



MAMLUKS IN THE MODERN EGYPTIAN MIND

CHANGING THE MEMORY OF
THE MAMLUKS, 1919-1952

IL KWANG SUNG



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palgrave
macmillan

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ISBN 978-1-137-55712-4 ISBN 978-1-137-54830-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-54830-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016955188

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Nature America Inc. New York
The registered company address is: 1 New York Plaza, New York, NY 10004, U.S.A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have incurred debts to many institutions, colleagues, and teachers in the process of producing this work. It is impossible to list all those whose advice and input I have received. I am grateful to Prof. Choi Chang Mo and Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Konkuk University in Seoul for giving me a full-time researcher position. I am especially indebted to these individuals. I am extremely grateful to my Ph.D. supervisor, Prof. Israel Gershoni, for his extra-ordinary supervision and invaluable advice. I am indebted to Prof. Amy Ayalon, Prof. Rami Ginat, Prof. Reuven Amitai, and Prof. Kim Jung Gwan for encouragement, and to Arie Dallal for his invaluable friendship. I am also indebted to Dr. Cho Yong Sik, Dr. Kim Sung Un, Darom, and Jung Hyun Ho for sharing both happiness and sadness as friends.

Finally I would like to thank my family. My parents Sung Tae Un and Lee Whe Sun deserve special acknowledgment. Always prioritizing education, they afforded me the luxury of scholarship. I feel fortunate and grateful to have them at my side. My sister Sung Kyung A supported my school expenses. I am particularly indebted to my wife Lee Jae Hee for supporting me. Without her patience and love, this work would never have been completed.

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PART I

Mamluks in Official Memory

Introduction

The Mamluk periods have often been described as decade of chaos in Egypt. Politically tyranny, oppression and destruction became the characteristic feature of their rule. The many Mamluk sultans are demonized as a war-monger and lustful of power. The point of departure of the present study is to critically delve into whether if the unfavorable attitude of modern Egyptian historical literatures toward the Mamluks actually did so or not. Thus the purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which modern Egyptian historians and intellectuals discussed the Mamluk past to discern their perceptions and understandings of the Mamluks and Mamluk era. Following the periodization of Egyptian historians, we will examine the representations of the Mamluks in two historical periods: the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517) era and the Mamluks under Ottoman era (1517–1811),¹ focusing mostly on the years 1760–1811. To critically analyze and compare the diverse dimensions of distinction, contrast, and similarity among multifaceted representations of the Mamluks presented in the years 1919 and 1952, we will focus on historical literature of representative historians and intellectuals.

Although the Mamluks have had a great impact on the Egyptian collective memory and, in particular, modern Egyptian thought, to date, the subject has hardly been researched seriously.² One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that the existing scholars have given too much prominence to stereotypical negative representation of the Mamluks in Egyptian historical works. However, as we shall see, many Egyptian historians and intellectuals presented the Mamluk era positively, and even symbolized the Sultans as national icons. The present study aims to shed light on this

heretofore-neglected positive dimension of the historical memory of the Mamluks,³ and thereby seriously address the way in which Egyptian historians and intellectuals utilized the historical memory of the Mamluks for their own political and ideological purposes.

Nevertheless, some scholars deal either with Egyptian historiography in general, or the historiography of the ‘Urābī Revolt and Mamluks specifically.⁴ The many studies by Egyptian and Western historiographers include those of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl and Jack A. Crabbs, focusing on nineteenth-century Egyptian historiography, while Youssef Choueiri, Anthony Gorman, and Yoav Di-Capua⁵ have researched that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gorman has placed more emphasis on the role of the state and nationalism in the development of Egyptian historiography, while Di-Capua contends that Egyptian historians have focused on the modern Egyptian state, with an emphasis on the historians’ role in its emergence.⁶ Although these historians have significantly contributed to the study of Egyptian historiography, their studies have not dealt specifically with the role of the Mamluks.

Thomas Mayer focuses on the chronological order in the changing portrayal of the ‘Urābī revolt as recorded in both official and popular Egyptian historical writings.⁷ He convincingly demonstrates how modern Egyptian historians have manipulated the history of the ‘Urābī revolt for their own purposes.

Paul Starkey outlines Egyptian history as reflected in the Egyptian novel and dramaturgy.⁸ Though he covers several historical novels and one play about the Mamluks,⁹ his treatment of the relationship between history and fiction in the modern Egyptian novel is superficial, lacking a critical analysis of the portrayal of Mamluks. Moreover, his study is limited to historical fiction, while neglecting other historical genres.

Two existing works of scholarship address the depiction of Mamluks by Egyptian and Arab historians, respectively.¹⁰ Yael Kimron dealt with the representation of the Mamluks by modern Egyptian historians, whereas Ulrich Haarmann attempted to reveal how Arab historians of the Middle Ages perceived the Mamluks.

Haarmann researched the Arab depiction of the Mamluks, mainly that of Arab historians of the Middle Ages, and found two contrasting, if not contradictory, images of the Mamluk, both positive and negative. As is generally accepted, most historians in Haarmann’s study had identified Mamluks as Turkish military slaves. The historians Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, Ibn Khaldūn, and Abū Shāma presented the Mamluks positively, as having saved the Arabs from the Mongols and as protectors of Islam. In contrast, the *‘Ulamā’*

defined the Mamluks as Turkish military slaves and stereotypically depicted them as Turkish barbarians.¹¹ However, Haarmann did not touch upon modern Egyptian historians, focusing on historians of the Middle Ages.

Kimron's unpublished study is closely related to the present research in that she investigates the manner in which Egypt's Mamluk past is depicted by modern Egyptian historians. She concludes that, for the most part, nationalist historians have treated the Mamluks as "the others" or "the strangers." The description of the struggle for Egyptian sovereignty excluded the Mamluks, perceived as imperialists. Furthermore, she argues that the modernists, who were ideologically secular and liberal, perceived the Mamluks as ardent Muslims and, therefore, wanted to expunge their names from the national, collective memory. With that, emphasizing the ethnic Arab element of national Egyptian identity, the pan-Arabist movement rejected the "Turks" as part of that identity.¹² Consequently, no one felt committed to "guarding" the Mamluk past; very few historians expressed interest in adding the chapter of Mamluk history to the Egyptian national collective memory, with the majority regarding it as insignificant to Egyptian history.¹³

The current study proposes to correct the following shortcomings in Kimron's work. Although Kimron explored in-depth the presentation of the Mamluks by a number of Egyptian historians, her research has failed to consider important Egyptian historians and intellectuals who, in contrast to her proposition, did indeed assimilate the history of the Mamluk Sultanate into Egyptian history. Moreover, these historians and intellectuals used the history of the Mamluks in order to strengthen Egyptian nationalism.¹⁴ Methodologically too, Kimron analyzes the perception of the Mamluks without distinguishing the Mamluk Sultanates from the Mamluks under Ottoman rule.

Unlike previous studies, which have focused either on academic works of history¹⁵ or on a limited number of historical novels,¹⁶ the current study will also include the writings of intellectuals as well as popular literature, such as popular periodicals, and even school textbooks as an official narrative. By comparing the various historical writings in which Mamluks are portrayed, this study seeks to provide a wider and more comprehensive range of representations than that presented in previous studies.

The following significant historic events and knowledge concerning the role and representation of the Mamluks will be referenced as categories of critical analysis: (a) the identity of the Mamluks, (b) the Mamluk war against Louis IX, King of France (1249) at al-Manṣūra, (c) the Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt (1260) by Zāhir Baybars and the Battle of Ḥoms (1281) by

Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwūn al-Alfī against the Mongols, (d) the independent movement of ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, (1760–1772) in Egypt, and others.

These categories serve two purposes. First, change and continuity in the Mamluk narrative is reflected through a chronological comparison of the categories. Second, differences in the depiction of the Mamluks in the several historiographical trends are illustrated through the prism of the categories.

The scope of the present study will be limited to the modern Egyptian historical narrative between 1919 and 1952. The year of 1919 is considered as a turning point, in which modern Egyptian historiography was alleged to have appeared in its mature form. Within the new zeitgeist and socio-political context of the time, Egyptian intellectual discourse on the Mamluks reached its zenith, as reflected by a dynamic and important revision in Mamluk representation. Thus, this period is crucial in discussing the concept of the Mamluk in Egyptian thought.

In the 1920s and, particularly, the early 1930s, Egyptian nationalist historians endeavored to reinterpret Egyptian history through Egypt’s own perspective, rather than Arab-Islamic historiography, or the Western historiography of European Orientalists.¹⁷ This reinterpretation involved engaging in the discourse of emancipation and rehabilitation, urging Egyptians to free their collective memory from the burden of foreign histories, purge their historical awareness of imposed prejudices, and recover a distinct Egyptian collective memory that could serve as the solid foundation for a new Egyptianist national consciousness. As far as the nationalists were concerned, writing Egyptian history “as it actually was” meant reconstructing the history of Egypt in a manner that displayed its “territorial essence”—that is, the millennial and paramount bond between the Nile Valley and the people of Egypt.

At the same time, monarchist historians, whose protagonists were Muḥammad ‘Alī, Ibrāhīm, and Ismā’īl, were recruited by King Fuād’s ‘Ābdīn Project.¹⁸ Hence, they mainly focused on reforms and developments in administration, army, public works, and education during the period of Muḥammad ‘Alī and his descendants.¹⁹ In addition to those two monarchist and nationalist narratives, the Ottomanist narrative that emerged in the previous century still lingered in the landscape of the Egyptian collective memory.

During the 1930s, on the other hand, three historiographical styles competed for hegemony in Egyptian society: “nascent academia, monarchist historiography, and the popular-nationalist tradition.”²⁰ Academic

historians adopted the monarchist historiography, their focus, assumptions, methods of work, style of writing, and, most importantly, their political orientation.²¹ However, with time, academic historians shifted focus from Muḥammad ‘Alī and his family to ordinary people, and developed an ideology of professionalism, distinguishing themselves from popular and amateur historians. A new fashion of Egyptian nationalism emerged in the 1930s. If the 1920s and early 1930s were a period of exclusivist, territorial Egyptian nationalism, the period after 1930 can be defined as an era of supra-Egyptian nationalism in which three different supra-Egyptian ideologies developed: Egyptian Islamic nationalism, integral Egyptian nationalism, and Egyptian-Arab nationalism.²² Among them, Egyptian-Arab nationalism became the most extensively articulated and important variety, as evidenced by its acceptance on the part of other Arabs and Muslims outside of Egypt. A critical analysis of these Ottomanist, monarchist, academic, and nationalist intellectual and historians’ perceptions of the Mamluks provides a means of understanding the ways in which Mamluk history has been narrated in order to institute various Egyptian projects of modernity and nationalism.

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, any study of the representations of the Mamluks is inseparable from the field of individual and collective memory. According to Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, “since collective remembrance is an activity of individuals coming together in public to recall the past, historians would do well to reflect on the findings of cognitive psychologists on how memory happens.”²³ Accordingly, this study seeks to offer a critical examination of the forms of memory and public commemoration of the Mamluks and the Mamluk era, developed in 1919–1952, to celebrate the progress of Egyptian modernity and Egypt’s struggle for national liberation. During this period, Egyptian national identity was constructed through an imagined community. The subjects of commemoration were dramatic episodes and dominant historical figures who played a pivotal role in the nation’s parade toward independence, freedom, and progress. The methods of remembering immortalize these glorious moments and individual heroes of the nation, and narrate the national drama. The result of these various endeavors was the creation of a monarchic, Ottoman, or national culture of commemoration and memory that served as a guide and an inspiration for the evolving nation.²⁴

As mentioned, the critical examination of public commemoration of the Mamluk era is a part of the extended field of memory studies. In recent decades, the study of collective memory has received a great deal

of critical attention from historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and cultural critics. This immense boom is even referred to as “memory mania.”²⁵

The scholarship that deals with the nature and operation of collective memory proposes the basic framework for our examination of the history of public commemoration in modern Egypt. The concept of “collective memory” was first subject to systematic analysis in the work of Maurice Halbwachs. Following in Emile Durkheim’s footsteps, Halbwachs stressed that collective memory is a social construction. This is in stark contrast to Henry Bergson, who conceptualized memory as an individual process and accordingly regarded psychology as the most suitable discipline for its analysis. The best method for examining that construction, Halbwachs argued, was historical sociology.²⁶ Patrick H. Hutton admitted that “Long neglected, his [Halbwachs’] work today serves as a theoretical groundwork in the emerging project of the history of memory.”²⁷

Halbwachs’ main hypothesis is that collective memory takes shape and unfolds in specific social contexts and, as such, is located within what he termed “the social framework of memory.” For Halbwachs, individuals are not able to exist outside society. Consequently, the social groups to which they belong inevitably have an effect on their memories of the past. He stated, “It is in the society that people normally acquire their memories,” and added that “it is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories.”²⁸ In effect, individuals can arrange their memories and give them specific meaning only within the social framework of memory, within which they are located as individuals: “It is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection.”²⁹

Halbwachs’ work has been a point of departure for every “scholar of memory.” During the 1970s and 1980s, Pierre Nora made a significant contribution to the systematic study of collective memory. In an endeavor to operationalize Halbwachs’ focus on the social nature of collective memory, Nora conceptualized the researcher’s objective as the study of “sites of memory” (*lieux de mémoire*). Nora supervised the massive collaborative effort that produced *Les lieux de mémoire*, a multi-volume study of numerous French sites of memory.

Nora’s fundamental assumption was that in the modern era, with its acceleration of the pace of historical change, the genuine, spontaneous, unpremeditated forms of memory that prevailed in the past are eroded and disappear. “We speak so much of memory,” he asserted, “because there is so little of it left.”³⁰ Modernity therefore compels human societies

to invent or produce artificial, manufactured forms of collective memory to compensate for the elimination of more natural forms of remembrance. Instead of real environments of memory that shaped human recollection in the past, modern sites of memory serve as the reference points for collective memory. Nora's sites of memory encompass nearly every social and cultural monument, flag, anthem, museum exhibit, archive, or library.³¹

The recreation of the historical memory of the Mamluks was also an effective medium for Egyptian Ottomanist, monarchist, and nationalist intellectuals for transmitting relevant political messages to their public. Through heroic monuments and spectacles, commemoration creates emotionally powerful evocations of episodes from the national drama: the heroic era of the founding fathers, the noble struggle for national liberation, and the splendid revival of national culture. Commemoration invites citizens to see and feel the greatness and glory of their nation. The active participation of the "Egyptian people" in these powerful communal festivals of Ottoman, monarchic, and national commemoration is obviously crucial for the education of broad sectors of society. The collective memory molded through commemoration reinforces a sense of a shared Egyptian monarchic or national identity.³²

Public commemoration is constructed on "national sentiment," rather than "rationale" as it creates a vivid tableau of national greatness, encouraging collective effort and sacrifice. In the words of Benedict Anderson, "it is this fraternity that has made it possible over the past two centuries for so many millions of people, not so much to kill as willingly to die for such limited imaginings."³³

In order to create a new historical memory, the Ottomanist, monarchist, academic, and nationalist intellectuals were devoted to uncovering the "lessons" of the past. These lessons can be learned from a historical record replete with glorious moments and splendid heroes, but may also be tainted by unsatisfactory compromises and ignominious defeats. For Ottomanist, monarchist, academic, and nationalist intellectuals all tend to stress the former while ignoring the latter.³⁴ Defeats and tragedies receive attention not as indicators of national incapacity, but as a warning and admonition (lest we forget) for traps and pitfalls that should not be allowed to reoccur.³⁵ Thus, commemoration enables the producers of the Ottomanist, monarchist, academic ideology and nationalism to either erase a problematic past or turn it into a lesson.

The shaping of memory allows the past to be reevaluated into a meaningful, teleological account of history: "Each act of commemoration

reproduces a commemorative narrative, a story about a particular past that accounts for this ritualized remembrance and provides a moral message for the group members.”³⁶ This narrative defines the periodization of the nation’s history, determines the relative importance of the events and individuals that comprise its content, and, by exclusion, mandates what is trivial and best forgotten.

