

Camila Pastor de Maria Campos

THE MASHRIQ UNBOUND: ARAB NATIONALISM,
CRIOULLO NATIONALISM AND THE DISCOVERY OF
AMERICA BY THE TURKS

*...it is to the travelling, colonizing, seafaring peoples that humanity
owes its progress. The Phoenicians, Portuguese and Spanish worked
for the unification of culture and civilization.*

Alfonso Aued, *El Emir*¹

Abstract

This paper explores ideologies of difference and mobility constructed in the circulation of Middle Eastern people and texts by framing these migrations through imperial and nationalist narratives produced in the Middle East and Mexico. The aesthetic and civilizational classifications defended by intellectuals of the Mexican Mahjar debating the Mexican intelligentsia in migrant and national press which situate Mashriqi peoples as fearless explorers and rightful ‘conquerors’ of less beautiful, less modern Middle American natives have a genealogy in Ottoman representations of New World populations. Cultivated during the nahda, the Arab modernist ‘awakening,’ these hierarchizing claims were concerned, like other anticolonial nationalisms, with situating Arabs as both heirs to a glorious ancient civilization and cosmopolitan moderns. Nahda narratives, an Arab decolonizing discourse, had emancipatory as well as subordinating effects as they intersected with *Criollo* nationalism. Mobilizing the universalist hierarchies integral to global modernism, the discursive decolonization of an ‘Arab civilization’ afforded the subalternization of Middle American populations. It enabled Mashriqi and Middle American elites to bisect Middle American nations into ‘primitive’ Indians and civilized *Criollos*, so that Mahjar notables and *Criollo* elites could come to understand themselves as partners in a civilizing mission.



INTRODUCTION

The Discovery of America by the Turks is a Brazilian modernist novel commissioned from Jorge Amado by an Italian publishing house; it was to be printed and distributed for free to airline passengers in commemoration of the five hundred year anniversary of the ‘discovery of America’ in 1992. As I browsed through photographs shared with me by family and friends documenting popular protest defying the 2009 coup d’état in Honduras, the graffiti scrawled relentlessly on street walls, doors, windows, trashcans chronicled mounting popular rage.

An accusation inscribed in the urban landscape materialized in the wake of protesters—it pointed to “turcos esclavistas” (Turks, slavedrivers) and demanded that “árabes, palestinos y judíos” (Arabs, Paletinians and Jews” leave Honduras. The graffiti, an ugly, angry scar that indexed the slippage into xenophobia of popular indignation in the face of economic exploitation and political strangulation by Honduran elites, brought to my mind Amado’s playful text. Together they challenged me to explore the relationship between Mashriqis in the Latin American Mahjar and the tropes mobilized by intersecting discourses—‘discovery,’ ‘turks,’ ‘conquest,’ subalternizations. Answers emerged at the crossroads of imperial practice and modernism, two often unacknowledged contexts informing Mahjari mobility and the construction of postcolonial nation-states.

ARAB MODERN: NAHDA NARRATIVES

State reforms and integration into the world economy generated a non-traditional intelligentsia in the Middle East as the nineteenth century unfolded. Public debate on the question of Ottoman relations with Euro-America surged among literate, often European-educated moderns, many of them active in new migratory circuits extending beyond the established patterns of Ottoman mobility. Various voices concerned with regulating these multiplying encounters and reclaiming a specifically Arab heritage merged in declaring and defining a renaissance of the Arab world, the nahda.

As Sayegh notes: “At the outset, this revival assumed the form of a set of discontinuous and somewhat unrelated phenomena, rather than a continuous or centralized movement. The diverse movements in which the Arab revival manifested itself were initially neither uniform in character nor identical in inspiration, motivation and aspiration”.² He includes Saudi Wahhabism, Egyptian attempts at economic modernization, rebellion against Ottoman rule, and the literary and intellectual renaissance of the Fertile Crescent, which wove together a newly discovered classical Arabic civilization and the modern Western traditions of science, technology, and literature.

The many-layered process of the nahda was rife with the productive tensions of a Mashriq coming unbound- geographically, politically, and ideologically, in an age of European high colonialism. The nahda emerged at a colonial crossroads and constituted the subaltern process in the unfolding of twin Renaissances. One the renaissance of ‘the Orient’ as an object of knowledge and extraction for Euro-America and the other the renaissance of cultural forms, public debate and the will to political autonomy in the Arab world. The many strands of the nahda converged in the context of what Zeynep Çelik has labeled the Ottoman civilizing mission, the policies and projects through which Ottoman modernity tugged the empire’s Arab provinces towards turkification.

Subaltern incarnations of modernism were conditioned by the violent emergence of modernity through Euro-American colonial expansion. In formulating an Arab modern, reformers were caught in the tension between emulating the global model and defending their difference and their projects of autonomy from its agents. The unequal encounter with industrial Europe and Ottoman modernization coincided with massive human mobility out of the Mashriq by the 1870s. Representations of European, American, Arab, and Muslim difference multiplied, invoking a local history of representation yet filtering it through the knowledges of colonial modernity.

European certainties regarding hierarchies among peoples and traditions were adopted by some of the foremost reformers of the turn of the century, who scrambled to define a middle ground for the Arab. Qassim Amin, noted as a champion of gender reform in Egypt, reflected in 1899 on the play of force between the European, the Arab, and the savage:

European civilization advances with the speed of steam and electricity, and has even over spilled to every part of the globe so that there is not an inch that he [European man] has not trodden underfoot. Any place he goes he takes control of its resources... and turns them into profit... and if he does harm to the original inhabitants, it is only that he pursues happiness in this world and seeks it wherever he may find it... For the most part he uses his intellect, but when circumstances require it, he deploys force... What drives the Englishman to dwell in India and the French in Algeria... is profit and the desire to acquire resources in countries where the inhabitants do not know their value or how to profit from them.

When they encounter savages they eliminate them or drive them from the land, as happened in America... and is happening now in Africa... when they encounter a nation like ours, with a degree of civilization, with a past and a religion... and customs and... institutions... they deal with its inhabitants kindly. But they do

soon acquire its most valuable resources, because they have greater wealth and intellect and knowledge and force.³

For Arab moderns, the European pursuit of industrialization in colonial practice as described here did not pose moral quandaries but a legitimate model to be emulated by those who wished for wealth and happiness, a tested recipe for global success.

I will argue that in formulating an Arab modern reformers operated within European discourses of nationhood whose ideologues were often enthusiasts of empire.⁴ Perverse Trojan horses, the categories of modernity, of its political thought and emancipatory rhetoric, contained assumptions that would not only enforce Europe as omnipresent referent as Chakrabarty has argued, but would condition Arab views of non-European others.⁵ Encounters between Mashriqi migrants and Middle American populations need to be understood in the context of these displacements and reconfigurations.

