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Justin Hoyle

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Arabism and the Syrian Intelligentsia in Cairo: 1900-1918

Justin A. Hoyle

The American University in Cairo

Masters of Arts Thesis

Contents

Abstract

My thesis examines the process by which the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo catalyzed Cairo's transformation into an epicenter of the Arabist movement between 1900 and 1918. I will explore a combination of British diplomatic sources and Arabic-language publications in order to determine the role of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo in the burgeoning Arabist movement of the early twentieth century. In addition to contributing to our existing historical understanding of the development of Arabist ideology, this study will demonstrate the utility of analyzing centers of Arabism (in this case Cairo) that have often been neglected in contemporary nationalist historiography.

Cairo provides a particularly interesting case study in terms of Arabist cooperation in the years leading up to, and including World War I. In contrast to the societies in the more frequently analyzed Arabist hotbed of Damascus, Arabist societies in Cairo were extremely ideologically diverse and contained a significant percentage of Christians. In addition, these comparatively diverse Arabist societies in Cairo were among the most significant in existence in the years following 1908. Although a homogenous version of Arabism never emerged, my thesis argues that the Syrian intelligentsia was able to develop Cairo into an epicenter of the Arabist movement in the early twentieth century that, by 1912, began to usurp Damascus for political significance.

Introduction and Historical background

Thesis

My thesis examines the process by which the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo catalyzed Cairo's transformation into an epicenter of the Arabist movement between 1900 and 1918.[1] I explore a combination of British diplomatic sources and Arabic-language publications in order to determine the role of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo in the burgeoning Arabist movement of the early twentieth century. In addition to contributing to our existing historical understanding of the development of Arabist ideology, this study demonstrates the utility of analyzing centers of Arabism (in this case Cairo) that have often been neglected in contemporary nationalist historiography.

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The period and location analyzed in this study are significant ones. In terms of nationalist history on the Arab world, the early twentieth century is a period of incalculable importance. It is this era when numerous nascent identities (Arabism,

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[1] It should be noted that in this study the term "Syrians" (al-Shwam) refers to individuals emigrating from the area of Ottoman Greater Syria (al-Sham). Generally speaking, the majority of individuals analyzed in this study will be from the areas of Damascus or Beirut. Furthermore, the term "intelligentsia" will be defined as individuals within the Syrian community in Cairo who take a critical political stance and make a significant intellectual contribution to the Arabist movement.

Turkism, Islamism, Zionism, etc.) that would impact the region for decades to come matriculated. Most existing studies of Arabism tend to either focus heavily on Damascus in terms of location or attempt to analyze Arabism in several areas rendering no single area studied in-depth. It is my contention that a systematic study of Cairo as a center of Arabism will further elucidate the size, nature and organization of the Arabist movement among the Syrian community in the early twentieth century.

The following sections provide the background information and theoretical frameworks that are necessary to contextualize this study. Furthermore, this introduction will provide the reader with an outline for how the project will be set up, what sources will be employed and the historical context within which the events analyzed in this thesis take place. In an effort to appropriately situate this study within existing scholarship, a review of the literature will serve as a jumping off point.

Review of Existing Literature

I. Theoretical Framework

On the concept of nationalism Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and David Lowenthal provide excellent studies. All three challenge the notion that nationalism or national identity should be seen as legitimate constructs.[2] They adhere to the notion that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist".[3] Likewise, all three suggest that histories have been constructed to promote nationalism for a society's "current needs" in spite of the "bias limits" of

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[2] See Ernest Gellner *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), David Lowenthal *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1998) and Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities* (1991).
[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. (London: Verso Publishing Company, 1991): 6.

these narratives.[4] It is this concept of nationalism that provides the conceptual framework for my study.

In terms of conceptual frameworks regarding nationalist theory in the Arab world, James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni provide interesting insight. Jankowski and Gershoni suggest that, in order to discuss nationalism in the Arab Middle East, it is important to balance the scholarship regarding the "intellectual, political, socioeconomic, cultural, and psychological" on nationalism.[5] Jankowski and Gershoni state that there are an insufficient number of studies that apply newer perspectives on nationalism (i.e. Gellner, Anderson and Lowenthal).[6] They argue that the dramatic shifts in Arab national identity over time, as well as the different modes in which Arab national identity has manifested itself necessitate that nationalism in the Arab world be studied within this context.[7] My study examines Arabism in the early twentieth century through this lens.

At this point, the Syrian Arabist movement of the early twentieth century has been analyzed at length by many of the field's most prominent scholars. Over time, a significant debate has emerged regarding the nature and significance of the Syrian Arabist movement in the early twentieth century. Within this debate there have emerged three predominant paradigms. The first is the traditional narrative which suggests that the Arabist movement in Syria was a movement of substantial size and influence and should be defined as a full-fledged Arab nationalist movement.[8] The second is the revisionist paradigm which suggests that the Arabist movement in Syria during this era was a minor

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[4] David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): XV.
[5] James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997): X.
[6] Jankowski and Gershoni, XIII-XIV.
[7] Jankowski and Gershoni, XXIV-XXV.
[8] See George Antonius *The Arab Awakening* (1938).

movement that, ideologically speaking, was much less Arab nationalist in nature than it was Islamist.[9] The third is the "revision of the revisionist thesis" paradigm which accepts the fact that Syrian Arabism during this era should be viewed as a "protonationalist" movement while at the same time arguing that the size and influence of the Syrian Arabist movement was much greater than the revisionists are willing to concede.[10] With respect to the first two paradigms it is the third which will provide the framework for this study.[11] It is this paradigm which will be used to define what is meant in this study by the terms "Arabist" and "Arabism". This decision is largely the result of the fact that the sources that will be employed indicate that this is the framework with the most nuanced analysis of the early twentieth-century Arabist movement.

II. Departures from Existing Scholarship

My unique study diverges from existing scholarship in two major ways. This study also seeks to significantly expand upon two major areas of the current literature. First, my study departs from much of the existing scholarship on Arabism in this period in that it focuses primarily on Cairo as an epicenter of Arabism.[12] Although some scholars of the period have implicitly[13] or explicitly[14] mentioned Cairo's significance, an in-depth analysis is lacking. It is my intention that, by diverging from the tendency to

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[9] See C. Ernest Dawn *From Ottomanism to Arabism* (1973), C. Ernest Dawn "The Origins of Arab Nationalism" (1993) and William Cleveland "The Arab Nationalism of George Antonius Reconsidered" (1997).
[10] See Rashid Khalidi "Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria Before 1914: A Reassessment" (1993).
[11] As a result of this my study will not use the term "Arab Nationalism to describe the movement. Instead, the term "Arabism" will be applied to denote that the movement should be viewed as protonationalist.
[12] See Dawn (1973 and 1993), Philip Khoury *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920* (1983) and Zeine N. Zeine *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (1966).
[13] See Khoury (1983), A.A. Duri *The Historical Formation of the Arab Nation* (1987) and Eliezer Tauber *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* (1993).
[14] Khalidi (1993).

focus primarily on Damascus, my study contributes to the broader discussion of the nature and scope of Arabist ideology in the early twentieth century.

Second, my study departs from the existing literature by looking at the specific developments that allowed the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to set aside their ideological differences and transform Cairo into an epicenter of the Arabist movement. While most studies do mention that the vast majority of the Arabist societies in Cairo were founded by Syrians; there is little discussion regarding the factors that facilitated cooperation between ideologically divergent Arabists within this community. The comparative diversity of Caireane Arabist societies[15] necessitates an examination of this process.

In terms of expansion on the current literature, my study first provides a more comprehensive discussion of Phillip Khoury's assertion that it was the Syrians in Cairo which gave the Arab Revolt "Arab nationalist ideological content."[16] The contributions of the Syrian Arabists in Damascus to the Arab Revolt have been covered in detail in the existing scholarship.[17] Some examination of Cairene Arabist participation in the early years of the war has been presented in other studies.[18] However, a detailed study of the participation of the Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo vis-à-vis the broader Arabist movement during World War I is lacking.

Secondly, my study looks to expand on the current debate regarding the scope and nature of the Syrian Arabist movement by providing support for the "revision of the

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[15] See Tauber (1993)

[16] Philip Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 77.

[17] See Zeine (1966), Kedourie (1974), Khoury (1983) and Dawn (1993).

[18] See Zeine (1966), Khoury (1983), Duri (1987) and Tauber (1993).

revisionist thesis" paradigm.[19] It is this paradigm which has inspired both the selection of Cairo as a unit of analysis, as well the type of sources that will be employed. The results of my study expand on the argument that this paradigm provides the appropriate lens through which to view Arabism among the Syrians in the early twentieth century by demonstrating that scholars who base there assessments of Arabism during this period on strictly Damascus-based studies are ignore significant portions of the Arabist movement.

Aim and Scope

There are five specific questions that guide my research: What are the ideological orientations among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo? What events catalyzed cooperation among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo? Is it justifiable to view Cairo as a center of Arabism comparable to Damascus? How does the Syrian intelligentsia catalyze Cairo's transformation in to an epicenter of Arabism? To what extent were the Syrian Arabists in Cairo connected to the broader Arab independence movement during the years of World War I?

This project aims to contribute to current scholarship on both the micro and macro scales. On the micro scale I intend to demonstrate that, as a result of the activities of the Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia, Cairo should be discussed as important center of early twentieth century Arabism. Specifically, it is my aim to challenge the dominant paradigm that Damascus was unrivaled as the political center of the Arabist movement during this period. Though one could examine other centers to demonstrate this assertion

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[19] Rashid Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria Before 1914: A Reassessment". in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Khalidi, Rashid, Anderson, Lisa, Muslih, Mohammad and Simon, Reeva S. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 52.

(specifically Istanbul) the comparative ideological diversity of the Syrian Arabists in Cairo make it a particularly fascinating case study.

On the macro scale, it is my intention for this study to enhance current understandings of the nature of Arabism in the pre-World War I and World War I eras. Much of the revisionist scholarship which focuses largely on Damascus has tended to downplay the scale and importance of the Arabist movement during this period.[20] It is my hope that the analysis of alternative centers, in this case Cairo, will lead to increased understanding of the size and scope of the Arabist movement during this era.

Methodology

For my research, I use British diplomatic correspondences as well as books and journals written by Arabist members of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo in addition to press clippings from major Arabic and British newspapers of the era. My reasoning for selecting these sources is largely due to Khalidi's assertion that in much of the scholarship regarding Arabism in this era foreign diplomatic correspondences, material in the press and writings of those involved in the movement have been underutilized. It is my aspiration that, by using these sources, my project can fill a gap in the existing scholarship.[21]

The most significant Arabic-language sources that I utilized are located at the American University in Cairo library, as well as the Egyptian National Library (*Dar al-Kutub*). The majority of the British periodicals and newspapers are housed in the British Library in London. The majority of the diplomatic correspondences are located in the

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[20] See Zeine (1966) and Dawn (1973 and 1993).
[21] Khalidi, 54.

British National Archives. A limited number of British documents are also available at the American University in Cairo Library.

The major Arabic-language periodical I consulted were *al-Manar*. *Al-Manar* was published by Shaikh Rashid Rida who held membership in several significant Cairene Arabist societies. In addition to his own writings, various Arabist members of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo, including Rafiq and Hafiq Azm, Iskandar Amun and Muhammad Kurd Ali published essays in this journal.

In addition to these publications, I examined books written by Arabist members of the Syrian intelligentsia in Egypt. Some of the books I am planning to analyze include *Anthar Rafiq Azm* by Rafiq Azm (1922), *Al-Khilafa wa al-Imama al-'Uzma* by Rashid Rida (1930) and *Umm al-Qura* by Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1901). These books are all located in Cairo. Rida and al-Kawakibi's works are located at the American University Library, while Azm's book is located at the Egyptian National Library.

The British documents I consulted were primarily foreign office correspondences. Many of these documents will have been composed by British high commissioner in Egypt Lord Kitchener, and Foreign Office administrators in the region such as Sir Mark Sykes and Sir Ronald Storrs. In addition, I employ reports and essays written by these individuals, as well as other British officials who had close contact with the Arabist movement during the early twentieth century. I also look at correspondences between British officials and Arabist leaders contained in the British archives. These will mainly be used in Chapters Three and Four to analyze the relationship between the British government and Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo during World War I. Some have been translated into English, some, such as the letter from the seven Syrians

in 1918, have not. These documents are mainly located in the British Archives with a few (such as the letter from the seven Syrians in original Arabic) being located at the American University in Cairo Library.

In addition to British government documents, I used selected British publications. The most relevant of these is the *Arab Bulletin*. All of the issues are housed in the British National Archives. It is my belief that these British sources, in conjunction with the aforementioned Arabic-language sources provide more insight into the issues being examined from multiple perspectives. In other words, this combination of sources will not only demonstrate both how the Arabists themselves, as well as an entity outside of the Arabists movement perceived events.

My sampling method consisted of analyzing a greater number of sources in years which bore witness to seminal events of the era. For example, the years 1908 (Young Turk Revolution), 1912 (massive Syrian losses in Parliamentary elections, as well territorial losses of Libya and the Balkans), 1914 (outbreak of World War I), 1915 (Damascus Protocol), 1916 (start of Arab Revolt) and 1918 (end of World War I) are the years in which more documents are analyzed. While this does not mean that other years are not sufficiently examined, it is these years in which I look at the greatest number of periodicals and diplomatic correspondences.

Historical Background of Syrian Immigration to Egypt

The major waves of Syrian immigration to Egypt occurred from 1850 through the end of the First World War.[22] Prior to the 1850's Syrian immigration to Egypt was not

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[22] Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt.* (Stuttgart: Stiener-Verlag-Wiesbaden-GmbH, 1985): 78.

significant enough to warrant close attention.[23] Prior to the census of 1917 it is difficult to know for certain exactly how many Syrians resided in Egypt. This is the result of the fact that prior to World War I Syrians were considered Ottoman subjects and thus not seen as foreigners.[24] However, some indication of the growth in the Syrian population in Egypt can be derived from the fact that in 1899 Lord Cromer described the Syrians in Egypt as "constituting a very small community"[25], whereas by 1917 there were 31,725 Syrians living in Egypt.[26]

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were a variety of factors both pushing the Syrians out of Greater Syria, and pulling them to immigrate to Egypt. Between 1850 and the start of World War I roughly 250,000 Syrians opted to emigrate from Greater Syria.[27] One push factor that contributed to this exodus was the deteriorating economic situation in Syria that was brought about by the closer integration of the world economic system that occurred in the nineteenth century. This led to a decrease in the importance of Syrian silk, long the province's most prized agricultural product, as well as a decrease in the need for locally made industrial products as they were replaced by "cheap and better European products".[28] These factors led to the large scale migration of Syrian peasants and artisans beginning around 1883.

The motivation of the intelligentsia for emigrating from Syria differed slightly from that of the peasants and artisans. One push factor was the fact that the quality of the Syrian education system had been on the rise since the early nineteenth century. This

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[23] Philipp, 71.
[24] Philipp, 78.
[25] Evelyn Baring Earl of Cromer, *Modern Egypt*. (New York: Macmillan, 1908): 214.
[26] Egyptian Population Census of 1917.
[27] Philipp, 83.
[28] Philipp, 82

improved education system produced a sizable educated class that the deteriorating Syrian economy was incapable of absorbing.[29] As a result of the economic situation the aforementioned primary occupations of the intelligentsia (i.e. jobs in bureaucracy and journalism) were not readily available. Therefore, if the Syrian intelligentsia hoped to find employment, they would have to look beyond the borders of greater Syria.