One important point that should be emphasized in this context is that public commemoration incorporates a multiplicity of “memories.” Various forces within civil society mark their interests by generating their own monuments, narratives, and rituals. Different communities of memory take tangible shapes in different communities of commemoration. Each community of commemoration has a distinctive commemorative portfolio from which it draws in an attempt to convince wider society of the validity of its memory of the past and the wisdom of its vision for the future. A variety of groups utilize commemorative objects, ceremonies, song, and even texts as weapons in an endless contest for national hegemony. Opposition groups create subversive counter-narratives of commemoration in order to challenge prevailing master narratives constructed by dominant groups.³⁷ These subgroups constantly endeavor to set an alternative agenda for the nation, using their forms of counter-commemoration to promote their ideological and political preferences.³⁸

In modern times, agencies connected with the state-incumbent governments, royal families, ministries of education, and public, provincial, or municipal authorities have often had the greatest impetus to reshape national sites of commemoration and mold collective memory. However, we ought to remember that the official agencies do not always monopolize the content and themes of public commemoration and collective memory.³⁹ Particularly in pluralist societies, public commemoration is often initiated by a variety of civilian intellectual groups and individuals. Much recent scholarship on public commemoration rightly distinguishes between official commemoration, initiated and organized by the state, and unofficial commemoration, conducted by various groups within civil society.

In their work titled *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan recommended the adoption of a “social agency approach” to the study of collective memory and public commemoration, emphasizing the importance of “secondary” agents of commemoration and memory, and non-official groups and individuals who represent the different communities of memory within a society.⁴⁰ First and foremost, Winter and Sivan stress the role of “second- and third-order

elites within civil society” in reproducing collective memory: The social organization of remembrance tends to be decentralized. This claim shifts the emphasis in this field “away from the central organization of the state [...] towards civil society groupings, their leaders and activists.”⁴¹

Focusing on the role of non-official actors in producing memory is not meant to deny that the state and its agencies are often “a major producer and choreographer of commemoration.”⁴² However, it does draw attention to the fact that public commemoration and collective remembrance are the result of an ongoing process of dialog, negotiation, and contestation between a variety of agents working within civil society and those associated with the state.

One dichotomy that has become popular in the academic literature dealing with collective memory and commemoration is John Bodnar’s distinction between “official” and “vernacular” forms of memory. Official memory is the creature of activities performed by “representatives of an overreaching or official culture.” Such official agents usually “share a common interest in social unity, the continuity of existing institutions, and loyalty to the status quo.” Vernacular forms of memory “represent an array of specialized interest that is grounded in parts of the whole.” Rather than providing an idealistic emphasis on unity and the covering-over of the manifold characteristic of the official culture, vernacular culture gives voice to “views of reality” emerging from first-hand experience in small communities rather than the “imagined communities of a large nation.”⁴³

Nevertheless, Bodnar contends that it is not always possible to differentiate between official and vernacular forms of memory. Rather, he emphasized that “public memory emerged from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions.”⁴⁴

Bearing in mind Bodnar’s thesis, this study focuses on selected forms of official and public commemoration developed in the era of the Egyptian parliamentary monarchy, from 1919 to 1952, often considered “Egypt’s liberal age” or “liberal experiment.” With political parties competing with each other and vigorous, if not raucous, press occupying the public sphere, the state was only one among many agents which enabled public commemoration. While it is true that in some cases the processes of commemoration initiated by non-official groups or associations eventually gained the state’s stamp of approval and sometimes also its financial support, this was mostly not the case. More often, commemoration was produced by agents emerging from within Egyptian civil society—political parties, ad hoc lobbies, and individual entrepreneurs. Hence, through critically examining

popular periodicals, the present study also devoted considerable attention to the systematic examination of non-official agents of public commemoration, and the projects and narratives which, together, constitute Egypt's "vernacular" culture of memory.⁴⁵

This study deals with two groups of intellectuals: "luminaries," or "great thinkers," on the one hand, and "secondary agents" on the other. The "luminaries" were those to whom Edward Shils referred as "productive intellectuals."⁴⁶ The luminaries outlined the contours of a future Egyptian identity. The group of "secondary agent" intellectuals (i.e., those discovering or disseminating, rather than shaping, narratives) included historians, professionals, artists, editors, and university professors.⁴⁷ These agents played an important role in the recreation, dissemination, and consolidation of new imagery and ideology.⁴⁸ Thanks to the "secondary" intellectuals, the "great thinkers" were able to communicate with the Egyptian public. In this context, the question of how the Mamluks were perceived by both groups of intellectuals will be compared to the manipulation of Mamluk history by nationalist intellectuals. Thus, the present study attempts to examine whether Mamluk history contributed to the emergence and development of new Egyptian nationalism, and if so, to what extent.

Two sections of this study each address a distinct system of historical memory of the Mamluks. The first offers a critical analysis of Egyptian school textbooks and historical works of the 'Ābdīn Project, thus discerning "official forms" of historical memory of the Mamluk era.

The second section of this study will focus on "public forms" of commemoration of the Mamluks and Mamluk era, as mirrored in three kinds of Egyptian historical literature. Firstly, popular periodicals provide a diverse discourse on the Mamluks, or even conflicting interpretations of historic events and characters. Above all, these sources are useful in tracing how the "secondary agent" intellectuals represented the Mamluks, as the periodical was their main medium of historical discourse. From the range of material on the Mamluks, this study will concentrate on three main historiographical trends: academic, monarchist, and nationalist. The following are the most significant periodicals in this context: *al-Hilāl*, *al-Risāla*, *al-Manār*, *al-Thaqāfa*, and *al-Muqtataf*.

In addition to the periodicals, Egypt's popular culture was also reflected in its novels, short stories, and plays. Historical novels and plays are not just storytelling, but may also serve as effective media for political propaganda. Indeed, the writer often presents selected historical facts and characters, thereby reshaping them to offer a new understanding of the past. As Georg

Lukács noted, “What matters [...] in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events.”⁴⁹ Accordingly, this study offers a critical analysis of the various political positions that shaped the Mamluk narrative. Moreover, the popular historical novels and plays may also provide insights into the popular discourse on the Mamluks within Egyptian society.

Lastly, since historians were the primary creators of Egyptian historical discourse, it is essential to examine their narratives in order to critically address the representations of the Mamluks. Above all, through this source I will address the mainstream depictions of the Mamluks in the Egyptian historical discourse. As previously noted, the four separate historiographical trends that emerged between 1919 and 1952, by nationalist, Ottomanist, monarchist, and academic historians, represent different facets of the Mamluk narrative.

NOTES

1. Egyptian historians in this study viewed local Egyptian rulers who emerged after the dissolution of the Mamluk Sultanate by the Ottomans in 1517 as Mamluk leaders. Concerning the re-emergence of the Mamluks after 1517, see Michael Winter, “The re-emergence of the Mamluks following the Ottoman conquest,” in Thomas Philipp and Ulich Haarmann (eds.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), ch.5; David Ayalon, “The end of the Mamluk Sultanate: Why did the Ottomans spare the Mamluks of Egypt and wipe out the Mamluks of Syria?,” in David Ayalon, *Islam and The Abode of War* (Aldershot: Variorum Reprints, 1994), ch.9. However, Ehud Toledano and Jane Hathaway argue that those who emerged after the defeat of the Mamluk Sultanate by the Ottomans were not Mamluks, as identified by many Egyptian historians, but Ottoman–Egyptian elite. See Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of Qazdaglis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Ehud R. Toledano, “The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elites (1700–1900): A Framework for Research,” in Ilan Pappé and Moshe Maoz (eds.), *Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas: A History from Within* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997), pp. 145–162.
2. See, however, Paul Starkey, “Egyptian History in the Modern Egyptian Novel,” in Hugh Kennedy (ed.), *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt, c.950–1800* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2001), pp. 251–262; Yael Kimron, *Perception of the Egyptian Mamluk Past by Modern Egyptian Historians* (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Tel-Aviv University, 2000). Concerning the Mamluk image from the rise of the Ottoman Empire to the nineteenth

- century, see Paula Sanders, *Creating Medieval Cairo* (Cairo: American University in Cairo, 2008). Concerning the Turk and the Mamluk image from the Abbasids to modern Egypt, see Ulich Haarmann, "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab image of the Turk from the Abbasids to Modern Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 20 (1988), pp. 175–196. Concerning the medieval perception of al-Zāhir Baybars, see Amina A. Elbendary, "The Sultan, The Tyrant, and The Hero: Changing Medieval Perceptions of al-Zāhir Baybars," *Mamluk Studies Review*, Vol. 5, 2001, pp. 141–155.
3. Yael Kimron's unpublished MA thesis, however, deals with the perception of the Mamluks by Egyptian historians; see Yael Kimron (2000), *Perception of the Egyptian Mamluk Past*.
 4. For early modern historiographical works (1800–1900), see Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, *Al-Ta'rikh wa al-Mu'arrikhūn fī Miṣr fī al-Qarn al-Tāsi* "Asbar" (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1958); Jack A. Crabbs, *The Writing of History in Nineteenth-Century Egypt: A Study in National Transformation* (Cairo: American Univ. of Cairo Press, 1984). For twentieth-century historiographical works, see Youssef Choueiri, *Arab History and the Nation-State: A Study in Modern Arab Historiography, 1820–1980* (London: Routledge, 1989); 'Abd al-Mun'im Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī al-Jumay'ī, *Ittijāhāt al-Kitāba al-Ta'rikhiyya fī Ta'rikh Miṣr al-Ḥadīth wa al-Mu'āṣir* (Cairo: 'Ayn lil Dirāsāt wa'l Buḥūth al-Insāniyya wa'l Ijtimā'iyya, 1994); Thomas Mayer, *The Changing Past: Egyptian Historiography of the 'Urabi Revolt, 1882–1938* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998); Anthony Gorman, *Historians, States and Politics in Twentieth-Century Egypt: Contesting the Nation* (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2003); Yael Kimron (2000), op. cit; Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writing in Twentieth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Yoav Di-Capua, *The Thought and Practice of Modern Egyptian Historiography, 1890–1970* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2004).
 5. Yoav Di-Capua (2004), *The Thought and Practice*; Idem, (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*.
 6. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, pp. 5–9.
 7. For the case of Ottoman history in Egyptian historiography, see Ehud Toledano, "Forgetting Egypt's Ottoman Past," *Jama'a* (Beer-Sheva) 1 (Jan. 1997) [Hebrew], pp. 67–87; Idem, "Forgetting Egypt's Ottoman Past," in Jayne Warner, (ed.), *Cultural Horizons: A Festschrift in Honor of Talat S. Halman*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), pp. 150–167.
 8. Paul Starkey (2001), "Egyptian History in the Modern Egyptian Novel."

9. Starkey deals with the following novels and play, respectively: Jūrjī Zaydān's *Al-Mamlūk al-Shārid*, Muḥammad Sa'īd al-'Aryān's *Alā Bāb Zuwayla*, Muḥammad Fa'rīd Abū Ḥadīd's *Ibnat al-Mamlūk*, Gamāl al-Ghīṭānī's *Al-Zaynī Barakāt*, and Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's *Al-Sulṭān al-Hā'ir*.
10. Yael Kimron (2000), *Perception of the Egyptian Mamluk Past* and Ulrich Haarmann (1988), "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity."
11. Ulrich Haarmann (1988), "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity," pp. 181–185.
12. Yael Kimron (2000), *Perception of the Egyptian Mamluk Past*, p. V.
13. *Ibid.*, p. VI.
14. For example, see Ḥusayn Mu'nīs, *Al-Sharq al-Islāmī fī al-'Aṣr al-Ḥadīth*, 2nd edition. (Cairo, 1938); Muḥammad Rif'at, *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭa* (Dār al-Ma'arif bi-Miṣr, 1948), pp. 155–158; Muḥammad Rif'at, *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭa* (Dār al-Ma'arif bi-Miṣr, 1928), pp. 178–179; 'Abd al-Raḥman Zakī, *Ma'ārik Ḥāsima fī Ta'rīkh Miṣr: Damiyāt wa al-Manṣūra* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Nil 1945), pp. 29, 39, 62–83; Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, *Mujmal Ta'rīkh Damiyāt: Siyāsiyan wa Iqtisādiyyan* (Cairo, 1949).
15. Yael Kimron (2000), *Perception of the Egyptian Mamluk Past*.
16. Paul Starkey (2001), "Egyptian History in the Modern Egyptian Novel."
17. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 143.
18. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1986), *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs*, p. 144.
19. King Fu'ād initiated an extensive historiographical project at his 'Ābdīn Palace in 1920. The project lasted more than twenty-five years and involved a host of foreign archivists, philologists, and historians such as Eugenio Griffini, Jean Deny, Angelo Sammarco, and Pierre Crabitès. This introduced the monarchist project to Egyptian historiography, and the first "public archive" was established in Egypt. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 12. For further reference, see Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *op. cit.*, ch. 3.
20. Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writing in Twentieth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p. 13.
21. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p. 13.
22. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 1.
23. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 11.
24. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (2004), *Commemorating the Nation*, p. 1.

25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., p. 2.
27. Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover, NH, 1993), p. 73.
28. Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris, 1925) partially translated by Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992), p. 38.
29. Ibid.
30. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire," *Representations*, special issue on memory edited by Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Stern, 26 (Spring 1989), p. 7.
31. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (2004), *Commemorating the Nation*, p. 3.
32. Ibid., pp. 8–9.
33. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* 2nd edition (London, 1991), p. 7.
34. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (2004), *Commemorating the Nation*, p. 8.
35. On this kind of manipulation of history by nationalist historians, see Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, 1995), pp. 153–208.
36. Ibid., p. 6.
37. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (2004), *Commemorating the Nation*, p.12.
38. Alon Confino, "AHR Forum: Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 5 (December 1997), pp. 1397–1403.
39. On the limitation of state as official agency, see Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1999), pp.29–30, 38; Israel Gershoni, *Pyramid for the Nation: Commemoration, Memory and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Egypt* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved Publishers Ltd, 2006)[in Hebrew], p. 40.
40. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (1999), eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 29-31.
41. Ibid., p. 38.
42. Ibid., pp. 38–39.
43. John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 13–14.
44. John Bodnar (1992), *Remaking America*, p. 13.
45. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski (2004), *Commemorating the Nation*, p. 17.

46. Edward Shils, "Intellectuals, Tradition, and the Traditions of Intellectuals: Some Preliminary Considerations," in S.N. Eisenstadt and S.R. Graubard (eds.), *Intellectuals and Tradition* (New York, 1992). Vol. 1, pp. 21–34.
47. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1986), op. cit., pp. 89–90.
48. Israel Gershoni, *The Emergence of Pan-Arabism in Egypt*, The Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies (Tel-Aviv, 1981), pp. 27–28. For further discussion on "second rank" intellectuals, see Edward Shils (1992) op. cit., p. 410.
49. Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962), p. 42.

Representations of the Mamluks in School Textbooks (1921–1949)

School textbooks have unique characteristics as a literary genre. A textbook (and not only the official government-ordained one) reflects the society it is designed to serve, its problems and aspirations, the nature of its regime, and its guiding ideological values.¹ Textbooks thus function as a sort of “supreme historical court” whose task is to decipher “from all the accumulated ‘pieces of the past’ the true collective memories which are appropriate for inclusion in the canonical national historical narrative.” In constructing the collective memory, textbooks play a dual role: on the one hand, they provide a sense of continuity between the past and the present, transmitting accepted historical narratives; on the other, they alter or rewrite the past in order to meet contemporary needs.²

The manipulation of the past often involves the use of stereotypes and prejudice in describing the “other”—the “categorization of groups into extreme negative social categories which are excluded from human groups that are considered as acting within the limits of acceptable norms and / or values.”³ Moreover, school textbooks are written using easy vocabulary and simplified composition in order that the readers, mostly students, can learn and understand them efficiently.

One more general remark as to textbooks, especially those on geography, history, and the like, is relevant. Many studies have shown that even where there is no intention to distort the facts or garble the data, the textbooks of one state almost never provide a proper, fair description of another.⁴ It is common knowledge that textbooks in social science and

humanities do not merely convey an objective body of information. In other words, textbooks tend to provide exaggerated, stereotyped, simplified, and biased knowledge in emotional tones in order to appeal effectively to the readers.