During the *nahda*, Ottoman travel narratives were edited and published and accounts of American populations by travelers and migrants were produced. By the 1940s, Arab nationalists were writing histories of the Arabs from the Mahjar, some from within the academy and others on its fringes, or for the Mahjar press and community chronicles. These were narratives that recovered an Arab past suitable for the migrant present. I want to suggest that *nahda* narratives, an Arab decolonizing discourse, had emancipatory as well as subordinating effects in the Mahjar as they intersected with *Criollo* nationalisms. Mobilizing the universalist hierarchies integral to global modernism, *Criollo* nationalisms and the discursive decolonization of an 'Arab civilization' afforded the subalternization of Latin American populations. They enabled Mashriqi and Latin American elites to bisect Latin American nations into 'primitive' Indians and civilized *Criollos*, so that Mahjar notables and *Criollo* elites could come to understand themselves as partners in a civilizing mission.⁶

OTTOMAN ARAB REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AMERICAS IN THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

I want to introduce an early genealogy of Arab representations of the Americas, which were recovered and re-circulated during the *nahda*, becoming part of *nahda* discourse on difference.⁷ It is impossible to determine the scale of circulation of these texts and to what extent modern migrants were aware of earlier narratives. Those that were edited and published during the *nahda*, however, must have circulated at least among the Arab moderns who produced and consumed such editorial ventures. Ottoman representations of the Americas and American population's

difference inserted the Ottoman Empire into a global narrative of expansion and discovery as a distinct imperial domain aware of and equivalent to European empires, even as the empire's strategic aims in the Indian Ocean during the 1400s and 1500s overshadowed officialdom's interest in the New World.⁸ Filtered through the European colonial sciences of race and Arab nationalism, this argument would be mobilized again in the Mexican Mahjar during the 1920s, 30s and 40s, to situate Mashriqi migrants as equivalent to Spanish-descent *Criollo* elites and rightful 'civilizers.'

The earliest Ottoman text on the Americas is anonymous, circulated in Istanbul by 1580, and continued to circulate in manuscript form in Ottoman lands until it became the fourth book to be printed in Arabic script in the late eighteenth century.⁹ Titled *Tarikh-i Hind-i Gharbi (History of The West Indies)*, its author clarifies that it is the compilation and summary of an avalanche of texts produced in response to the 'discovery of the New World.' Written in Spanish and translated into Italian and other European languages, the proliferation and wide circulation of the New World literature indicate that it was wildly popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is hard to say whether the *Tarikh* and its popularity responded to imperial concern with Frankish expansion in lands of fabulous wealth or to Ottoman participation in the fashions and fascinations of a Mediterranean in motion.¹⁰

FAZIL BEY'S EROTICS

In his *Muslim Discovery of Europe*, Bernard Lewis reproduces a set of illustrations from an Ottoman manuscript titled the *Book of Women*, authored by Fazil Bey, also known as Fazil-i Enderuni (1757-1810), in the late eighteenth century.¹¹ The grandson of a famous Palestinian Arab leader hanged for rebelling against the Ottomans in Akka, Fazil was brought up in the Imperial Palace in Istanbul and "became famous for his erotic poems and, in particular, two lengthy poems, one on girls and one on boys, describing them by nationality with enumeration of the good and bad qualities, for the purposes Fazil Bey had in mind, of the various national groups."¹² Women of the New World are among those listed and assessed. Lewis claims that by 'Americans,' "Fazil Bey clearly means the Red Indians."¹³ Why?

The *Book of Women* was reprinted in Ankara in an English-Turkish bilingual edition in 2006—the text was rendered from Ottoman Turkish into modern Turkish and English by Filiz Bingölçe, who confesses to an amateur effort yet asserts that many of the representations in the text continue to be popular understandings of women. The last descriptive section of the long *masnavi* is titled *On the New World (American) women*:

oo the swaying of the hope vineyard
new world in coy world

women of the new world is ugly faced
a woman in the figure of beast

her little child stay seven months in her womb
as if she gives birth two times a year

most of them do not live but die however
they have no soul their body become scrap

but she is applicant to mate
lust is victorious to that weak body (sic)¹⁴

The section is one of the briefest; it is also the only one in which women are said to be ‘in the figure of beast,’ or to lack souls.¹⁵ These appear to be echoes of the New World literature and the Spanish monarchy’s early debates regarding its American territories and their populations. Fazil’s erotics bear the imprint of the *Tarikh*.

We have a sample of the eighteenth century Ottoman pictorial imagination in the illustrations to the *Book of Women*, which circulated as an illustrated manuscript by 1793.¹⁶ Bingölçe describes illustration with miniatures as both a measure of the popularity of a text and a way to make it more attractive to the public. Ottoman state censors banned the printed text from circulation in 1838. Along with plates representing ‘Persian,’ ‘Ottoman,’ ‘English,’ ‘French,’ ‘Austrian,’ and ‘Dutch’ ladies, we find an illustration of a woman from the ‘Yeni Dunya,’ the New World. She is distinct from the others, hatless though her hair is draped with ropes of pearls. Instead of their eighteenth-century garb, she wears a fitted knee-length tunic, which appears to be made of fur, and exposes her full breasts. Unlike the other ladies, who mostly avert their eyes demurely, she stares provocatively at the viewer.

Zennaname manuscripts are not always illustrated, and the extent of illustration varies across them.¹⁷ In reproductions of illustrations from the manuscript housed at the Istanbul University Library in Sema Nilgün Erdogan’s *Sexual Life in Ottoman Society*, Moroccan, Spanish, and Polish ladies also present partially exposed breasts; in Bingölçe’s edition Ottoman and Persian ladies do likewise.¹⁸ They all however display the trappings of their respective civilizations in dress and decorum. The contrast among the women is not their sexualization—this is after all a catalogue of their differential sexual charms—but the production of the American as savage.

EARLY TRAVELERS TO THE AMERICAS

Three accounts by early Ottoman Arab travelers supply textual representations of the peoples of Latin America. Al-Musili, a Chaldean priest resident in Europe, journeyed through the New Spain in the seventeenth century. Elias Cheik Chedid and Kassen of the House of Kassen, a “Christian prince of Mount Lebanon, Maronite by nation,” who was apparently an impostor belatedly exposed, traveled throughout France and to the French islands of the Americas in 1744 collecting charitable donations supposedly destined to buy his older brother’s freedom from the pasha of Mount Lebanon and rescue his family from oppression by the Turks.¹⁹ Al-Baghdadi, an imam traveling on an Ottoman vessel, was accidentally stranded in Brazil in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁰ These authors were Ottomans with strong ties to *Bilad al-Sham* who also lived and travelled elsewhere in the Empire and beyond for extended periods of time.

Al-Musili’s text was ‘discovered’, edited and published during the nahda—Reverend Rabbat, a renowned Jesuit scholar, found Al-Musili’s manuscript in the library of the Suryan (Jacobite Orthodox) bishopric in Aleppo and proceeded, with the Chaldean bishop’s permission, to edit the travel portions.²¹ Al-Baghdadi’s was produced in the late nineteenth century; both are lengthy accounts which appear to have been written as memoirs intended for fellow Arab audiences once the travelers were safely back in the Mashriq.²² The two narratives claim to be accounts of eyewitnesses whose gaze is full of curiosity yet firmly embedded in particular visions and traditions. Both men traced their roots to Iraq, grew up in Aleppo and Damascus respectively and lived itinerant lives made possible by their religious erudition.

Al-Musili made use of the Eastern Uniate churches’ ties to Rome to study and then travel in the service of the pope and later under the auspices of Catholic monarchs. Al-Baghdadi requested to be posted as imam to a ship in the Ottoman navy. Both narrate their travels through the Americas as the result of a series of accidents. Al-Musili requested permission to travel in the Spanish Empire from the queen of Spain as compensation for a royal debt only when her viceroys in Sicily and Naples had refused to honor her debt and after extensive consultation with friends in the Spanish court. Al-Baghdadi’s fleet was blown off course during a trading expedition and accidentally stumbled onto Rio de Janeiro.