In addition to economic factors, political factors played a significant role in pushing the Syrian intelligentsia out of Greater Syria during this period. By the 1890's Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II was repressing political dissenters throughout the empire.[30] Individuals who openly challenged the Hamidian reforms ran the risk of being arrested, or worse. Numerous members of the Syrian intelligentsia had crossed Abdulhamid via anti-Hamidian publications.[31] In an effort to continue their efforts to combat Hamidian repression, several member of this class opted to leave Greater Syria.

Following the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, emigration from Syria for political reasons briefly decreased. This was the result of the fact that, initially the Syrians, like most in the Ottoman Empire welcomed the revolution as an opportunity to move away from the status quo and create a more inclusive Ottoman state. However, by 1909 it was clear the Young Turks were not going to fulfill these expectations. In the years that followed Young Turk repression would replace Hamidian repression as an incentive for emigration among the Syrian intelligentsia. This can be seen particularly after the Parliamentary elections of 1912.[32]

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[29] Philipp, 84.
[30] Philipp, 85
[31] Specific names of these individuals will be provided throughout the body of the thesis.
[32] Details of these elections and their aftermath will be discussed in chapter two.

In contrast to Greater Syria, nineteenth-century Egypt was experiencing an economic boom. This boom was largely due to an increased in cotton exports catalyzed by the American Civil War.[33] This situation stood in stark contrast to the aforementioned decline of agricultural and industrial sectors in Greater Syria. As a result, Egypt became the primary destination for Syrian artisans and cultivators during the mid-to-late nineteenth century.[34]

In terms of the Syrian intelligentsia, economic and employment concerns were also key factors in their choice to immigrate to Egypt. Educated Syrians were able to find employment in medical, journalistic and bureaucratic sectors upon the arrival in Egypt. This was particularly true after the British occupied Egypt in 1882. British officials viewed the Syrians as the "intellectual cream of the Near East" and thus sought their services in administrative positions.

In addition to increased job opportunities, the British occupation of 1882 also politically motivated the Syrian intelligentsia to immigrate to Egypt. The British occupation limited the ability of Abdulhamid, and later the Young Turks, to persecute those who dissented with their regimes. Under the protection of the British in Egypt members of the Syrians intelligentsia were able to publish anti-Abdulhamid/Young Turk material without fear of repercussions. The leniency of the British with regard to political dissention led members of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to describe the British rule as "tolerant and fair" through the first years of World War I.[35]

In terms of ideology, it should be noted that Arabism was not the universal ideology adopted by the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. In fact, some notable members of

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[33] Philipp, 82.
[34] Philipp, 82.
[35] Tauber, 80.

this group, such as journalist Farah Antun were staunchly opposed to Arabism on the grounds that this ideology would only further the gulf between the Syrian community in Egypt and the Egyptian population.[36] For Antun and other like minded individuals the safest path was to attempt to incorporate themselves into the Egyptian Nationalist movement.[37] Thus, although this thesis focuses primarily on Arabist members of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo, it is important to keep in mind that Arabist ideology was not a monolithic one among this group.

Socio-occupational Position of the Syrian Intelligentsia in Egypt

After the British occupation began in 1882, the Syrians rapidly began their ascension as one of the country's most influential minorities. Two arenas in which their significance is most readily observed were the press and government administration. It was these two professions (particularly the press) that would produce the individuals whom would emerge as leaders of the Arabist movement in Cairo.

The era from 1882 to 1908 was a time when "the Egyptian press came into its own".[38] This was due in large part to the relaxed press restrictions put in place by Lord Cromer and other British officials. During this period 604 periodicals were founded in Cairo and Alexandria alone.[39] The Syrian community within Egypt played an active role in this journalistic upsurge. For example, of the 790 newspapers and magazines established in all of Egypt during this time, roughly one fifth of them were established by

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[36] Donald Reid, *The Odyssey of Farah Antun.* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1975): 104.
[37] Reid, 108.
[38] Philipp, 97.
[39] Philipp, 97.

"men whose names were recognizably Syrian".[40] Among these individuals were Rashid Rida and Muhammad Kurd Ali who are of vital importance to this study. In addition, Syrians were also responsible for roughly 15% of the new periodicals that emerged in this era.[41] These publications founded by the Syrians included "some of the most important early newspapers and periodicals" such as *al-Ahram* and *al-Manar*.[42] For the purpose of the study *al-Manar* is particularly important due to the fact that many of the leading Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo frequently published in this periodical.[43]

In terms of bureaucratic employment, the early twentieth century was an era when Syrians were presented with increased opportunities. This greater demand for Syrians in government administration was in part due to "the shift from Turkish to Arabic in administrative language and the rapid expansion of the administration itself".[44] In addition, the aforementioned quality of the Syrian education system led to the Syrians being more qualified to hold administrative positions in the eyes of the British. The result of these reforms was the number of Syrians holding Egyptian government positions increasing from 690 in 1896 to 1,252 in 1906.[45] An even more staggering statistic can be seen when analyzing the number of Syrians holding high-level government posts. As of 1905, 30% of high level government positions were held by Syrians or Armenians while only 28% were held by Egyptians.[46] In fact, Lord Cromer was so notorious for hiring Syrian bureaucrats that his successors made mention of the fact that they should avoid

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[40] Philipp., 98.
[41] Philipp, 98.
[42] Beth Baron, Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender and Politics. (Berkley: University of California Press, 2005): 28.
[43] This periodical, as well as its contributors, will be discussed at length in chapter one.
[44] Philipp, 98.
[45] Philipp, 100.
[46] Philipp, 100.

placing to many Syrians in high level positions since Cromer's high number of Syrian advisers led to mistrust among the Egyptian population.[47]

The relatively high professional status of the Syrian intelligentsia led to a certain amount of resentment among Egyptian nationalists. The fact that Syrians held such privileged positions in the state apparatus spurred "feelings of dislike" and mistrust among segments of Egyptian society.[48] One reason for this is the fact that many Egyptian Nationalists "resented Syrian competition for posts in the administration".[49] These feelings of distrust and suspicion would remain present in the relationship between Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo and the Egyptian nationalists. In order to fully comprehend the where to situate the Arabist movement within the broader nationalist current present in Egypt during this period, a closer analysis of this dichotomy is necessary.

Syrian Arabist Relations with the Egyptian Nationalists

Though the first significant encounters between these two movements occurred around 1900, it was during the years between 1908 and 1914 that a major gulf began to emerge between the two movements.[50] This gulf evolved largely as a result of the movements' divergent ideological orientations and political trajectories.[51] On the most basic level these contrary trajectories were the product of the politics and identity of the Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo being largely shaped by their sense of

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[47] PRO 30/57/44, "Lord Kitchener in Egypt", December, 1913, 1.
[48] PRO 30/57/44, 1913,1.
[49] Baron, 28.
[50] James Jankowski, "Egypt and Early Arab Nationalism", in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Khalidi, Rashid, Anderson, Lisa, Muslih, Mohammad and Simon, Reeva S. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 245-246. This was largely due to the increased adherence to both movements in the wake of events such as Dinshawai (1906) and the Young Turk Revolution (1908).
[51] Jankowski, 245.

Arab identity while the Egyptian nationalist movement was void of this component.[52] At best, the Egyptian nationalist movement viewed the Arabs as tolerable only on religious grounds.[53]

Throughout World War I the Egyptian nationalist movement remained "entirely apathetic to the Arab movement for independence".[54] In the view of many Egyptian nationalists the Arabs were incapable of making use of independence in the event that the Revolt in the Desert succeeded.[55] Given that Cairo was by this time the location of several of the more active Syrian Arabists, these attitudes resulted in a war of propaganda between the two movements, which is discussed in chapter three.[56] According to British sources, despite the significant number of Syrian-run journals, newspapers and periodicals in Egypt the Syrians in Cairo struggled to counter the large amounts of "insidious propaganda" produced by the Egyptian nationalists.[57] Although it its is true that British sources should in this case be taken with a grain of salt, the letters and newspaper clippings produced in these sources indicate that there were indeed tensions between these two movements.[58]

In addition to ideological divergences related to Arab identity, there were other factors that contributed to wartime tensions between the Egyptian nationalists and Syrian Arabists based within Cairo. First of all, within the Egyptian nationalist movement there

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[52] Jankowski, 244.
[53] CAB 24/34 "Memorandum from E.S. Montagu to Sir Hankey", November 17, 1917, 192.
[54] FO 141/783 High Commission Report, "Egypt and the Arab Movement", August 16, 1917, 2.
[55] FO 141/783, 3.
[56] The exact members present in Egypt, as well as their war-time activities will be discussed in detail chapter four.
[57] FO 141/783, 3.
[58] The grain of salt comment relates largely to the fact that it would have been in British interests to portray this movements as in conflict.

existed a small but powerful minority of Egyptians of Turkish descent.[59] Not surprisingly, these individuals continued to feel contacted to the Ottoman Empire and as such resented Arab efforts to break away from it.[60] In addition, some Egyptian nationalists who were not of Turkish decent also had reason to wish the British had chosen to support the Ottomans over the Arabs.[61] This was largely due to the fact that many Egyptian nationalists still perceived the "Sultan of Turkey" as the Khalifa of Islam and thus felt that being submissive to the Ottoman Sultan was akin to being submissive to the Islamic Caliphate.[62]

In addition to pro-Ottoman sentiments, anti-British sentiments also played a significant role in shaping Egyptian nationalist perceptions of the Arab movement. By the start of World War I the Egyptian nationalist movement was strongly anti-British.[63] Egyptian nationalists viewed the British occupation as an illegal and illegitimate occupation that had put Egypt in a worse position than when it was under Ottoman control.[64] Given these attitudes, the fact that Arabists in general, and particularly those within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo were actively cooperating with the British late into World War I did not help shrink the gulf between the two movements.

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[59] FO 141/783, 2.
[60] FO 141/783, 2.
[61] CAB 24/34, 192.
[62] "Anonymous Letter from an Egyptian Nationalist Group", February, 1916, 1.
[63] PRO 30/57/47, "Letter from Egyptian Nationalist Abbas Hilial", January, 1915, 1.
[64] PRO 30/57/47, 1-2.

Chapter Outline

The following thesis will be divided into three chapters. Chapter one will analyze the development of Arabism among the Syrians intelligentsia in Cairo. Key in this chapter is the examination of the ideological differences among Arabists within this group. In addition, this chapter examines of the factors that catalyzed cooperation among Arabists with differing ideologies. Chapter Two will examine Cairo's transformation into a center of Arabism in the era from 1908-1914. The major component of this chapter is an examination of the development, nature and activities of Arabist societies in Cairo. Chapter Three will examine the activities of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo during the war years (1914-1918). The critical aspect of this chapter is an analyses of the extent to which the Syrian Arabists in Cairo were connected to the broader Arab independence effort (the Revolt in the Desert), as well a broader analysis of this group's contributions to the allied war effort. Chapter Three will contain comparative analysis of Cairo vis-à-vis Damascus.

Catalyzing Cooperation: An Analysis of Arabism within the Syrian Intelligentsia in Cairo from 1900-1914.

Introduction

The following chapter will examine the ideological orientation and interactions between Arabists within Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo between 1900 and 1914. The Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo provides a particularly interesting case study in terms of cooperation among Arabists of different ideological orientations in the years leading up to, and including World War I. In contrast to the societies in the more frequently analyzed Arabist hotbed of Damascus, Arabist societies in Cairo contained a significant percentage of individuals with different ideological conceptions of Arabism.[65] In addition, these comparatively diverse Arabist societies in Cairo were among the most significant in existence in the years following 1908.

This chapter argues that, although a homogenous version of Arabism never emerged, cooperation between Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo increased dramatically between the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the First World War. In addition, the following work will challenge the dominant paradigm in existing scholarship that rigidly categorizes Muslim and Christian Arabists. This categorization has prevented analysis of the internal divergences within each of these entities. It is my aim to deconstruct the notion that one can classify ideological conflicts within the Arabist movement as being exclusively along religious lines. Instead, this study sets out to adopt a more nuanced approach and discuss the different ideological interpretations present within these groups. For reasons of source accessibility as well as prevalence of existing

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[65] Eliezer Tauber, *The Emergence of the of the Arab Movements*, (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1993): 290-295.

material, this study will be heavily focused on the differing ideological conceptions of Arabism found among Muslim Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.

There are four specific questions that guide my research: How do the individuals within the Syrian intelligentsia perceive Arabist ideology? What are the ideological divergences within this community? What events catalyzed cooperation between Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo? Does a homogenous version of Arabism develop within this community?

The aim of this chapter is to challenge two assumptions that are prevalent in much of the scholarship regarding Arabism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The first paradigm that is challenged in this study is the aforementioned notion that Christian Arabists and Muslim Arabists should be seen as two distinct but homogeneous entities (one religious (Muslim) the other secular (Christian)). As has been mentioned, this will be proven largely by de-essentializing the notion of a homogenous Muslim Arabism. The second paradigm that is challenged in this study will be the idea that the increased cooperation between Arabists during this era was the result of the development of a homogeneous Arabist ideology.[66] This study deconstructs this fallacy by examining alternative factors (e.g. Hamidian repression, Young Turk Turkification polices, and the loss of territory in 1912) that explain this development.

The following study is divided into four sections. The first section will examine the existing scholarship regarding the ideological orientations of Syrian Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. The second section will explore two early ideologues often cited as establishing the Christian and Muslim versions of Arabism. The third

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[66] See C. Ernest Dawn *From Ottomanism to Arabism* (1973): Eliezer Tauber *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* (1993) and Zeine N. Zeine, *Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (1966).

section will examine the ideological orientations of four prominent Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo from 1900 through 1914. The final section will examine the circumstances that catalyzed cooperation between Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.

Historiography

Much of the early scholarship regarding Arabist ideology in the early twentieth century has cited religion as the primary lens through which ideological orientations within the Arabist movement should be viewed.[67] Prevalent in this scholarship is the assertion that Christian Arabists formed one distinct group while Muslim Arabists formed another.[68] Scholars such as Zeine N. Zeine, Ernest Dawn and Albert Hourani explicitly speak of the existence of "Christian" and "Muslim" versions of Arabism.[69] Thus, according to these narratives understanding an Arabist's religious orientations was sufficient for understanding their interpretation of Arabism.

In addition to propagating religion as a lens through which to understand Arabist ideological orientations, the aforementioned scholarship also promotes religion as the lens through which to understand conflict within the Arabist movement. This narrative suggests that, prior to 1914; the Christian and Muslim ideological versions of Arabism were inherently hostile toward one another.[70] According to this school of thought Christian Arabists during this period were concerned with establishing a single, secular Arab state where Christians and Muslims would be equal[71] while Muslim Arabists were

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[67] See Albert Hourani *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (1962), Zeine N. Zeine *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (1966) and C. Ernest Dawn *From Ottomanism to Arabism* (1973).
[68] Zeine, 61.
[69] See Dawn, 132-133, Zeine, 61 and Hourani, 271-277.
[70] See Zeine, 69-70 and Dawn 132-133.
[71] Hourani, 278

concerned with establishing an Arab state based on the principles and practices of the seventh-century Islamic community.[72] Problematic in this paradigm is the fact that the propagation of the Christian/Muslim divide as a definitive split that can be blamed for ideological divergences within the movement precludes examination of significant divergences within each community.[73]

For proponents of this paradigm, increased interaction between ideologically differing Arabists coincides with the birth of a homogeneous version of Arabist ideology around the onset of World War I.[74] Since proponents of this paradigm see Christian and Muslim Arabists as two distinct homogenous entities, any sign of ideological cohesion between members of these groups can be taken as a evidence a homogeneous version of Arabism.[75] There are two major problems with this line of thinking. First of all, the problem of the Christian vs. Muslim divide being portrayed as the most significant gap to be bridged is omnipresent in this assertion. Secondly, this line of thinking ignores writings of members of the movement that continue to reflect different ideological interpretations of Arabism well beyond World War I. Thus, the current study will diverge from this line of thought in two distinct ways. First, it will refrain from using religion as the definitive category for understanding ideological orientations and conflicts within the early twentieth century Arabist movement. Secondly, this study will not conflate increased cooperation and the homogeneity of Arabist ideology.