Another crucial characteristic of school textbooks (published by the Ministry of Education) is that they are certain to have the widest and most clearly defined audiences. For example, although it cannot be taken for granted that these textbooks reach exactly that number of readers due to a relatively high percentage of pupils never even achieving literacy, data on the Egyptian educational system indicates a readership of millions of pupils and their parents and tens of thousands of teachers.⁵ However, the importance of textbooks also lies in the fact that they are produced for local consumption and are therefore free of the constraints that would be applied in producing material for foreign scrutiny.⁶

In this chapter, therefore, the school textbooks will be perceived as a product of a particular zeitgeist, reflecting the author's values and beliefs regarding a certain historical point as only his own authentic one. Karl Mannheim clearly points out the importance of context in understanding a certain thought by indicating that "it is not men in general who think, or even isolated individuals who do the thinking, but men in certain groups who have developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of responses to certain typical situations characterizing their common position." By the same token, Mannheim asserts that

It is incorrect to say that the single individual thinks. Rather it is more correct to insist that he participates in thinking further what other men have thought before him. He finds himself in an inherited situation with patterns of thought which are appropriate to this situation and attempts to elaborate further the inherited modes of response or to substitute others for them in order to deal more adequately with the new challenges which have arisen out of the shifts and changes in his situation.⁷

Hence, it is crucial to explain the socio-political context of textbooks as much as text itself.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, Egyptian nationalist historical writers committed to rewrite Egyptian history through Egypt's own perspective, rather than Arab-Islamic historiography, or the Western historiography of European Orientalists.⁸ This nationalist reinterpretation focused mainly on the discourse of emancipation and rehabilitation, urging Egyptians to

free their collective memory from the trace of foreign histories, remove their historical awareness of imposed prejudices, and rediscover a distinct Egyptian collective memory that could serve as the strong foundation for a new Egyptianist national consciousness. For the Egyptian nationalists, rewriting Egyptian history “as it actually was” meant recreating the history of Egypt in a way that stressed its “territorial essence,” that is, the millennial and paramount bond between the Nile Valley and the people of Egypt.⁹

In addition, the historians of the 1920s rejected Thomas Carlyle’s personalist historical approach, which strongly stressed the role of gifted individuals in reshaping history, and espoused instead the positivist paradigm with an emphasis on the importance of impersonal factors focusing on the Egyptian nation and people.¹⁰ Accordingly, the main protagonists of Egyptian history are not the great rulers, kings, or dynasties but rather the Egyptian nation and people. Egyptian history is the unfolding of destiny determined by impersonal, objective, and collective factors.¹¹ Thus, all Egyptians are the collective national hero of Egyptian history. The fundamental task of the nationalist historian is to “Egyptianize the past” (*tamṣīr al-mādi*) by liberating Egyptian history from an exaggerated emphasis on the activity of kings and rulers and stressing instead the importance of native Egyptian environment and social structure and collective forces.¹²

Another important historical context of the 1920s and early 1930s we should remember is that the nationalist historical writers embraced Hippolyte Taine’s theory of environmental determinism. The Nile Valley population, long subject to the continuous influence of an unflinching physical environment, evolved an independent history that was governed by indigenous laws and was unaffected by externalities. In the words of prominent Egyptian intellectual Aḥmad Ḥusayn, “Egyptian history is nothing but the history of Egyptian who has dwelt for thousands of years (in the environment) of the Nile Valley.”¹³ This environmental determinism generates the “law of assimilation,” according to which all peoples, races, religions, cultures, and languages that come into contact with the Nile Valley and with the nation dwelling there inevitably surrender to the Nile Valley’s physical and cultural superiority and are completely assimilated.¹⁴

As for Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, the “fusion” (*indimāḡ*) of non-Egyptians into the Egyptian personality (*al-shakhsīyya al-miṣriyya*) was a primary process in the country’s long history. “Egypt’s history” he wrote, “from the Pharaohs to the contemporary period is the ‘history of fusion’

(*ta'rīkh al-indimāf*) between all those who sought to invade Egypt, and the inhabitants of Egypt... The Hyksos, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arab, the Mamluks, all became Egyptians who accepted the authority of Egypt and who completely embodied the spirit of the Nile Valley."¹⁵

In the early 1930s, a similar pattern to that of the 1920s is found in the historical literatures of the "second rank" intellectuals. These intellectuals assimilated the Mamluk past into the Egyptian collective memory as follows:

Invaders such as the Hyksos, the Persians, the Nubians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, and the Mamluk and Ottoman Turks were all held to have had not the slightest effect on the stability and strength of the Egyptian national personality. Instead, that personality had stamped its characteristics upon them, Egyptianized them, and made them subject to Egyptian historical patterns.¹⁶

However, in the late 1930s, many Egyptian historians and intellectuals shifted their support from territorial nationalism to supra-Egyptian nationalism, comprising three different ideological features: Islamic Egyptian nationalism, integral Egyptian nationalism, and Egyptian Arab nationalism. 'Abd Allah Afifi, Muḥammad Sulaymān, Muṣṭafā al-Rifā'ī al-Lubbān, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Sa'īd, Ismā'īl Shalabī Sha'afān, and Ḥasan al-Bannā embraced Islamic Egyptian nationalism,¹⁷ with a fundamental emphasis on the unity of Muslim history.

On the other hand, integralist Egyptian nationalists, such as Aḥmad Ḥusayn,¹⁸ Faṭḥī Raḍwān, Ibrāhīm Jum'a,¹⁹ Ḥusayn Mu'nis, Maḥmūd Kāmīl,²⁰ Fikrī Abāza, Maḥmūd al-Manjūrī,²¹ and Sulaymān Ḥuzayyīn, narrated history from a different perspective. In contrast to the Egyptian nationalists of the 1920s, who viewed Arabs as foreign conquerors, integralists noted the symbiosis between Arabs (Muslims) and Egyptians.²² According to the integralist narrative, Egypt's primacy in the Muslim world was unquestioned under the string of independent dynasties that ruled Egypt from the Ṭūlūnids to the Mamluks. Under these dynasties, Egypt became a leader of Islam and defended Islam from the Crusaders and Mongols. Indeed, on the whole, integral Egyptian nationalists regarded the Mamluk Sultanate positively.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, many integral nationalists made the ideological shift to Egyptian Arab nationalism, which resulted from the extensive contact with neighboring Arab countries.²³ Likewise, Islamic

nationalism, integral nationalism, and Arab Egyptian nationalism dismissed the exclusivist territorial nationalist ideology and, instead, tended toward the Arabism of Egypt as a part of Egypt's Muslim identity.²⁴ In the Arab nationalist narrative, postulating that all Arab regions share a common historical destiny, the division of Arab history into Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian, and others derived from the recent, arbitrary fragmentation of the Arab nations caused by imperialism.²⁵

In the territorialist narrative the environment of the Nile Valley and from which the independent Egyptian personality originated are said to have completely assimilated Islam and Arab culture.²⁶ The Islamic-Arab narrative, by contrast, considers Islam and Arab cultures the reshapers of Egypt in an Islamic-Arab image. Thus, Egypt's Islamic-Arab characteristics and the Islamic religious spirit of its people were the country's cornerstone in defeating its external foes and in making Egypt the political and cultural center of Muslim civilization.²⁷

Bearing the context of Egyptian nationalism in mind, we also should take into account an interest of a given regime in historical writing as another context of the school textbooks, because these are produced under the strict supervision of the Ministry of Education and the regime. It is true that most regimes tend to make tremendous efforts in reforming the educational system and in rewriting school textbooks in accordance with the regime's new platform. Why then is the regime particularly interested in school textbooks? What kind of positive role did they possibly play for the regime?

According to Howard Mehlinger, textbooks are the modern version of village storytellers, since they "are responsible for conveying to youth what adults believe they should know about their own cultures as well as those of other societies." In his opinion, none of the socialization instruments can be compared to textbooks "in their capacity to convey a uniform, approved, even official version of what youths should believe."²⁸ In addition, textbooks carry the authority of print. Written texts, according to David Olson, "are devices which separate speech from speaker, and that separation in itself makes the words impersonal, objective and above criticism." In his opinion, textbooks resemble religious rituals since both "are devices for putting ideas and beliefs above criticism."²⁹

All of this taken together, it can safely be concluded that textbooks may serve as an efficient ideological apparatus for regimes in power to promote a certain belief system and legitimize an established political and social order. Of many subjects, most regimes manipulate history as one

of the main mediums to diffuse nationalistic ideologies into not only students but also parents and even teachers. Arab intellectual Hisham Sharabi describes the unique function of history in the Arab mentality as follows:

The past ... lives in us and among us, it permeates our behavior in private and in public, in our interpersonal relationships, in customs of marriage and divorce, in rituals of birth and death, in all that immense heritage of traditions accumulated for thousands of years. A reinterpretation of this past is in order for this will better enable us to elucidate the present and to look at the future.³⁰

Considering this unique function of history, it is logical for a regime to manipulate history in order to validate the values and norms of its reborn nation, crystallizing its rediscovered personality and enhancing its self-image and self-representation.³¹

What the Egyptian monarchy sought most from history writing was to glorify Muḥammad ‘Alī and his descendants, such as Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl. King Fuād’s history-writing project reflected this trend well. He initiated an extensive historiographical project in 1920, which is referred to as the ‘Ābdīn Project, in order to rewrite Egyptian history from the point of view of Egyptian monarchy.³² Hence, monarchist historians mainly focused on reforms and developments in administration, the army, public works, and education during the period of Muḥammad ‘Alī and his descendants. In sum, this chapter examines the ways in which the Mamluks and the Mamluk era are represented in two historiographic trends: Egyptian nationalist and monarchist historiography. As we shall see, the first had a more prominent impact on the representations of the Mamluks than the second. It is to these interesting and multifold representations of the past, particularly that of the Mamluks, which we now turn.

TEXTBOOKS OF THE 1920S

Mamluk Sultanate Periods

The issue of Mamluk identity may be one of the most important barometers for unpacking the Mamluk representation. Although some 1920s textbooks define the Mamluks as Turks³³ or non-Arabs,³⁴ one textbook, influenced by Egyptian nationalism, transforms Sultan Baybars into the King of Egypt.³⁵

Similarly, some authors of textbooks reinterpret the war between the Mamluks and Ottomans, representing it as one between Egypt and the Ottomans: “The Ottomans killed Sultan al-Ghawrī during the war between the Ottoman Turks and the Egyptians, and, as a result, Egypt was annexed to the Ottoman Empire.”³⁶ One textbook even identified the Mamluk dynasty with Egypt: “Egypt ceased to be one of the great independent dynasties following the collapse of the Mamluk rule in 1517.”³⁷

Among many other Mamluk leaders, Sultan Baybars appears in many ways as the predominant and most positive symbol of the Mamluks. He is described as the most famous and successful Bahārī Mamluk Sultan, with outstanding military achievements, such as the reorganization of the army, fleet-building, and stopping the Mongol invasion of Egypt, in 1260, at ‘Ayn Jālūt.³⁸ An even greater accomplishment is that he succeeded in bringing ‘Abbāsīd Caliph Mustanṣir to Cairo.³⁹ Nevertheless, Baybars was not represented as a perfect hero. In order to overcome the Mongols, he appears to have had a diplomatic arrangement with the Crusaders.⁴⁰

In addition to Baybars, there are other positive references to the Mamluks. First and foremost, the Mamluk era is praised as the zenith of political, cultural, architectural, and religious development. Politically, the King of the Bahārī Mamluks achieved geographical expansion and gained rule over the Euphrates Peninsula as well as Hijaz, Cyrenaica, and Dongola.⁴¹ Through this territorial expansion, Cairo became the center of a prosperous and glorious Islamic culture, gathering riches from the East and the West. The Mamluks even appeared to compete among themselves in the building of mosques, Khans, schools, roads, residences, caravansaries, hostels (*fundaqs*), and pools.⁴² In particular, this textbook emphasizes that “Kings of Islam, Mamluks, Ayyūbids, and Ottomans repaired the Harm al-Sharif by renovation and restoration.”⁴³ Progress was also evident in the fields of art, science, and trade.⁴⁴

Regarding the origin of the Mamluks, 1920s textbooks adopted a theory that is now widely accepted among scholars. The majority of textbooks note that the Mamluks stemmed from the ‘Abbāsīd period: “The Caliphs of the ‘Abbāsīd dynasty used the services of many Mamluks as soldiers and guards to protect themselves against Arab tribes such as the Umayyad and the ‘Alawis.”⁴⁵ Another textbook mentions that “the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs commenced to use many Mamluks to protect themselves against the Arabs and their power increased.”⁴⁶

Some textbooks ascribe the Caliph’s dethronement by the Mamluks to the latter’s increasing numbers: “It was a mistake to invite a great numbers

of Mamluks as they denied the succession of throne by the caliph's son, as was the case with the sons of Mu'taṣim."⁴⁷ Another claims that "The increasing number of Turkish Mamluks controlled almost everything in the country, even matters pertaining to the palace and to the weakened Kurdish and Arab populations."⁴⁸

The Ottoman Periods

Before embarking on a discussion of the Ottoman periods, we should keep in mind that according to the Egyptian school books discussed in this chapter, the Mamluks succeeded in surviving and even ruling the local provinces of the Ottoman Empire following the downfall of the Mamluk dynasty in 1517.⁴⁹

Depicted as an early hero of Egyptian nationalism, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr is presented as the most important historical figure during the Ottoman periods. One history book asserts that 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr even achieved Egypt's independence from the Ottomans and refused to pay the Sublime Port *Kharaj* (land tax).⁵⁰ According to a different textbook, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr's rule can even be considered the Mamluks' most glorious medieval regime.⁵¹ This textbook provides a detailed account of 'Alī Bey's military campaign, adding that 'Alī Bey attempted to strengthen Egypt by dispatching armies into Arab cities and conquering Jeddah in order to gain access to the Indian trade route and protect navigation of the Red Sea. This led to the submission of the entire Arabian Peninsula.⁵² For these reasons, it was not easy for the Ottomans to remove him from the throne. They could only, with great difficulty, regain control over Egypt through a plot against 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and with the help of another Mamluk leader, Muḥammad Bey Abū al-Dhahab.⁵³

In contrast to the Mamluk Sultanate era, Mamluk leaders, except for 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr, are portrayed as outdated and treacherous. The negative representations of Murād and Ibrāhīm Bey are particularly remarkable. Murād and Ibrāhīm Bey fought against the French army and were met with heavy canon fire.⁵⁴ Inevitably, they fled from the French army,⁵⁵ stealing money (*amwāl*) and, more significantly, trade profits.⁵⁶ Therefore, the French presence in Egypt is attributed to the Mamluks: "France could stay in Egypt due to the mistake made by the Mamluks."⁵⁷

One history book suggests two convincing explanations for the Mamluk defeat. First, the Mamluks made strategic mistakes,⁵⁸ ignoring battle tactics, and, second, they were deluded by their own courage and previous victories.⁵⁹

The manner in which Muḥammad Alī's massacre of the Mamluks in 1811 is depicted is of the greatest importance in our discussion. Through this episode we may not only examine the representation of the relationship between Muḥammad 'Alī and the Mamluks, but also learn about the attitudes of monarchist historians toward the Mamluks. In light of the influence of monarchist historiography, one would expect validations of the massacre and these rationalizations to have been examined in detail. One history school book justified the massacre by hinting that Muḥammad 'Alī feared the Mamluks would attack Egypt.⁶⁰ Obviously, this justification of the Mamluk massacre should be understood in light of the Egyptian Ministry of Education's wish to glorify Muḥammad 'Alī's reign.

In sum, two points should be raised for our discussion. First, under the influence of territorial Egyptian nationalism, the 1920s school books represented the Mamluk and Mamluk history from an Egyptianist viewpoint by reshaping prominent Mamluk sultans (such as Baybars) as Egyptians and by depicting 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr as a symbol of Egyptian nationalism. Second, the 1920s textbooks reflected monarchist historical views to some extent by justifying the Mamluk massacre by Muḥammad 'Alī.

From a perspective of Egyptian nationalism, Jane Hathaway offers an interesting idea in which nationalization of the Mamluks under Ottoman rule is revealed in the factionalism of Faqaris and Qasimis in seventeenth-century Egypt. Each individual faction can incorporate members from disparate backgrounds by imbuing them with a sense of group cohesion; this is particularly noticeable in a society in which two factions predominate, since few things foster unity like hostility toward a common foe. In such circumstances, the factions themselves had to serve as a source of cohesion and community feeling.⁶¹

In this respect, the origin myths that contributed to factional cohesion are invented traditions in the manner of Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger's classic edited volume. In most, if not all, of the cases in this volume, the traditions in question served a nationalistic purpose: to strengthen or even to create nationalist sentiment by fostering a sense of group cohesion. In the case of our factions, no nationalist purpose is served, although the tales are unquestionably used to foster group cohesion. These invented traditions, in their turn, create collective memory of the sort on which group cohesion depends.⁶² However, the school textbooks did not deal with the factionalism between Faqaris and Qasimis in a serious manner.