Despite the title of Al-Baghdadi’s account, which echoes the classic *rihla* tradition—*The Foreigner’s Delight in All That Is Amazing and Wonderful*—what is perhaps most striking about both narratives is the ease with which these travelers explored the New World and interpreted continuities with it through their interaction with local co-religionaries.²³ Catholic Christianity for Al-Musili and Islam for Al-Baghdadi provided a universal frame in which

to situate the geographies and populations they encountered. This frame, which enabled their ease of transit by allowing them to situate the ‘other’ as intelligible given a shared religious tradition, also drew particular exclusions. Significantly, both authors share a perception of local populations that have refused colonial authority and proselytism as ‘savages.’

The document describing ‘Prince’ Elias Kassen’s travels is not a memoir but a short denunciation by French authorities in Martinique and Saint Domingue, who note that the support extended to the traveler—horses and ship passages *gratis*, recommendations and access to charitable funds—were based on two criteria of credibility for his *persona*. One is his story itself—a tale of persecution of Ottoman Christians—who, Kassen reminds his hosts, have extended Christian hospitality to Europeans and defend at their peril a stronghold for Christianity in lands of Islam—by cruel, tyrannical, bloodthirsty Turks. Migrants in the Mexican Mahjar will mobilize this argument two hundred years later. The other is the fact that a former missionary, who had been stationed in the Levant for ten to twelve years, confirms his story in Rome. Kassen, like Al-Musili, travels in the world of Christian universalism.

AL-MUSILI TRAVELS THROUGH SPANISH AMERICA

The seventeenth century travel account is attributed to Reverend Elias Al-Musili, described as “a priest of the Chaldean Church, from the family of Amuda (some say Amuna) that hailed originally from Baghdad.”²⁴ Translated from the Arabic by Caesar E. Farah and published in English in 2003, the book is titled *An Arab’s Journey to Colonial Spanish America: The Travels of Elias Al-Musili in the Seventeenth Century*.²⁵ Dr. Farah edited and translated a text published in 1905, titled *The Journey of the First Eastern Tourist to America 1668-1683*, itself selected and edited for publication by the Reverend Antun Rabbat S.J. from a larger manuscript presumably compiled by Al-Musili.

Al-Musili describes American peoples as wild and barbarous prior to their ‘return’ to the Christian Church through European colonization. The categories he uses to differentiate human populations are those of Spanish colonial administration; he speaks of Indians, Spaniards and blacks. That Indians, or ‘red men’ and blacks are different from Spaniards, or ‘whites,’ in powerful if somewhat mysterious ways is made clear through the following story:

I, the humble one, resolved on accompanying those merchants to Peru. So I rented three mules for ninety piasters, but the governor did not want me to proceed by myself because of the mountains where grows a type of grass resembling bamboo.

When a white man steps on it, it rises from the ground like the shaft of an arrow and strikes him. One thus smitten does not recover. He dies. It does not strike Indians or blacks, nor does it harm them in any way.²⁶

As the story unfolds, the magically violent bamboo proceeds to racialize Arabs as white, or at least equivalent to the Spanish in their vulnerability to the aggressions of this unintelligible geography:

When the governor told me this story, I said to him that I do not believe what I do not see with my own eyes. He rose and sent an Indian servant to point the weed out to me. When we reached where it was located, the Indian came around to my side of the horse and quickly disappeared. Lo and behold, the weed, still at a distance of ten yards from the road, rose and headed in my direction as if intending to strike me. The Red man came out [of hiding] and shouted at it: "Beware O dog!" and it immediately fell back onto the ground. I witnessed this with my own eyes!²⁷

Blacks are described as slaves who work as personal attendants, in sugar mills, as field laborers and in mint houses and mines.²⁸ Al-Musili notes that some of the more marginal populations are mixed. He recalls that one of his treacherous muleteers was a *mestizo*, "that is a half-breed, of an Indian mother and Spanish father."²⁹ He also mentions visiting a village inhabited by *mulatos* in Guatemala, "that is, the offspring of white father and black mother."³⁰ Indians encountered by Al-Musili were of many kinds: they could be merchants and bishops; they could be pagan Indians or infidels—that is, non-Christians.³¹ They could be rich, like the Indian inhabitants of Piura, even of noble descent. Some were "true Christians, the rest Christians out of fear."³² Even when they shared the same urban space however, Indians and Spaniards were accounted for separately and attended different institutions.³³

In spite of the fact that he visits the New World with the permission of the Spanish queen and as a guest of a string of Spanish administrators, churchmen and notables, in a few passages Al-Musili suggests that Indians resist Christianization and the Spanish presence as a strategy for retaining their land and autonomy.³⁴ He goes so far as to draw a parallel between rebellious Indians and Arabs:

In this town resides also a bishop and the king's council of state...they are always at war with the Indians and pagans, before they [the latter] even knew the ways of war, which they learned after associating with the Spaniards. They had no horses at first, nor did they know how to ride them. Now they ride horses bearing spears, like Arabs, and constantly combat the Spaniards.

Should they capture one, they would barbecue and eat his flesh. As for the head, they hollow out the skull and make a drinking vessel out of it, and drink one of the wines of their country out of it. They are defiant, fierce and cruel.³⁵

This paragraph is fascinating in its ambivalence. Al-Musili considers that the colonizers have brought faith and civilization to the land. Yet he seems to identify with and admire native defiance of European universalism and like Qasim Amin later, to situate the Arab halfway between the European civilized and the savage.³⁶

AL-BAGHDADI'S VISIT TO THE EMPIRE OF BRAZIL

Al-Baghdadi's text apparently circulated widely in Ottoman contexts in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish.³⁷ About Abdurrahman bin Abdullah al-Baghdadi al-Dimachqui we know that he was born to a prosperous family in Baghdad, grew up in Damascus, where he studied Arabic, Persian, literature, jurisprudence, and theology.³⁸ After being imprisoned probably due to trouble related to the 1860 massacres, one Muhammad Salih Ates Pacha recommended him as imam for the Ottoman army. He requested and was granted an appointment on a ship sailing to Basra from Istanbul, but a series of storms blew his craft off course from Cadiz. The vessel managed to land in Rio de Janeiro, where they negotiated a loan to make repairs to the ship in July 1866. Al-Baghdadi's garb as imam caught the attention of local Muslims, most of them African or of African descent, and Muslim communities sent delegations with translators to the Ottoman ship requesting visits from the imam and instruction in the faith.

Al-Baghdadi agreed to stay despite his captain's misgivings about sparking a diplomatic incident. The Empire of Brazil had been vigilant of local Muslims since the slave revolts carried on in the name of Islam during the first half of the nineteenth century in the northeast of Brazil. The imam spent three Ramadans travelling throughout the well-organized Muslim communities and doing his best to bring their West African practice closer to Mashriqi orthodoxy.³⁹ He was invited to visit Muslim communities in Bahia and Pernambuco, sometimes sparking off local resistance to his leadership. In 1899 he returned to Damascus via Lisbon, Andalucía, North Africa and Mecca. After visiting his family in Damascus he settled in Istanbul, where he presumably wrote his memoir.⁴⁰

Al Baghdadi noted hierarchies within the Muslim community and African titles by which respected and venerable men were addressed, recognizing that there were 'nobles' among the black Muslims.⁴¹ He describes the African Muslims who approached him as "a group of respectable black men" who addressed him "with good manners."⁴² He observed that having left their own

lands very young and without adequate religious instruction, Muslims were a small group and knew very little about their religious tradition. Most Africans in Brazil were slaves, and those who became free turned back to Islam.⁴³ Arabs are racialized as white in his narrative through the voice of one of the delegations that approached Al-Baghdadi requesting him to teach them more about Islam:

We thought we were the only Muslims in the world, that we followed the right path and that all white people belonged to the Christian communities, until by the divine grace of the Sublime we saw you and we knew that the creator's world is immense and that the world is not a desolate land, but one full of Muslims.⁴⁴

Al-Baghdadi's description of African populations in the Americas does not emphasize their condition as slaves, though it mentions slavery as a source of restrictions on the overt practice of their faith.