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[72] Zeine, 69.

[73] Hourani touches on internal divides within the Christian Arabist communities briefly in his work. None of the authors mentioned discuss ideological divergences within the Muslim Arabist.

[74] See Zeine, 149-150, Hourani, 300-302 and Dawn 142-143

[75] Dawn, 142-143.

Within the last twenty years scholarship has emerged that challenges notions of homogeneity within the early twentieth-century Arabist movement.[76] It argues that the Arabist movement never produced a comprehensive theory of Arabism during this period.[77] In other words, these scholars propagate the notion that a homogenous version of Arabism did not emerge during the period of pre-World War I or World War I periods. In addition, scholars promoting this paradigm take a more nuanced approach to the examination of ideological differences within the early twentieth century Arabist movement.[78] Specifically relevant to this to study is the fact that these scholars are cognizant of internal divides within the Christian and Muslim Arabists.

Though this study will use the paradigm propagated by Duri, Tauber and Gelvin as a point of embarkation, the following research differs from these studies in that it will examine a very specific case study (the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo) that is under analyzed in the aforementioned works. The studies conducted by both Duri and Tauber attempt to analyze such a high quantity of individuals and locations that no single group is analyzed in depth.[79] For his part, Gelvin's study focuses exclusively on Syria, as well as on an historical period (1918-1920) that falls outside the scope of this study. The following study seeks to contribute to the existing scholarship by using the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo as a lens into the ideological orientations and activities of the nascent Arabist movement.

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[76] See A.A. Duri *The Historical Formation of the Arab Nation* (1987), Eliezer Tauber *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* (1993) and James Gelvin *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (1998).

[77] See Duri, 335, Tauber, 331 and Gelvin, 7.

[78] This is most evident in Gelvin's *Divided Loyalties* and Tauber's *The Emergence of the Arab Movements*.

[79] In addition, both Tauber and Duri have a tendency to discuss "Muslim" and "Christian" versions of Arabism.

Early Ideologues

One of the earliest members of the Syrian intelligentsia in Egypt to espouse a politicized version of Arabism was Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakabi.[80] Kawakabi was a Muslim who was originally from Aleppo and immigrated to Cairo in 1898 after his journalistic activities provoked ire from the Turkish authorities.[81] It was from Cairo that he was able to produce writings advocating the establishment of an Arab state without facing the oppression of the Hamidian government. It is through his publications produced during his years in Cairo (1898-1903) that one can gain a sense of Kawakabi's ideological conceptions of Arabism.

For Kawakabi, the return of the Arabs to a position of prominence required a return to the true Islam of the early Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula.[82] In Kawakabi's view the decline of Arab society was the result of the Ottoman sultans departing from the version of Islam adopted by the early Arabs.[83] Given Kawakabi's juxtaposition of Arab revival and a return to Islamic purity; it is not entirely surprising that Kawakabi suggests that it is the Arabs of Arabia that should take the lead in this process.[84] This was part and parcel of Kawakabi's notion that the Arabian Arab's closeness to Islam made them superior to others in the Arab world.[85] Thus, for Kawakabi, the revival of Arab society was necessarily linked to a return to the Islamic principles that had guided the Arabs of the seventh-century Arabian Peninsula.

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[80] Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, 138.
[81] Hourani, 271.
[82] Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakabi, *Umm al-qura*, (Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Misriyah bi-al-Azhar, 1931): 12-13 (Originally written in 1901).
[83] Kawakabi, 201-207.
[84] Kawakabi, 12-13.
[85] Kawakabi, 195-196.

It was Kawakabi's diagnosis that Islamic revival would act as the catalyst for unifying Arabs of all religions under a single banner. In his view, Islam in its pure form was a progressive system that promoted freedom and justice.[86] It was Islam that allowed the Arabs to precede other societies in adopting principles of equality and social welfare.[87] As a result of these beliefs, Kawakabi asserted that a return to pure Islam was capable of catalyzing unification among people of all the Eastern religions.[88] What is evident here is that in Kawakabi's ideological conception Arab unity could not exist without Islam.

Another prominent Arabist within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo in the years prior to 1908 was Nagib Azoury. Azoury was from a Syrian Christian background and immigrated to Cairo in 1906 after a brief stint in Paris from 1904-1906.[89] Azoury was among the first Arabists to advocate Arab independence from the Ottoman Empire.[90] Though Azoury is often cited as establishing a distinctly Christian version of political Arabism,[91] some of his ideological principles are also present in the writings of Muslim Arabists.[92]

Contrary to Kawakabi's view of Islam being the necessary catalyst for Arab unity, Azoury envisioned an Arab state where civil and religious power would be separated.[93] According to Azoury, this separation would be in the best interests of both Arabs and

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[86] Kawakabi, 195-196.

[87] Kawakabi, 195-196.

[88] Kawakabi, 197. What is meant here by "Eastern Religions is Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

[89] Tauber, *The Emergence of the Arab Movements*, 33.

[90] Hourani, 278.

[91] See Tauber, *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* and Hourani *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*.

[92] This will be discussed further when analyzing Rafiq and Haqqi Azm later in this section.

[93] Negib Azoury, "Program of the League of the Arab Fatherland", 1905, reprinted in Sylvia Haim's *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962): 81.

Muslims.[94] Azoury's ultimate goal was the establishment of an Arab state that would be governed by a "constitutional sultanate" and based on "freedom of all religions and equality of all citizens before the law".[95] While Kawakabi also spoke of freedom and equality it is important to make the distinction that in his view Islam acted as the catalyst for these principles.

Despite his desire to separate Islam from the official Arab state, Azoury does appear cognizant of the important connection between Islam and Arab history. Azoury's solution is to establish a politically independent Muslim Arab caliphate in the Hijaz region.[96] This caliphate would be governed by the Sherif of Mecca and "hold a real moral authority over all the Muslims of the world."[97] His rationale for limiting the political authority of the caliph to the Hijaz was his belief that attempts to use Islam as a bond for establishing a single Muslim state had failed since the earliest days of Islam.[98] Thus, in Azoury's view Islam did not represent the ideal catalyst for bringing about Arab unification.

Though Kawakabi and Azoury are of great importance to the study of the early twentieth-century Arabist movement, the tendency to view these individuals as representing separate Muslim and Christian versions of political Arabism is problematic.[99] While there are certainly examples within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo of Muslims echoing Kawakabi's sentiments and Christians propagating Azoury's theories, there are some significant exceptions to this rule. It is through the analysis of

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[94] Azoury, 81.
[95] Azoury, 81.
[96] Azoury, 82.
[97] Azoury, 82.
[98] Azoury, 82.
[99] This is seen in Dawn, Zeine, Hourani and even to some extent in Tauber. These authors all speak of Kawakabi and Azoury defining Muslim/Christian versions of politicized Arabism.

other Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo that the problem of using these two ideologues as representatives of homogenous Muslim/Christian Arabist ideologies becomes apparent.

Ideological Interpretations

One of the most well-known Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo throughout the early twentieth century was Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida. Rida emigrated from Syria to Cairo in 1897 and quickly entered the sphere of publishing.[100] His periodical *Al-Manar* was founded in 1898 and quickly became a forum for many of the leading Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.[101] While Rida was willing on some level to acknowledge the importance of nationalisms based on linguistic and ethnic ties, it was Islam that Rida viewed as "a kind of supernationalism, the only true nationalism for Muslims."[102]

Like Kawakabi, Rashid Rida juxtaposed Islamic revival and Arab revival.[103] In Rida's view it was the departure from pure Islam that had led to the Ottoman Empire becoming subservient to the European powers.[104] Rida's solution to this problem was the establishment of an Islamic caliphate that governed based on the general principles of the past history of Islam.[105] In terms of the principles guiding the caliphate, Rida supported the aforementioned concept developed by Kawakabi.[106] Part of this conception was the idea that Islamic restoration and Arab revival were part and parcel of one another.[107]

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[100] Hourani, 226.
[101] Rida himself, Kawakabi, as well as Muhammad Kurd Ali, Rafiq Azm and Haqqi Azm were published in *Al-Manar*.
[102] Tauber, 111.
[103] *Al-Manar*, Vol. 12 (1909): 683.
[104] Rashid Rida, *Al-Khalifa*, (Cairo: 1922): 108.
[105] *Al-Khalifa*, 90.
[106] Duri, 187.
[107] Kawakabi, 197.

Though he perceived Islamic and Arab revivals as being inexorably linked, Rashid Rida recognized the potential importance of modern nationalisms based on ideas of a shared language and homeland.[108] Rida described these bonds as a "union of the inhabitants of a homeland who cooperate in preserving their independence and increasing their prosperity."[109] For Rida, this ideology is compatible with Islam in that Islamic teachings promoted the cooperation of Muslims and non-Muslims to defend a country and preserve its independence and prosperity.[110] Despite this, Rida's tendency to conflate Islam and Arabism was never far from the surface. This is evidenced by the fact that all initiates in to his Society of the Arab Association established in 1911 were required to recite the following oath:

> I swear by Allah, the mighty, the victorious, the vengeful, the great, who knows my secret and reveled, who can negate all the talents and strengths that were given to me, and by the glorious book of Allah, that I will put all my effort to bring the cooperation of the Arabs, the unity of their leaders and the founding of a new kingdom according to the principles determined by the Society of the Arab association that I am joining today." [111]

Thus, while the Society of the Arab Association was ostensibly a society promoting equality for all Arabs regardless of religious affiliations, the Islamic ideological overtones in the preceding oath are hardly subtle.

Though similar in some respects to Kawakabi and Rida, Muhammad Kurd Ali represents an example of a Muslim Arabist with a slightly different view of the relationship between Islam and Arabism. Kurd Ali emigrated from Damascus to Cairo in

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[108] Rashid Rida, "Islam and the National Idea", *Al-Manar* Vol 33, 1933, reprinted in Sylvia Haim's *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962): 76.
[109] Rida, "Islam and the National Idea", 76.
[110] Rida, "Islam and the National Idea", 76.
[111] Rashid Rida, Society of the Arab Association oath, reprinted in Amin Said, *Al-Thawra al-Arabiyya al-Kubra*, (Cairo: Vol 1, 1934): 49-50.

1901 for professional reasons.[112] Like Kawakabi and Rida, Kurd Ali believed that the era of early Islam was an era of freedom and progress and that the Ottoman sultans' departure from pure Islam had led to the decline of Arab society.[113] Kurd Ali was also in agreement with Rida and Kawakabi that the Arabs had historically controlled their own destiny and deserved to do so again.[114] However, Kurd Ali differed slightly from Rida and significantly from Kawakabi in his suggestions for how to return the Arabs to their place of prominence.

In Kurd Ali's view, Arab revival was best catalyzed through a fusion of the past and present.[115] While Kurd Ali believed that the principles of early Islam supplied the foundation for Arab revival[116], he also believed that religion alone could not catalyze Arab unity.[117] In Kurd Ali's view, the revival of education and Arabic literature were also key components of bringing Arabs of various backgrounds together.[118] Part and parcel of the educational revival was a renewed focus on the teaching of standard Arabic, which Kurd Ali viewed as superior to all other languages including local Arabic dialects.[119] Thus, for Kurd Ali a return to pure Islam was only one component of Arabism. Though he points to pure Islam as the foundation for unity, his notion that literature, education and knowledge are essential for the Arabs to reclaim their place of prominence[120]

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[112] Kurd Ali was a journalist and during the Hamidian period Egypt offered far more journalistic freedom than other areas of the Empire. See Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt*.

[113] Muhammad Kurd Ali, *al-Islam wa al-hadarah al-Arabiyah*, (Cairo: Maṭba'at Lajnat al-Talīf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr, 1934): 34-35 (Originally written in 1909).

[114] Kurd Ali, 34.

[115] Kurd Ali, 47.

[116] Kurd Ali, 34.

[117] Kurd Ali, 47.

[118] Kurd Ali, 47.

[119] Kurd Ali, 46.

[120] It should be noted that Rida also saw education as an important component of Arab revival. However, Kurd Ali differed in that he also advocated a revival of pre-Islamic Arabic, as well as contemporary literature. Rida tended to strictly focus on the sciences when speak of the revival of knowledge.

represents a discrepancy between his ideology and that of more conservative Muslim Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.[121]

While Kurd Ali differed with Kawakabi on the relationship between Islam and Arab unification, other Muslim Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo were far more skeptical of the ability of Islam to unify the Arab people. Two of the more significant examples of this are Rafiq and Haqqi Azm. Both were originally from the notable Azm family of Damascus. These two individuals, Rafiq in particular, were among the more influential Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo in the years leading up to World War I.

Throughout the years of 1900-1914 Rafiq Azm was involved in several Arabist societies in Cairo.[122] Most notably, he served as the President of the Decentralization Society. This society was characterized by A.A. Duri as one of the most influential Arabist reform movements in the pre-war era.[123] It should be noted that Rafiq Azm shared Kawakabi, Rida and Kurd Ali's veneration for early Islamic practices and leadership.[124] He was in agreement with the assertion that the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs was an era in which democracy, freedom and justice were promoted.[125] Despite his reverence for this period, Rafiq Azm did not see religion as a bond capable of uniting the Arabs.

Azm's rationale for looking beyond Islam for sources of Arab unification related in large part to his view that Islamic unity had traditionally been hard to achieve.[126] In

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[121] Kurd Ali, 47.
[122] See Tauber Chapters 8, 16 and 18.
[123] Duri, 280.
[124] Rafiq Azm, *Ashar mashahir al- Islam fi l-harb wa-l-siyasa* (Cairo, 1909): 120.
[125] Azm, *Ashar Islam*, 120.
[126] Rafiq Azm, *Majmu'at athar Rafiq Bey al-Azm* (Cairo: 1909): 49-51.

Azm's view, this was reflected by the fact that historically Islam had failed to catalyze cooperation among Muslims even in cases where Muslim lands had been attacked by external forces (i.e. Crusades and Mongol invasion).[127] Azm's alternative in terms of unifying the Arabs was to focus on the bonds of nationalism and language.[128] For Azm, it was these bonds that "had the potential of uniting the Arabs, irrespective of their religions.[129]

Like his cousin Rafiq, Haqqi Azm looked beyond Islam for bonds among the Arab nation. Also a member of the Decentralization Society, Haqqi Azm sought to ensure that religion did not bar Arabs of various religious backgrounds from obtaining membership in the society.[130] In Azm's view, linguistic and ethnic ties superseded religious affiliations. These feelings can be seen in a letter composed in 1913 in which Haqqi Azm stated that failing to accept Christians as equal members of the Decentralization Society was ignorant.[131] This letter was composed in response to the increasing problem of branch leaders refusing to allow religious minorities into the society.[132] What is significant here is that, like Rafiq, Haqqi Azm stresses language and nationality as unifying bonds that superseded religious affiliations.[133]

What can be derived from the analysis of the ideological orientations of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo is the fact that discussing ideological divergences strictly within the framework of Christian vs. Muslim is deeply flawed. As this section has demonstrated, important Muslim members of this group have much in common with

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[127] Azm, *Ashar*, 49-51.
[128] Duri, 200.
[129] Duri, 200.
[130] Letter from Haqqi Azm, *Al-Manar*, Vol. 17, (1914): 237.
[131] Letter from Haqqi Azm, 237.
[132] Letter from Haqqi Azm, 237.
[133] Letter from Haqqi Azm, 237.

the Christian Azoury in terms of their conceptions of Arabism. By establishing that one cannot speak of two distinct, homogeneous versions of Arabism it becomes harder to assert that the conflation of "Christian" and "Muslim" ideology occurs at the start of World War I. What the writings of the aforementioned individuals demonstrate is that a homogenous Muslim version of Arabism did not develop during this period. Thus, in order to explain the cooperation among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo from 1900-1914 it is essential to explore the social and political factors that created common interests among these individuals.