TEXTBOOKS OF THE 1930s

Mamluk Sultanate Periods

Among the three different tiers of supra-Egyptian nationalism discussed above, the impact of integralist Egyptian nationalism on the representation of the Mamluks is remarkable in the 1930s textbooks, as can be seen in the case Muḥammad Rifʿat. Rifʿat clearly reflects integralist Egyptian nationalism by emphasizing the Arab assimilation into Egypt.

It was not long after their invasion of Egypt until the Arabs began to mix with the local and village culture and married Egyptian women. After converting to the faith and fortifying their dwellings, Arab soldiers forgot their traditions, neglected their missions and began farming.⁶³

Another significant indication that must be raised is that Rifʿat began to relocate Egypt and the Egyptians in the context of the Arab sphere in order to meet the expectations of those who shifted their ideology from Egyptian territorial nationalism to Egyptian Arab nationalism. This new and important trend is found only in post-1930s textbooks.

Despite this change, Rifʿat continues to represent the Mamluks in Egyptianist terms. He seeks the Mamluk origins in Egypt from the Fāṭimid Caliphate, rather than the ‘Abbāsīd dynasty, claiming that the Caliphate first used Mamluks in Egypt as it aspired to emulate ‘Abbāsīd in Baghdad.⁶⁴

Compared to the 1920s textbooks, no significant change is made in the identity and positive representations of the Mamluk Sultanate. Rifʿat defines the Mamluks as the majority of white slaves, who were prisoners of war or were purchased on the slave market.⁶⁵ Above all, the Baḥrī Mamluk era was represented positively as one of Egypt’s most powerful regimes, having the largest numbers of followers and lasting for 130 years.⁶⁶ The Qalāwūn family, on the other hand, endured for approximately 100 years. Moreover, the Crusaders’ defeat is attributed to the power of the Mamluks, who, invigorated with this success, took the throne from the Ayyūbids.⁶⁷

In contrast to the Baḥrī Mamluks, the Circassian Mamluks are described in far more negative terms, marking their inability to instate an independent regime due to Circassian Sultans’ fierce and endless struggle for power.⁶⁸

Rifʿat's textbook, in particular, offers detailed information about the Mamluk slave system and society. According to this book, young Mamluks obtained political education and military training, and the lordship was granted to the one who showed the greatest political power and demonstrated excellent administrative skills.⁶⁹

Interestingly, Rifʿat offers a convincing explanation for the power struggle among the Mamluk leaders, arguing that it was derived from the Mamluk slave system. Rifʿat argues that “every Mamluk general (leader) owned bodyguards and officers who were in charge of the palace. In turn, many Mamluk generals split into various factions which fought each other for power.”⁷⁰

Like Rifʿat, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Muṣṭafā holds a positive view of the Mamluk Sultanate periods and compares them with the Ottoman periods: “In many ways the independent Mamluk Sultanate periods were more stable than the Ottoman periods and were marked by trade, agriculture, architecture and the progression of science, knowledge and production.”⁷¹

Of the many historical figures, the last Ayyūbid Sultan, Tūrānshāh, Sultana Shajarat al-Durr, Sultan Quṭuz, and Baybars stood out as heroes. Shajarat al-Durr is depicted in positive terms in that she persisted in the defense against the Crusaders after the king of Ṣālīḥ al-Ayyūb had passed away.⁷² Similarly, Tūrānshāh led the battle against the Crusaders at Fāriskūr, with the help of the Muslims. However, after the victory against the Crusaders, the Mamluks killed Tūrānshāh.⁷³

Rifʿat's textbook sketches Tūrānshāh's victory as follows: “The Muslims followed and caught them (the Crusaders) at Fāriskūr, 30,000 were killed and King Louis IX was imprisoned.”⁷⁴ The story of Tūrānshāh's battle against King Louis IX at Damietta should be noted since the Egyptians appeared to have played a part in the war.⁷⁵ The emphasis on the Egyptian role in the war indicates a shift from a monarchist position that emphasized a certain person or hero to an Egyptian nationalist attitude which viewed the collective Egyptian nation as the main engine of historical development.

In contrast to the 1920s textbooks that referred to Baybars, Quṭuz is presented as the hero who halted the Mongol invasion at ‘Ayn Jālūt in 1260. Baybars, on the other hand, is continuously praised as the Sultan who brought the Caliphate back to Cairo,⁷⁶ revived the Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn era in West Asia,⁷⁷ killed Quṭuz, and founded the Baḥrī Mamluk dynasty.⁷⁸ Baybars is also portrayed as a reformer who reorganized the port, the

fortress, the network system between Cairo and Syria, and the pigeon network (communication).⁷⁹

Much as in the 1920s textbooks, the Mamluks appeared to have contributed greatly to Egypt's excellence in the fields of art and architecture by the construction of artifacts and numerous buildings: Sultan Ḥasan and Qāyṭbāy mosque, schools, and hospitals.⁸⁰ Especially during the Mamluk Sultanate, Egyptian Islamic art (rather than Arabic art) flourished, such as with fountains, lamps, censers, pitchers, and gold-coated plates, by which Egypt became a glorious Islamic art center.⁸¹

Rif'at's textbook notes that the Mamluks won great fortunes from three trade routes between the East and West: the Suez route, from the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea to Suez; Alexandria, from the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates; and the land route to Constantinople—between East and West Asia.⁸² Moreover, the Mamluks appeared to have used this wealth to ease the living conditions of the poor.⁸³

The Ottoman Periods

As was the case in the period of the Mamluk Sultanate, integral Egyptian nationalism had a crucial impact on the representation of the Mamluks in the Ottoman periods. For instance, in his history book, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥīm Muṣṭafā offers one unusual explanation for the Mamluk survival following the downfall of the Mamluk dynasty by the Ottomans in 1517. Muṣṭafā provides a new insight into the Mamluk survival, by arguing that this was possible only after the Ottomans integrated into the Egyptian nation, in line with the theory of integral Egyptian nationalism.

In the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire weakened and Ottoman soldiers lost their courage and even integrated into the Egyptian nation. As a result, the Ottomans were forced to seek help from the Mamluks and a growing influence of the Mamluks made them Shaykh al-Balad.⁸⁴

No significant change can be traced in the positive representation of 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and Muḥammad 'Alī. 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr remains a symbol of Egyptian nationalism and independence. He became Shaykh al-Balad in 1763 and declared Egypt's independence from the Ottomans in 1766.⁸⁵ Having allied with Shaykh Zāhir, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr was involved in the war with Russia, spoke *khuṭba* in his name, and conquered Yemen, Jidda, Mecca, and the Arabian Peninsula.⁸⁶ With the help of successful military

campaigns, he gained the title of “Egyptian Sultan and ruler of the two seas.”⁸⁷ Around 1769, he embarked on another military battle over Syria with Muḥammad Bey Abū al-Dhahab, but due to the latter’s plot with the Turks (Ottomans), the campaign failed.⁸⁸

Similarly, Muḥammad ‘Alī is also represented as a nationalist leader, in his consent to cooperate with al-Bardīsī and in opposing not only the Turks (Ottomans), but also the Mamluk leader Muḥammad al-Alfī, who cooperated with the British army.⁸⁹

The episode of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s expulsion of ‘Umar Makram from Cairo in 1809 is one of the most important points in Muṣṭafā’s book.⁹⁰ At first glance, it is likely to indicate a negative view, blaming Muḥammad ‘Alī for ‘Umar Makram’s exile. However, the episode ends with a justification of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s measures, accusing numerous Egyptian nationalist leaders of constant conflict. In other words, Muḥammad ‘Alī had no choice but to exile ‘Umar Makram in order to prevent internal strife.⁹¹ Correspondingly, the massacre of the Mamluks by Muḥammad ‘Alī, in 1811, is also legitimized.

The story begins with the Mamluk refusal to help Muḥammad ‘Alī build a castle in Giza. Furthermore, the Mamluks refused to assist Muḥammad ‘Alī each time the latter requested it. It is told as follows: “Muḥammad ‘Alī must have felt the Mamluks’ betrayal and faithlessness and had no choice but to exile them.”⁹² Such a justification of the massacre perpetrated by Muḥammad ‘Alī may lead to the conclusion that 1930s textbooks reflect not only Egyptian nationalism but also a monarchist viewpoint.

After the French invasion of Egypt in 1798, the Mamluk image deteriorated rapidly. The Mamluk leader Murād escaped and went into hiding in Upper Egypt, as did Ibrāhīm Bey in Sharqiyya (northeastern Egyptian city).⁹³ In October 1798, the Egyptians stood up against the British, Turkish, and Mamluk oppression.⁹⁴ The Mamluks even attempted to regain the power they had held prior to the French expedition.⁹⁵

TEXTBOOKS OF THE 1940s

Mamluk Sultanate Periods

As mentioned above in the introduction, the new zeitgeist of Egyptian Arab nationalism predominated in Egypt’s intellectual discourse in the 1940s. It would be more accurate to assert that what occurred was a transformation from integralist Egyptian nationalism to Egyptian Arab

nationalism. Reflecting this trend, school textbooks of the 1940s express both forms of nationalism. It should be noted that the integralist Egyptian nationalism of the 1940s bears new features. The Egyptian influence on the foreign regime dates back to ancient times and was not limited to the Middle Ages:

Since ancient times Egyptian society had the power to influence foreign regimes in Egypt. Egypt succeeded in ‘Egyptianizing’ them through its language, rituals, and security. This occurred quickly as the foreigners were lacking a sense of nationality. Mamluks, Turks and others ruled over Egypt and became assimilated into the Egyptian people, remaining in the country as parts of it rather than foreign elements.⁹⁶

In the meantime, Egyptian Arab nationalism gives rise to an important shift in the relations between Arabs and Egypt, as reflected in the school books. Emphasizing Egypt’s crucial contribution to Arab society, a new and positive relationship is formulated between the Arabs and Egypt:

Arabs and Turks may have destroyed Egypt as conquerors, but they did mix with its inhabitants and with Copts and formed one group (*jamīʿ*) of Egyptian Umma.⁹⁷ Egypt’s Islamic tradition influenced Arab society and also had a remarkable effect on the Arab arts and social literature.⁹⁸

Even after the emergence of Egyptian Arab nationalism, the Egypt-centered viewpoint was still the primary framework for the representation of the Mamluks. Rifʿat refers to the Fāṭimid Caliphate as that which first used the Mamluks in Egypt to emulate ‘Abbāsīd in Baghdad.⁹⁹ Similarly, some 1940s textbooks viewed Egyptians rather than Mamluk leaders as masters of historical development: “When, in 1249, the Egyptians received the ominous news of the French march towards Egypt and the conquest of Damietta, they retreated to al-Manṣūra and fortified their positions there.”¹⁰⁰

This change also reshapes the interpretation of the battles. For example, the battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt is no longer simply a victory of the Mamluks over the Mongols, but rather a victory of Egypt over the Mongols. Quṭuz, rather than Baybars, defeated the Mongols in the battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt in 1260 and saved Egypt from the disaster of Mongol rule.¹⁰¹ Even Sultan Qalāwūn is depicted as an Egyptian Sultan,¹⁰² and the war between the Turks (Ottomans) and the Mamluks at Marj Dābiq near Aleppo is reinterpreted as a war between the Turks and the Egyptian army (not mentioning the Mamluks).¹⁰³

Interestingly enough, the Mamluks are also used as a symbol of Egyptian independence: “The last Circassian Mamluk Sultan, Ṭūmānbāy, was killed, and as a result Egypt lost its independence and became an Ottoman province.”¹⁰⁴

No significant change is found in the identity of the Mamluks. They were perceived as white slaves who were prisoners of war or were purchased on the slave market¹⁰⁵ and were trained for horse worship, battle skills, hunt, and the Quran.¹⁰⁶

The Mamluks are generally described in positive terms, apart from the Circassian Mamluks, who are accused of constantly fighting each other for power.¹⁰⁷ Rifʿat praises the Mamluks for being the most powerful race that helped to defeat the Crusaders,¹⁰⁸ and concludes that the Baḥrī Mamluks stayed for 130 years upholding Egypt as the greatest power and subduing its subjects.¹⁰⁹ Baybars is particularly praised for shaping Egypt’s supremacy.

Baybars re-established the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate in Cairo in the name of al-Mustaṣṣir. He was one of the greatest and most famous sultans and turned Egypt into a distinguished center.¹¹⁰

Moreover, Baybars’ territorial expansion is also used to glorify Egypt’s status in the region.

Baybars launched a military campaign in Nubia, where Christians still lived and attacked the Nubians of Dongola. The Christians were subdued under the first Muslim rule and were forced to pay Jiziya (poll tax). Egypt’s rule spanned from the upper Euphrates and Anatolia to Sudan.¹¹¹

As mentioned above, the Mamluks gained great fortunes from the trade route between the East and West, building mosques (Sultan Ḥasan and Qāyṭbāy mosque), schools, and hospitals, and even using the wealth to assist the poor.¹¹²

According to Rifʿat, the Mamluks made great contributions to the arts. The Mamluk period is described as the golden age of Egyptian Islamic art (for its fountains, lamps, censers, pitchers, and gold-coated plates).¹¹³

The Ottoman Periods

The 1940s textbooks continued to describe ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr as a symbol of Egyptian nationalism. One small but crucial difference is the fact that

the historical context is shifted from Egypt to a wider Arab framework. The implication of this change is that Egyptian Arab nationalism provided the books' authors with new insights into 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr.

'Alī Bey al-Kabīr achieved independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1768. He conquered Egypt and turned it into a part of the Arab world and also attempted to conquer Syria. If the Turks had not plotted with one of his followers, Muḥammad Bey Abū al-Dhahab, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr may have won the military campaign in Syria.¹¹⁴

The other textbooks present 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr in a positive light, depicting him as an independent Egyptian ruler. One textbook notes that after Egypt's declaration of independence, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr sent the *wali* designated by the Sublime Port back to Constantinople and refused to pay tribute to him. He minted coins under his own name with the inscription "Egyptian Sultan who revived the first Mamluk period." He even succeeded in allying with Shaykh Zāhir al-'Umar, ruler of Akko. One interesting and crucial feature found in this textbook is that it not only represents 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr as the most prominent of men, but also depicts him as the precursor of Muḥammad 'Alī.¹¹⁵ The comparison between the two clearly serves to glorify Muḥammad 'Alī by measuring him up to 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr. In addition, the 1811 Mamluk expulsion of Muḥammad 'Alī is presented as an inevitable measure for Egypt's defense: "In order to reform Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī had no choice but to slay the Mamluks, who were only responsible for Egypt's ruin, famine, war and destruction."¹¹⁶

Returning to our discussion, except for 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr the rest of the Mamluks are characterized as failed local rulers and as oppressors. Thus, their negative image prevails in most of the textbooks of the 1940s. Rif'at's book offers several explanations for the Mamluk defeat by Napoleon's army: chiefly, the Mamluks were neither well-trained nor well-organized, and could therefore not compete with the French army.¹¹⁷

The textbook points a finger at the Mamluk oppression as one of the main reasons for the 1798 revolt. For example, the people were oppressed by the internal plots among the Mamluk leaders and by the punishments inflicted on those who refused to partake in their religious rituals. Moreover, during the war with the French, the Mamluks are said to have hidden fortunes in the relics of Embabeh and transferred them to Syria.¹¹⁸

This negative description of the Mamluks is even found following the French withdrawal, when they attempted to restore their power. Rifa‘t’s textbook indicates that it was something other than factionalism within the Mamluks that weakened their power. The book implies that Muḥammad Bey al-Alfī sided with the English while the rest of the Mamluks sided with the French.¹¹⁹

CONCLUSION

The authors of school textbooks narrated the past in accordance with their own ideological and political beliefs. From the perspective of Egyptian nationalism, the 1920s textbooks reflected only territorial Egyptian nationalism. However, the cases of the 1930s and 1940s textbooks are quite different. These periods mark a tendency toward both territorial nationalism and Egyptian Arab nationalism. For instance, unlike the 1920s textbooks, the 1930s and 1940s textbooks locate Egypt and the Egyptians in an Arab sphere and stress the positive relations between Egyptians and Arabs. It can be concluded that, with the change in Egyptian nationalism, the representations of the Mamluks in the school textbooks gradually shifted from Egyptian territorial nationalism to Egyptian Arab nationalism. One interesting and crucial phenomenon that should be mentioned in this context is that the essence of Egyptian nationalism, the Egypt-centered view, prevails in the representations of the Mamluks in the school books throughout the discussed period.