Al-Baghdadi sometimes seems to echo Al-Musili's descriptions of American populations, suggesting that Abdurrahman was familiar with that text or other New World literature.⁴⁵ Other passages, flirting with the fantastic, evoke Fazil-i Bey's erotic poetry:

They seek the shade of trees as if they were *avutardas*, their bodies naked, their constitution is large and their feet extremely broad, out of proportion to their bodies. I have been told that when it rains they put their heads to the ground, raise their feet and use them as umbrellas to shield themselves...

The women are of extreme beauty; their hair falls down beyond their knees and is often silver or golden. They wear no clothes other than their hair, and pubic hair covers the men's nudity.⁴⁶

About Brazilians in Rio de Janeiro he comments that they are very civilized, but haven't attained the same level of refinement as Europe.⁴⁷ This civilizational evaluation, along with Al-Baghdadi's dismissal of the constraints placed on Afro-Brazilian Muslims by their condition as slaves, situates him as complicit with the hierarchies of global imperial practice.

IDEOLOGIES OF AN ARAB AWAKENING RIGHT AND LEFT

The *nahda* emerges as a field of interaction between an imperialist Europe and Arab middle classes and elites concerned with both subverting and appropriating technologies and political, social, and cultural forms of the European post-Enlightenment to avoid subalternization. Along with Muslim modernists, Arabs of diverse social origins and political alignments living in far-flung geographies wrote about Europe, translated European texts, formulated strategies for interaction, and defined boundaries.⁴⁸ Journalists,

many of them established in Egypt and the Americas, were concerned with modernizing and standardizing the Arabic language for the new mass media. Their attention to language borrowed from the new European science of philology to define and defend the richness and particularity of Arabic.

Arab nationalist narratives were founded on the trope of Arab decline during the period of Ottoman administration; a ‘medieval condition’ or ‘ossification’ from which Arabs were finally jostled awake through an unsettling but felicitous encounter with Euro-American modernity on the brink of the nineteenth century.⁴⁹ The claim of ‘nations’ awakening from a long period of slumber separating their ancient glory from a modern subalternity was common to many regions of the colonial world in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such narratives became vital to a global subversive modernist discourse of civilization in which certain African, Arab, Asian, and Euro-American intellectuals—critics of the West—converged. Anticolonial nationalists justified their mobilization and transformation of ‘the people’ by appealing to an alleged ancient unity and described the nationalisms they sought to build as national ‘awakenings.’⁵⁰

In the Arab world, nationalists who embraced the Euro-American presence in the Mashriq produced narratives of awakening as well, describing it as the happy result of recognition and liberation by Euro-America: “Even today, in fact, the history of the Nahda is identified with the history of the influence of the West over the East and reflects the quarrel, complex and tangled, which pitched against each other not only Westerners and Easterners, but diverse groups of Easterners opposed among themselves by their literary, religious and political conceptions.”⁵¹ Compared to a Nile flood, the nahda is presented as complex and rife with dissenting visions, yet a derivative discourse. Arab authors extend credit for the Renaissance to particular imperial nations of the West according to personal trajectories reflecting patronage circuits: “It is hardly necessary to say that it [the nahda] owes much to the work of Orientalists. We recognize our immense debt to them...”⁵² Or “It was America’s knock that awakened the Arab East from its medieval slumber and set it on the road to modernism and national progress in the 1870s.”⁵³

Euro-American powers’ patronage of Christian Arabs as mediators for Euro-American interests in the Mashriq intensified during the nineteenth century, along with direct Euro-American economic, military and missionary intervention.⁵⁴ Imagined as culturally and morally closer to Christian empires than their Muslim compatriots, Christian and Christianized Arabs acquired the privilege of missionary education disproportionately. An emphasis on an Arab *literary* renaissance as crucial precursor to political consciousness conditions the storyline of such nationalists, affording a particular twist. In spite of recognizing the diversity of Middle Eastern participants in the

debates, the narrative attributes the awakening to Christian Arabs of *Bilad al-Sham*.⁵⁵ Building on this trend, mid-twentieth century Mashriqi ways of thinking about New World peoples, though developing out of Ottoman representations of the New World, would take on a decidedly Christian mold of Eurocentrism.

The press of the Mexican Mahjar presents variations on this theme in the 1930s and 40s. There is a progressive detachment of a specifically ‘Lebanese’ experience, distinct from that of ‘Syrians.’ A stellar role is claimed in the awakening for Lebanese Christians, and a new chronology postulated for the process based on the Uniate churches’ historical ties to Rome:

... as of that time [Arab language and literature] sank into the dark depths of a lethargic slumber which would have been eternal but for the indefatigable efforts of the Lebanese and the missionaries, both French (who arrived in 1625) and American (who arrived in 1820).⁵⁶

Syria had its flourishing in the time of the Greeks and the Romans and later in the time of the Arabs. Its decadence began with the arrival of elements that neither had a culture nor knew how to assimilate: The Kurds, Turks, Mamlukes and Turcomans, who under the banner of Islam dominated the Syrian people, far superior to them in culture and civilization. And thus the torch that illuminated the ancient world went out. The decadence of Syria was followed by the decadence of Phoenicia, because the rulers- Mamlukes, Turks- did away with everything. The schools of Aleppo that existed during the reign of Saladdin disappeared. Fanaticism and ignorance reigned during several centuries. This lethargic life- which went on for a long time- was followed by a renaissance, slow at first but which later accelerated, and the movement which began as a religious one, became a social one. The achievement is due to the popes of Rome, who in educating young Lebanese men later caused them to found national schools and spread culture in the Orient.⁵⁷

Syrian civilization is given a Greek, Roman, and Arab pedigree, distinct from the Lebanese Phoenician past. An early Uniate lineage invented by Mexican Maronites for the nahda is claimed through the Uniate churches’ cultivation of links with Rome since the sixteenth century.⁵⁸ This additional nahda ancestor is not surprising given that approximately 80 percent of the Mashriqi migration to Mexico is Maronite, and that they were carving out a place in a country then overwhelmingly Catholic.

THE MIGRANT INTELLIGENTSIA IN MEXICO: EL EMIR AND TWO HISTORIES OF LEBANON

Two book length histories of Lebanon were written and published in Mexico, in Spanish, in 1945, both under the title *Historia del Líbano*, (History of Lebanon). The authors were William Nimeh and Alfonso Negib Aued, intellectuals of the Mexican Mahjar with strong connections to Lebanon and the Mahjar at large.⁵⁹ Both were Lebanese by birth and naturalized Mexican citizens. The 1946 reprint of Nimeh's *Historia* includes a section of "Mensajes," an appendix to the main text in which important figures congratulate him on his book and address a patriotic message to the Mexican and the Spanish-speaking Mahjar, especially directed at youth. These include the Maronite Patriarch and two looming characters of the Mahjar intelligentsia, Gibran Khalil Gibran and Habib Estefano.

Aued was editor in chief of one of the two most long-lived Mexican Mahjar periodicals, *El Emir*, published from 1937 through 1968.⁶⁰ *El Emir* included political and cultural reports, interviews, editorials and covered Mashriqi news in the Mashriq and the Americas. It published obituaries of leading figures, for example Mustafa Kemal Pasha; the text of the new Syrian and Lebanese constitutions; the text and music of the Algerian March; and French consular announcements regarding national status and nationalization options after the treaty of Lausanne, calling migrants to register with the French authorities. It congratulated young men of the community on successful university defenses and young women on their *quince años*, publishing flattering photographs. It published letters and contributions from readers and intellectuals in the Mexican provinces and Mashriqi populations living in every corner of Iberoamerica—Tucuman, Argentina; Santo Domingo; Honduras; Cuba, etc. It reported on the projects and achievements of the Lebanese League in Mexico. Important intellectuals based elsewhere contributed articles and conference transcripts, notably Habib Estefano from Argentina and Esteban Fayad from Venezuela.

