* that it “provides new evidence of his great knowledge of grammar and it abounds with excellent materials for comparing Classical Arabic with the dialect that developed in Egypt.” “sa grammaire fournit des nouvelles preuves de son grand savoir grammatical et abonde en matériaux excellents pour la comparaison de l’arabe classique et du dialecte qui s’est formé en égypt.” Jules Mohl, *JA* 4, no. 18 (1851): 142.

³⁴⁶ Al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, 170-7.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 133

not sufficiently trained in *adab*, then they ought to ask someone who is to write it for them or they may select one from a book on letter writing.³⁴⁸ In this brief note al-Tantawi conveys to the non-native speaker the necessity of the conventionally rhymed and embellished preamble in letter writing.

As this chapter has shown, al-Tantawi occupied an important position within the institutional structures of Oriental Studies as they were developing in the middle of the 19th century. His power allowed for the production and publication of *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, which was composed in dialogue and possibly in competition with his philologically inclined European counterparts in orientalist circles. Al-Tantawi's native facility with Arabic and affirmed identity as a trained Azharī shaykh in a foreign land represent the most outwardly apparent markers of authenticity. In his time, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* likely bore a mark of distinction and perhaps intrigue to anyone curious about the spoken and writerly culture of Egypt in al-Tantawi's time.

Nevertheless, the text's significance for this dissertation extends beyond its existence as an authentic artifact or archive. On the one hand, I draw attention to the textual technique by which he intervenes in the genre of chrestomathy and *inshā'* by projecting his voice as a model of proper speech, thus fulfilling a goal unobtainable by the likes of de Sacy. On the other, we can discern al-Tantawi's view of vernacular Arabic as a crucial aspect of not only spoken Arabic, but also the written language. Whereas the Nahḍa became known for standardizing a formal written Arabic, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab* takes seriously the grammar and structure of vernacular Arabic and accordingly ascribes a unity among the different registers of Arabic.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 133.

Ascent among the Tsars and Decline in Health

Having shown al-Tantawi's rise in orientalist circles through his publications and teaching, let us now examine his ascent among the Russian aristocracy. Al-Tantawi's professorial duties did not go unnoticed. After his promotion in 1847 to professor, he was celebrated rather lavishly. For example, in 1850, he received recognition for teaching a group of Circassian students.³⁴⁹ In light of the ongoing Russian-Circassian War (1763–1864), one can imagine that the Russian aristocracy valued any geopolitical advantages this would have offered the Empire. Furthermore, Nicholas I awarded al-Tantawi the orders of Saint Anna and Saint Stanislaus for his “diligence in teaching students... at St. Petersburg University.”³⁵⁰ Not only does al-Tantawi mention in his travelogue, *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā*, that these are only given as necklaces to people of medium or high rank,³⁵¹ but he also wryly delights over his choice to wear it in public: “I indeed saw a wonder in Saint Petersburg, a Muslim shaykh presses Anne to his chest.”³⁵² Furthermore, the medal of Saint Anna can be observed in the sole portrait of him in 1853 (see Figure I), as well as the his recently commissioned statue in his birthplace of Najrīj (see Figure VII). Al-Tantawi composed many poems in praise of the Russian royal family for various occasions, including the birth of the heir-apparent and royal weddings.³⁵³

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Quoted in Svetlana Kirillina, “Arab Scholars in Russia Universities: The Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century,” *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 44, no. 1 (2006): 7.

³⁵¹ Al-Ṭantāwī, *Tuhfat al-Adhkiyā*, 187

³⁵² Ibid., 188.

³⁵³ Many of these were published in 1964, see Ḥusayn, “Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭantāwī.”

Lastly, al-Tantawi left an indelible physical mark on the Russian aristocracy through his contributions to the so-called Turkish or Asiatic chamber of the Tsarskoye Selo Palace (literally: The Tsar's Village).³⁵⁴ Located just 25 kilometers to south of Saint Petersburg, the palace was the summer residence of the royal family. Al-Tantawi was invited to adorn the room with Arabic poems that he painted upon the room's eastern objects. Interestingly, Krachkovski notes that the room's furnishings are not as lavish as one might expect, which he believes is the result of al-Tantawi's non-elite Egyptian status.³⁵⁵ Al-Tantawi recounts in a letter addressed to his colleague Joseph Gottwaldt (1813–1897) how the heir-apparent Alexander II awarded him an emerald ring inlaid with diamonds in recognition of his work on the Turkish chamber.³⁵⁶

Al-Tantawi's gradual rise among the Russian aristocracy occurred mainly from the mid-1840s to the mid-1850s after which point his life was cut short due to a decline in health. Archival material studied by Krachkovski indicates that, according to a physician's evaluation, a paralysis had begun in his lower limbs as of September 1855, the same year in which Saint Petersburg University inaugurated a discrete department for Oriental Studies.³⁵⁷ Based on al-Tantawi's unstable handwriting in the following years, it must have spread to his arms rather

³⁵⁴ Shortly after the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks changed the name of the palace from Tsarskoye Selo (Tsar's Village) to Detskoye Selo (Children's Village). On the 100th anniversary of the death of the great Russian author Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837), it was again renamed, this time in his honor.