Catalyzing Cooperation

In the years prior to the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 cooperation among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo was catalyzed in large part by the oppressive regime of Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1908). Much of the commentary in the preceding section regarding the need to establish an Arab caliphate based on early Islamic principles was in reaction to the policies of Abdulhamid. While it should be noted that some members of this group did feel Abdulhamid's emphasis on religion was not entirely negative[134], he was not seen as the correct individual to hold the position of caliph. In the words of Rashid Rida, "the Ottoman (Hamidian) caliphate could be accepted then as a caliphate of necessity, but it was not a real caliphate.[135] It was this line of thinking that led to the more religious Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo like Kawakabi, Rida and to some degree Kurd Ali to reject the idea of Abdulhamid continuing to hold the title of caliph.

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[134] See Dawn, 137-139.
[135] Hourani, 240.

In addition to alienating more religious Muslim Arabists, less religious Muslims and Christians had abundant cause to be dissatisfied with Abdulhamid. In the Christian context, the fact that Abdulhamid's focus on Islam was the key component of Ottomanism necessarily placed Christians in an inferior position.[136] In terms of the more secular Muslims within this community, mention has been made in previous sections of the fact that fear of Hamidian persecution was a key factor that led many of these individuals to emigrate from Syria to Cairo.[137]

Evidence of anti-Hamidian sentiments catalyzing cooperation among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo can be found through the analysis of the Society of the Ottoman Council established in Cairo in 1907.[138] The founding of the society was the result of collaboration between Rashid Rida and Rafiq Azm (Muhammad Kurd Ali was also a member).[139] The stated aim of this society was to apply the strongest possible efforts toward combating the tyranny of Abdulhamid.[140] The end goal was the establishment of a constitutional/parliamentary Ottoman state that respected the rights of all individuals regardless of religion or nationality.[141] Thus, this society serves as a fine example of ideologically heterogeneous Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo coming together based on common socio-political aims.

In the years following the Young Turk revolution Arabist activity within the Ottoman Empire increased significantly. It was during this era that British diplomat A.T. Wilson describes "a period of rapid growth" for the Syrian Arabist movement that

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[136] Engin Akarli, "Abdulhamid II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System," in D. Kushner, ed., *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period. Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*, (Leiden: Brill, 1986): 86.
[137] See section two as well as Tauber, 51.
[138] Tauber, 51.
[139] Tauber, 51.
[140] Society of the Ottoman Council Charter, *Al-Manar*, Vol. 12, (1907): 951.
[141] Society Charter, *Al-Manar*, 951.

resulted in a "mushroom crop of patriotic organizations."[142] Though the initial reactions to the revolution were largely positive among Arabs throughout the empire[143], over time anti-Young Turk sentiments would serve as the primary factor unifying Ottoman Arabs.[144]

In the immediate wake of the revolution the majority of Arabists would have shared Rashid Rida's view that "(on the day of the Young Turk Revolution) the Ottomans tasted the sweetness of liberty, the difference between the past and present in the difference between night and day."[145] Rafiq and Haqqi Azm even accepted positions in the Young Turk bureaucracy.[146] However, as a result of the Young Turk polices of "Turcification" based on the principles of "not any nationalism but Ottoman Turk, not any official language but Turkish, not any home rule within the empire, not any of the higher power in other hands than those that subscribed to its program of one race, one language, one administration" the amenable attitudes of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia toward the Young Turks had almost completely evaporated by the onset of World War I.[147] It is in this context that one can observe an increasing amount of cooperation among ideologically divergent Arabists of both religions.

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[142] "Dispatch from Civil Commissioner, Mesopotamia, to Secretary of State for India," 15 November 1919, P 8253/19, reprinted in *Records of Syria, 1918-1973*, 15 vols., ed. Jane Priestland (Southampton: Archive Editions, 2005), 1: 105.

[143] Handbook Prepared Under the Direction of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office-No. 93 Syria and Palestine," April 1919, reprinted in *Records of Syria, 1918-1973*, 15 vols., ed. Jane Priestland (Southampton: Archive Editions, 2005): 41.

[144] Rashid Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria Before 1914: A Reassessment". in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Khalidi, Rashid, Anderson, Lisa, Muslih, Mohammad and Simon, Reeva S. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 62.

[145] *Al-Man*ar, Vol. 11 (1908): 417 and 423.

[146] Tauber, 53.

[147] Handbook on Syria and Palestine, 80.

Cooperation among the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo during this period largely manifested itself in the form of Arabist societies.[148] While it is impossible to determine exactly how many individuals were involved in these societies (or the broader Arabist movement during this period) there is evidence suggesting that the Arabist societies in Cairo were influential.[149] The majority of these societies exerted influence for relatively short periods of time, however there is a pattern that can be seen where by as soon as one society is dissolved another is formed by the same individuals who were active in the previous society.[150]

While societies such as the aforementioned Society of the Ottoman Council were established by the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo prior to 1908, it was during the period of 1908-1914 that a significant increase in the establishment of these societies can be observed.[151] It has already been noted that these societies were comparatively ideologically diverse. Many of them contained some or all of the Muslim Arabists discussed in the previous section.[152] By and large the common thread among all of these societies was the idea that as a result of the Young Turk's failure to establish an inclusive Ottoman state, the Arabs needed to unite to achieve increased autonomy.[153]

Dissatisfaction with the Young Turks manifested itself differently in the various societies. For example, Rashid Rida described the mission of his Society of the Arab Association as creating a union between the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula and the

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[148] It should be noted that an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of these societies will not be present in this chapter. This will be discussed at length in chapter three.
[149] This will be explained in greater detail in chapter two.
[150] Even the Decentralization Party was only relevant for at most two years.
[151] Tauber, 1.
[152] See Tauber chaperts 16 and 18, as well as Zeine, 174.
[153] At this juncture the Arabist societies were not advocating complete independence from the Ottoman Empire. See Handbook on Syria and Palestine, 80.

Arabs of other Ottoman provinces against the Young Turks[154] whose evil plots made
them the enemies of the Arabs and Islam.[155] Similar language can be found in the 1913
"Proclamation to the Arabs, Sons of Qahtan" issued by the Arab Revolutionary Society in
which Haqqi Azm was deeply involved.[156] This pamphlet called on Muslim, Jewish and
Christian Arabs to set aside their religious differences and "cleanse their country" of the
oppressive tyranny of those (i.e. the Young Turks) who show enmity toward the Arab
race and language.[157] Thus, for these societies it was hostility toward the Young Turks'
policies of Turkification that served to unite Arabists of divergent ideological
orientations.

The Decentralization Party, a society in which Rida, Muhammad Kurd Ali, Rafiq
Azm and Haqqi Azm were members, had a slightly different platform than those of the
two aforementioned societies. Though the failures of the Young Turk government served
as the unifying thread[158], the Decentralization Party's main concerns had less to do with
Turcification and more to do with fear of territorial loss.[159] The fact that by 1912 the
Young Turks had ceded Libya to Italy and were on the brink of losing the Balkans led
members within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to fear that the Young Turks lacked the
resources and power to prevent Arab land from falling under imperial control.[160] In their
manifesto the Decentralization Party asserts that the best way to combat this potential
loss of territory was to create a decentralized Ottoman system in which the Arabs, as well

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[154] Tauber, 114.
[155] *Al-Manar*, Vol. 7, (1913): 316-317.
[156] Zeine, 174.
[157] " Proclamation to the Arabs, Sons of Qahtan", 1913, reprinted in Sylvia Haim's *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962): 86-87.
[158] See Tauber chapter 18.
[159] Tauber, 121.
[160] Tauber, 121.

as other ethnic groups, would gain increased autonomy.[161] Thus while frustration with

Turcification policies was present within this group[162], it was the fear that the Young

Turks were too weak to protect Ottoman-Arab interests that acted as the principal factor

for unifying this society.

Conclusion

The years of 1900-1914 did not witness the birth of a homogeneous version of

Arabism among the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. The analysis provided in this study has

demonstrated that even within communities that have been suggested to be ideologically

homogeneous (in this case the Muslim Arabists) significant ideological divergences were

present. Thus, when considering the circumstances that catalyzed increased cooperation

between Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo during this period it is

imperative to first move beyond the notion of the development of a homogenous version

of Arabism.

Increased cooperation among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo

during this period was the result of common interests being created by socio-political

realities. This can be observed prior to 1908 via analysis of Arabists societies that cited

combating Hamidian repression as their primary aim. In the years following the Young

Turk revolution cooperation among ideologically divergent Arabists within the Syrian

intelligentsia in Cairo increased dramatically. As the analysis has shown, this cooperation

had little to do with an ideologically homogenous version of Arabism. Cooperation seen

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[161] Decentralization Party Manifesto, *Al-Manar*, Vol. 16 (1913): 226-231.
[162] See above comments from Rashid Rida and Haqqi Azm, as well as Duri, 203-204.

in the societies mentioned in the preceding section was the result of an increasingly negative attitude among Arabs of different ideological orientations toward the Young Turk government. Whether it was dissatisfaction with Turcification policies, or fears that the government was no longer strong enough to protect Arab territory, dissatisfaction with the Young Turk government served to unite Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo despite their ideological differences.

In addition to providing insight into the activities and ideological orientations of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo, the preceding study should be situated with the broader debate regarding Arabism in the early twentieth century. De-esssentializing the notion that Christian and Muslim Arabists can be rigidly classified as two separate, ideologically homogenous groups is a methodological approach that can be applied to the study of the broader Arabist movement during this period. It is by moving beyond notions of ideological homogeneity that one can understand the socio-political factors that catalyzed increased cooperation among Arabists in the years of 1900-1914.

Cairo as a Political Center of the Arabist Movement: 1908-1914

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the process by which the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo transformed Cairo into in an epicenter of the Arabist movement. Although an analysis of subsequent years is extremely useful in terms of demonstrating this assertion, this study will present the years 1908-1914 as the period in which Cairo developed in to an epicenter of the Arabist movement. Despite the fact that by 1912 many prominent Damascus Arabists had immigrated to Cairo there is a limited amount of literature available describing Cairo's place in the Arabist movement. Likewise, a detailed study of the Syrian intelligentsia's role in catalyzing Cairo's development as an epicenter of the movement is noticeably absent from the existing scholarship.

As has been mentioned in chapter two, the development of Arabist societies was one of the most significant external manifestations of Arabist ideology in Cairo. In the years leading up to World War I the Arabist societies founded in Cairo were among the most influential in existence.[163] Several of these societies were closely connected other to braches in areas across Greater Syria.[164] Despite these facts scholars of tended to focus far more on Damascus as the movements lone epicenter during this period.[165] As such, the conclusion drawn by these scholars regarding the nature and scope of early twentieth century Arabism are tainted by the fact that they only provide detailed analysis of one Arabist center. In contrast, this chapter demonstrates how the Syrian intelligentsia was able to develop Cairo into an epicenter of the Arabist movement that, by 1912, was on many levels a more significant political center than Damascus.

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[163] Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East*. (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1956): 47.
[164] Eliezer Tauber, *The Emergence of the Arab Movements*. (London: Frank Cass, 1993): chapters 18,19 and 24.
[165] See Dawn (1973 and 1993), Philip Khoury *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920* (1983) and Zeine N. Zeine *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (1966).

The aim of this chapter is two-fold. First of all, this chapter aims to demonstrate Rashid Khalidi's assertion that centers of Arabism outside of Damascus of been under analyzed by scholars.[166] This chapter aims to bridge this gap by analyzing Cairo as an epicenter of the movement. It is my intention that an analysis of Cairo will both justify Cairo's place as an epicenter of the movement, as well as demonstrate the utility of examining areas outside of Damascus to obtain a broader understanding of the Arabist movement during this period.

The second aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that it was the activities of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo that catalyzed Cairo's development into an epicenter of the Arabist movement. It was within this group that Arabist ideology was prevalent during this period. As has been mentioned in chapter two, many of the Syrians that immigrated to Cairo during this period were among the more prominent members of the Arabist movement.

There are four questions to be answered this chapter: How does the Syrian intelligentsia catalyze Cairo's transformation in to an epicenter of Arabism? Why should the Arabist societies in Cairo be viewed as influential? Is it justifiable to view Cairo as a center of Arabism comparable to Damascus? What are the implications of this study vis-à-vis Khalidi's assertion that alternative centers of Arabism must be examined to truly understand the size and scope of the Arabist movement in the early twentieth century?

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[166] Rashid Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria Before 1914: A Reassessment". in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Khalidi, Rashid, Anderson, Lisa, Muslih, Mohammad and Simon, Reeva S. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993):   60-61.

Historiography

Much of the existing scholarship regarding Arabism in the early twentieth century is quick to portray Damascus as the unchallenged political center of the Arabist movement. According to this paradigm, Damascus-based elites were the first to advocate Arabism.[167] As a result of this assertion proponents of this paradigm argue for Damascus as "the major center of Arabism during the period of 1908-1914".[168] Although it is true that many of the more notable Arabist leaders were Damascenes, it is misleading to suggest that this resulted in Damascus as the lone center of the Arabist movement.[169]

In *From Ottomanism to Arabism* Ernest Dawn provides the reader with a chart outlining Syrian membership in pre-1914 Arabist societies.[170] In this chart up on which subsequent scholars have been heavily reliant[171], Dawn neglects to include membership in societies that had its leadership centered outside of Greater Syria.[172] Particularly relevant in terms of this study is the fact that membership in Cairo-based societies, including the Decentralization Party is noticeably absent.

Dawn's assessment of the number of Syrian Arabists prior to World War I is tainted by the fact that he seems to ignore societies in other areas. As this chapter shows, the incompleteness of his analysis is the result of the fact that there was a great deal of important activity occurring in other centers. By ignoring these centers Dawn renders his

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[167] See Dawn, 11-12 and Khoury, 1.
[168] Khoury, 68.
[169] For names of Arabists of Damascus origins see the introduction, as well as chapter one.
[170] Dawn, 174-175.
[171] Khalidi, 52. Among the scholars Khaidi mentions are Khoury and Albert Hourani.
[172] Dawn, 174-175

work incapable of presenting an accurate picture of the size and scope of the early twentieth-century Arabist movement.

Although Philip Khoury clearly that states that his *book Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism* is designed to be a case study of Damascus, his understanding of alternative centers is a bit more nuanced than Dawn's.[173] While Khoury argues for the significance of Damascus, he also seems willing to acknowledge that some of the more active Arabist Damascenes immigrated to Cairo by 1912.[174] Unlike Dawn, Khoury also acknowledges the fact that these individuals remained active in the Arabist movement after settling in Cairo.[175] The discrepancy between these two works should be seen as the result of the sources they examine, as well as the progression of scholarship over the decade.