GENEALOGIES FOR TRAVELERS AND CONQUERORS

Migration ideologies indexed or elaborated in the two histories and in articles and editorials which appeared in *Emir* can be understood as rooted in the Ottoman history of representation of the Americas and its modernist recuperation. They also constitute an intervention in the Latin American debates surrounding the desirability or undesirability of Mashriqis as migrants.⁶¹ Restrictions to migration legislated in Mexico in 1926 turned the liberal Porfirian migration policy on its head, and efforts to curb arrivals multiplied over the next decade given the scarcities generated by the Great

Depression. Finally, they reflect the global interwar zeitgeist, which privileged racial sciences and exclusions.⁶²

In these texts, Mashriqi and *Criollo* authors construct biological, moral, and civilizational genealogies for the migrants. Migrants are located in relation to Mexicans or ‘Americans’ more generally through a variety of narratives that share two assumptions. The first is an assumption about the nature of ‘American’ populations. They were believed to include two distinct sectors, the civilized (European) and the inadequately civilized (Indian). The second is an assumption about the nature of Mashriqi populations. The Lebanese, as distinct from the Syrian, are construed as Phoenicians—with a bit of Arab ‘blood’ and some superficial cultural markers, for instance language and music—who have been thoroughly ‘westernized’ and in their rural manifestations in fact surpass the West.⁶³ Both through their Phoenician and their Arab genealogies, the argument goes, the Lebanese are the offspring of conquerors, racially white and vectors of civilization.

A letter written by Miguel Zacarías to Adolfo Fernandez Bustamante, author of the play *El Baisano Jalil*—later made into a film—commending him on his portrayal of a Mashriqi migrant family was reproduced as an editorial piece in *Emir* in September of 1938.⁶⁴ Zacarías laments the short-sightedness of Mexican immigration policy, based on loose criteria of nationality and certain economic requirements rather than on the crucial criteria of “race, religion, morality and customs; that is, the ensemble of characteristics which make these migrants’ assimilation easy or difficult, desirable or undesirable.”⁶⁵ He argues that among the migrant populations adversely affected by such policy are the Spanish and the Lebanese: “both immigrants, the Spanish and the Lebanese, individuals of white race and Christians.”⁶⁶

Mashriqis are described as Phoenician conquerors and colonizers in the abstract—implying their conquest of the Americas at large; or more specifically as conquerors of the Mediterranean, Spain and the Americas. In their modern Latin American adventure, they are situated as equivalent to the Spanish colonizer by drawing elaborate parallels across the histories of both peoples. Ultimately, Mashriqis emerge as legitimate partners to Latin American *Criollo* elites in the necessary project of civilizing the Indian majority of the American nations.⁶⁷

Some Mashriqi authors go as far as attributing the origins of civilization—the universal civilization of Western Europe—to Phoenicians:

I take up my pen to sing the great deeds of my ancestors,
who contributed to contemporary civilization
the foundations on which it rests.⁶⁸

The Phoenicians propagated the alphabet along all the
countries they visited. Cadmus carried it as far as the

Greek islands, as a seed of civilization that cleared away the clouds of ignorance and barbarity.⁶⁹

In this vision, Western civilization as a whole, including its industrial imperial permutations, is derivative of an early Mashriqi golden age.

THE PHOENICIAN CIVILIZING MISSION

Authors invoke historical Phoenician hegemony in the Western Mediterranean to claim Phoenicians as conquerors in the European tradition, suggesting that ancient Phoenicians have shared in the European burden of spreading civilization to 'primitive' peoples. Aued titles the eighth chapter of his *History of Lebanon*, "The British of Antiquity- the Phoenician fleet, colonizer of the Mediterranean."⁷⁰ In his newspaper, *Emir*, we find it clearly stated: "it is to the travelling, colonizing, seafaring peoples that humanity owes its progress. The Phoenicians, Portuguese and Spanish worked for the unification of culture and civilization."⁷¹ Nimeh informs us that Phoenician conquest moreover, was a peaceful affair "...we are authorized to assert that Phoenicians were really the apostles of peace and that, even in their colonizing enterprises they never used violence or committed barbarous acts... thanks to their metal weapons they conquered the primitive inhabitants, who ignored that such wonderful weaponry existed, very quickly."⁷²

Another recurrent claim is that of an early Phoenician discovery and conquest of the Americas. Nimeh goes so far as to attribute the establishment of the great Amerindian traditions to them:

The Phoenicians were the first great colonizers of History, the first colonizers who implanted their civilization everywhere, in all its aspects, beauty, love and material improvements... THERE WAS NO CORNER, NO MATER HOW REMOTE, THAT THEY DIDN'T KNOW; and abandoning their Mediterranean lake, they traversed Hercules' columns (Gibraltar), circumnavigated Africa in three years, from the shores of the Red Sea to the Cape of Good Hope, and they built the city of Dakar, reaching as far as the British Isles and the shores of America in the middle of the XII century B.C. This last fact, extremely interesting, has been sufficiently revealed with the findings in Brazil and in Santo Domingo, the specialists in the matter assert that the small group of Phoenicians which conquered the Brazilian coasts probably founded the Inca, Maya and Aztec civilizations and reached as far as the Yucatan Peninsula.⁷³

The early Phoenician discovery of the Americas continues to be defended in the early twenty-first century by leading community intellectuals.⁷⁴

Situating Phoenician traders at the origin of great Amerindian civilizations stakes two claims. Grandly, it extends the Phoenician to a universal origin of civilization, regardless of where or when ‘civilization’ may have flourished. In the context of the post-Revolutionary Mexican national project, it also seems to be a universalizing move. Not only were the Phoenicians at the origin of the Mediterranean civilization that had conquered the New World, they were also the root of New World civilizations; they were always already there in both of the genealogies mobilized as constitutive of the Mexican.

PARALLEL HISTORIES: THE LEBANESE AND THE SPANISH

Sometimes the emphasis is on Mashriqis as conquerors of Spain. They are the conquerors of the conquerors of Iberoamerica—the Spaniards are their descendants. In an editorial titled “The Lebanese and the Progress of America,” Aued narrates the parallel and interlocking histories of Mashriqis and Spaniards in the Mediterranean:

The first to dominate Spain were Phoenicians and Carthaginians—our ancestors—, the Spaniard has Phoenician blood in his veins. The Lebanese in turn is a direct descendant of the Phoenicians.

Later, Greeks and Romans conquer the ancient Phoenician land and they also impose their dominion on the Iberian Peninsula. Yet Arab blood also mixes in Spain and Lebanon. This way, indestructible parities were created which give ethnic parity to the two peoples, the Spanish and the Lebanese.⁷⁵

According to Aued, the spiritual parity of the Spanish and the Lebanese peoples derives from the fact that they have both historically labored and battled in defense of the Christian faith. The parallels continue in their encounter with the Americas:

And with the same agility with which the ancient Phoenicians sail the seas, the Spaniard crosses the pond... Comes to America... Conquers all and obtains all, but at the same time gives his blood, his language and his religion to the land in which he arrives... In turn, the Lebanese [man] comes to America and he is not satisfied to make his fortune, but ties himself to America’s blood, establishes his house and does not forget the motherland but loves the new land.⁷⁶

Spanish and Mashriqi accumulation in the Americas is a noble enterprise, a generous surrender.