³⁵⁵ Krachkovski published a short separate article that examined al-Tantawi's contribution to Tsarskoye Selo Palace. Ighnati Krachkovski, "Vostochinye Rukopisi Ekaterininskogo Dvortsa ve Detskom Selo," DAN-V (1929): 161-9.

³⁵⁶ Letter from al-Tantawi to Joseph Gottwaldt, 11 February 1853. Printed in Krachkovski, *Hayāt al-Shaykh*, 231-5.

³⁵⁷ Prior to 1855, Oriental Studies at the University of Saint Petersburg were part of the Department of History and Philology.

quickly.³⁵⁸ Furthermore, university records indicate that by 1857, his medical condition forced him to miss substantial time teaching.³⁵⁹ He would travel periodically to Bohemia to try to alleviate the ailment, but without benefit. Eventually, he was forced to give up teaching in the final years of his life until his death in 1861. According the Mosque of Saint Petersburg, the cause of death was gangrene, yet the underlining cause or condition remains unclear.³⁶⁰

Conclusion:

This chapter has outlined the major ideologies, figures, and institutions of Russian Oriental Studies in Saint Petersburg as they developed into the middle of the 19th century. In 1810, when the spirited Sergei Uvarov insisted on the necessity of developing Oriental Studies in Russia in his widely read *Projet d'une académie asiatique*, the field was still in its infancy. Uvarov not only propagated discourses of an Oriental Renaissance, but also enacted concrete measures in the hopes that Russia would not lag behind its counterparts to the west, as outlined in this chapter.

Furthermore, this chapter has teased out the discourses, policies, and inter-personal connections that converged to orchestrate al-Tantawi's invitation to teach at the Institute of Oriental Languages. Al-Tantawi's original contract was for three years, but as the second half of this chapter has shown, once he settled in, he thrived and ascended in academic circles and

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 135.

³⁵⁹ In one instance, a former student of al-Tantawi and adjunct professor at the University of Saint Petersburg, Mikhail Timofeyevich Navrotsky (1823–1871) was charged to give in place of al-Tantawi a lecture on the history of the Arabs, which he delivered in Latin, rather than the French and Arabic used by al-Tantawi. Ibid., 136

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 138

aristocratic echelons of power. To grasp how al-Tantawi came to flourish in his new home, I examined his rise from two perspectives: his enduring relationship with one of his first students, Georg Wallin, and his momentous publication, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*.

Al-Tantawi's peculiar language learning book, *Aḥsan al-Nukhab*, I have argued, is indicative of his broader views on Arabic. However, this chapter has only begun an investigation into the text. Further research would more fully present his language ideology, which I contend differs from the one that would become closely tied to the Nahḍa and concomitant efforts towards language standardization and reform. These efforts maintained, for the most part, a strict bifurcation of spoken and written forms of the language. Al-Tantawi upholds Arabic's diglossic nature while disrupting the binary of spoken and written language. By this, I simply mean that he espouses a vision of diglossia that reflects how the language was used in early 19th century Egypt. Accordingly, it is a valuable source for research into the development of Arabic during one of its most creative periods—nearly a century before the establishment of Arabic language academies.

Conclusion

The tropes of cultural stagnation and insecurity that entail an urgent need to catch up to Europe figure prominently in the writings of orientalists and many figures of the Nahḍa. This dissertation has put forth a case for reading the Nahḍa through the lens of a man who possessed respect for many aspects of European culture, such as their openness, infrastructural achievements, and institution building. As I put forth in the introduction, al-Tantawi stood on something nearing equal footing with his European colleagues whether in Egypt or in Russia. The equal footing on which he stood need not, in his case, be construed as a reflection that renders self and European other as equivalent or mirrored.³⁶¹ Nor do I believe categories of dominator and dominated, seducer and seduced, or oppressor and resister are suitable to characterize his encounter with Europe.³⁶² This is not to say that al-Tantawi miraculously eschews the power dynamics of his time, but rather that he acted within these structures with utmost self-assuredness in what constitutes an impressive contribution to the Nahḍa from its margins.