As seen above, Egyptian nationalism is the most significant factor in the representations of the Mamluks, but it is not the only one. Egyptian monarchist historiography also represents the Mamluks from its own perspective. It is obvious that the aim of the monarchists was to glorify their forefathers in order to maintain a sense of legitimacy. Thus, most textbooks portray Muḥammad ‘Alī as a nationalist leader, attempting to justify the Mamluk massacre by presenting the Mamluks as an obstacle to Egypt’s progress.

Another important aspect of the Mamluk representations in the textbooks is that a sharp distinction is drawn between the Mamluk Sultanate periods and the Mamluks under Ottoman rule. The Baḥrī Mamluk Sultanate periods, including the Baḥrī Sultans, are represented as the zenith of political power, wealth, construction, and Islamic art. In contrast, the Circassian Mamluk periods are described as dark eras of internal power struggles. Particularly the Mamluks under Ottoman rule are

depicted as oppressors and dictators. The only positive exception is ‘Ali Bey al-Kabir, who is portrayed as a symbol of early Egyptian nationalism and independence. In conclusion, the textbook authors made selective use of Mamluk history, exploiting it to support their own ideological beliefs, such as Egyptian nationalism or pro-monarchist ideologies.

Critical history starts with dissatisfaction with conventional memory and a mission to correct its deficiencies. However, there is more than one kind of discomfort with the current way of remembering. The critical scholar may be dissatisfied with what is remembered in history since he thinks that it is inaccurate, insufficient, and/or misleading. Moreover, there are others who would rewrite history not actually as it was, or as they have been taught that it was, but as they would prefer it to have been. As far as historians of this school are concerned, the goal of changing the past is not to search for authentic or genuine truth, but to create a new vision, better suited to their needs to resolve urgent problems in the present and their aspirations for the future. Their aim is to rectify, to rephrase, to replace, or even recreate the past in a more satisfying manner. Here we may recall one of the main purposes of remembering the past, for communities as for individuals. It is to explain and perhaps to justify the present—a present, some present, on which there may be a dispute. Where there are conflicting loyalties or clashing interests, each will have its own version of the past, its own narrative and presentation of the salient events.¹²⁰

This is the case with the publishers and authors of Egyptian school textbooks. In sum, the school textbooks unfold a struggle between Egyptian nationalist historiography and monarchist historiography. Even within Egyptian nationalism, different types of nationalism, such as territorial Egyptian nationalism and Egyptian Arab nationalism, emerge and compete with each other. It can be concluded that the Egyptian school books are used as a battlefield in which different, even contrasting, ideologies struggle for hegemony over Egyptian society.

NOTES

1. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, “An Inquiry into Arab Textbooks,” *Asian and African Studies* vol. 8, 1972. p. 1.
2. Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (London: 1995), pp. 273–74. See also Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli*

- National Tradition* (Chicago: 1995), p. 4; Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: 1987), p. 206.
3. Daniel Bar-Tal, “Delegitimization: The Extreme Case of Stereotyping and Prejudice,” in idem et al. (eds.), *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions* (New York: 1989), p. 170.
 4. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh (1972), “An Inquiry into Arab Textbooks,” p. 2.
 5. In 1973/74, elementary, preparatory, and high school students numbered 4.5 million, taught by over one hundred thousand teachers. In 1970, 48.5 million copies of textbooks had been printed. *Al-Jumhūriyya*, December 23, 1970; *Al-Akhhbar al-Yawm*, September 29, 1973; Avner Giladi, “Israel’s Image in Recent Egyptian Textbooks,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* no. 7. (Spring, 1978), p. 88.
 6. Avner Giladi (1978), “Israel’s Image in Recent,” p. 96.
 7. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (trans.), Louis Wirth, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1936), p. 3.
 8. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and The Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 143.
 9. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1986), *Egypt, Islam, and The Arabs*, p. 144.
 10. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, “Ta’riḫ al-Ḥaraka al-Qawmiyya,” in *al-Siyāsa al-Uṣbū’iyya* 12 (Jan. 1929), pp. 3–4; Israel Gershoni, “Imaging and Reimaging the Past,” in *History and Memory* 4/2, 1992, p. 17.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Aḥmad Ḥusayn, “Miṣr Fir‘awniyya,” al-Muqaṭṭam: pt.1, 6 Sep. 1930, p. 7; Israel Gershoni (1992), “Imaging and Reimaging the Past,” p. 15.
 14. Israel Gershoni (1992), “Imaging and Reimaging the Past,” p. 15.
 15. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, “Ta’riḫ al-Ḥaraka al-Qawmiyya,” in *al-Siyāsa al-Uṣbū’iyya* 12 (Jan. 1929), pp.3–4.
 16. See Ḥasan Subḥī, “Ḥadīth al-Masa’,” *al-Balāgh* 16 (Sept. 1933), pp. 1,3; Ḥasan ‘Arif, “‘Abqariyyat al-Bi’a al-Miṣriyya,” *al-Balāgh* 3 (Oct. 1933), pp. 1–11; ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Salīm, “al-‘Unṣur al-Miṣrī,” *al-‘Uṣūr* (Feb. 1928), pp. 636–642; Aḥmad al-Nahrī and Aḥmad Baylī, *Al-Mūjaz fī al-Tarbiya al-Waṭaniyya* (Miṣr 1926), pp. 281–286. Quoted from Israel Gershoni (1986), op. cit., p. 148.
 17. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 79–84. For typical Islamic nationalism see, Ḥasan al-Bannā, “Bayna al-Ams wa

- al-Yawm” in *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (1939) and “Da‘watuna” in *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (1935). Periodicals examining Egyptian Islamic nationalism: Al-Manār, edited by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, and the weekly al-Faṭḥ (1926-) of Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb and Majallat al-Hidāya al-Islāmiyya (1928-), edited by Muḥammad Khaḍīr Ḥusayn, and the Young Men’s Muslim Association periodical, Majallat al-Shubbān al-Muslimīn (1929-) edited by Yāḥyā Aḥmad al-Dardīrī. See Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1995), *Redefining the Egyptian*, p. 61.
18. See *Ra’y Jam‘iyyat Miṣr al-Fatāḥ fī Mu‘āhadat Sanat 1936* (Cairo, 1936).
 19. See *Al-Qawmiyya al-Miṣriyya al-Islāmiyya* (Cairo, 1944).
 20. See *Miṣr al-Ghad* (Cairo, 1952) and *Al-‘Amal li-Miṣr: Ba‘ th Dawla wa Iḥyā’ Majd* (Cairo, 1945).
 21. See *Ittijāhāt al-‘Aṣr al-Jadīd fī Miṣr* (Cairo, 1937).
 22. Israel Gershoni (1995), *Redefining the Egyptian*, p. 103.
 23. Dominant among Arab nationalists: ‘Abd al-Raḥman Azzām, Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī, Maḥmūd Azmī, Aḥmad Ḥusayn, and Muḥammad Luṭfi Jum‘a.
 24. Israel Gershoni (1995), *Redefining the Egyptian*, p. 117.
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
 26. Israel Gershoni (1992), “Imaging and Reimaging the Past,” p. 26.
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. Howard . D. Mehlinger, “International Textbook Revision: Examples from the United States,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, No. 7, (1985), p. 287.
 29. David .R. Olson, “On the Language and Authority of Textbooks,” in S. De Castell, A. Luke, and C. Luke (eds.), *Language, Authority and Criticism: Readings on the School Textbook* (London: 1989), p. 241.
 30. Hisham Sharabi, *Muqaddima li-Dirāsāt al-Mujtama‘ al-‘Arabī* (Akko: Dār-al-Aswar, 1987), pp. 13–29. Quoted from Emmanuel Sivan, “Arab Revisionist Historians” in *Asian & African Studies Vol.12*. November 1978. No.3, p. 284.
 31. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: 1986), pp. 174–200.
 32. King Fu‘ād initiated an extensive historiographical project at his ‘Ābdīn Palace in 1920. The project lasted more than twenty-five years and involved a host of foreign archivists, philologists, and historians such as Eugenio Griffini, Jean Deny, Angelo Sammarco, and Pierre Crabitès. Thereby, the monarchist project was introduced to Egyptian historiography, and the first “public archive” was established in Egypt. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab.*, p. 12. For further reference, see Chap. 5.
 33. Salīm Ḥasan Afendī et al., *Ṣafwat Ta’rīkh Miṣr waal-Duwal al-‘Arabiyya al- Juz’ al-Thānī* Sixth version (Cairo, 1923, 1925), p. 69.

34. ‘Umar Al-Iskandarī, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr min Faṭḥ al-‘Uṭhmānī* (Maṭba‘at Ma‘arif bi-Shāri‘a Fajāla bi-Miṣr, 1921, 1925), p. 236. “Quṭuz halted Mongols with help of Arab tribes in Egypt.”
35. Aḥmad Al-Iskandarī, *Nuzhat al-Qāri’ lil Madāris al-Thānawiyya al-Juz’ al-Thānī* (Maṭba‘at al-Salafiyya bi-Miṣr, 1923), p. 100.
36. Aḥmad Al-Nahrī and Aḥmad Baylī, *Al-Mūjaz fī al-Tarbiyya al-Waṭaniyya* (Miṣr, 1926), p.284.
37. Salīm Ḥasan Afendī et al., *Ṣafwat Ta’rīkh Miṣr* (Cairo, 1923, 1925), p. 80.
38. ‘Umar Al-Iskandarī (1921, 1925) *Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, p. 236. One textbook mentioned it was Quṭuz who halted Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt. See Salīm Ḥasan Afendī et al (1923, 1925). See also *Ṣafwat Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, p. 72.
39. Ibid., p. 237.
40. Ibid.
41. Aḥmad Al-Iskandarī, *Nuzhat al-Qāri’ lil Madāris al-Thānawiyya al-Juz’ al-Awwal* (Maṭba‘at Ma‘arif bi-Shāri‘a Fajāla bi-Miṣr, 1921), p.199. Egypt conquered Sudan and Syria of Arab lands. See Aḥmad Al-Nahrī and Aḥmad Baylī (1926), *Al-Mūjaz*, p. 283.
42. Aḥmad Al-Iskandarī (1921), *Nuzhat al-Qāri’*, p.199; Aḥmad Al-Iskandarī (1923), *Nuzhat al-Qāri’*, pp. 101, 104. Salīm Ḥasan Afendī et al. (1923, 1925), *Ṣafwat Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, pp. 74–75.
43. Ibid., p. 245.
44. Aḥmad Al-Nahrī and Aḥmad Baylī (1926), *Al-Mūjaz*, p. 283.
45. ‘Umar Al-Eskandarī, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr ilā Faṭḥ al-‘Uṭhmānī* (Maṭba‘at Ma‘arif bi-Shāri‘a Fajāla bi-Miṣr, 1921, 1925), p. 230.
46. Salīm Ḥasan Afendī et al. (1923, 1925), *Ṣafwat Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, p. 71.
47. Ibid., p. 69.
48. ‘Umar Al-Iskandarī (1921, 1925), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr ilā*, p. 235.
49. Salīm Ḥasan Afendī et al. (1923, 1925), *Ṣafwat Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, p. 83.
50. Ibid.
51. ‘Umar Al-Iskandarī, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr min Faṭḥ al-‘Uṭhmānī* Seventh version (Maṭba‘at Ma‘arif bi-Shāri‘a Fajāla bi-Miṣr, 1921, 1931), p. 89.
52. Ibid.
53. Salīm Ḥasan Afendī et al. (1923, 1925), *Ṣafwat Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, p. 83. See also ‘Umar Al-Iskandarī (1921, 1931), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr min Faṭḥ*, p. 90
54. Ibid., p. 87.
55. Ibid., See also, ‘Umar Al-Iskandarī (1921, 1931), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr min Faṭḥ*, p. 91.
56. ‘Umar Al-Iskandarī (1921, 1931), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr min Faṭḥ*, p. 91.
57. Salīm Ḥasan Afendī et al. (1923, 1925), *Ṣafwat Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, p. 86.
58. ‘Umar Al-Iskandarī (1921, 1931), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr min Faṭḥ*, p. 102.
59. Ibid., p. 104.

60. Saḫīm Ḥasan Afendī et al. (1923, 1925), *Şafwat Ta'rīkh Mişr*, pp. 97–98.
61. Jane Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions* (Albany: State University of New York, 1993), p. 13.
62. Ibid., p. 14.
63. Muḫammad Rif'at and Muḫammad Aḫmad Ḥasūna, *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr al-Wuṣṭā* (Dār al-Ma'arif bi-Mişr, 1938), p. 87.
64. Ibid., p. 159
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., p. 165.
67. Ibid., p. 158. See also Muḫammad Rif'at and Muḫammad Aḫmad Ḥasūna. *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr al-Wuṣṭā* (Dār al-Ma'arif bi-Mişr, 1931), p. 179.
68. Muḫammad Rif'at (1938), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh*, p.165.
69. Ibid., p.159.
70. Ibid., p.165.
71. Muḫammad 'Abd al-Raḫīm Muştafā, *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh Mişr al-Ḥadīth lil Sana al-Rābī al-Ibtidā'ī* (Cairo, 1937), p. 1.
72. Muḫammad Rif'at (1931), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr*, p. 178; Muḫammad Rif'at (1938), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr*, p. 157.
73. Ibid., p.179; Muḫammad Rif'at (1938), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr* , p. 158.
74. Muḫammad Rif'at (1938), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr*, p. 158.
75. Muḫammad Rif'at (1931), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr*, p. 178; Muḫammad Rif'at (1938), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr*, p.157.
76. Muḫammad Rif'at (1938), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr*, p. 161.
77. Muḫammad Rif'at (1931), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr*, p. 180.
78. Muḫammad Rif'at (1938), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh al-Uşūr*, p. 160.
79. Ibid., p. 160.
80. Ibid., p. 168.
81. Ibid., p. 166.
82. Ibid., p. 167.
83. Ibid., p. 168.
84. Muḫammad 'Abd al-Raḫīm Muştafā (1937), *Ma'ālim Ta'rīkh Mişr*, p. 5.
85. Ibid., p. 6.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid., p. 28.
90. Ibid., p. 33.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid., p. 32.
93. Ibid., p. 12.
94. Ibid., p. 16.

95. Ibid., p. 26.
96. Muḥammad Rifāt and ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Bashrī, *Al-Tarbiya al-Waṭaniyya lil Madāris al-Thānawī* (Cairo, 1943), p. 15.
97. Ibid., p. 17.
98. Ibid., p. 15.
99. Muḥammad Rifāt and Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḥasūna, *Ma‘ālim Ta’rīkh al-‘Usūr al-Wuṣṭā* (Dār al-Ma‘ārif bi-Miṣr, 1948), p. 156.
100. Ibid., p. 154.
101. Ibid., p. 157.
102. Ibid., p. 158.
103. Ibid., p. 172.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid., p. 156.
106. Ibid.; Muḥammad Rifāt, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Siyāsī fī al-Azmina al-Ḥadītha: Muqarrar lil Sana al-Rābi al-Thānawīyya* (Cairo: Wizārat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Umūmiyya, 1949), p. 4.
107. Muḥammad Rifāt (1949), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Siyāsī*, p. 3.
108. Muḥammad Rifāt (1948), *Ma‘ālim Ta’rīkh al-‘Usūr*, p. 155.
109. Ibid., p. 162.
110. Ibid., p. 158.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid., p. 165.
113. Ibid., p. 163.
114. Muḥammad Rifāt (1943), *Al-Tarbiya al-Waṭaniyya*, p. 173; Muḥammad Rifāt (1949), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Siyāsī*, p. 7.
115. Muḥammad Rifāt (1949), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Siyāsī*, p. 6.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., pp. 25–26.
118. Ibid., p. 31.
119. Muḥammad Rifāt (1949), *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Siyāsī*, p. 48.
120. Bernard Lewis, *History Remembered, Recovered, Invented* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 55.