Aside from the tendency to focus heavily on Damascus, another semi problematic trend in scholarship on Arabism in the early twentieth century is a scholar's tendency to analyze all the societies and ideologues from various centers in a single work.[176] While these works represent a more nuanced attempt to convey the size and scope of the early twentieth-century Arabist movement, this approach is not without flaws. Problematic here is the fact that by trying to analyze the general development of Arabist societies from Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, Mousl and Istanbul this scholarship provides little more than a brief introduction to the Arabist movement during this period.[177] In other words, studies of this broad scope fail to adequately capture the nuances of any single Arabist center.

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[173] Khoury, 1.
[174] Khoury, 63 and 69.
[175] Khoury, 63.
[176] See A.A. Duri *The Historical Formation of the Arab Nation* (1987) and Tauber *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* (1993).
[177] See Tauber chapters 10-25.

This chapter will depart from this paradigm by providing in-depth analysis of Cairo as an epicenter of Arabism. It should be noted that this chapter does not intend to replicate the implicit arguments of scholars of the first paradigm that understanding one Arabist center provides sufficient insight into the size and scope of the movement. Instead, this chapter argues that in-depth understanding of Cairo can be used as a piece of a larger puzzle that reveals the picture of Arabism during this period.[178]

Cairo's Development as an Epicenter of Arabism

As dissatisfaction with the Young Turk regime grew in the years following the revolution of 1908 an increasing number of Arabist societies began to emerge throughout the Ottoman Empire.[179] Since it was the Syrians that served as the "intellectual and organizing power" of the Arabist movement during this era, it is not surprising that the vast majority of these societies were established by individuals from Greater Syria.[180] As a result, as time went on the Young Turk government increasingly sought to stamp out Arab nationalist currents within the borders of Greater Syria.[181] Thus, it was from alternative areas that Syrian Arabist leaders would mitigate to continue their battle with the Young Turks.[182]

In addition to the factors for emigration from Greater Syria detailed in the introduction and chapter one, the parliamentary elections of 1912 must be discussed here in order to understand Cairo's transformation into an epicenter of Arabism. It was these

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[178] In addition to Cairo, it should be noted that Istanbul and Beirut are mentioned by Khalidi as under analyzed centers of the movement. Khalidi, 60-61.

[179] "Dispatch from Civil Commissioner, Mesopotamia, to Secretary of State for India," 15 November 1919, P 8253/19, reprinted in *Records of Syria, 1918-1973*, 15 vols., ed. Jane Priestland (Southampton: Archive Editions, 2005), 1: 105.

[180] CAB 24/1, Speech by Mark Sykes Entitled "The Arab Question", December 16, 1915: 242.

[181] This was particularly true in Damascus. Khalidi, 55.

[182] Khalidi, 55-61.

elections that compelled several politicized Arabists to emigrate from Damascus to Cairo.[183] Furthermore, the outcome of the 1912 elections appear to have increased the number of individuals in Greater Syria willing to collaborate with Cairo-based Arabist leadership.[184] This fact combined with an increasing number of politicized Arabist émigrés provided the pre-existing Syrian Arabist community within Cairo with an increased ability to expand their influence throughout the intellectual circles of Greater Syria.[185]

The Parliamentary Elections of 1912 witnessed a significant loss of parliamentary seats for those Syrians who adopted an Arabist agenda in opposition to the Young Turks. Only three out of the hitherto twenty-one Syrian deputies in the Ottoman Parliament were re-elected in 1912.[186] Furthermore, the three individuals who were re-elected were known Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) collaborators.[187] As has been mentioned, a significant portion of Syrians who did not get re-elected had known Arabist sympathies. Despite the fact that the ambitions of these individuals were at this point were "without a thought of separatism" from the empire, the Young Turk regime still opted to attempt to stifle Arabist representation in the Ottoman parliament.[188]

The fact that Arabs within the Ottoman Empire were able to gain parliament seats only through collaboration with the CUP is useful in debunking the idea that the elections of 1912 should not be seen as a pivotal moment in the pre-War Arabist movement.

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[183] Among these individuals were Haqqi Azm, Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi and Shukri al-Asali. Khoury, 69 and Khalidi, 59.
[184] Tauber, 125.
[185] Khoury, 63.
[186] Khalidi, 59.
[187] Khalidi, 59.
[188] Handbook Prepared Under the Direction of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office-No. 93 Syria and Palestine," April 1919, reprinted in *Records of Syria, 1918-1973*, 15 vols., ed. Jane Priestland (Southampton: Archive Editions, 2005): 80.

Scholars such as Feroz Ahmed have cited the fact that there were more Arabs in parliament in 1912 than 1908 as rationale for devaluing the 1912 elections as a turning point for the Arabist movement.[189] In reality, the Arabs that held on to their seats in these elections were in opposition to the Arabist movement. Thus, the argument that these elections should not have been viewed by Arabists as an important moment does not hold water. In particular, these elections were important for the Arabist movement in Cairo due to the fact that they catalyzed both the immigration of politically active Arabists, as well as bolstered support for Cairo-based societies throughout Greater Syria.

The Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo was responsible for the establishment of several Arabist societies in Cairo prior to 1912. However, by-and-large these societies were limited in scope and fairly limited in their political agendas.[190] This was largely the result of the fact that there was a lack of coordination by Arabists in Cairo with Arabists in other parts of the empire, particularly Greater Syria. This changed with the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo's establishment of the Decentralization Party in 1912. The society was founded by "a group of Ottoman gentlemen" led by the Azm brothers[191] and would emerge as arguably the most important Syrian-led society prior in the pre-World War I era.[192]

The platform of the Decentralization Party was based on the idea that the relative diversity of the Ottoman Empire necessitated a decentralized administrative approach.[193] In this system the Arabs, as well as other groups throughout the Empire, would have a

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[189] Feroz Ahmed, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914.* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2008): 58.
[190] Tauber, chapters 8 and 16.
[191] PRO 30/57/44, Memorandum From Lord Kitchener "A New Ottoman Party in Cairo", January 13, 1913: 1.
[192] Kedourie, 47.
[193] Amin Said, *Al-Thawra al-Arabiyya al-Kubra*, Vol. 1, (Cairo: 1934): 14-18.

larger degree of control over their affairs. Despite their desire for increased autonomy the Decentralization Party never advocated separation from the Ottoman Empire. The society's charter states that the aim of the society was to work for increased autonomy within the existing Ottoman framework.[194] Regardless of the society's pro-Ottoman platform, the political activeness and influence of the Decentralization Party increasingly rendered its members targets of the Young Turk regime.[195]

An important indicator of the influence of the Decentralization Party was the society's ability to establish branches in major cities across Greater Syria. Between 1912 and the summer of 1914 the Decentralization Party managed to establish branches in Damascus, Beirut, Hama, Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem.[196] These branches operated under the same constitution as the main branch in Cairo and were directly monitored by liaisons from Cairo.[197] Further evidence for viewing these branches as operating under the control of the main branch in Cairo can be found through examination of this monitoring system. Rafiq Azm was particularly insistent that all branches follow the charter established in Cairo and thus all liaisons closely observed the activities of other branches.[198] If any of these branches acted in a manner that deviated from the Cairo branch, they were immediately reprimanded.[199]

The establishment of branches of the Decentralization party throughout Greater Syria provides further evidence for how the Parliamentary elections of 1912 enhanced the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo's ability to transform Cairo into an epicenter of the Arabist

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[194] Amin Said, Vol. 1: 14-18.
[195] Foreign Office Memorandum, "Eastern Report No. 2": 8.
[196] Tauber, 125.
[197] Tauber, 125.
[198] Tauber, 126.
[199] Tauber, 126.

movement. The entirety of Decentralization Party branches throughout Greater Syria were founded by Syrian elites.[200] These individuals included: Shafiq al-Mu'ayyad and Shukri al-Asali in Damascus, Khalid al-Barazi in Hama, Hafiz al-Said in Jaffa and Said al-Husayni in Jerusalem.[201] One thread of commonality shared by all of these individuals is that each one lost their Parliamentary seat in 1912 after being identified by the CUP as members of the Arabist opposition.[202] What can be derived from this is that in the wake of the elections Arabists within Greater Syria were willing to accept the leadership of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.

The increasing importance of Cairo as a political center of the Arabist movement can be seen through analysis of the First Arab Congress of 1913. This congress was originally conceived by the al-Fatat society of Paris and thus was held there.[203] The crux of the argument of the Arabist societies present at this conference was that the Young Turks failure to recognize Arab claims had created a situation in which the Arab provinces were on the verge of chaos and vulnerable to European advances.[204] Not surprisingly given preceding information, the solution proposed by the Arabist delegates was increased Decentralization.[205] In addition, the Arab delegates also proposed Arabic as the official language in Arab Vilaytes, new regulations regarding immigration to and emigration from Syria and increased Arab representation in the Ottoman Parliament.

Though the First Arab Congress was conceived by al-Fatat, it was the Decentralization Party that served as the political leaders of the conference. Shortly after

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[200] Letter from Haqqi Azm to Mahmoud al-Mihmisani, cited in Dejamal Pasha *Idahat*, (Istanbul, 1916): 65-66.
[201] *Idahat*, 65-66.
[202] Khalidi, 59.
[203] Tauber, 178.
[204] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*. (Norwich: Jarrold and Sons, 1938): 114.
[205] Antonius, 115.

deciding that the conference was in the interest of the Arabist movement the leadership of al-Fatat sent a letter to the leadership of the Decentralization Party in Cairo suggesting that the society "take up on itself the presidency of the congress".[206] After some discussion Rafiq Azm responded that the Decentralization Society would indeed accept the leadership position at the congress.[207] Azm elected to send Decentralization Party member Abdul Hamid al-Zahrawi to the congress to serve as President.[208] In addition, Iskander Ammun would accompany him as the Decentralization Party's other delegate to the congress.[209]

Although the concessions gained by the Arab delegation at the First Arab Congress ultimately proved to very limited, the leadership position of the Decentralization Party remains significant in terms of this study.[210] The fact that al-Fatat immediately sought out the Decentralization Party leadership in Cairo to accept the Presidency of the congress speaks to the amount of political clout Cairo had within Arabist circles by 1913. That this society was founded and comprised completely of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo suggests that it was this group that catalyzed Cairo's emergence as an important political center of the movement. It was this group that was able to successfully capitalize on the 1912 election results to expand Cairo's influence vis-à-vis the Arabist movement. However, in terms of this study it is not enough to demonstrate that Cairo emerged as a center of Arabism. For this study to achieve its aims it is imperative to analyze Cairo's development in comparison with that of the more well-known Arabist hotbed of Damascus.

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[206] Tauber, 178-179.
[207] Tauber, 179.
[208] Antonius, 117.
[209] Tauber, 185.
[210] Antonius, 116. The Arabist demands for Decentralization were almost completely ignored.

Analysis Vis-à-Vis Damascus

Prior to conducting a comparative analysis of Cairo and Damascus as centers of the early twentieth-century Arabist movement it is pertinent to note that this section in no way seeks to downplay the role of Damascenes in propagating Arabist ideology. In fact, Philip Khoury's assertion that Damascenes played a disproportionate role in terms of "promoting the ideology of Arabism and directing the Arab movement" is supported by an analysis that incorporates Cairo as another epicenter of Arabism.[211] For example, both Rafiq and Haqqi Azm, as well as Muhammad al-Din al-Khitab and Muhammad Kurd Ali all immigrated to Cairo from Damascus.[212] The significance of all of these individuals has been touched on in this chapter, as well as the preceding.

Despite the important role of Damascenes within the Arabist movement the years in which Arabist societies were rapidly being established (1908-1913) witnessed the establishment of very few politically significant societies within Damascus, in contrast to Beirut, Istanbul and of course Cairo.[213] This is largely related to the emigration from Damascus generated by the 1912 elections, as well as aforementioned economic, occupational and political factors. Thus, while it is certainly appropriate and necessary to discuss the importance of Damascenes vis-à-vis the Arabist movement throughout the early twentieth century, it is important to consider the fact that many of these individuals exerted their influence from centers outside of Damascus.

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[211] Khoury, 68.
[212] PRO 30/57/44, 1.
[213] Tauber, chapters 10-25.

The majority of notable societies established in Damascus during the period of 1908-1913 were branches of societies founded in other cities.[214] These branches ranged from the Reform Society of Beirut; a society which actively argued for British occupation as the answer to Turkification policies, to Al-Ahd; one of the first Arabist societies to actively argue for Arab independence, to the Decentralization Party.[215] In terms of comparison with Cairo, this lack of Damascus-based societies presents a stark contrast. Not only was the aforementioned Decentralization Party established, but other societies that had significant influence, such as The Arab Revolutionary society; a society which argued for actively combating the Turks to achieve Decentralization, were also established in Cairo during this period.[216] In addition, branches of both of these societies would be established in Damascus thus putting the Damascus societies directly under the umbrella of the Syrian Arabists in Cairo.[217]

The important role played by the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo at the First Arab Congress in Paris has already been discussed at length. The fact that it was the Decentralization Party that ultimately assumed leadership over the congress speaks to the central place of the Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.[218] What is interesting here is that, in contrast to Cairo Arabists residing in Damascus seem to have had little involvement with the organizational aspect of the congress. This is evidenced by the fact that among the delegates that attended the congress not one was a

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[214] Tauber, chapters 10-25.
[215] Khalidi, 59, Antonius, 157 and Tauber, 135 and 214.
[216] Zeine, 174 and 175.
[217] See Tauber chapters 18 and 25.
[218] Antonious, 117.

representative of a Damascus-based society.[219] Though there were many Damascenes there, all of them were operating within societies based out of alternative centers.

In addition to sending very few delegates to the Paris Congress, Damascus served as one of the most vocals centers of opposition to the conference. These objectors were by-and-large individuals who worked closely with the CUP and as such managed to maintain positions within the bureaucracy pot-1912.[220] As has been mentioned, the individuals who managed to hold power in Damascus post-1912 did not have strong Arabist leanings. For example, the fact that it was Abd al-Rahman al Yusuf, one of the three individuals who retained his parliamentary seat in 1912, who organized the conference against the Paris Congress, demonstrates that pro-CUP notables were a significant part of this objection.[221] What can be derived here is that in contrast to Cairo which was a strong center of Arabist leadership, Damascus was by 1913 an area where the CUP was capable of exploiting the lack of Arabist presence for its own means.[222] As such, by this time it became fair to say that Cairo not only competed with Damascus for political significance, but in some ways had usurped Damascus as the dominant political center of the movement.

Another area in which Cairo was competitive with Damascus in terms of political significance is the production of publications. Several of these publications, mostly taking the form of newspapers and periodicals, regularly contained the writings of prominent members of the Arabist movement.[223] These writings produced by individuals

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[219] Tauber, 185-186.
[220] Tauber, 184.
[221] Khalidi, 59.
[222] Tauber, 184.
[223] The statistics regarding the publications of the Syrians in Egypt can be found on pages 5 and 6 of the introduction.

such as Kawakabi, Rida, Rafiq Azm, Haqqi Azm, Muhammad Kurd Ali and Naguib Azoury discussed different conceptions of how the Arabs could regain their former glory.[224] Furthermore, post-1908 these writings began to increasingly question, and in many cases outright criticize the policies of the CUP. As a result of the increasingly strict press regulations imposed by the Young Turk government, Arabists in Damascus had a far more difficult time producing this sort of literature literature.