Careful to sustain the parallel without positing the modern migrant as a direct conqueror, Aued argues that the Spaniards civilizing achievements have remained unfinished: “Three hundred years have not been enough to

fully inject Western customs into the indigenous peoples”; and this is where the modern partnership between civilized peers becomes crucial to progress:

Where elegant or rich commerce disdained to go he goes and begins by selling suits to the people who scarcely clothe themselves... not only does he change the way of dressing, he transforms footgear: *huaraches* (sandals) are substituted by leather shoes and tennis shoes. And the significance that dress has for the progress of a people is no secret for anyone. Peter the Great, Mustafa Kemal Pacha in Turkey, saw this problem clearly: they understood that the feeling of inferiority that their people had before the French, the English etc. was due, more than anything else, to clothing...⁷⁷

Aued distinguishes the legitimacy of Mashriqi partnership with *Criollo* nations by contrasting the noble restraint of Mashriqi profit from the irresponsible accumulation of North American and European migrants:

And the noble character of this labor is fully understood when it becomes known that, even after twenty or thirty years, most of those merchants don't make fortunes greater than twenty or thirty thousand pesos... Big industry and mining require enormous capitals. They are exclusively in the hands of the Americans and Europeans. Culture and science are French and Spanish imports. All of this has been useful to the upper middle class, the Indian has been left aside. He is considered a stranger to all these goings on... when the revolution came, the Indian had had no contact with the Western world other than through the Lebanese who had gone all the way to his house in order to dress him and the ancient missionary friars who taught him their religion and tried to get him to know their language... But now the Lebanese is no longer a stranger who will introduce something unknown [to the people], now, because of his home already established, because of his wealth, already made in America, he is the brother who is helping to forge the new homeland... The Lebanese is, in the evolution of the Americas, an unquestionable truth of civilization and progress.⁷⁸

Mashriqi businessmen are morally as well as racially and ethnically equivalent to the *Criollo* postrevolutionary elites, willing, capable, and responsible partners to their modernizing mission.

The claims made by Mashriqi intellectuals resident in Mexico were eventually, though not initially, validated by local state ideologues and intellectuals. Modernist genealogical construction begins with the propagation of migrant fantasies about Phoenician pasts, but turns bitter after the publication of Jose Vasconcelos' *Que es el comunismo?* Vasconcelos,

minister of state and the foremost ideologue of the postrevolutionary national project, begins one hundred and twenty pages dedicated to ruminations on the Spanish Civil War and the defects of the Calles administration in Mexico by lamenting the expulsion of ‘defenseless Spaniards’ during the Mexican Revolution, and their substitution in the national landscape by Jews and Syrio-Lebanese: “deaf persecution ended up replacing in our cities and towns, our own Spaniard, with the communist Jew who today exploits petty industry and a good part of commerce, but speaks English; by replacing him with the Syrio Lebanese who does not better our race, but worsens it.”⁷⁹

Vasconcelos identified progress, democracy and civilization with Christianity, and saw all of these incarnate in the Spanish tradition. He envisioned the empowerment of Latin America through a confederation of ‘Hispanic nations’ given the Spanish leadership’s reluctance to engage in an enlightened imperialism. In a speech celebrating the *Día de la Raza* in 1936, Vasconcelos argued about this commemoration of the ‘Discovery of America’:

We are gathered to celebrate the most important event in our American history, the discovery that linked the New World with Europe, incorporating all of these territories into civilization... Day of the Race; that is to say, the date of homage to the Spanish race in whose glories we have a share because we are part of Hispanic culture and because a branch of our ancestors sailed in the caravels of the immortal expedition... The transcendence of Colon’s findings resides in the fact that he made his discovery as a Spaniard in the company of Spaniards... and since Spaniards were then the most cultured nation of Europe, they were not content to fill the deserts with half naked offspring like any barbarous tribe, but rather in three centuries of incomparable civilizing effort they built the twenty-something nations which constitute the Latin world of America... So that our fathers the conquerors and explorers, as well as our teachers the missionaries, were when they arrived in these territories the flower of the Europe of their time, and the first among races in the World.⁸⁰

Mashriqi journalists only responded to Vasconcelos’ statements a few years after their publication. It was not until *El Emir*’s seventy third number that Leonardo Kaim and Aziz Hatem took issue with his characterization of Mashriqis as undesirable. Vasconcelos’ response of May 1943:

I cannot and should not take back the affirmation I made about the Spanish race being superior and more desirable as a migrant race. This does not hinder appreciation and tenderness towards

people or migrants of other races. Thus, as you have pointed out to me, I have friends whom I appreciate and respect in the Syrio-Lebanese colony; but this does not mean that even today the Syrio-Lebanese race could demonstrate a capacity for cultural creativity, a spiritual development comparable to the Spanish. Of my own Mexican people, it would be absurd to say that their historical level and their qualities could be compared to those of the Spanish. Therefore, I think that stirring up resentment regarding self-evident facts does not contribute anything to the conviviality of the different races that have to coexist peacefully in democracies.⁸¹

Mahjar intellectuals must have been convincing in print and beyond, because by the time Nimeh's *History of Lebanon* appeared two years later, Vasconcelos prefaced it in glowing welcome:

But America is a land which belongs to all men, and since we are fortunate to have among us a distinguished group of Lebanese, who by the way show themselves to be good Mexicans, it is convenient that we know what the small but illustrious nation which is the cradle of our compatriots of Lebanese origin is and has been. Dr. Nimeh's book, "History of Lebanon" provides us with the means to access this knowledge. Dr. Nimeh is a distinguished professional... An expert in history and Arab topics, this prepares him to understand the Spanish, insofar as the Arab element endures in the Spanish. Not an unimportant influence, excepting the religious aspect, which is of course antithetical in the two cultures. Dr. Nimeh's book saves us from a common error, which is to mistake the Lebanese for the Arab, the Syrian, even the Turk. The Lebanese is distinct from all other groups of the Orient. Most Lebanese are of Phoenician origin, though some Arab blood runs in their veins and their language is Arabic. And it is well known that the Phoenicians were the first colonizing people in history. Once Phoenician power had disappeared, the Lebanese, now living in a Roman province, contributed to the glory of the Empire, were part of the Roman army and mixed with the patricians. Likewise, at the dawn of Christianity the Lebanese take the lead and contribute martyrs and saints very early on... In modern times, Beirut has been a cultural center with a strong French influence... Souls with affinities to our Western tradition, it is only natural that they will soon assimilate to the idiosyncrasies of the American nations and become collaborators in their progress... Dr. Nimeh's book should not then be exotic for us, but something that is already part of the Hispano-Mexican heritage.⁸²

Vasconcelos is finally happy to recognize Mashriqis as another element in his vision of *mestizaje*, the racial and cultural ‘mixing’ which he considered constituted the distinctive and vital force sustaining the Mexican nation. The campaign to make Mashriqi migration palatable to the Mexican public continued with the support of Mexican journalists; the *Unión Libanesa Mundial* published the journalist Enrique Castro Farias’ *Aporte Libanés al Progreso de America* in 1948.⁸³

CONCLUSION

Tracing an Ottoman Arab history of representing the Americas that informed mid-twentieth century “Lebanese” intellectual production in Mexico, this text argues for a connected history of American and Middle Eastern modernisms as ideologies of racialized civilizational hierarchy. In the decade between 1936 and 1946, a mutual recognition, though far from seamless, was negotiated between Mashriqi Mahjar intellectuals and postcolonial Mexican elites. Their anti-colonial nationalist discourses, rooted in distinct geographies and colonial histories, complied with an overarching Eurocentric narrative even as each struggled to dismantle European hegemony locally. In fact both decolonial elites anchored the legitimacy of their right to control state apparatuses and regional economies in the European genealogies they cultivated for themselves. They became intelligible to each other as subalterns complicit in a common desire to emulate Europe in the civilizing missions of a postcolonial global.