Representations of the Mamluks in ‘Ābdīn Project Historians’ Literatures

MAMLUK SULTANATE ERA (1250–1517)

Before discussing in detail the representations of the Mamluks in historical works of the ‘Ābdīn Project, it is essential to address the ‘Ābdīn Project itself in order to critically view monarchic historiography within the relevant historical context. In 1920, King Fu’ād initiated an extensive historiographical project at his ‘Ābdīn Palace. This “Ābdīn Project” lasted more than twenty-five years and involved a host of foreign archivists, philologists, and historians such as Eugenio Griffini, Jean Deny, Angelo Sammarco,¹ and Pierre Crabitès.² This introduced the monarchist project to Egyptian historiography, and the first “public archive” was established in Egypt.³

Historians Georges Douin⁴ and Édouard Driault, editor of the *Revue des Études Napoléoniennes*, took charge of the French Archives. E.C. Fawtier-Jones, the only woman to join the project, utilized the British Public Record Office and cooperated closely with Douin.⁵ She was the daughter of medieval historian Robert Fawtier, who taught at Fu’ād University until 1928 and most likely introduced her to his French colleagues in the service of the king.⁶

In March 1928, Gabriel Hanotaux, a man of versatile talents, a former French politician, diplomat, historian, and brilliant member of *l’Académie Française*, accepted the invitation of King Fu’ād to visit to Egypt. To Hanotaux, the king presented the great barrier hindering his ‘Ābdīn Project and highlighted the still existing gaps in Egyptian scholarship.

Hanotaux understood pretty well what Fu'ād planned to do, since he had just finished nine years of work that primarily organized a similar historical project: *Histoire de la Nation Française*, fifteen volumes of a dense republican and nationalistic history of France.⁷ Near the end of the meeting, Fu'ād urged Hanotaux:

Compose the work as soon as you possibly can; do not lose even a minute. There is indeed much to say about ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs, and you know how attached I am to these studies. However, as for now, start with the modern period!... The history of my grandfather Muḥammad 'Alī is hardly known; tell it, speak of the ingenious soldier Ibrāhīm, of the great transformations accomplished under Sa'īd, and of my father Ismā'īl. Tie us again to the living world...render us justice by telling the truth.⁸

Hanotaux and his colleagues met what Fu'ād expected from them and, in 1930, the first volume was prepared for publication. At the same time, Pierre Crabitès, Douin, Sammarco, and a host of other writers, all on the King's payroll, commenced to rewrite modern Egyptian history from the angles of monarchy. A new recruit, British historian Henry Dodwell, joined the 'Abdīn Project team.⁹

It goes without saying that the protagonists of monarchic history were the rulers of the dynasty, especially Muḥammad 'Alī, Ibrāhīm, and Ismā'īl. The main subject was Egypt's transition from a pre-modern local community to a modern nation-state. Monarchic history inclined to focus mainly on reforms and modern developments in the administration, army, public works, and education. Europe was described as a benevolent entity, the home of reason and order, which made efforts to tie Egypt to modern civilization. Egypt, in turn having its own domestic *mission civilisatrice*, was expected to export these goods made in Europe to black Africa. The Ottoman Empire played the part of villain as antithesis of historic hero Muḥammad 'Alī. Ordinary Egyptians had no crucial role in this story. Modern Egyptian history was to be shaped from "above" and from "outside."¹⁰

This historical documentation project mainly focused on the khedives, then on the monarchy and modern Egyptian history covering the period from 1798/1805 to 1879 (when Ismā'īl was deposed) and barely went beyond this. The frame of this chronology fully dovetailed with the general structure of the 'Abdīn archive, which excluded the Ottomans and ignored uncomfortable events such as peasant revolts, financial blunders,

the 'Urābī affair, and the subsequent British Occupation.¹¹ In other words, the task of the Ābdīn Project historians was not only to commemorate the past, but also to forget it, that is, to exercise “counter-memory.”

From a thematic point of view, the primary concern of the collection was engagement diplomacy of Europe with the Ottoman Empire to serve their national interests, which became known as the “Eastern Question.” The monarchic project covered Egypt’s “Eastern Answer” to this question and its growing political autonomy in particular. As expected, most of the documents focused on magnificent events of diplomacy and war, highlighting the prominent individuals who were believed to have engendered these heroic deeds. The published titles of correspondence are typical examples: “Le Grand Vizir à Lord Hawkesbury,” “Le Major Général Stuart au Grand Vizir,” and so on.¹²

One of the Ābdīn Project historians, Gaston Louis Marie Joseph Wiet, was born in Paris on December 18, 1887. His formal academic discipline was practically completed by the age of 21. In October 1908, he had graduated in Law (*Licence en Droit*) and acquired diplomas from the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes at the same time. He majored in both Classical Arabic and Colloquial Arabic, as well as in Persian and Turkish. Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire offered him a scholarship as “Pensionnaire” from 1909 to 1911.¹³

In 1926, a crucial change occurred in the life of Gaston Wiet: King Fu’ād I of Egypt asked him to take over the directorship of the Museum of Arab Islamic Art in Cairo, and he retained this significant position until 1951, combining his activities at the museum with his academic teaching in Paris.¹⁴ During the Second World War, he was an energetic supporter of General de Gaulle and served as Vice-President of the Committee of the Free French Forces in Cairo.¹⁵

Wiet views the Mamluks in a comparatively balanced manner. Regarding the origin of the Mamluks, Wiet accepted the prevailing theory by defining them as Turkish militia and referring to al-Mu‘taṣim as the first to establish and use the Mamluks. Strangely, however, Mamluk Sultans are not included in the Muslim world.¹⁶

Wiet’s favorable references to the Mamluks apply to their excellent military ability and territorial expansion. In the same manner, Mamluk Sultans are glorified as defenders of Islam¹⁷ or brave warriors halting foreign attackers. Moreover, Wiet praises the Mamluks for contributing splendid pages in Egyptian history and the founding of a vast empire.¹⁸

Thus, in his view, one cannot deny a certain admiration for this people who ran Egypt with unequalled authority.¹⁹

Wiet's narrative concerning the Mamluks has an affinity with Egyptian Islamic nationalism. For instance, he remarks that the Mamluk Sultans ran the huge empire for the glory of Islam, and even Islam's tradition and prejudice against slaves did not prevent the Mamluks from envisaging universal Muslim imperialism.²⁰

Egyptian power was not confined to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the grand empire included other Oriental and European nations. The Mamluks protected the Caliph from the Crusaders and the Mongols. They found themselves at the head of Muslim civilization with real and certainly justified prestige.²¹

Of the many other Mamluk Sultans,²² Baybars stands out for his victory over the Mongols at 'Ayn Jālūt,²³ and he is recast as a genius ruler who returned the 'Abbasid Caliphate to Cairo.²⁴ The most impressive homage to Baybars is to identify him with Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, who unified command in the victorious warfare against the French Crusaders.²⁵ Wiet also described Sultan Ḥasan Ibn Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn as the creator of a great Islamic empire:

Of many other Sultans he was distinguished for cleverness, glory and efficient administrating.²⁶ It was widely acknowledged to the Arab West from Iran to Syria that the intelligence produced by Egypt, which organized resistance against Crusaders and Mongols and Egypt's political tradition saved Islam and formed amazing unity of empire in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁷

Despite these compliments to the Mamluk Sultans, Wiet does not exclude criticism of the Mamluks and the Mamluk era. Above all, the era of Mamluk rule is derided as a period of constant disorder and anarchy due to intrigues and assassination conspiracies hatched by power-seeking Mamluk leaders.²⁸ The Mamluks are accused of having a burning urge to destroy, with rage and intense passion.²⁹ Reflecting such an atrocious situation in the last days of the Mamluk era, the Egyptian population seemed inclined to favor the Ottomans, since they were no longer attached to the Mamluks.³⁰ Just as the Egyptians welcomed the Arab Muslims when they became tired of the Greeks, they willingly accepted the Ottomans because they could not continue to bear the Mamluks.³¹

We can take the word of a writer referring to the ease of the Arab conquest of the seventh century. Syria resembles to a camel that is lying quietly. In Syria as in Egypt, the burden of exactions and confiscation of all kinds had eventually become intolerable and we see reappearance of turning point in history similar to that which was inaugurated in the Muslim period. As they had hosted the Arabs because they were tired of the Greeks, the Egyptians saw the coming of the Ottomans without displeasure because they could no longer bear the Mamluks.³²

In sum, Wiet devoted a great deal of his book, nearly 240 pages, to covering the Mamluk Sultanate period, compared to the 117 pages of both periods of Ayyūbids and Fātimids. From a thematic point of view, Wiet stressed military success as well as the development of architecture, industry, and agriculture in the Mamluk Sultanate era, which clearly indicates Wiet's favoring of the Mamluk Sultans.

MAMLUKS UNDER OTTOMAN RULE (1760–1811)

As a primary root of monarchist historiography, the Ābdīn Project started in 1920 as a modest library project that developed into an archival enterprise. Selected documents were published to serve as source material for independent research in the framework of the emerging academe, among others. Since the Ābdīn Project was designed primarily to rewrite Egyptian history from the perspective of Muḥammad 'Alī and his descendants, it was highly likely that the binary glorification of Muḥammad 'Alī on the one hand and delegitimization of the Mamluk Beys on the other would dominate the era of Ottoman monarchist literature. Another important preliminary point is that in this study most historical works, including Ābdīn Project works, dealing with the Ottoman era cover the years 1760–1820.

By and large, unfavorable remarks concerning the Mamluks converge on two points: the internal struggle of the Mamluk Beys and the mismanagement of political and economic affairs. For instance, François Charles-Roux,³³ a member of the Ābdīn Project, criticized the internal struggle in the late eighteenth century between Muḥammad al-Alfī and 'Uthmān Bardīsī,³⁴ made stereotypical accusations concerning the Mamluks, and declared that the Mamluks destroyed the economic system.³⁵

Compared to French documentation, British diplomatic files offer many and more diverse considerations of the Mamluks, including both positive and negative features. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that

these intriguing and mostly politically biased judgments on the Mamluks are reached by analysis of the situation from a standpoint of British interest. J.J. Morier, in his diplomatic protocol to the Under Secretary of State for the Foreign Ministry, advised that the Mamluk Sultans should be eliminated in the interests of stability.

J.J. Morier to George Hammond (1763–1854) (Sous-Secrétaire d'Etat au Ministère des Affaires étrangères de 1795 a 1806):

Having established this fact, it remains to be determined how Great Britain is effectually to prevent the return of the French to Egypt, where they probably would establish themselves upon so firm a basis as to preclude the possibility of our ever driving them out again.³⁶

Three alternatives may be chosen to secure the tranquility of Egypt should we keep it for the Turks, the Mamluk party must be entirely destroyed. For although our forces would in some degree keep a due subordination amongst them, yet many disorders would arise from the existence of two rival parties. The Mamluks are not only the natural enemies of the Turks, as the usurpers of the power in Egypt.³⁷

Similarly, in 1804 Britain's Charge d'Affaires, A. Straton, carefully assessed the chaotic situation and concluded that Egypt would not be able to recover its tranquility as long as the country remained divided between the Mamluks and the Turks.³⁸ Based on this assessment, he warned Lord Hawkesbury in Pera that it was certainly possible that the Mamluks would betray Britain:

It does not appear that this sanguinary measure was suggested to them by any officer of the Porte; but that, distrusting the Mamluks, dissatisfied with their situation in Egypt, conscious of having betrayed the interest of their Sovereign...³⁹

In the same year, in a diplomatic protocol to Lord Sian-Vincent, Captain B. Hallowell warned of the danger of internal struggle among the Mamluk Beys and advised him to expel Alfī Bey in order to restore tranquility:

I was therefore led to enter a very minute examination of Selim Effendi by a Mamluk who had been sent from Ibrāhīm Bey and 'Uthmān Bey al-Bardīsī.

In the course of my conversation with him he assured me that Alfi Bey was a troublesome character, that he was disliked by all the Mamluks, and that they explained his turbulent disposition to General Stuart, and requested he would take him anywhere out of the country or tranquility would never be restored in Egypt.⁴⁰

In addition, Major E. Missett strongly doubted the Mamluks' loyalty to Britain, since he believed them to be scheming and treacherous:

Major Missett to Lord Hobart (Cairo 1803)

But flattering as such declarations are I am now in possession of intelligence which leaves me no doubt of their insincerity and of the duplicity and dissimulation of the Beys in all their negotiations with commanders of the British Army, as well as with myself, and which converts into certitude the suspicion I already entertained of their having applied to France for protection, a suspicion which I had the honor or to communicate to Your Lordship in my last dispatch.⁴¹

E. Missett to Lord Camden (Rosetta 1805)

Convinced that the Mamluks would join the invaders, I have written to the principal Beys that the French Squadron, with a large body of troops on board, having steered its course towards Egypt...

Fully aware that the object of the Beys has been preserve an interest both with Great Britain and France and under the mask of the sincerest attachment, to deceive both Powers alternately, I determined not to trust to the professions I looked for from them in answer to the above communication.⁴²

In terms of military capability, Major E. Missett believed that it was uncertain whether the Mamluk Beys were capable of defending Egypt against a French invasion:

Major E. Missett to Lord Hobart (Cairo 1804)

However determined Ibrāhīm and 'Uthmān Bey may be to defend the country against French, I must not conceal inform Your Lordship that⁴³ they do not possess the means of making any effectual resistance. The Mamluks do not amount to three thousand, many of whom would not gain willingly engage in warfare against armies of France.⁴⁴

The internal struggle among the Mamluk Beys was another reason for Major Missett's distrust of the Mamluks. In a diplomatic protocol to Charles James Fox (Alexandria 1806), E. Misset describes power struggle among 'Uthmān Bey al-Bardīsi, Ibrāhīm Bey, and Muḥammad Bey al-Alfi and assumes 'Uthmān Bey al-Bardīsi as the potential victor.⁴⁵

Henry Dodwell, a member of the Ābdīn Project, actively popularized early modern Egyptian history from a standpoint of the monarchy, but unlike the independent 'Abd Raḥman al-Rāfi'ī, he was a full-time history professor, as chair in Oriental Studies at London University. Dodwell majored in Indian history. Even though he neither read nor spoke Arabic, with the help of the archivists and translators of the 'Ābdīn archive, he composed what became one of the most authoritative accounts of Muḥammad 'Alī's career.⁴⁶ Dodwell contended that the period that preceded the French occupation was exceptionally chaotic and repressive.⁴⁷ Likewise, another Ābdīn Project historian, Édouard Driault, was convinced that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Egypt practically disappeared from history. That such a phenomenon was intentionally marginalized or denied by two eminent historians can only be explained as an example of counter-memory, which means forgetting the past.