Al-Manar published by Rashid Rida between 1898 and 1935 serves as a prime example of an influential publication produced by Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.[225] During the years of its publication Al-Manar was responsible for the publication of over thirty-thousand pages of literature.[226] Although this publication was not presented as an Arabist periodical, there is an obvious emphasis on Arabist ideology that can be seen in numerous volumes.[227] Evidence for this can be found through the examination of the individuals who regularly published in Al-Manar. All of the individuals in the preceding paragraph aside from Naguib Azoury published in al-Manar. In the case of Rafiq Azm, he published his work in the periodical on a regular basis.[228] Thus, Al-Manar served as a forum for the dissemination of Arabist ideology that had no legitimate equivalent in Damascus.

Although it did not have a significant impact on the Greater Syrian populous, the fact that this Cairo-based publication was so widely circulated in greater Syrian political circles is relevant in terms of evaluating Cairo's political importance vis-à-vis Damascus.

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[224] See chapter two.

[225] See chapter one for a brief introduction to Al-Manar.

[226] Kosugi Yasushi, "Al-Manar Revisited", in Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World, ed. Stephane Dudoignon, Hisao Komatsu and Kosugi Yaushi. (London: Routledge, 2006): 7.

[227] Al-Manar Revisited, 6.

[228] David Commins, "Al-Manar in Syria", in Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World, ed. Stephane Dudoignon, Hisao Komatsu and Kosugi Yaushi. (London: Routledge, 2006): 46.

As has been established in the introduction the discussion of the Arabist movement during this period should be situated within the framework of intellectual movements. In other words, those propagating Arabist ideology during this period were not entirely effective in terms of gaining support among the lower classes.[229] Evidence of this can be found in Mark Sykes presentation on the Arabist movement in which he states that the movement is an elite movement that has not reached the populous.[230] Thus, comparative arguments regarding significance and influence of an Arabist group or a publication must be conducted via examination of elite, political circles.

As the preceding paragraph has stated, *Al-Manar* had little influence on the ideological orientations of the Greater Syrian masses.[231] This was related to the periodical's elitist view of Arabism, as well as a lack of literacy among the Greater Syrian populous.[232] However, within circles of Arabist political elites, *Al-Manar* was frequently read and well respected.[233] In Damascus in particular *Al-Manar* was common reading within intellectual circles.[234] Thus, within the context of Arabism as an intellectual movement al-Manar should certainly be viewed as an influential publication.

At the onset of the World War I Cairo was on many levels a more significant political center for the Arabist movement than the more frequently analyzed Arabist center of Damascus. The fact that Syrian Arabists in Cairo were more active in terms of forming societies, pushing for Arab autonomy and publishing indicates that Cairo be considered at the very least comparable with Damascus in terms of political importance.

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[229] For a more in-depth discussion as this see James Gelvin's *Divided Loyalties*, as well as chapter three of this thesis.
[230] CAB 24/1, Presentation by Mark Sykes entitled "The Arab Question", December 16, 1915.
[231] Commins, 50.
[232] Commins, 49-50.
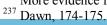[233] Commins, 50.
[234] Commins, 50.

Placed in the broader context of understanding the Arabist movement in the early twentieth century, the above analysis of Cairo suggests that the tendency to focus so heavily on Damascus has blurred the picture in terms of the size and scope of the Arabist movement during this period.

<div align="center">The Utility of Examining Alternative Centers</div>

What the case study of Cairo demonstrates is that even though the Syrians are often described as the intellectual backbone of the movement, this does not imply that scholars can expect to understand the size and scope of the movement through the exclusive analysis of one or two centers within Greater Syria.[235] Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that if a scholar were to overlook Cairo as an important Arabist center their analysis of the movement would be incomplete.[236] Thus, the political significance of the Syrian-led Cairene Arabist societies necessitates a reassessment of scholarship that discusses the movement without sufficiently study centers outside of Damascus.

The disproportionate amount of Arabists located outside of Damascus can be seen in the chart provided by C. Ernest Dawn in *From Ottomanism to Arabism*. While it is true that the vast majority of the Arabists listed by Dawn were Damascenes, the majority of these individuals were by the onset of World War I either operating out of other centers or members of societies whose main branch was located outside of Damascus.[237] As the above study has demonstrated, several of the individuals listed were affiliated with the

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[235] Sykes, "The Arab Question", 242.
[236] More evidence for this assertion will be provide in the forthcoming chapter.
[237] Dawn, 174-175.

Cairo-based Decentralization Society.[238] Therefore, failure to properly analyze alternative centers necessarily means that the activities of a significant number of Syrian Arabists will not be adequately understood.

The above analysis of Cairo as a leading political center of the Arabist movement has significant implications in terms of drawing conclusions regarding the size and scope of the early twentieth century Arabist movement. Going back to Khaidi's assertion necessity of examining Arabist centers outside of Damascus, this case study illustrates clearly that other centers were comparable to Damascus in terms of size and political influence.[239] Though this study only provides analysis of one important alternative center it is useful in that the analysis provides evidence to support the conclusion that in order to fully comprehend the early twentieth century Arabist movement it is imperative to analyze multiple centers.[240]

Conclusion

During the period of 1908-1914 the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo catalyzed Cairo's development into an epicenter of the Arabist movement that eventually usurped Damascus in terms of political significance. The most formative years in terms of this development were 1912-1914. It was during this period that the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo managed to established societies that would play a significant role in shaping the Arabist political agenda.

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[238] The names of all of the Decentralization Society members on this list have been mentioned in this chapter. Dawn, 174-175.
[239] Khalidi, 60-61.
[240] Khalidi, 60-61.

The Arabist societies formed by the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo during this period were arguably among the most politically important Arabist societies in the pre-World War I era. The example of the Decentralization Party that is used throughout this study is a prime example of this. Analysis of this society demonstrates that Arabists and other viewed this society as politically important. The fact that this society was selected to preside over the First Arab Congress is a testament to this fact.

In addition to the activities of the societies, publications produced by the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo contributed to Cairo's development into a politically significant Arabist center. Although *al-Manar*, as well as other publications produced by these groups did little to influence the populous, this publication in particular was read and respect by Arabist political figures throughout Greater Syria. This taken in conjunction with the activities of the Cairo-based societies, allow Cairo to compare very favorably with Damascus in terms of political significance.

The development of Cairo into a political center of the Arabist movement provides support for Khalidi's assertion regarding the utility of analyzing alternative centers of Arabism. Through increased analysis of the size and scope of the Arabist movement in areas such as Cairo one can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the broader movement during this period.[241] More support for the importance of Cairo vis-à-vis the broader Arabist movement, as well as implications of analyzing alternative centers will be provided in the next chapter.

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[241] As Khalidi notes, Beirut and Istanbul are also centers that must be researched further.

Arabism and the First World War: The Case Study of the Syrian

Intelligentsia in Cairo.

Introduction

The following chapter examines the activities and contributions of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo during the era of World War I (1914-1918). Furthermore, this chapter will analyze the impact of the war on the ideological orientations of these Arabists. Though several historians of the period acknowledge a connection between the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo and the Revolt in the Desert[242], elaboration on the significance of this connection, as well as the relationship of this group to the broader war effort is lacking. Likewise, despite a great deal of literature regarding the impact of the war on the broader Syrian Arabist movement[243] a specific analysis of its impact on Syrian Arabists in Cairo is noticeably absent.

In the period leading up to World War I Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo were among the first to be approached by the British regarding the possibility of Arabist cooperation against the Turks.[244] The majority of the individuals contacted were members of the Decentralization Party discussed at length in chapters two and three.[245] Despite the fact that very few members of this group were involved in the military aspect of the Arab Revolt[246], this chapter argues that the Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo contributed significantly to the revolt, and broader allied World War I effort via diplomacy, negotiations and production of literature. Furthermore, this chapter will argue that dissatisfaction with British actions in the last years of the war, as well as the actions of Sherif Hussein catalyzed significant ideological shifts within the Syrian intelligentsia

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[242] See Philip Khoury; *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism* (1983), Albert Hourani; *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (1961) and Ellie Kedourie; *England and the Middle East* (1958).
[243] See C. Ernest Dawn; *From Ottomanism to Arabism* (1973) and James Gelvin: *Divided Loyalties* (1998).
[244] Khoury, 78.
[245] Dawn, 155-156.
[246] Dawn, 156-157.

in Cairo in terms of their attitudes toward aiding the British, as well as adherence to Arabist ideology.

The aims of the following chapter are three-fold. First, this chapter intends to provide support for Philip Khoury's assertion that it was the Syrian Arabists in Cairo that gave the Arab Revolt "Arab nationalist ideological content".[247] Implicit is this aim is the idea that this chapter will challenge the notion that contributions of Syrian Arabists to the revolt in the desert was relatively insignificant.[248] Secondly, this chapter aims to examine the war time contributions of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo that related directly to stimulating and carrying out the Arab revolt, as well as their broader contributions to the allied war effort. This will be demonstrated through the analysis of the activities of this group in the last years of the war. Thirdly, this chapter aims to illuminate the precise developments during this period that catalyzed shifts within the movement in question.

The following chapter will address four specific questions: How did the British perceive the Syrian Arabists in Cairo? How did Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo perceive the British? What role do the Arabists with the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo play in the Arab Revolt/broader war effort? What ideological shifts occur within this group during the war years and why? In terms of structure, this chapter will be organized into five sections. The first section will examine the existing literature pertaining to this subject. The second section will analyze how British officials perceived Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. The third section will discuss how Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo perceived the British. The fourth section

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[247] Khoury, 77.
[248] This will be discussed in the forthcoming section regarding historiography.

will explore how Arabists within this community impacted the Arab Revolt/broader war effort. Lastly, the fifth section will look at how World War I impacted the ideological orientations of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.

Historiography

Within scholarship regarding Arabism during the war years a debate has emerged regarding the degree to which the Syrian Arabist movement actually affected the Arab Revolt. The origins of this debate go back to Antonius's The *Arab Awakening* (1938). In this work Antonius argues that the Damascus Protocol composed by the Syrian Arabist leaders was the document allowed the Arab Revolt led to take place.[249] In essence, Antonius uses this logic to argue for the Arab Revolt as the culmination of a Syrian-led Arab independence movement that began in the late nineteenth century.[250]

In the 1950's some revisionist scholars suggested that the Syrian Arabists lack of military involvement, combined with Sherif Hussein's lack of interest in Arabist ideology necessitated that the Arab Revolt not be viewed as possessing Arabist ideological content.[251] According to this view, the Syrian Arabist movement "was an independent force that was of minor significance to the origin of the Arab Revolt."[252] In this view the fact that Sherif Hussein was driven by his own ambitions to obtain power, as opposed to ambitions to create an independent Arab state indicate that the Revolt was not initiated under the banner of Arabism.[253] Problematic here is the fact that this view tends to

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[249] George Antonius, George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, Norwich: Jarrold And Sons LTD, 1938, 157-159.
[250] Antonius, 79.
[251] Ellie Kedourie; *England and the Middle East* (1956) and C. Ernest Dawn; *From Ottomanism to Arabism* (1973).
[252] Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, 53.
[253] Kedourie, 56.

downplay the role of Syrian Arabists, particularly those in Cairo, in the initial phases of organizing the Arab Revolt.

Like the revisionists of the 1950's, scholar Philip Khoury acknowledges the self-serving ambitions of Sherif Hussein.[254] However, as has been stated in the introduction Khoury's work is not as quick to dismiss the significance of the Syrian Arabists in laying the groundwork for the revolt.[255] Though he does argue that Syrian Arabists in Cairo did not contribute significantly to the military aspect of the revolt, he points out that their negotiations with the British in the years leading up to the Revolt secured the necessary support for Sherif Hussein from Arab notables in various areas of the Ottoman Empire.[256] It is this paradigm that this chapter will seek to expand upon via the analysis of the activities of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.

In terms of the impact of the war years on the Syrian Arabist movement, there is little argument among scholars that these four years significantly altered the movement. There are however differing views on the nature of this impact. According to revisionist historians such as Dawn and Zeine N. Zeine, the war years served to solidify Arabism as the primary national allegiance of the Syrians.[257] Specifically, these scholars argue that the events of World War I led Syrians previously not involved in the Arabist movement to join their brethren in forming a solitary program of Arab unity that could combat foreign interference.[258]

The flaws within the aforementioned paradigm are highlighted in James Gelvin's *Divided Loyalties* (1998). In this work Gelvin points out that, although the war years did

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[254] Khoury, 76.
[255] Khoury, 77.
[256] Khoury, 76-77.
[257] See Dawn, 157 and Zeine N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (1966), 176.
[258] Dawn, 57

have an impact on nationalism among the Syrians, it did not solidify Arabism as the dominant ideology.[259] According to Gelvin, the uprisings against Fysal's Arab government are testament to the heterogeneous nature of nationalism among the Syrian in the post-war years.[260] This chapter will use the ideological changes that occurred among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo during the war years to expand upon this analysis.

British Attitudes Toward the Syrian Intelligentsia in Cairo

At the dawn of World War I the Arabist movement was "Syrian-inspired and dominated".[261] British diplomatic correspondences from the war years suggest that the British government was acutely aware of this dynamic. Evidence of this can be found in Lieutenant Mark Sykes's assertion that the Syrians acted as the "driving power behind the Arab Nationalist movement" in the early years of the twentieth century.[262] Furthermore, in his 1914 memo to London British diplomat Mr. Fitzmaurice described the Syrians as the Arabs most likely to be receptive to taking up arms against the Young Turks.[263]

The significance of the Syrians in relation to British interests was part and parcel of the fact that the British saw supporting the Arabist movement as "their principle

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[259] James Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire*. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1998): 8-9.
[260] Gelvin, 1-5.
[261] Khoury, 68.
[262] "The Arab Movement". Memorandum by Lieut-Col. Sir Mark Sykes, Bart., M.P.," 1916, reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996), 1: 354.
[263] "Memorandum by Mr. Fitzmaurice," 11October 1914, reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996), 1: 260.

weapon against the Turks" throughout World War I.[264] In the view of Sir Mallet, a British diplomat stationed in Cairo, the British could deal the Turks a crushing blow by "promoting Arab movements in any and all parts of the region".[265] Mr. Fitzmaurice echoed these sentiments when discussing the potential embarrassment that a revitalized Arabist movement supported by the British would cause the Young Turks.[266] Thus, as of 1914 the British strategy for countering Turkish entrance into World War I relied heavily on their ability to garner the support of the Arabist movement.

Given the leading role of the Syrians in the Arabist movement at the onset of World War I, it is hardly surprising that the British reached out to several leaders of the movement to gauge the feelings toward joining the allies. Mark Sykes went so far as to assert that the success of any potential Arab revolt centered on British ability to influence the Syrian intellectuals.[267] As a result of the parliamentary elections of 1912 in which only three out of the hitherto twenty-one Syrian deputies in the Ottoman Parliament were re-elected in 1912, an increasing number of politically active Arabists emigrated from Damascus to Cairo. This wave of emigration, combined with earlier waves related to Hamidian and Young Turk oppression resulted in Damascus losing a great deal of its political hegemony over the Arabist movement by the start of World War I.[268] Thus, although Damascus served as the location for some of the most important meetings between the British and Arab leaders, it was members of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo that were among the first contacted by the British in the lead up to the war.[269]

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[264] CAB 24/18 Memorandum from Austen Chamberlain June 29, 1917: 189.
[265] "Sir L. Mallet's dispatch No. 604," 22 September 1914, reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996), 1: 253.
[266] Mr. Fitzmaurice, 262.
[267] See CAB 24/1, Mark Sykes speech entitled "The Arab Question", Dec 16, 1915: 242-243.
[268] See also Khoury, 68.
[269] Amin Said, *Al-Thawra al-Arabiyya al-Kubra*, Vol. 1. (Cairo: 1934): 128-129.