In the first half of the paper I explore Ottoman representations of the Americas cultivated during the nahda. I begin with Ottoman translations of New World literature and note their textual traces in erotic poetry and Ottoman travel accounts through the late nineteenth century. Nahda narratives, an Arab decolonizing discourse, mobilized Ottoman representations of New World populations that were produced in the context of Ottoman imperial practice and participation in inter-imperial rivalries. The modernist logic they shared with *Criollo* nationalisms was rooted in the early modern construction of a global arena of imperial practice that integrated regions into larger economies and polities, imposing universalisms initially defined in terms of religious tradition, re-cast in terms of ‘civilizations’ during the nineteenth century.

By the late nineteenth century, elites in various geographies subaltern to Europe developed anticolonial nationalisms that launched a long and uneven global process of decolonization and became the foundational fictions for postcolonial states. Migrant intellectuals mobilized nahda narratives in debates with the Mexican postrevolutionary intelligentsia in the migrant and national press in Mexico, defending Ottoman representations of aesthetic and civilizational difference which situated Mashriqi peoples as fearless

explorers and rightful ‘conquerors’ of less beautiful, less modern Latin American natives. Nahda hierarchizing claims were concerned, like other anticolonial nationalisms, with situating Arabs as both heirs to a glorious ancient civilization and cosmopolitan moderns. They had emancipatory as well as subordinating effects as they intersected with *Criollo* nationalism in the Latin American Mahjar.

I argue that nahda narratives intersected with the postcolonial Mexican championing of the *Criollo* as a civilizing force. This enabled Mashriqi and Latin American elites to bisect Latin American nations into inadequately civilized ‘savages’ and ‘civilized’ *Criollos*, so that Mahjar notables and *Criollo* elites could come to understand themselves as partners in a civilizing mission. Mobilizing the universalist hierarchies integral to global modernism, *Criollo* nationalisms and the discursive decolonization of an ‘Arab civilization’ afforded the subalternization of Latin American populations.

NOTES

¹ *El Emir*, Revista Mensual, May 1939. *El Emir* was published monthly, 1937-1968, Mexico City. Alfonso Negib Aued, (editor), Biblioteca del Colegio de México.

² Fayez A. Sayegh, *Arab Unity: Hope and Fullfillment* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1958), 3.

³ Qasim Amin, *Tahrir al-mar'a*, quoted in Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 155-156.

⁴ The case of Ernest Renan, whom Said treats at length in *Orientalism*, comes to mind.

⁵ Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?" *Representations* 37 (1992): 1-26.

⁶ *Criollos* are Latin Americans claiming European descent.

⁷ There is much new scholarship on Arab representations of the West, see Nabil Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); *Islam in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

⁸ Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁹ Serge Gruzinski, *Quel heure est-il la bas?* (Paris: Seuil, 2010).

¹⁰ The manuscript was translated into French and German, then into English in 1980 but has become more visible through two publications: Gruzinski, *Quel heure*, and Thomas Goodrich, *The Ottoman Turks and the New World. A Study of Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi and Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990).

¹¹ Lewis estimates that the manuscript, in the Istanbul University Library, was produced circa 1793. Lewis, B. *The Muslim discovery of Europe*. New York, (W.W. Norton. 1982) 330; and for more on Fazil, E.J.W. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry* (London, Luzac 1900-1909).

¹² Lewis, *Muslim discovery* 290

¹³ Lewis, *Ibid* 290

¹⁴ Enderunlu, F. edited and translated by F. Bingölçe. *Zenânnâme. Kadınlar kitabı. The book on women* (Yenimahalle-Ankara, Alt-Ust Yayinlari, 2006), 179

¹⁵ Many other 'nationalities' are described as undesirable because they are 'black'; they appear as less attractive yet fully human.

¹⁶ Bingölçe, *Zenânnâme* 22

¹⁷ For a manuscript lacking illustration see <https://archive.org/details/EnderuniFazilHuseyinBey>

¹⁸ Erdogan, Sema Nilgün. *Sexual Life in Ottoman Society*. (Istanbul, Donence, 2000)

¹⁹ Archives D'Outre Mer, Aix en Provence. Archives Nationales. Fonds Anciens des Colonies, Série E Personnel Antérieur à 1798. E170. Elias Cheik Chedid et Kassen de la Maison Kassen, prince chrétien du Mont-Liban, de nation maronite, a voyage vers les îles de l'Amérique en tant qu'employé du roi de France en 1744, avec l'intention de rassembler des ressources pour la diffusion de l'idée française en Syrie.

²⁰ The published texts are the Bibliaspa multilingual edition of Al-Baghdadi, *El deleite del extranjero en todo lo que es asombroso y maravilloso*, trans. Paulo Farah (Argel, Rio de Janeiro, Caracas: Bibliaspa, 2007) and Elias Al-Musili, *An Arab's Journey to Colonial Spanish America: The Travels of Elias Al-Musili in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Caesar Farah (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

²¹ According to Farah, Rabbat first published it in the Jesuit journal *Al-Mashriq* in 1905 and later with the Jesuit Catholic Press in Beirut in 1906. He also cites sources who claim 1903 as the date of publication, and who claim the journey to have taken place in the eighteenth century. Farah, *An Arab's Journey*, xii.

²² Farah tells us "It is probable the author wrote also for the benefit of fellow Syrians, for Rabbat alleges that he settled in Aleppo after his return, although there is evidence turned up in Spanish archives to suggest that he returned to Spain instead." Farah, *An Arab's Journey*, xviii.

²³ *Maslia al-gharib bi kul amr ajib*, is the Arabic title given for the book.

²⁴ Farah, *An Arab's Journey*, ix.

²⁵ Farah thanks Bernard Lewis of Princeton for suggesting the translation and editing of the manuscript. Farah, *An Arab's Journey*, xiii.

²⁶ Al-Musili, *An Arab Journeys* 60

²⁷ Al-Musili, *Ibid* 61

²⁸ Al-Musili, *Ibid* 42, 49, on mines, 59.

²⁹ Al-Musili, *Ibid*, 35.

³⁰ Al-Musili, *Ibid*, 75.

³¹ Al-Musili, *Ibid*, infidel and pagan Indians mentioned in pgs. 32, 33, merchants in p. 20 and bishops in p. 35.

³² Al-Musili, *Ibid*, 37.

³³ Al-Musili, *Ibid*, 49.

³⁴ Al-Musili, *Ibid*, 32, 64.

³⁵ Al-Musili *Ibid* 64. One has to wonder, did he consider himself to be an Arab, or is this an image of the Bedouin?

³⁶ Al-Musili, *Ibid* 41

³⁷ Al-Baghdadi's text was translated by Yacine Daddi Addoun and Renée Soulodre-La France, through York University, in 2001. It was also published in 2007 with several prologues and introductions by academics and bureaucrats alongside the original text and renditions in Modern Standard Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese as the founding text for BiBliASPA, a project for south-south cultural cooperation established through a meeting of Arab and South American heads of state in Brasilia in 2005. According to the introduction to the Farah translation, the manuscript bought by a German from a Turk was donated to the Berlin Library, where Dr. Farah stumbled upon it.