Fully belonging neither to Egypt nor Russia, al-Tantawi was unsurprisingly never championed in either of their national literary histories. While Rifā‘a earned his place in the ranks of Egyptian historiography through decades of work in state run schools, al-Tantawi chose, of his own accord, to live remotely in Saint Petersburg. Consequently, he abandoned the

³⁶¹ The language of equivalency or mirroring is frequently used to describe this encounter. Sandra Naddaf, “Mirrored Images: Rifā‘ah al-Ṭahtāwī and the West,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* no. 6 (1986): 73-83.

³⁶² In recent years Suha Kudsieh and Kaj Öhrnberg have explicitly located al-Tantawi outside these dynamics. “Beyond Colonial Binaries: Amicable Ties among Egyptian and European Scholars, 1820-1850,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* no. 36 (2016): 44-68. Kaj Öhrnberg, “Fostering Mutual Understanding between Savants from Egypt and Europe in the Early 19th Century,” *Studia Orientalia* 99 (2004): 221-230.

possibility of altering the ill-fated trajectory for Arabic literature that Mehmed Ali had set in motion. In Russia, al-Tantawi maintained access to modes of self-representation and participated in intellectual exchange, apparently without forsaking his robust sense of self and cultural confidence.

In commemoration of al-Tantawi's bicentennial anniversary in 2010, Saint Petersburg University held a conference entitled "Russia and the Arab World."³⁶³ It marked a notable moment in the visibility of al-Tantawi and the beginning of new collaborations aimed at studying his work. After the conference, initiatives were adopted to digitize his manuscripts and to commission statues of him at Saint Petersburg University and in his birthplace of Najrīj, near Tanta (see Figure VII). In journalistic writings about him, he is frequently lauded as a token of cross-cultural understanding. This type of deployment of al-Tantawi is rife with sanguine idealism. But it is hard not to idealize such a rare figure given his deft navigation of the historical contingencies of his era, as well as the autonomy, and most importantly, the curiosity, with which he encountered the world.

³⁶³ "Russia and the Arab world: Dedicated to the 200th Anniversary of Sheikh Muhammad 'Ayyad al-Tantawi (1810-1861)," Saint Petersburg University, 2-3 November 2010.



Figure VII: Al-Taṭāwī's Statue in Nagrīg, Egypt
Photo courtesy of Ahmed Abd El-Gawad.

Appendix I: Translation of al-Tantawi's Autobiography³⁶⁴

[My translation of Kosegarten's German introduction to al-Tantawi's Autobiography]

Scheich Ettautawi was summoned a few years ago from Cairo to be a teacher of the Arabic language in Petersburg. Shortly after his arrival there, at the request of Mr. Frähn, he wrote the following brief account of the events and circumstance of his life, as well as his studies and the Arabic lectures he gave in Cairo at the Academy [*sic*] of the El-Ashar Mosque. The report is therefore of interest, in that we can learn from it how a young Arab scholar in Egypt is customarily educated today, and which subjects one can engage with at the Academy of El-Azhar. Mr. Frähn was kind enough to inform me of the essay by the Scheich [al-Tantawi], and to give [me] permission to make it known in Germany...

Der vor einigen Jahren als Lehrer der arabischen Sprache von Kairo nach Petersburg berufen Scheich Ettautawi schrieb kurz nach seiner Ankunft daselbst, auf den Wunsch des Herrn Staatsrath von Frähn, den nachstehenden kurzen Bericht über seine Lebensverhältnisse, und die von ihm zu Kahira auf der Academie bei der Moschee EI-ashar gemachten arabischen Studien, und die von ihm dort gehaltenen Vorlesungen. Der Bericht ist daher von Interesse, indem wir daraus sehen, wie heutiges Tages ein junger arabischer Gelehrter in Aegypten sich zu bilden pflegt, und mit welchen Gegenständen mau sich auf der Academie EI-Azhar beschäftigt. Herr Staatsrath von Frähn hatte die Güte, mir den Aufsatz des Scheich mitzutheilen, und die Erlaubniss hinzuzufügen, ihn in Deutschland bekannt zu machen...

³⁶⁴ Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī in J.G.L. Kosegarten, “Autobiographie des Scheich Ettantawi zu Petersburg,” in *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* no. 7 (1850), 48-63.