Probably it is natural for Dodwell, a monarchist historian, to describe the Mamluks as villains:

It had been entrusted to the tyranny of such of the Mamlukes as had survived massacre and had proved their unworthiness by deserting their own master...The Beys, as the Mamluke chiefs were called, sought nothing but personal and private ends...But they cherished few personal objects. All the revenues that could be wrung from the country went to cover them splendidly in armour, to fill their stables with the noblest Arab stock, to adorn their palaces with the finest carpets of the East, to crowd their harems with beautiful slaves and to guard them with Negro eunuchs.⁴⁸

In addition to greed, the Mamluks are accused of tyranny as well as of causing the rapid decline of socio-economic conditions:

Under the rule of these picturesque but stupid warriors the resources of Egypt rapidly decayed. The canals on which cultivation depended were choked by neglect. The desert encroached while the cities shrank.⁴⁹

Of the many Mamluk Beys, Alfi and al-Bardīsi Beys symbolized fierce internal conflict:

The Turks themselves were divided...The Mamluks too had their won Bardīsi and Alfi factions, each much more disposed to destroy the other than to make common cause against a common danger.⁵⁰

Considering the unfavorable image of the Mamluks in the narrative of the 1811 Mamluk massacre, it is difficult to avoid the impression that Dodwell aimed to justify the brutal massacre of Muḥammad 'Alfi:

The Mamluk still formed a very dangerous body, occupying Upper Egypt, successively threatening Cairo, or driven southward, according to temporary shifts of military superiority.⁵¹

Moreover, according to Dodwell, the survivors of the Alfi faction continuously hoped that a more powerful English expedition would overthrow their enemy and fancied they might ask a huge sum of money from the English to enable them to buy Muḥammad 'Alfi's troops and then overthrow him themselves.⁵²

Not all the 'Ābdīn materials present the Mamluks negatively. In the following British document, Alfi Bey is portrayed as an authentic and credible figure. We should bear in mind that this positive account preceded Britain's disappointment in Alfi Bey:

Sir G.C. Brathwaite Boughton to J. Sullivan (1803)

I have heard from several officers who served in Egypt a very high character of al-Alfi Bey, both as soldier, and as a man of uncommon frankness and loyalty in all his dealings, which last is very much confirmed by his manners and countenance.⁵³

Interestingly enough, British diplomats were well aware of the fragile political condition of Egypt and that the Turks were not able to rule the country without the help of the Mamluk Beys. Therefore, many British diplomats advised British politicians and decision-makers that Britain had to maintain friendly relations with the Mamluks not only in order to protect British interests, but also to preclude the growth of French influence on Egyptian soil.⁵⁴

In sharp contrast to the demonization of the Mamluk Beys, Muḥammad ‘Alī is glorified as the authentic reformer and savior who delivered Egypt and Egyptians from Mamluk oppression. British correspondence simply recast Muḥammad ‘Alī as prodigious, preordained, robust, vigorous, tall, and handsome.⁵⁵ Ābdīn Project historian Charles-Roux even marginalized the significance of the Mamluk massacre of Muḥammad ‘Alī by treating it as a contemporary Oriental custom.⁵⁶ In a similar vein, Henry Dodwell clearly ascribed the responsibility for the massacre to the Mamluks:

Muḥammad ‘Alī tried to persuade the Mamluks to return to dwell in Cairo under his authority. The Beys agreed to come down and settle in Giza, but they did not arrive for nearly six months and when they did come, they came far more prepared for war than for peace. Time honored policy now demanded that they should be destroyed. Muḥammad ‘Alī resolved to make an end of these fallen tyrants of the country.⁵⁷

In sum, most of the historical works of the Ābdīn Project omit the Mamluk Sultanate era and instead focus on Muḥammad ‘Alī and his offspring.⁵⁸ However, in his book on modern Egyptian history, Gaston Wiet not only depicted the Mamluk era as a golden age, but also praised the Mamluk Sultans for their military force and territorial expansions. It is unclear, however, whether Wiet really meant to nationalize Egypt’s past through the glorification of the Mamluk Sultans or achieve some kind of ‘historical objectivity.’

It is not surprising to find that the Mamluk Beys are ignored or delegitimized given the fact that the primary protagonists in the history writing of Ābdīn Project historians were Muḥammad ‘Alī and his offspring. Muḥammad ‘Alī is recreated as the antithesis of the Mamluk Beys and as Egypt’s national hero, eradicating the evil Mamluks and initiating a series of progressive measures.

CONCLUSION

As compared to the depictions of the Mamluks in school textbooks, it is difficult to find nationalist aspects in the representations of the Mamluks in the historical works of the ‘Ābdīn historians. ‘Ābdīn historian Gaston Wiet does offer a sympathetic portrayal of the Mamluks, but it is not very

characteristic of Egyptian nationalism. Importantly, the other 'Abdīn historians did not touch upon the Mamluk Sultanate.

Regarding the Mamluk Beys under Ottoman rule, both school textbooks and the 'Abdīn historians share a similar negative view. As seen in the case of the Egyptian school textbooks, the state is a powerful creator of historical and collective memory, though by no means ubiquitous or omnipotent. Civil society, on the other hand, constitutes the arena in which numerous groups generate remembrance alongside the state, and sometimes against it. Remembrance is a product of a negotiation process among various social groups, including the state. Of course, the agents that generate different types of memory are not equal in terms of power and influence; nevertheless, distinctive voices and counter-narratives are created and expressed.⁵⁹ In other words, the interaction between the diverse social agents that operate within civil society and state institutions—an ongoing process of contestation—is likely to continue as one of the eternal features of remembrance.⁶⁰ Therefore, it could be concluded that social forces identifying with Egyptian nationalism predominated in the landscape of Egyptian historiography and had a crucial impact on the narratives of the school textbooks. The socio-ideological contexts of the textbooks' authors are another significant point. In the case of Muḥammad Rif'at, an undeniably nationalist historian,⁶¹ the depictions of Mamluk Sultans or 'Alī Bey al-Kabir were most likely used as a tool in the fulfillment of an ideological duty.

NOTES

1. Born in Naples in 1883, Sammarco first came to Egypt in 1922 to take up the position of history teacher at the Italian Lycée in Cairo. From this time on he dedicated himself to the study of Egyptian history, conducting research, writing, and giving lectures at learned societies such as the Institut d'Égypte and the Royal Geographical Society. In 1925, following the death of Eugenio Griffini, Fu'ad offered Sammarco the vacant post of librarian of 'Abdīn Palace and asked him to continue the task of reconstructing the history of contemporary Egypt. See Anthony Gorman, *Historians, State and politics in Twentieth Century Egypt* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 16–17.
2. Pierre Crabitès (1877–1943) was an American judge of the Mixed Tribunal in Cairo and later became Chief Judge. See Anthony Gorman (2003), *Historians, State*, p. 17.

3. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2009), p. 12. For further reference, see Chap. 5.
4. Georges Douin (1884–1944) was born in France and joined the French Navy at a young age. When he was in China he earned a...after publishing his book on Bonaparte’s fleet in Egypt in 1922 King Fu’ād paid attention to him. Accepting King Fu’ād’s request, Douin prepared a great deal of documents from the reign of Muḥammad‘Alī for publication, particularly consular correspondence written by French, English, Austrian, Prussian, and Russian representatives. For the next four years Douin mainly focused on Muḥammad‘Alī and authored a number of works on his military campaigns in Syria. See Anthony Gorman (2003), *Historians, State*, p. 17.
5. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p. 115.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
8. Gabriel Hanotaux, *Regards sur L’Égypte et la Palestine* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1929), pp. 196–97; Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p. 125.
9. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p. 125.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
13. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977), p. ix.
14. *Ibid.*, p. x.
15. *Ibid.*, p. x.
16. Gaston Wiet, “L’Égypte Arabe, de la Conquête Arabe à la Conquête Ottomane 642–1517 de L’èr Chrétienne,” in Gabriel Hanotaux ed., *Histoire de la Nation Égyptienne*, vol. 4. (Paris: Société de l’histoire nationale, Librairie Plon, 1933), p. 387.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 388.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 401.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 402.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
21. *Ibid.*
22. In addition to Baybars, Wiet covered many other Mamluk Sultans including Circassian Sultans, such as Qalāwūn, Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn, Faraj, Barsbāy, Qayṭbāy, and al-Ghawrī.
23. Gaston Wiet (1933), “L’Égypte Arabe, de la Conquête Arabe,” p. 388.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 400.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 412.

26. Gaston Wiet, "Jāma' al-Sultān Ḥasan: Jallālahu al-Fanniwa Waḍ'ahu al-Handasī" (trans.), Muḥammad Wahhabī, *al-Muqataḥaf*, Dec. 1938, p. 526.
27. Ibid., p. 528.
28. Gaston Wiet (1933), "L'Égypte Arabe, de la Conquête Arabe," p. 391.
29. Ibid., p. 391.
30. Ibid., p. 634.
31. Ibid., p. 636.
32. Ibid.
33. The French Ambassador to the Vatican offered a standard diplomatic account which focused principally on the actions of the ruler, although there was some discussion of the Egyptian national movement under Muṣṭafā Kāmil and the emergence of Wafd. See Anthony Gorman (2003), *Historians, State*, p. 19.
34. François Charles-Roux, "L'Égypte de 1801 à 1882" in Gabriel Hanotaux, ed., *Histoire de la Nation Égyptienne*, vol. 6. (Paris: Société de l'histoire nationale, Librairie Plon, 1936), p. 14.
35. François Charles-Roux (1936), "L'Égypte de 1801 à 1882," p. 60.
36. G. Douin et E.C.Fawtier-Jones *L'Angleterre et l'Égypte: La Politique Mameluke (1801–1803)*, (Cairo: Société royale de géographie d'Égypte, 1929–30), vol.1, p.31. See Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p. 115.
37. G. Douin et E.C.Fawtier-Jones (1929–30), *L'Angleterre et l'Égypte: La Politique Mameluke (1801–1803)*, p. 31.
38. G. Douin et E.C.Fawtier-Jones, *L'Angleterre et l'Égypte: La Politique Mameluke (1803–1807)* vol.2. (Caire: Impr. Par l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire pour la Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte, 1930), p. xi.
39. Ibid., p. 149.
40. Ibid., p. 95.
41. Ibid., p. 48.
42. Ibid., p. 215.
43. Ibid., p. 109.
44. Ibid., p. 110.
45. Ibid., pp. 287–289.
46. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p. 151.
47. Henry Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt: A Study of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 1–3. Dodwell's book was previously published in 1931. See also François Charles-Roux, "L'Égypte de 1801 à 1882," in Gabriel Hanotaux, ed., *Histoire de la nation égyptienne* (Paris: Ouvrage publié sous les auspices et le haut patronage de sa majesté FouadI^{er}, Roi d'Égypte, 1937), vol. 6, pp. 2–4.

48. Henry Dodwell (1967), *The Founder of Modern Egypt*, p. 2.
49. Ibid., p. 3.
50. Ibid., p. 13.
51. Ibid., p. 33.
52. Ibid., p. 34.
53. G. Douin et E.C.Fawtier-Jones (1930), *L'Angleterre et l'Égypte: La Politique Mameluke (1803–1807)*, p. 36.
54. Such accounts of the Mamluks are found mostly in the era of 1801–1803; see G. Douin et E.C.Fawtier-Jones (1929–30), *L'Angleterre et l'Égypte: La Politique Mameluke (1801–1803)*, pp. 50, 59, 81–85, 94–97, 119, 234–235, 241–243, 345–346.
55. François Charles-Roux(1933), *L'Égypte de 1801 à 1882* in Gabriel Hanotaux ed., *Histoire de la Nation Égyptienne*, Vol. 6, pp. 16–18.
56. Ibid., p. 46.
57. Henry Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt: A Study of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 34.
58. See the list of 'Ābdīn Project literatures Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of Arab Past*, pp. 118–119, 182–183.
59. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 30.
60. Ibid., 39.
61. Muḥammad Rif'at will be discussed in the following chapters.

PART II

Mamluks in Public Memory

Prologue: Historical Novel and Egyptian Nationalism

Before we embark on an analysis of Egyptian historical novels, it is vital to review the historical setting that preceded their emergence. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Egypt witnessed the crystallization of the concept of “Egyptian national literature” (*al-Adab al-Qawmī*) or “Egyptian literature” (*al-Adab al-Miṣrī*). Two features of the interwar Egyptian intellectual scene played a crucial role in the development of this literature.

The first was the emergence of territorial nationalism as the predominant nationalist force in post-1919 Egypt. Most Egyptian nationalist intellectuals of this period hold a belief that the creation of a new Egyptian national image demanded a new assessment of the Egyptian environment and a reinterpretation of Egyptian history accompanying the transformation of literary activity in Egypt.¹

The second feature of the intellectual atmosphere of interwar Egypt was the antagonistic reaction to Arabic literature (*al-Adab al-‘Arabī*) on the part of most Egyptian nationalist intellectuals. Most Egyptian writers of the 1920s shared an antagonistic view towards previous patterns of literary development in Egypt and believed their cultural mission as the creation of a new Egyptian literature that should replace traditional Arabic literature. Indeed, the only one way to remove the constraints of traditional Arabic literature was the creation of a new Egyptian literature that would derive its entire theme from the country’s distinctive milieu.²

As a result, the fiction created by Egyptians through most of the inter-war period clearly mirrored the territorial nationalist orientation which had developed in the wake of the Revolution of 1919. This literature is characterized by realism and contemporary issues rather than historical setting, and with a certain focus on Egyptian problems. Egypt's Arab-Islamic legacy, on the other hand, is not one of its focal points.³

It was only from the second half of the 1930s onwards that a sizable corpus of Egyptian creative literature that dealt with Arab and Islamic historical themes appeared. Indeed several Egyptian novelists commenced to shift their attention to Arab and Islamic history in order to meet both their growing interest in Egypt's Arab-Islamic legacy and an increasing receptivity to this subject-matter by Egyptian readers.⁴ This did not mark the disappearance of territorialist historical fiction. For instance, in the 1940s, Muḥammad 'Awad Muḥammad, 'Adil Kamil, and the young Najīb Maḥfūz continued to produce novels on Pharaonic Egypt.⁵

Although realism made its breakthrough in the 1940s, the decade opened with a marked interest in the historical novel, as is indicated in the results of the first novel-writing competition in which three of the five top novels were historical, among them the work of Muḥammad Faṛīd Abū Ḥadīd.⁶ Importantly, the intimate relationship between nationalism and history was not a novel and unique phenomenon that emerged only in Egypt. The famous Scottish historical novelist Sir Walter Scott,⁷ for example, understood the power of history in the process of state-building and used it as raw material for his literary works.

Scott's words spoke to the newly emergent independent nation-states and allowed the site of the historical novel to be a crucible for the discursive formation of states and races.⁸ History became crucially important to national self-definition, as Lukács argues in his discussion of Scott: "The appeal to national independence and national character is necessarily connected with a reawakening of national history."⁹

In this sense, the historical novel might be considered as a tool for national self-definition, with both global aspects (form) and local ones (effect). In modern critical and sociological terms, this phenomenon is defined as "glocalization," describing the amalgamation of local and international. The historical novel is part of the typology of nationhood and helps to define what Benedict Anderson terms as "imagined communities."¹⁰

Although the historical trend in the Egyptian novel became prominent from the 1930s onwards, it dates back to the turn of the twentieth

century. Very much a romantic period, the historical trend emerged in the 1890s European novels. Jūrjī Zaydān was one of the leading novelists at the time, and his works will be discussed in the following subsections.¹¹

Egyptian nationalism was not the only theme of the contemporary Egyptian historical novels. Influenced by European critiques (e.g., by Renan, d’Darcourt, Cromer, and Hanotaux) of Islamic and Egyptian society, for Egyptian novelists, social justice became one of the literary focal points. Ali B. Jad clarifies this point by explaining that, during 1939–1952, the Egyptian novel of literary merit is characterized by a profound concern with the question of social justice. According to his analysis, the earlier generation of novelists did not deal with this matter with the exception of the position of women in the family and society.¹² Thus, it is not surprising to find not only the issue of social justice, but also liberal political views in the following novels. In other words, this era marks the departure from mere ‘story-telling’ to a more political form of writing. Indeed, the writer often presents selectively chosen historical facts and characters, thereby reshaping them to offer a new understanding of the past. As Georg Lukács notes, “What matters, therefore, in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events.”¹³

In this sense, historical novels operate on the borderline between fiction and reality. Thus, the location is crucial for their very existence, since the illusion of dealing with reality engenders a sense of truthfulness that strengthens the epistemological status of the novel. This intoxicatingly vague position enables the historical novel to report history (truth and reality) and simultaneously manipulate its meaning by representing and recasting the historical stage (fiction). The works of Zaydān, who wrote novels, history books, and articles on the very same topics, are particularly good examples of the blurred distinction between reality and fiction.¹⁴

Therefore, historical novels gave both the author and the reader an opportunity to escape the unpleasant reality of the time and take refuge in visions of a splendid past. Some of the works also offer criticism of contemporary conditions as well as an attempt to encourage the people to emulate the great deeds of their ancestors in order to solve the country’s problems.¹⁵

This chapter will offer a critical analysis of such writers and examine the manner in which they shaped the Mamluk narrative. Moreover, the historical novels and plays of Egyptian popular literature may also provide an insight into the popular discourse on the Mamluks in Egyptian society.