While British sources mention by name several members of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo as having contact with the British[270], it is British attitudes toward Al Azhar Sheik and publisher Rashid Rida, Decentralization Party President Rafiq Azm and his cousin Haqqi Azm that best illustrate the perceived importance of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. In a letter composed in 1915 by British Foreigner Officer Sir Ronald Storrs the Azm cousins are described as individuals the British could count on for information regarding the mood of the Arabist movement.[271] In fact, both Rafiq and Haqqi Azm had established an amiable relationship with the British well before the Arab revolt.[272] Due to their comparative lack of Islamic fervor, in view of the British the Rafiq and Haqqi Azm were not fanatical revolutionaries, but reasonable men open to the idea of cooperating with foreign powers to achieve their aims.[273]

In contrast to British perceptions of Rafiq and Haqqi Azm, the British saw Rashid Rida as important, but potentially problematic. Although Rida initially aided the British in the early years of the war[274], some in the British ranks perceived him as "a Pan-Arabist chauvinist agitator" whose writings and speeches contained overtones of religious fanaticism.[275] Despite this, the British understood Rida's importance. In the same report that describes him as a "Pan-Arabist chauvinist" a later sentence acknowledges that his influence extends from Cairo to India.[276] Sir Ronald Storrs echoes these sentiments in a letter to Iraqi Arabist leader Abd-al Azzi al Masri in which he describes Rida as an

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[270] This will be discussed in more detail in section three.

[271] Foreign Office letter to Ronald Storrs regarding Muhktar El-Solh and Habib Lutfallah, January 5, 1915, reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996), 1: 325.

[272] Khoury, 78.

[273] CAB 24/145 Foreign Office Memorandum "Eastern Report No. 2" February 7, 1915: 8.

[274] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1962): 303.

[275] Eastern Report No. 2, 8.

[276] Eastern Report No. 2, 8.

influential individual that would be a powerful ally.[277] Thus, regardless of his personal beliefs, the British saw Rida as an individual who could help them garner Muslim and Syrian support for Sherif Hussein, and the Arab Revolt.

Syrian Intelligentsia Perceptions of the British

As World War I approached Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo began to consider cooperation with foreign powers. During this period the Syrian community in Egypt was as a rule strongly anti-French.[278] In the words of Rafiq Azm, "The Syrians are primarily attached to the Ottoman Empire therefore France has nothing to look for in Syria".[279] In light of the fact that Young Turks sided with the entante powers, it would have been somewhat counterproductive from the Arabists to do the same.[280] Thus, the option left for many Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo was to consider the overtures of the British.

As of 1914 the idea of corroborating with the British was not uncommon among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. Rationale for this can be seen in Arabist political activist Naguib Azuri's assertion that "Britain has no ambition to occupy Syria".[281] Furthermore, many members of this community viewed their lives under British rule as much more comfortable and tolerant than the lives of Syrians residing in areas directly controlled by the CUP.[282] As such, certain members of this community

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[277] Eastern Report No. 2, 8.
[278] CAB 24/144 No. 28, Foreign Office Report, August 9, 1917: 2.
[279] Eliezer Tauber, *The Emergence of the of the Arab Movements*, (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1993): 121.
[280] Reasons why this was the case have been discussed in chapters two and three.
[281] Tauber, 278.
[282] Tauber, 280.

took it upon themselves to write letters persuading Syrians in other parts of the Empire (particularly Damascus) to support collaboration with the British against the CUP.[283]

In run up to the Arab Revolt a movement emerged among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to annex Syria to Egypt so it could be under British control.[284] This concept was introduced by a small group of intellectuals that included noted journalist Muhammad Kurd Ali and his brother, Ahmed.[285] Upon hearing this plan several Syrian émigrés in Cairo[286] contacted British Counsel-General in Egypt, Lord Kitchener to set up a meeting to figure out how to make this plan a reality.[287]

It should be noted that, while the above information does indicate a strong level of support for cooperation with the British among Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo, this support was by no means unanimous. Among the most fervent objectors was Rashid Rida's protégée, Shakib Arslan. Arslan was a young Syrian who had emigrated from Syria to Cairo to study under Rida. Arslan, like other Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo, believed in the establishment of an independent Arab state.[288] He disagreed however that collaborating with the British was the best way to achieve independence.

Arslan and Rida quarreled vehemently over the decision to collaborate with the British.[289] Though Arslan was opposed to the policies of the Young Turks[290], it was his

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[283] Tauber, 280.

[284] PRO 30/57/37, Letter from Ronald Storrs to Mr. Fitzmaurice regarding Egypt and Syria, February, 1915: 4.

[285] Tauber, 279.

[286] It should be noted that Tauber (p. 279) makes a point of emphasizing that this group was comprised of all Muslims. Storrs note states that both Christian and Muslim Syrians in Egypt support this plan (p. 4). The fact that Nagiub Azuri was Christian and adamantly pro-British lends support to Storrs's assertion (see previous paragraph).

[287] Tauber, 279.

[288] A.A. Duri, *The Historical Formation of the Arab Nation*. (New York: Croom Helm, 1987): 207-208.

[289] Hourani, 303.

view that the Ottoman Empire represented a lesser evil than that of the European powers.[291] Despite these objections, Arslan did not yield a great deal of influence at this point in his life.[292] He was still very much Rida's apprentice and had nowhere near the power of Rida, the Azm's or Muhammad Kurd Ali. Thus, it was not until the later years of the war that Arslan's objections gained more widespread support within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.[293]

At the onset of World War I both the British and Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo saw a wartime alliance as a real possibility. Indeed, the British and Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo would engage in significant interactions throughout the war years. However, the complex and shifting nature of this relationship renders the actual contributions of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo worthy of examination.

Contributions to the War Effort

The initial involvement of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo vis-à-vis World War I was in the arena of diplomacy. In early 1914 the British approached the Decentralization Society regarding the possibility of sending representatives to various Arab leaders inquiring about their attitudes toward a British-sponsored movement against the Turks.[294] In response, the Decentralization Society, arguably the most important Syrian-led society

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[290] Hourani, 303-304.
[291] Shakib Arslan, *Sira dhatiya* (Beirut: Dar al-talia, 1969): 69-70.
[292] His writings were fewer in numbers and less widely circulated. Furthermore, he had minimal involvement in Arabist societies up to this point.
[293] Reasons for this will be given in section four.
[294] Letter from Mr. Cheetham to Sir Edward Grey, No. 1, October 28, 1914. reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996): 264-265.

prior in the pre-World War I era,[295] sent Muhammad al-Din al-Kitab and Shaikh Muhammad al-Qaqili to areas across Greater Syria, Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf and the Hejaz to get a feel for how the potential revolt would be perceived.[296] In addition, Haqqi Azm himself traveled to Syria on behalf to the British to gather information regarding the attitudes and readiness of the Syrian military.[297]

Though a member of the Decentralization Society, the British opted to make use of Rashid Rida's influence in a slightly different fashion. Rida was approached by the British in hopes that he could use his position as Imam at Al-Azhar to persuade the more religious elements in the Arab world to support a British-sponsored revolt.[298] Specifically, Rida was asked by the British to send emissaries to Ibn Saud and Imam Yihya.[299] This collaboration, as well as that of other Decentralization Society members was not taken lightly by the CUP. In 1915 the aforementioned emissaries, as well as those accused of dispensing them were sentenced to death.[300]

In addition to their assistance in negotiations abroad, Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo also assisted the British with matters regarding the Arabist movement in Cairo. This was particularly true of Rafiq and Haqqi Azm. An example of this can be seen in 1915 when Habib Lutfallah and Muktahr el-Solh arrived in Cairo.[301] These two individuals were Syrian émigrés and former CUP partisans who now claimed

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[295] Kedourie, 47.

[296] Letter from Mr. Cheetham to Sir Edward Grey, 265.

[297] Letter from Haqqi Azm, Amin Said, 63-65.

[298] Tauber, 281.

[299] Tauber, 281.

[300] CAB 24/145, Foreign Office Memorandum, "Eastern Report No. 2", 1915: p. 8. This document also states on the same page that Rashid Rida and Rafiq and Haqqi Azm were among those sentenced to death for working with the British in this instance.

[301] It should be noted that both of these individuals would eventually become important individuals in Syrian Arabist societies in Cairo.

they wanted to help the British in their efforts to organize an Arab Revolt.[302] In an effort

to get a sense for the sincerity of Lutfallah and el-Solh, the British enlisted the services of

Rafiq and Haqqi Azm.[303] The request from the British was that the Azm's meet with

Luftallah and el-Solh and report their impressions to the British.[304] The rationale for

selecting the Azm's was that they were deeply involved in the Arabists movement and

had intimate knowledge of its dynamics.[305]

Another example of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo aiding

negotiations can be seen through analysis of interactions with Sherif Hussein's second

son, Amir Abdullah. Throughout much of the lead up to WWI Amir Abdullah was

negotiating with the British and Arabists in Cairo. During one of his trips through Cairo

in 1914 he met with Rashid Rida. During this meeting Rida made Abdullah an honorary

member of the Society of the Arab Association.[306] In addition, Rida advocated that

Abdullah ask his father to consider the British-approved pact for unity among the rulers

of the Arabian Peninsula.[307]

By mid-1915 Ottoman civil and military head in Syria, Djemal Pasha had grown

increasingly suspicious of the activities of the Syrian Arabists. After being defeated in

Egypt in 1914 Djemal Pasha began a campaign to "stamp out all non-Turkish currents in

the State, especially Arab and Armenian nationalism."[308] This program made it virtually

impossible for Arabists within Syrian to produce anti-CUP/pro-British propaganda

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[302] Foreign Office letter to Ronald Storrs regarding Muhktar El-Solh and Habib Lutfallah, 321.
[303] Foreign Office letter to Ronald Storrs regarding Muhktar El-Solh and Habib Lutfallah, 325.
[304] Foreign Office letter to Ronald Storrs regarding Muhktar El-Solh and Habib Lutfallah, 325.
[305] Foreign Office letter to Ronald Storrs regarding Muhktar El-Solh and Habib Lutfallah, 324-325.
[306] Tauber, 115.
[307] Tauber, 115.
[308] T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, (Oxford: Alden Press, 1935): 47.

without substantial risk. Thus, any propaganda supporting an Arab independence effort would likely have been produced outside of Greater Syria.

The relatively free press in Egypt allowed Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to produce pro-British/anti-Young Turk propaganda that Arabists in other parts of the empire would have been incapable of circulating. The 1913 "Proclamation to the Arabs, Sons of Qahtan" is an example of a piece of anti-Turkish propaganda that was viewed by the British as promoting their agenda.[309] Though the letter is not blatantly pro-British, the facts that it advocates the Arabs "draw their swords against his oppressors and destroyers (the Turks)"[310] to achieve their complete independence[311] was seen by the British as favorable to their cause. In addition, one of the writers of the document, Haqqi Azm[312] was already working with British officials. Thus, although the document did not directly suggest that the Arabs align with the British, the fact that this widely circulated document[313] called on the Arabs to rise up against the Young Turks was taken by British officials as a positive sign.

A more explicitly pro-British piece of propaganda produced by Syrian Arabists in Cairo was produced by Habib Luftallah and Muktahr El-Solh shortly after the hangings of ten Syrian notables suspected of treason.[314] This document, which Rafiq and Haqqi

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[309] "No. 22 Confidential British Consulate Damascus Translation of Seditious Pamphlet," 29 June 1914, reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996): 298.

[310] "No. 22 Confidential British Consulate Damascus Translation of Seditious Pamphlet," 298.

[311] Proclamation to the Arabs, Sons of Qahtan", 1913, reprinted in Sylvia Haim's *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962): 88.

[312] Zeine, 174.

[313] Zeine, 174-175.

[314] "General Headquarters, The Force in Egypt, Cairo Letter from Habib Lutfalla and Muktah El Solh," 5 January 1915, reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996), 1: 328. It should be noted the Rashid Rida, Muthib al-Kitab and Rafiq and Haqqi Azm were condemned to the same punishment.

Azm helped to circulate throughout Syria[315], contained a total of eighty-four instructions

for the Arab people to follow.[316] The first of the eight-four points contained in this note

was that the Arabs were to "help the British government by all means in (their) power to

get rid of the Turks and the Germans."[317] The letter goes on in point nine to state that the

Arabs should "approach the British government with a view to their supplying our secret

and other societies with arms and money until such time as we are able to shake of the

yoke and organize ourselves".[318] Thus, this document can be viewed as a clear example

of pro-British literature being produced and distributed by Arabists within the Syrian

intelligentsia in Cairo.

In addition to producing pro-British and anti-CUP literature, as the revolt began in

1916 Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo also began producing material

advocating support for the Sherif of Mecca. The Sherif's record of corroborating with the

Ottoman government and striving for his own self-aggrandizement left some in the Arab

world to question his position as leader of the revolt.[319] Conscious of this situation,

Rashid Rida composed a piece in *Al-Manar* describing the Sherif's past.[320] In this piece

Rida explains that in the past the Sherif had been deceived by the CUP and thought he

was doing the right thing by showing loyalty toward the State.[321] Rida concluded,

however that at the present time the Sherif was aware of his past errors and was no longer

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[315] Letter from Lutfalla and Solh, 328.
[316] Letter from Lutfalla and Solh, 331-345.
[317] Letter from Lutfalla and El Solh, 331.
[318] Letter from Lutfalla and El Solh, 332.
[319] Kedourie, 49-51.
[320] *Al-Manar*, vol. 19, June, 1916: 151-152.
[321] *Al-Manar*, vol. 19, 151-152.

under the influence of the CUP.[322] As a result of this, Rida suggest that Arabs should be supportive of the Sherif, as well as the nascent Arab Revolt.[323]

As the war progressed certain elements within the British ranks sought to expand the role of the Cairene Arabist societies within the Syrian intelligentsia beyond gathering information and disseminating literature. By early 1917 elements within the British Foreign service began to question the organization of the forces in the Hejaz led by the Sherif and his sons.[324] To counter this lack of organization, British Colonial Administrator Sir Ronald Wingate proposed assembling an Arab Legion comprised of "prisoners of war and the Syrians in Egypt"[325] It was these elements that Wingate felt would best promote Arab and Syrian unity.[326] Since by this time Arab (particularly Syrian) support for the Sherif was beginning to wane[327], it was Wingate's hope that assembling a legion from the areas where Arab nationalism was strongest would allow this unit to symbolize the movement.[328] Although Wingate's vision never materialized in a significant way, the idea that the Syrians in Egypt represented a community where Arabist sentiments and organization were comparatively strong supports the preceding information regarding the importance of the Syrian Arabists in Cairo in the early stages of the war.