Dear the Honorable and Venerable Mr. Frähn,

Muḥammad b. Sa‘d b. Sulaymān ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī says: I was born in a village near Tanta called Najrīd³⁶⁵ in the year 1225 [1810]. The reason being that my father, as al-Ḥarīrī said, was always “on the move,” (*bayna ta‘rīs wa-riḥla*) as a merchant of fabrics, coffee, and soap, etc. He would deliver many goods and distribute them to merchants, so he had houses in Tanta, Najrīd, and al-Ṣāfiya.

I was born in Najrīd, though my mother is from al-Ṣāfiya, part of Maḥallat Marḥūm, a large town near Tanta. Eighty years ago [Maḥallat Marḥūm] was richer and more populous than Tanta. Then ‘Alī Bey³⁶⁶ built the Sayyid Badawī Mosque around which he then constructed the *Qaysāriyya*, a marketplace for merchants and their shops. Maḥallat Marḥūm continued to fade away gradually until it disappeared, with very little remaining of it. You would find its houses, shops, and bathhouses to be as dilapidated as they were in Tanta when it began to develop and grow to what it is today. The reason for its wealth is al-Sayyid al-Badawī, one of the four major Sufi saints (*aqṭāb*),³⁶⁷ whose shrine (*mazār*) is there. It has two *mawālīd*, one minor and one major. During both of them, inhabitants of Cairo (*Miṣr*), Upper Egypt (al-Ṣa‘īd), and other regions come to buy and sell [goods]. It has scholars (‘*ulamā*’), jurists (*fuqahā*’), and reciters (*qurrā*’). The teaching of the Qur’ān, in contrast to that of ‘ilm, is better [in Tanta] than in Cairo. Accordingly, it is said as an adage, ‘There is no Qur’ān study but Aḥmadī and no learning but

³⁶⁵ It is now called Najrīj (Egyptian Arabic: Nagrīg).

³⁶⁶ Ali Bey al-Kabīr (1728–1773), Mamlūk leader exiled by his general, Abū Dhahab (1735–1775).

³⁶⁷ The four Sufi *ṭuruq* of Aḥmad al-Badawī (d. 1276), Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī (d. 1182), Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī (d. 1288), and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 1165).

Azharī.’ Aḥmadī is an adjective referencing the Sayyid Aḥmadī Mosque, and Azharī is a *nisba* adjective referencing al-Azhar.

My parents traveled to the Hijaz when I was four years old, leaving me with my uncles in al-Ṣāfiya. When I grew up, I went to Tanta, to our house there, and I went to the *maktab* when I was about six years old. I memorized the Qur’ān twice (*bidāyatan wa- ‘ayyādatan*), as was the custom. Then after memorizing the Qur’ān, I did not leave the *maktab*, but rather stayed there and memorized many texts, such as *al-Minhaj fī ‘Ilm al-Fiqh*,³⁶⁸ which is equivalent in length to the Qur’ān (*wa-huwa qadr al-Qur’ān*) and the text of Ibn Mālīk’s *Alfiyya* on *naḥw*, etc. Then when I reached ten years of age, I began new learning (*ta‘allum al- ‘ilm*). I studied from the late shaykh Muḥammad al-Kūmī the *sharḥ* of Ibn Qāsim on *fiqh* for one year, then again the next year from Muḥammad b. al-Najā, a famous scholar (‘*ālim*) and compiler of *ḥadīth* (*muṣannif*). Then I studied with the *sharḥ* al-Khaṭīb on *fiqh* in the third year. Even so, I did not study much, and I used to play often. I only studied about three lessons of *naḥw* before moving, as it is rare in Tanta.

Then at the end of the third year in 1238 [1823 CE], as a 13-year-old, I traveled with my uncle to Cairo, and later my father came. We left the people of Tanta, but I would go back to it for the festivals (*mawālīd*). It so happened that I taught there a book on ‘*ilm al-majāz* and *Kitāb Mawlid al-Nabī* which allowed me to pay my debt [to Tanta]. When in al-Ṣāfiya, I also taught some simple books suited for people (*al- ‘awāmm*), such as *fiqh* and *tawḥīd*. My stay Cairo was a delight. I then studied grammar (*naḥw*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and more. Without a doubt, because I studied for three years in Tanta, even with distractions, I acquired some degree of understanding (*ba‘ḍ al-fahm*). I especially studied *naḥw*, and other [subjects], more than *fiqh*. I

³⁶⁸ Al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286) *Minhāj al-Wuṣūl ilā ‘Ilm al-Uṣūl*.

studied the *al-Ājurrūmiyya* and the commentary of the shaykh Khālīd on the *sharḥ* of *al-Qaṭr* and of *al-Alfīyya* by Ibn al-‘Aqīl and another by *al-Ashmūnī* and the commentary of *Mukhtaṣar* al-Sa‘d on ‘*ilm al-ma‘ānī*, *al-bayān*, and *al-badī*’... Most of my studying was under the shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī, now without contest the most learned person at al-Azhar.