³⁸ Paulo Farah, *El deleite*, 2007:44.

³⁹ Al-Baghdadi often interprets these populations practice of Islam as incorrect and speculates that deviations are probably due to the fact that many were torn from their communities young, before they had acquired the faith properly. From his references to the presence of texts in Arabic, to alternate marriage and inheritance practices as well as healing practices using Quranic texts as talismans, it seems more likely that West African Islam as practiced in Brazil presented syncretic forms which incorporated non-Arab African cultural practices.

⁴⁰ Al-Baghdadi, *El deleite del extranjero*, 193.

⁴¹ Al-Baghdadi, *Ibid*, 146, 148.

⁴² Al-Baghdadi, *Ibid*, 135-136.

⁴³ Al-Baghdadi, *Ibid*, 137.

⁴⁴ Al-Baghdadi, *Ibid* 143-144

⁴⁵ Al-Baghdadi, *Ibid* 151

⁴⁶ Al-Baghdadi, *Ibid* 167-68

⁴⁷ Al-Baghdadi, *Ibid* 161

⁴⁸ For a study of radical ideologies, see Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

⁴⁹ Philip Hitti, *The Arabs: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 213.

⁵⁰ Prasenjit Duara, *Decolonization* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 6.

⁵¹ Abd-El Jalil, *Brève Histoire de la Littérature Arabe* (Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine Maisonneuve, 1943), 221.

⁵² Abd El-Jalil, *Brève Histoire*, 7. The author was a professor at the Catholic University of Paris in 1943, when this text was published, and he refers to European Orientalists.

⁵³ Hitti, *The Arabs*, viii.

⁵⁴ This is particularly true of French and American practice. Druze and Muslims were also clients; in fact European powers extended their patronage to particular sectarian populations- thus the Maronites were French clients, the Druze British clients etc. See: Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) and *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

⁵⁵ Dawn argues that this interpretation was first popularized in the West by George Antonius in 1938, in his *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1939) and later though in a more ambivalent and complex form, restated by Albert Hourani, as well as Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years 1875-1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972) and *Neopatriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). Also in George N. Atiyeh and Ibrahim M. Oweiss, eds., *Arab Civilization: Challenges and Responses. Studies in Honor of Constantine Zurayk* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1988) and Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Enquiry* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1981); Ernest Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism" in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* ed. Rashid Khalidi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 3. It also occurs in Edward Atiyah, *The Arabs. The Origins, Present Conditions and Prospects of the Arab World* (Edinburgh: Penguin Books, 1958 [1955]), Abd El-

Jalil 1943, Hitti 1943, Sayegh 1958. Abd al-Jalil suggests that a revived concern with the Arabic language initially emerged among Christian populations; he notes that as early as the seventeenth century, a movement championing Arab linguistic purism developed in Christian circles in Aleppo (Abd El-Jalil, *Brève Histoire*, 219).

⁵⁶ Nimeh, William. *Historia del Líbano* (México D.F., 1946), 282-283

⁵⁷ Article “Duaihi y el Renacimiento Libanés”. *El Emir* No. 6, November 1937, p. 14-15

⁵⁸ Once the Melkite and Maronite churches recognized papal authority, religious scholars of these traditions occasionally travelled to study or teach in Europe, especially after the establishment of the Maronite College in Rome in 1584. Edde, Padre Emile, M.L. *El Líbano en la Historia*. Vol. II. (Jounieh, Líbano. 2001), 135-137. It is important to keep in mind that approximately 80% of the migration to Mexico is Maronite. For a discussion of the problem with numbers in the migrations to Mexico see Pastor de Maria y Campos, C. *The Mashreq in Mexico: patronage, property and class in the postcolonial global*. (PhD Thesis. Anthropology. UCLA, 2009).

⁵⁹ Nimeh was by profession a gastroenterologist. *El Emir*, No. 1 1937.

⁶⁰ Marta Diaz de Kuri and Lourdes Macluff, *De Líbano a México. Historia de un Pueblo Migrante* (Mexico D.F., 1994), 228. For a discussion of the Mexican mahjar press see Camila Pastor de Maria y Campos, “Palestina como espectáculo en la prensa del Mahjar mexicano”, in *Mas allá del Medio Oriente: las diásporas judía y árabe en América Latina*, ed. Ranaan Rein et al, (Granada: Universidad de Granada/ Universidad de Tel Aviv, 2012).

⁶¹ On the debates about desirable and undesirable migrants and the questions of extranjería (foreignness) in Mexico for this period see Pablo Yankelevich, “Extranjeros indeseables en México (1911–1940). Una aproximación cuantitativa a la aplicación del artículo 33 constitucional,” *Historia Mexicana*, 211(2004): 693.

⁶² On the history of this migration see Angelina Alonso Palacios, *Los libaneses y la industria textil en Puebla*, Cuadernos de la Casa Chata, 89 (México, D. F.: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Cultura, 1983), Teresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), Camila Pastor de Maria y Campos, *Mashreq in Mexico*; “Palestina como espectáculo”; “The Transnational Imagination: Twentieth Century Networks and Institutions of the Mashreqi Migration to Mexico” in *Emigration, Diaspora and Lebanese Network Communities*, special issue of *Palma Journal* (Lebanon: Lebanese Emigration Research Center, Notre Dame de Louaize University, 2009); “Lo Árabe y su Doble. Imaginarios de principios de siglo en Honduras y México”, in *Contribuciones Árabes a las Identidades Latinoamericanas*, ed. Karim Hauser (Madrid: Casa Árabe /SEGIB/ BibliASPA, 2009); “Inscribing Difference: Maronites, Jews and Arabs in Mexican Public Culture and French Imperial Practice,” *Latin American & Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 6 (2011); “Diasporas: Mexico”, in *Encyclopedia of Women in Islamic Cultures*, ed. S. Joseph (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

⁶³ Zacarías, 1938. No. 16, 4.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of the film *El Baisano Jalil* see Alfaro-Velcamp, “‘Reelizing’ Arab and Jewish Ethnicity in Mexican Film,” *The Americas* 63(2006), 261-81

⁶⁵ Zacarías, *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Zacarías, *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ José Vasconcelos, *Que es el Comunismo?* (México: Ediciones Botas, 1936), 103.

⁶⁸ ‘El Origen de los Libaneses’, *Emir* p. 8 (Esteban Fayad?)

⁶⁹ Aued 1945:47

⁷⁰ Aued, *Ibid.*, 55.

⁷¹ *Emir*, Mayo 1939, 15.

⁷² Nimeh, *Historia*, 88.

⁷³ Nimeh 1946:94

⁷⁴ Edde 2001, Martínez Assad, Carlos. *Memorias del Líbano* (Ed. Océano, México D.F, 2003),

188-189. Martínez Assad is a prestigious researcher, recipiente of a Guggenheim fellowship and senior professor at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

⁷⁵ Aued, *El Emir* Diciembre 25 1938, No. 19:3.

⁷⁶ Aued, *El Emir* Diciembre 25 1938, No. 19: 3.

⁷⁷ Aued, *El Emir* Diciembre 25 1938, No. 19: 4.

⁷⁸ Aued, *El Emir* Diciembre 25 1938, No. 19: 4.

⁷⁹ Vasconcelos 11.

⁸⁰ Vasconcelos 105- 109

⁸¹ *Correspondence reproduced in* *El Emir*, No. 73 p. 16

⁸² José Vasconcelos, prologue to Nimeh 1946: 9-10

⁸³ Castro Farías, *Contribuciones Libanesas al Progreso de América* (Mexico City, 1948).