As World War I drew to a close the British remained in close contact with Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. By March 1918 Syrian Arabist opinion

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[322] *Al-Manar*, vol. 19, 151-152.
[323] *Al-Manar*, vol 19, 151-152.
[324] CAB 24/18, Letter from Mark Sykes, "The Arab Legion", January 6, 1917: 80.
[325] CAB 24/18, 80.
[326] CAB 24/18, 80.
[327] This will be supported in detail in section five.
[328] CAB 24/18, 82.

both within Greater Syria as well as Egypt was "hardening against Zionism".[329] In the wake of the Balfour Declaration this increasing anti-Zionist fervor led many in the Arab world to simultaneously question the intentions of the British vis-à-vis the Arabs after the war. In an effort to reconcile this issue the British supported the effort of the Syrian in Cairo to send a delegation to Palestine to help resolve the tensions between the Arabs and the Zionists.[330] This delegation had five representatives; among them were Rafiq Azm and Muhktar El-Solh.[331] In a testament to the diplomatic sway held by this group, British General Clayton describes the delegation's visit as having had "a tranquilizing effect on the (Arab) population (of Palestine), Christian and Muslim alike".[332]

On May 7, 1918 seven representatives of the Syrian Unity Party composed a memorandum to the British government inquiring about its intentions to honor its pre-revolt agreements with the Arabs.[333] In this document these seven individuals, among them Rashid Rida[334], Rafiq Azm and Muktahr El-Solh[335], claimed to be the foundation and intellectual ideologues of the Hussein-led Arab revolt.[336] In addition, this memorandum requested that the British government confirm their intentions to respect Arab and Syrian autonomy.[337] This document was not taken lightly by the British Foreign Office.

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[329] CAB 24/145, Intelligence Bureau Memo, "Weekly Report on Turkey and other Muslim countries", March 12, 1918: 38.
[330] CAB 24/145, Foreign Office Memorandum, "Eastern Report No. 70", May 30, 1918: 39.
[331] CAB 24/145, 39.
[332] CAB 24/145, Foreign Office Memorandum, "Eastern Report No. 72", June 13, 1918: 47.
[333] "Confidential No. 90 High Commissioner in Egypt Copy of Address from Syrian Arab Nationalists in Egypt," 7 May 1918, reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996), 1: 380-389.
[334] Hourani, 302.
[335] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*. (Norwich, Jarrold and Sons, 1938): 433.
[336] Confidential No. 90, 389.
[337] Confidential No. 90, 388.

In response to the memorandum from the Seven Syrians, the Arab Bureau in Cairo four point memorandum known as "The Declaration to Seven Syrians".[338] In this document, the British Foreign office assured the seven Syrians that they viewed their memorandum as a document of high value[339] and attempted to reassure them that the British government would support autonomous Arab rule.[340] What is significant here is that this document suggests that the British continued to view the Syrian Arabist in Cairo as significant to the Arab movement/war effort through the end of World War I.

Although Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo were active throughout the war years, the attitudes of this group did not remain stagnant. Beginning around 1917 Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo began to reconsider their support for the Arab Revolt.[341] The result of this dissatisfaction was the emergence of ideologies and societies that would impact nationalism is Syria in the post-war era.

Ideological Shifts

By 1917 Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo who had initially supported the British and the Sherif began to question their decision. In terms of the British, the reasons for waning support have been touched on in the previous section. The combination of their support for Zionism, as well as increasing suspicion of agreements being broken led individuals such as Rashid Rida to go from supporting the British to actively working to combat their interests in the region.[342] In addition, the Syrian Unity

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[338] "The Declaration to the Seven Syrians", June 16, 1918, reprinted in George Antonius's *The Arab Awakening*: 433-434.
[339] Antonius, 433.
[340] Antonius, 434.
[341] Kedourie, 113.
[342] Hourani, 303.

Party, a society in which several Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo were members[343] sought to abandon British patronage and actively began seeking the support of the United States.[344]

In addition to dwindling support for the British, the latter years of the war bore witness to a decrease in support for Sherif Hussein within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. Even individuals who had supported the Sherif in the early years of the war began to view him as a self-interested British puppet by the end of World War I.[345] These perceptions led Rashid Rida to go so far as to describe the Sherif and his sons as "the worst disaster that has befallen Islam in this age".[346] Rida was far from the only individual to lose faith in the revolt. According to Amin Said, many of the Syrians in Cairo who had long worked for the Arab cause had, by 1918 gradually disassociated themselves from Sherif Hussein.[347] The reasons for this according to Said were the Sherif's inflexible nature, as well as his failure to heed the advice of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.[348]

In addition to the Sherif's stubborn disposition, his personal ambitions to achieve Arab Unity through his own Kingship also did not sit well with Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo.[349] From the outset of the War many Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo had expressed desires for Syria to function as an autonomous state.[350] Although these individuals advocated strong connections with the Sherif and other Arab leaders, they did not want to be directly under their rule. This

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[343] A complete list will be provided on the following page.
[344] CAB 24/145, Foreign Office Memorandum, "Eastern Report No. 112", March 20, 1919: 6.
[345] Hourani, 304-305.
[346] Hourani, 304.
[347] Said, vol. 1 37.
[348] Said, vol 1., 37.
[349] Kedourie, 56.
[350] See the Decentralization Charter cited in chapters one and two.

stance directly conflicted with the notion held by the Sherif and his sons that it was essential to incorporate Syrian into the Arab kingdom that they would rule over.[351] Abdullah went so far as to state that "if Syria were to not be in the new Arab kingdom, the revolt would have been in vein".[352]

The diminishing confidence in the Sherif led some Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to move away from Arabist ideology. Several of these individuals began to view Arab identity as secondary to Syrian identity.[353] An external manifestation of this ideological shift can be seen in the establishment of the Syrian Unity Party.[354] This group was established in Cairo in 1918 and contained several individuals who had previously been involved in the Arabist movement.[355] Among these individuals were; Rafiq Azm, Iskandar Ammun, Rashid Rida, Abdel Rahman Shabender and Muhktar El-Solh.[356]

The constitution of the Syrian Unity Party differed from constitutions of earlier societies established by the same individuals. In previous years, these individuals had set forth constitutions containing fairly strong Arabist overtones.[357] The primary points of the constitutions of the Syrian Unity Party were as follows:

> There should be an undivided Syria bounded by the Taurus mountains, the Arabian desert, the Sinai desert and the Mediterranean, That's (Syria's) independence should be declared at the Paris Peace conference, That politically it should be a federation of states with a central democratic government, That religion should be entirely independent of the government, That Arabic should be the country's one official language.[358]

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[351] Mary Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 34.

[352] Wilson, 34.

[353] Kedourie, 113.

[354] Said, vol. 1, 37.

[355] "Programme Constitutionnel du Parti de l'Union Syrienne", 1918, , reprinted in Arab Dissident Movements, 1905-1955, 6 vols., ed. A.L.P. Burdett (Southampton: Archive Editions, 1996), 1: 377.

[356] "Programme Constitutionnel", 377.

[357] See chapters two and three.

[358] "Eastern Report No. 112", 6.

Aside from the last point, the entirety of the constitution was focused on the ambitions of Syria, not the broader Arab movement.

The constitution of the Syrian Unity Party provides support for the assertion that the war years brought about an ideological shift among hitherto Arabist Syrians. Specifically, the ideological orientation of the Syrian Unity Party demonstrates that the events during World War I caused Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to rethink their relationship with Sherif Hussein, and the broader Arab movement. This case study should be viewed as evidence that nationalism among the Syrians in the post-war period was more complex than simply supporting the Arab movement.

Conclusion

In the years leading up to World War I British officials and Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia perceived one another as being able to aid their causes. It was these perceptions that led the two entities to cooperate in the early stages of the war. Throughout the war Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo aided the Allies' war effort largely through diplomacy, negotiations and propaganda. Though attempts by the British to garner a stronger military contribution from Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo ultimately failed, the fact that British officials perceived this group as significant through the end of the war indicates that their contributions to World War I cannot be underestimated.

While a significant portion of the war-time contributions of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo was directly related to stimulating the Arab Revolt (i.e. negations with Arab leaders and some pro-Sherif literature) their contributions extended

beyond this theater. Evidence of this can be seen in the negotiations between individuals within this community and Zionist leaders toward the end of the war, as well as the memorandum of the Seven Syrians that was issued independent of the knowledge of the Sherif and his sons. Thus, to completely grasp the contributions of Arabists within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to the war effort, it is essential to look beyond developments in Arabia.

The combination of broken agreements by the British and dissatisfaction with the organization, self-centeredness and stubbornness of the Sherif led important individuals with in the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo to reconsider their relationship with the Arabist movement. Though many of the individuals had fought for Arab autonomy for decades, the new direction of the movement led many to view Syrianism as a viable alternative. The founding of the Syrian Unity Party is a telling example of this. Thus, the year of 1914-1918 brought about a significant shift in the identity within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. The Arabists dimension which had for over a decade been so strong within this community began to diminish and in its place emerged Syrian nationalist sentiments that would greatly impact post-war efforts to establish a Fysal-led Arab government in Syria.[359]

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[359] For an in-depth analysis of this see Gelvin's *Divided Loyalties*.

Conclusion

Throughout the period of 1900-1918 Cairo emerged as an Arabist center extreme political importance. This development was largely the result of the activities of one particular group, the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. As more and more politically active Arabists immigrated from Greater Syria to Cairo there was a noticeable shift in Cairo's significance vis-à-vis the broader Arabist movement.

Despite the fact that the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo catalyzed Cairo's development into a political epicenter of the Arabist movement, a homogenous ideological conception of Arabism never emerged within this group. Throughout the period examined Arabist leaders within this group differed in their conceptions of what Arabism meant. Furthermore, these ideological rifts were not confined to simply Christian Arabists vs. Muslim Arabists. These conflicts can be seen through analysis of the internal dynamics of these groups.

Increased cooperation between ideological divergent Arabists within this group was largely catalyzed by the perceptions of increased Ottoman tyranny and incompetence. This can be seen during both the Hamidian and Young Turk periods. During both of these eras numerous Arabists societies emerged that contained members of very different ideological backgrounds. As opposed to C. Ernest Dawn's suggestion that the increased cooperation seen these societies is related to the ideological convergence of Christian and Muslim Arabists, the sources employed in this study suggest that this cooperation was more likely the result of a sense among Arabists that they were facing a broader threat. Specifically, these Arabists found common ground in the form of opposition to Ottoman policies. Thus, the increased cooperation throughout this period should be seen less as the result of the development of a homogenous version

of Arabism than the result of Arabists with differing ideological orientations finding common political interests.

The increased cooperation facilitated by Hamidian/Young Turk policies, combined with an influx of politically active Syrian Arabists post-1912 set the stage for Cairo's development into a political epicenter of the Arabist movement. Though the years of 1900-1911 (particularly the years between 1908 and 1911) bore witness to the establishment of several important Arabist societies by the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo, it was in 1912 that one can observe Cairo's emergence as a leading Arabist political center. It was during the years of 1912-1914 that Cairene Arabists societies founded by Syrian Arabists were more politically influential than those operating in Damascus.

Evidence for the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo catalyzing Cairo's development as a political epicenter can be seen in various areas. The fact that it was Syrian Arabists that founded the most politically influential societies, including the Decentralization Society, speaks to their importance. Furthermore, the fact that Arabist publications produced in Cairo by the Syrian intelligentsia were larger in number and readership than those originating in Damascus is evidence of Cairo's significance. These factors that point to Cairo replacing Damascus as the dominant political center of the Arabist movement were further highlighted with the onset of World War I.

As it became clear that the Ottoman Empire was going to enter World War I on the German side the allies, particularly the British, began to focus on mobilizing the Arabist movement. In the minds of British officials the best way to go about this was by first winning over the movements intellectual leaders, the Syrians. It was the Syrian Arabists in Cairo that were among the first to be contacted by the British during this

period. By and large, these Arabists were affiliated with the Decentralization Society and actively aided the ally's efforts to combat the CUP in via the Arab Revolt, as well as other efforts. The fact that the British were so willing to solicit cooperation from Syrian Arabists in Cairo at the onset of the war, as well as continue to work with these individuals through 1918 speaks to the fact that Cairo was perceived as an important political and intercultural epicenter of the movement through the end of the First World War.

The years of World War I precipitated a shift in the ideological orientations of several Arabist leaders within the Syrian Intelligentsia in Cairo. The combination of broken British promises and the stubbornness of Sherif Hussein led to and increasing espousal of Syrianist ideology among these individuals. Thus, as opposed to solidifying Arabism as a universal excepted ideology among the Syrians, the case study of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo demonstrates that at the close of World War I identity and nationalism varied among the Syrians.

There are several broader conclusions that can be drawn from the case study of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. In terms of frameworks for identity and nationalism, this case study demonstrates the fluidity of these concepts. The fact that Arabism within the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo was so varied based on the aims and perceptions of individuals' supports the notion that the concept of an Arab identity was by-and-large manufactured by intellectuals of the day. Furthermore, the fact that so many of the leading Syrian Arabists in Cairo begin to more adamantly highlight their Syrian identity in the wake of the First World War can be viewed as support for the idea that national identity is constantly shifting and as such should be viewed as a fluid construct.

In terms of insight into the size and scope of the early twentieth century Arabist movement, this case study is extremely useful. The fact that this is one of the few in-depth studies of the Cairo as an Arabist center implies that this very important political center has been understudied in academia. The fact that Cairo was clearly an area in which some of the most active members of the Arabist movement resided necessitates that it be considered seriously when attempting to understand the nature of the movement during this period. This studied demonstrates that in order to obtain a complete understanding of the early twentieth century Arabist movement it is imperative to consider the activities of the Syrian Arabists in Cairo. Thus, previous studies that have based their conclusions largely on the activities of Damascus-based Arabists present an understanding of the size and scope of the Arabist movement that is incomplete.

Although this study is significant on several levels, it should also be seen as a base upon which I, as well as other scholars can build. There are several interesting ways in which the current study can and should be expanded. First, there is a need to incorporate how the Arabist ideology propagated by intellectuals resonated with the populous classes in Greater Syria. While the evidence in this study does suggest a disconnect between the intellectuals and the populous, it would be interesting to examine the degree to which Arabist ideology was present within the lower class, as well as whether or not Arabism among the populous resembled any of the elite version of Arabism.

Another area in which this study could be expanded is the incorporation the framework of gender. During this period there was a significant women's press developing in Cairo under the guidance of women who had emigrated from Syria. Within

the framework employed in this study many of these women would be classified as part of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo. It would be interesting to examine the relationship of the women to the Arabist movement. For instances, it would be intriguing to see if any of these women were writing about Arabism and if not, why?

In spite of the aforementioned elements not being addressed in this study, this thesis does serve as an important contribution to scholarship regarding Arabism in the early twentieth century. By appropriately situating Cairo within the broader Arabist current this study has aided the understanding of the size and scope of the movement. Furthermore, through this case study one can observe important arguments against the notion of ideological homogeneity within the movement during this period. Although there is still work to be done on this subject, the case study of the Syrian intelligentsia in Cairo presented in this thesis allows the reader to not only understand the significance of this group, but to gain an appreciation for the necessity of examining often overlooked centers of the movement.

Appendix: List of Significant Arabists

Name	Hometown	Occupation	Religion
Rafiq Azm	Damascus	Notable/Journalist	Muslim
Haqqi Azm	Damascus	Notable/Journalist	Muslim
Rashid Rida	Aleppo	Publisher/Sheik	Muslim
Muhktar el-Suhl	Damascus	Politician	Muslim
Iskandar Ammun	Dayr al-Qamar	Lawyer	Maronite
Naguib Azoury	Beirut	Bureaucrat	Maronite
Abdl al-Rahman al-Kawakabi	Damascus	Publisher	Muslim
Shakib Arslan	Mt. Lebanon	Student/Publisher	Muslim
Muhammad al-Din al-Khitab	Damascus	Publisher	Muslim
Muhammad Kurd Ali	Damascus	Journalist	Muslim

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