On the fifth year of my stay in Cairo, my father died, but in Tanta. I grieved for about two years as a result. I had started teaching in Cairo [in the same year that he died]. I first taught on prosody (‘*arūd*’), even as I attended lectures, then after that on *naḥw* and other subjects. I read quite often the *sharḥ* of Khālīd al-Azharī’s *Azhariyya*, *Qaṭr* and *Shudhūr*, then Ibn ‘Aqīl’s *sharḥ*, then *al-Mughnī*. That was in the previous year I read al-Malawī’s *sharḥ* on *majāz* and his commentary on logic. I studied *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and *al-Shifā*, which was the last of what I taught at al-Azhar, finishing it four days before traveling.

I also read the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī at al-Azhar and al-Zawzanī’s *sharḥ* of the *Mu‘allaqāt*. I did not know of anyone before me who taught those [at al-Azhar]. I also taught the *Burda* and *Bānat Su‘ād* and *al-Tuḥfa* on arithmetic (*ḥisāb*) and al-Sa‘d’s commentary of al-‘Izzī on morphology (*ṣarf*), then I composed a useful gloss (*ḥāshiya*) on the text. I taught it a second time, then *Lāmiyyat al-Af‘āl* on *ṣarf*, and countless other minor useful compositions (*rasāyil*). Still, it did not happen that I taught *fiqh* out my concern for my livelihood (*bi-amr al-ma‘āsh*). So, many of the people (‘*amma*’) of al-Azhar claimed that I did not know *fiqh*, and they were correct, as I forgot it after abandoning its study. From the time that my father died, my mind was sullied, and my focus stripped, and for about two years, time was lost for me.

Then matters gradually returned to normal, and fate impelled me to benefit (*kasb*). I became closely acquainted with some of the Europeans (*Ifranj*) residing in Cairo, the first of whom was Mr. Fresnel. He loves Arabic by nature (*bil-ṭab*) and would always urge me to keep

working. He is now Consul-General of Jeddah. Thanks to him, I improved in the literary sciences, because I would read them with him. He was among the people of precision and exactitude (*al-taḥqīq wal-tadqīq*) and has good attention to detail and fine perceptive thoughts. He wrote articles about what he would read with me, such as a biography (*tarjama*) of al-Shanfarā and pre-Islamic battle tales (*Ayyām al-‘Arab*), etc., in which he makes extolling mention of me. Then he awakened a desire in me for [learning] the French language, and he taught it to me, although lack of time prevented us from finishing. In summary, I feel as though I could not repay what I owe him. On the whole, I acknowledge that I am indebted to him for paying the *kharāj* tax (*ana maksūr lahu fī daf‘ al-kharāj*). The people of Egypt are always late in [paying] the *kharāj* tax to the Pasha, so you always find them in debt. Thanks to Fresnel, I became acquainted with others, such as the German Mr. Weil, and Mr. Pruner, a doctor at Qaṣr al-‘Aynī. He was a man of fine morals and character who heals the ill with his friendly countenance even before his treatment. [I also met] Mr. Perron, director of Qaṣr al-‘Aynī at present. He studied with me many of the biographies (*tarjamāt*) of *al-Aghānī* and genealogies (*ansāb*) of *al-‘Iqd*. I taught at the school of the British in Cairo one year before my travel [to Saint Petersburg]. As for serving the Pasha, I was invited to do so often, but I did not find myself inclined to it for several reasons: if one does [serve the Pasha] then he cannot give lessons at al-Azhar. Also, their work is despicable because the translator provides ridiculous expressions that do not make sense, and accordingly the editor only understands the meaning with great difficulty. Besides, they display disdain and arrogance etc. Among Europeans (*Ifrañj*) who read under me are the Russian (*Muskūbī*) Mr. Nicholas Mukhine, then the Russian Mr. Frähn. They then asked of me to go to Petersburg and I agreed. After the necessary time passed to complete this matter, I came to Petersburg under your guard and protection.

إلى حضرة الجنب الوقر الخواجه فرين

يقول الفقير محمد بن سعد بن سليمان عياد الطنطاوي ولدت بقرية بقرب طنطا تسمى بنجرى سنة 1225 السبب في ذلك أن أبى كان كما قال الحريرى كل يوم بين تعريس ورحلة وذلك لأنه كان تاجرا في الأقمشة والبنّ الصابون ونحو ذلك فكان يأتي بالبضائع الكثيرة ويفرقها على التجار فكان له بيت بطنطا وبيت بنجرى وبيت بالصافية وانا ولدت بنجرى مع أن أمى من الصافية وأصله من محلة مرحوم بلد كبيرة بجوار طنطا وكانت منذ ثمانين سنة أترى وأكثر سكانا من طنطا ثم لما بنى على بيك جامع السيد البدوي وبنى حوله القيسارية أي سوق التجار ودكاكينهم لا زالت محلة مرحوم تضمحل شيا فشيا حتى تلاشت ولم يبق منها إلا القليل قترى بيوتها ودكاكينها وحماماتها منهدة وبقدّر ذلك أخذت طنطا في العمارة وزادت إلى يومنا هذا وسبب ثروتها أن السيد البدوي أحد الاقطاب الاربعة الذي مزاره فيها له مولدان مولد صغير ومولد كبير وفي كل منهما يأتي أهل مصر والصعيد وسائر النواحي فيبيعون ويشترون وبها علماء وفقهاء وقراء وتعليم القرآن بها أحسن من مصر بخلاف العلم ولذلك يقال في المثل ما قرآن الا أحمدي ولا علم الا أزهرى أحمدي نسبة للأزهر وقد سافر أبى وأمى الحجاز وعمرى نحو أربع سنين وتركونى بالصافية عند أخوالى ثم لما ترعرت ذهبت إلى طنطا في بيتنا هناك وذهبت الى المكتب وعمرى نحو ست سنين فحفظت القرآن مرتين بداية وعبادة كما هو العادة ثم بعد حفظي القرآن لم أخرج من المكتب بل حفظت فيه متونا كثيرة كمتن المنهج في علم الفقه وهو قدر القرآن وكمتن ألفية ابن مالك في النحو إلخ ثم لما كان عمرى عشر سنين ابتدأت في تعلم العلم فحضرت على المرحوم الشيخ محمد الكومى شرح ابن قاسم في الفقه مدة سنة ثم مرة ثانية في سنة ثانية على المرحوم الشيخ السيد محمد ابى النجا عالم شهير مصنف ثم حضرت عليه شرح الخطيب في الفقه في السنة الثالثة ومع ذلك فما كنت أطلع وكنت ألعب كثيرا ولم أحضر نحوا إلا نحو ثلاثة دروس قبل سفرى لان النحو قليل في طنطا

ثم في آخر السنة الثالثة سنة 1238 وهي السنة الثالثة عشر من عمرى رحلت مع عمى الى مصر وبعد ذلك أبى وتركنا سكنى طنطا لكن كنت أذهب إليها في الموالد وقد اتفق أنى درست فيها كتابا في علم المجاز وكتاب المولد النبى فقد دفعت له دينى كذلك درست بالصافية لما كنت أذهب إليها لكن بعض كتب خفيفة تناسب العوام كالفقه والتوحيد فكان مكثى مصر سعادتي فحينئذ حضرت في النحو والفقه غيرهما ولا شك أن تعلم الثلاثة سنين في طنطا وإن كان مع اللعب أكسب لي بعض فهم فكنت أفهم خصوصا في النحو

وغيره أكثر من الفقه فحضرت الأجرومية وشرح الشيخ خالد وشرح القطر وشرح الألفية لابن عقيل وشرحها للأشموني وشرح مختصر السعد في علم المعاني والبيان والبديع وشرح مطوله كذلك وشرح جمع الجوامع في علم أصول الفقه وشرح الورقات فيه المغني وشرح التحرير في الفقه وشرح المنهج فيه وشرح المحلي على المنهاج فيه وبعض شرح البهجة فيه وشرح مختصر النوسى في المنطق وشرح الأخضري على السلم فيه وشرح إيساغوجي فيه وشرح السمرقندية في علم المجاز وشرح النوسية في علم التوحيد وشرح الجوهرة فيه إلخ وغالب حضوري على الشيخ إبراهيم الباجوري وهو أعلم أهل الأزهر الآن بلا نزاع وفي السنة الخامسة من مكثي في مصر مات والدي لكن في طنطا وقد تكررت بسبب ذلك نحو سنتين وكنت ابتدأت في التدريس فيها وأول ما درست درست في العروض مع أبي أحضر ثم بعد ذلك في النحو وغيره فقرأت شرح الشيخ خالد والأزهرية والقطر والشذور مرارا ثم شرح ابن عقيل ثم المغني وكان ذلك في السنة الماضية وقرأت شرح الملوي في المجاز وشرح الملوي في المنطق وقرأت تفسير الجلالين وقرأت الشفا وهو آخر ما قرأت في الأزهر فأني ختمته قبل السفر بأربعة أيام وقرأت المقامات الحريرية في الأزهر وشرح الزوزني على المعلقات وما علمت أحدا قبلي قرأها فيه وقرأت البردة وبانت سعاد والتحفة في الحساب وشرح السعد على الفزي في الصرف ثم صنف على المتن حاشية مفيدة ومع ذلك فلم يتفق لي التدريس في الفقه لاشتغالي بأمر المعاش فلذلك كان كثير من عامة الأزهر يظنون أنني لا أعرف الفقه وقد صدقوا فأني بترك مزاولته ضيعته ومن مدة أن مات والدي تكدر ذهني وعراني شغل البال وضاع مني الزمان بلا فائدة نحو سنتين

ثم تراجع الأمر وألجأني الدهر إلى الكسب فعاشرت بعض الافرنج المقيمين بمصر وأول من عاشرته حضرة الخواجة فرينل وهو يحب العربية بالطبع فكان يحتني دائما على الاشتغال وهو الآن قنصل جدة وبسببه تقويت في العلوم الأدبية لأنني كنت أقرأها معه وهو كان من أهل التحقيق الدقيق وله توقعات حسنة وبنات أفكار جميلة وقد كتب رسائل فيما كان يقرأ معي كترجمة الشنفرى وأيام العرب إلخ ونوه بذكرى فيها ثم رغبت في اللغة الفرنسية وعلمني إلا أن قصر الزمان عاق عن التمام وبالجملة فأنا أعترف بأني مكسور له في دفع الخراج فتراهم عليهم البقايا دائما

ثم اجتمعت على غيره بسببه كالخواجة وائل النمساوي الخواجة بروير الحكيم بالقصر العيني سابقا وهو رجل حسن الاخلاق والطباع يشفى ببشره المريض قبل علاجه والخواجة بيرون مدير القصر العيني الآن وقد قرأ معي كثيرا من ترجمات الأغاني وأنساب العقد وكنت أعلم في مكتب الانكليز في مصر وذلك سنة قبل سفري

وأما خدم الباشا فأني دعيت إليها كثيرا ومع ذلك لم أجد نفسي تميل إليها وذلك لأسباب منها أن من ذهب إليها لا يقدر أن يكون له درس في الأزهر ومنها أن أشغالهم مقرفة وذلك أن المترجم يأتي بألفاظ سخيفة لا يفيد معنى فلا يفهم المصحح منه المعنى إلا بعد شق النفس ومع ذلك فلهم انفة وتكبر إلخ
ثم من جملة من قرأ علي من الفرنج الخواجة نقوله موخن المسكوبي ثم الخواجة فريين المسكوبي ثم سألاني الذهاب إلى بتربورغ فأجبت ثم بعد انقضاء الزمان اللازم لتوفية هذا الأمر حضرت إلى بتربورغ في ذراكم وتحت حماكم.

Appendix II: Al-Tantawi in the Newspaper

“For some time in Saint Petersburg, a handsome man in Eastern clothing, wearing a white turban, has been observed strolling with a solemn gait in the Nevsky fashion.³⁶⁹ He is the prominent Scheik-Mohammed-Tantaoui, an Egyptian, recently settled in Saint Petersburg. His entire name is Mohammed-ibn-Saad-ibn-Souleiman-Eyad-el-Tantaoui. El Tanaoui or Tantaoui for short, without the El is his surname and means native of Tanta in Egypt.

The name of the Scheik-Eyad-el-Tantaoui is well-known to anyone who is interested in the Arabic language, even though he never wrote anything; however, his reputation spread throughout Europe through travelers who gratefully benefited from his lessons, and those who were beholden to him in part for their achievements and discoveries.

At the Grand Mosque of El-Ezhhar in Cairo is a school considered one of the best, if not the very best in Egypt. There, at the foot of the columns which support an immense hall, the teachers sit with their audiences forming a half-circle in front of them. One of these columns was always surrounded by a more numerous group [of students], and composed of more diverse students than the others that even comprised young Europeans, curious to study the depths of the Arabic language. It was at the seat of the Scheik-Mohammed-Eyad-el-Tantaoui, one of the most knowledgeable men of the country, profoundly versed in national literature and history, the same man we see now in Saint Petersburg.

Two orientalist in particular have made Scheik-Mohammed-Eyad-Tantaoui a celebrated name. Both of them had been his students at the Mosque of El-Ezhhar and then became distinguished for their profound knowledge of Arabic, both written and spoken. One is M.

³⁶⁹ The Nevsky Prospect was the fictive cosmopolitan site famously portrayed in Nikolai Gogol's (1809–1852) eponymous short story published in 1835.

Fulgence Frensel, now consul of France in Jedda in Arabia and author of *Lettres sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'islamisme* (1836). The other is M. Gustave Weil, former professor in Heidelberg, translator of *Mille et une Nuits*, and author of a book on the poetry of the Arabs before Mahomet. By the same admission, these two works on Arabia before Islam owe their existence to the knowledgeable Scheik, without whom they could not have been published. "He is perhaps the only man devoted himself to the restoration of ancient monuments of Arabic literature," says M. F. Frensel, speaking of the Scheik.

From the above, one can see the important asset that the Institute of Oriental Studies at Saint Petersburg gained by inviting the Scheik-Mohammed-Tantaoui to come to fill the chair of the Arabic language [department].³⁷⁰

[In the Russian version, the article continues:]

"One of the main people behind Sheikh Mukhamed's invitation was our academician Frähn, whose famous name is associated with all of Russia's successes in eastern philology: he was the first to have the idea and proposed it to Vice Chancellor Count Nesselrode, head and founder of the Institute.

Now you can learn to speak perfect Arabic without leaving St. Petersburg.

Last week, Sheikh Mukhamed Eiyd el-Tantavvi gave his first lesson in the hall of the Institute. Like in the Cairo mosque, his lesson here attracted, other than pupils of the institute, a few outside orientalists.

*17 August 1840, P. Savelev.*³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ *Journal de Saint-Petersbourg*, 27 August 1840, no. 179.

³⁷¹ *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti*, 22 August 1840, no. 189, 868-9. Translation courtesy of Sarah Unninayar.

Appendix III: Al-Tantawi's Response

“A few more words about the Shaykh Mukhamed al-Tantavi

It has been some time since we were pleased to hear about the invitation to our capital from Cairo of Shaykh Mukhamed al-Tantavi, known for his learning, to teach Arabic language at the Institute of Oriental Languages. We long awaited him with impatience, finally the welcome guest arrived here. We had not yet managed to make his acquaintance, when an article by Mr. Savelev appeared about him in edition 189 of this newspaper. We read it with curiosity, thinking it would be based on accurate information. Although many things led us into doubt, as it seemed, how could we not believe the person who so boldly and, moreover quite eloquently, announced welcome news for all to hear. However, it turned out in the end that he himself did not know very well about that which he was telling others.

The kind author [Savelev] says that Shaykh had never written anything—this is unfair; also that some Europeans listened to his lectures in Cairo's Al-Azhar mosque—a strange mistake. Here are the direct words of our venerable Sheikh, who having read the article in *Le Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, wrote to his students the following letter in Arabic:

‘Yesterday I read an article about myself in a French magazine, translated from Russian, and despite its beauty, I found two important mistakes in it. The first is that the kind author gives assurance, ostensibly, that I have never written anything; in rebuttal to this claim, here are some of my compositions, such as a collection of poems and a book on prosody, and another about the proper names of people and famous breeds of horses; this last work, divided into two parts and organized alphabetically, is with me. Moreover, I wrote grammar, a book on rhetoric, and many other essays, when I was in Cairo with my Al-Azhar students. The second mistake is that he writes that some Europeans listened to my lectures in Al-Azhar mosque, whereas none of them,

or other people of the Christian or Jewish faiths, may enter the mosque without special permission. I taught my Azhar students just as I now teach you, with the only difference being that they sat around me, the same as I sat, without chairs; I gave lessons to my European students in their homes, and not in a mosque. Who has never been mistaken? But, I hope that you, dear students, take it upon yourselves to correct these mistakes.'

This ends the Shaykh's letter, the original remaining with the students of the Institute of Oriental Languages. But I consider it my duty to add that to not publish doesn't mean not writing; compositions can also be as effectively distributed by means of many handwritten copies, as by printing books, and this method for the most part was always used and is still used to this day in the East.

-N. Stupin”³⁷²

³⁷² *Saint Petersburg Vedomosti*, 13 September 1840, no. 207, 948. Translation courtesy of Sarah Unninayar.

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