NOTES

1. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and The Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 191.
2. Ibid.
3. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930–45* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 130.
4. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski (1995), *Redefining the Egyptian*, p. 130. Much like Gershoni, Kilpatrick lists two reasons for the appearance of historical novels: Egyptian intellectuals' desire for recreation of cultural identity of Egypt and the influence of Egyptian nationalism see Hilary Kilpatrick, "The Egyptian Novel from Zaynab to 1980" in M.M. Badawi ed., *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 236. Sakkut held more or less similar views of emergence of historical novel. See Hamdi Sakkut (1971), op. cit., 47.
5. Jan Brugman, *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), pp. 291, 295–98, 316; Hamdi Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel and It's Main Trends from 1913 to 1952* (Cairo: Cairo University Press, 1971), pp. 72–84. Mattityahu Peled, *Religion, My Own: The Literary Works of Najib Mahfuz* (New Brunswick, 1983), pp. 28–67.
6. Hilary Kilpatrick (1992), op. cit., p. 236.
7. Sir Walter Scott, 1st Baronet, (born 15 August, 1771, [Edinburgh, Scotland](#)—died 21 September , 1832, Abbotsford, Roxburgh, Scotland), was a Scottish novelist, poet, historian, and biographer who is often considered both the inventor and the greatest practitioner of the [historical novel](#). Scott's father was a lawyer, and his mother was the daughter of a physician. From his earliest years, Scott was fond of listening to his elderly relatives' accounts and stories of the Scottish Border, and he soon became a voracious reader of [poetry](#), history, drama, fairy tales, and romances. He had a remarkably retentive memory and astonished visitors by his eager reciting of poetry. His explorations of the neighboring countryside developed in him both a love of natural beauty and a deep appreciation of the historic struggles of his Scottish forebears. Scott was

educated at the high school at Edinburgh and also for a time at the grammar school at Kelso. In 1786, he was apprenticed to his father as writer to the signet, a Scots equivalent of the English solicitor (attorney). “Ivanhoe” (1819) was the first of Scott’s novels to adopt a purely English subject and was also his first attempt to combine history and romance, which later influenced Victorian medievalism. “Sir Walter Scott, 1st Baronet,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica* online version (2015. 9.6).

8. Jerome de Groot, *The Historical Novel* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 94.
9. Georg Lukacs, *The Historical Novel* trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Marlin Press, 1962), p. 25.
10. Jerome de Groot (2010), *The Historical Novel*, p. 94.
11. Hamdi Sakkut (1971), *The Egyptian Novel*, p. 46.
12. Ali B. Jad, *Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel 1912–1971* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), p. 147.
13. Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962), p. 42.
14. Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writings in Twentieth-Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p. 56.
15. Hamdi Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel and its Main Trends from 1913 to 1952* (Cairo: Cairo University Press, 1971), p. 47.

Representations of the Mamluks in Historical Novels and Plays

MAMLŪK AL-SHĀRID (BY JŪRĪ ZAYDĀN)

An Ottomanist intellectual, Jūrjī Zaydān was born in Beirut on December 14, 1861. His family belonged to the Greek Orthodox community, though this religious affiliation does not seem to have played a crucial role in the daily life of the family.¹ Some ideological and international political contexts indicate Zaydān's pro-Ottoman beliefs.

In Zaydān's opinion, the formation of a group and the means by which it unified its members could change according to needs and time. Any acquired or inherited characteristic could be used as a means to create solidarity if it promised to be useful to the members of the group. The Egyptians, for instance, could belong to and promote an Arab cultural identity while political expedience would prompt a feeling of solidarity with the Ottoman Empire as a whole.²

Shortly after the Young Turk Revolution, Zaydān was convinced that the new regime would be successful because a long time was spent in preparing the population before the takeover. Years later, after an attempted counter-revolution, interference of foreign powers, and increasing centrifugal tendencies within the Ottoman Empire, Zaydān believed that the government of the Ottoman Empire should retain some absolute powers because the people were not yet familiar with the concept of a constitution.³

In addition to pro-Ottoman tendency, Zaydān shows an obviously favorable attitude to Muḥammad ‘Alī. In the June 1, 1902 issue of *Al-Hilāl*, Jūrjī Zaydān, as editor, stated that through a series of administrative, military, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and educational reforms, Muḥammad ‘Alī changed the course of Islamic history and opened an entirely new and progressive era. This edifice was built on the ruins of a crumbling and corrupt Ottoman Mamluk order.⁴

Similarly, in another novel, *Istibdād al-Mamālīk*, which was also discussed in this study, Zaydān’s monarchic sympathies served as the central theme and also as a key to the critical analysis of the representation of the Mamluks. Our main focus will therefore be the negative representation of the Mamluks, as compared to that of the Ottoman Empire and Muḥammad ‘Alī. First and foremost, the Mamluks are accused of an insatiable lust for power:

The Mamluks were used as slaves by the ‘Abbasid Caliphate. Instead Jiziya some of them were taken from the people who lived in the province of Turkistan, They [the Mamluks] embraced the Islamic religion and were taught to admire the Caliphs. They ruled the country and the Caliphs granted them [the Mamluks] sovereignty, land tax and superiority over others. Nevertheless, they remained power-thirsty.⁵

The key historical event that clarifies the relationship between Muḥammad ‘Alī and the Mamluks is their massacre in 1811. This is justified in the text by the numerous references to their enduring oppression and tyranny. For example:

During the last days of the Ottoman era, the Mamluks played a political role, but they brought about tyranny and destruction in the Ottoman government. They were never frightened until the days of the great Muḥammad ‘Alī, who massacred them.⁶

This glorification of Muḥammad ‘Alī clearly indicates Zaydān’s monarchic orientation. Even the Mamluk survivors of this massacre are not depicted in positive terms:

The Mamluk survivors of the massacre got married, but they abused their wives. The Mamluks lamented their hard fates and were in miserable plight and their battered women became addicted to Hashishi.⁷

In addition to the political oppression and the terrible abuse of women, the Mamluks appeared to be entirely responsible for the corruption. In a dialog between Amīr Bashīr and Ibrāhīm Pasha, the Mamluks are presented as responsible for the corruption in the country:

[Amīr Bashīr:] Without Muḥammad ‘Alī the Egyptian people could never have achieved obedience and submissiveness. He restored order in Egypt.

...

[Ibrāhīm Pasha:] It is undeniable that the Mamluks were the source of corruption.

[Amīr Bashīr:] These Mamluks ruled Egypt through corruption. Nothing else can be said about them.⁸

[Amīr Bashīr:] After the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, the Mamluks were appointed viceroy in the local province, but the Mamluks Bey were not afraid of the Pashas and became tyrannical. For example, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr obtained independence from the Ottoman governments and attacked Syria. Without Muḥammad Abū Dhahab’s betrayal of ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, Egypt and Syria could have become independent from the Ottomans.⁹

...

The French came to take revenge against the Mamluks, but could not succeed without the support of the locals.¹⁰

...

Muḥammad Bey Abū al-Dhahab was a treacherous man.¹¹

Similar accusations against the Mamluks are also made by the merchants:

[Sa‘īd (Amin Bey’s servant):] Thanks to Muḥammad ‘Alī and his son Ismā‘īl, Egypt had a government and was secured.¹²

[All merchants:] No doubt, there is no one who does not know their benefit and who can ever imagine the conditions in Egypt after the Mamluk tyranny. Thus, we should thank Allah who saved us from them.¹³

[Sa‘īd :] Who are the Mamluks?

[Amin:] They [the Mamluks] ruled Egypt before Muḥammad ‘Alī and killed, plundered the people and tyrannized them endlessly.¹⁴

[One of merchants said:] Thanks to Allah we were released from the Mamluks and now but we are faced with another predicament that inhibits our victory, in the form of the Albanians and Moroccans [north African-Mugharaba].¹⁵

[Sa‘īd asked again:] Who are they?

[The same man said:] They were soldiers in troops that fought in the battle and saved Egypt from the French. Our lord wanted to build a new army but they refused it and threatened the Pasha with disobedience.¹⁶

[Others said:] Do not worry, our lord understood how to deal with them and sent them to this deadly country [Sudan] and there was no other goal but to make them deal with the insurrection and take advantage of this chance to train the Egyptian army as they wished without Albanians and Moroccans.¹⁷

[Sa'īd asked:] Why does he train the army?

[They said:] There is tremendous benefit to it as one hundred trained soldiers will encounter one thousand untrained soldiers.¹⁸

[Another one said:] Our Lord, the eternal Muḥammad 'Alī made efforts to strengthen security and open schools [*madrasa*] and this was the key to success.¹⁹

Muḥammad 'Alī even brought cooks from France in order to open a cooking school.²⁰

Of the many different types of accusations raised against the Mamluks, one common and significant pattern is the contrast with the positive depictions of Muḥammad 'Alī. For example, the Mamluk tyranny in Egypt, marked by political oppression and corruption, is compared to the new and correct order established by Muḥammad 'Alī. The reason for this contrast may have resided in Zaydān's wish to parody the crucial historical moment of transfer from decadence to progress in his contemporary Egypt. Namely, if the Mamluks symbolized the past, villainous origins of socio-political ills, Muḥammad 'Alī was glorified as the future and as a hero, savior, and reformer who rescued the Egyptians from their suffering.

This binary pattern of demonization of the Mamluks and idealization of Muḥammad 'Alī and his reforms once again reflects Zaydān's monarchic sympathies. Zaydān's views of the monarchy may indicate that he attributed to Muḥammad 'Alī and the Ottomans the ability to protect Egypt against Western socio-political penetration until the nineteenth century. Seemingly, Zaydān believed that Western influence had an adverse effect on Egypt.

Significantly, Amīn Bey's (a Mamluk general who survived the 1811 massacre) retrospective view of the violent events indicates the greatness of the Ottoman power:

Sultan Maḥmūd ordered the elimination of the Janissary as they opposed the Sultan's reforms. When Amīn Bey heard that the Sultan ordered to kill the Janissary he recalled the slaughter of the Mamluks in Egypt 25 years ago. Sultan Maḥmūd emulated his deputy Muḥammad 'Alī, such as reorganization of [the] army for [establishing a] new regime. Amīn Bey explained that he participated in a war against the Greeks and that he himself handed over the submission to Ibrāhīm Pasha.²¹

The more significant psychological change we see in the passage above is that Amīn Bey not only understood the historical cause of the Mamluk massacre, but even took a step further in joining Ibrāhīm's (Muḥammad 'Alī's son) army.

Considering the unflattering descriptions of the Mamluks, Baybars is the only heroic Mamluk figure:

[Man of castle of Egypt] Ahmad introduced water ways to Gharīb. They [Aḥmad and Gharīb] walked to a stone Bridge on which a lion [emblem of Baybars] was illustrated and Aḥmad explained that one of the Mamluk Sultans, Ḍāhir Baybars, built this for transferring water from the Nile River to a castle in Cairo.²²

In addition to his monarchic sympathies, Zaydān also frequently expressed pro-Ottoman views²³:

[Gharīb:] What caused the Greek revolt?

[Salīm Agha:] Although the Greeks are an ancient people, their country is still a vilayet of the Ottoman Empire. They do not cease to remember their old country, in all its glory and great power. With the help of Russia, they made a pact with a group of governments of limited independent states.²⁴ A secret Greek nationalist organization called the "Friendly Society" or "Company of Friends" (*Filiki Eteria*) was formed in Odessa in 1814.²⁵

The sub-plot of the Greek national movement is a definite clue to Zaydān's pro-Ottoman tendency. The Greek nationalist movement is not perceived as one of valid rights, but rather as one of immoral, unrighteous, and treacherous rebels: "The Greeks were raging with anger and declared disobedience, taking revenge on the prosperous country of Sultan Maḥmūd."²⁶

Zaydān's socio-religious background gives a hint about his unfavorable attitude to the Greek nationalist movement. As a secular reformer of Christian background, Zaydān had to redefine his relations with the Muslim Arab environment. Zaydān believed that, regardless of their religious background, a new basis for the relations between Christian and Muslim Arabs was found in terms of an Arab cultural and national identity under the protection of the Ottoman Empire. This is one reason why Zaydān supported the Ottoman Empire. Even the story of the French invasion is employed to present the Ottoman Empire in a flattering light: "The 1801 Ottoman military campaign finally removed the French from Egypt."²⁷

Zaydān's pro-Ottomanism reflects one more socio-political and ideological atmosphere of the time: Ottomanism dominated the discourse of Egyptian intellectuals of nineteenth-century Egypt. The main reason for such sympathy with the Ottomans was the urgent need to respond to the unprecedented change in the socio-political order of the area. Facing the tide of Western political and cultural influence, Egyptian intellectuals believed in the Ottoman Empire's power to protect Egypt from the West.

In his pro-Ottoman and monarchist orientations, Zaydān diffused his Egypt-centered standpoint:

[Amīn Bey:] My uncle told me that at the moment the people of Egypt are confronted with the very deeds of the people of Syria. I think the people of Egypt are deceived by what the French claim [i.e.] that they are Muslims and do not drink alcoholic drinks.²⁸

When Bonaparte secretly arrived in Egypt, the Mamluks and the people of Egypt prepared to join forces.²⁹

However, it would be difficult to assume from this that Zaydān's Egyptian nationalism was already concrete at the time.³⁰ As shown, Zaydān's political orientation tended toward Ottomanism,³¹ which is incompatible with the independent functioning of a vilayet like Egypt. It could be for this reason that Zaydān scorned the Greek nationalist movement, as discussed above. This is also a clear sign of the contradiction embedded in Zaydān's worldview. That is to say, paradoxically, Zaydān seemed to have Egyptian nationalist sentiments, but viewed the Greek nationalist movement as treacherous to the Ottoman Empire. This is another sign of Zaydān's loyalty to the Ottomans.

In sum, this novel offers a wide-ranging plot in which the Mamluks are presented as the binary opposite of Muḥammad 'Alī and the Ottoman Empire. More than anything, it explains the antipathy toward the Mamluks. Zaydān was an enthusiastic proponent of Muḥammad 'Alī (and therefore also of the concept of monarchy) and the Ottomans, while the Mamluks, viewed as an inhibition to Egypt's path toward a bright future, are viewed as a historical impediment. On the other hand, Muḥammad 'Alī and the Ottomans are considered the saviors who regained Egypt's prosperity and glory, eliminating the Mamluks and undertaking extensive reforms in government. Through this novel, Zaydān intended not only to awaken his mostly Egyptian readership to the glorious and recent past of Muḥammad 'Alī's era, but also to highlight the importance of the Ottoman Empire in

maintaining the balance of power in the region, with the European powers at its gate. It is in this context that the negative representations of the Mamluks should be understood.

ISTIBDĀD AL - MAMĀLĪK (BY JURJĪ ZAYDĀN)

Zaydān's affection for the Ottoman Empire is evident in his letters to his son, Emile.³² Most significantly, Zaydān seemed to believe that the Ottoman Empire should remain the protector of all Arabs and Muslims in the wake of European influence in the Muslim Arab area. Zaydān's pro-Ottoman orientations are the main ideological context of this novel. Thus, it is not surprising to find many references to Mamluk oppression and tyranny as opposed to the positive reflections on the Ottomans in his previous novel.

The plot is exactly in line with the theme: the family of 'Abd-al-Raḥman, an Egyptian soap merchant, was destroyed by Mamluk oppression and reunited, after a painstakingly long journey, in Acre following the defeat of 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr by the Ottomans. Another reason for the pro-Ottoman trend of this novel stems from the fact that the novel was published in 1893, at the peak of pro-Ottoman historiography in Egypt. Both the personal and historical context of the novel provide us with a crucial clue to the critical analysis of Mamluk representations.³³

As Zaydān was not only a historical novelist, but also a prolific historian, it is no wonder that he began his novel with a description of eighteenth-century politics. Zaydān sketched the political system of the time by offering three Ottoman administrative systems: the Pasha, the Mamluk Bey, and the Janissary army. The author's antipathy toward the Mamluks is patent at this early stage. "The Mamluk was not satisfied with the great authority granted upon them and they returned to despotism and injustice (oppression) and heavy levy on tax."³⁴ Importantly, Zaydān used the word "go back/return," rather than "begin/start." This may indicate that the Mamluk tyranny was indeed precedented.

In addition to the Mamluk oppression, the fact that many soldiers were sent to war in the Arabian Peninsula worsened the security situation. The gatekeeper in the novel complained about this in saying that "after many Egyptian soldiers had gone to war the condition became very bad, increasing crime such as provocation and revolt." More seriously, the Pasha did not notice this because the local Egyptian government ordered his isolation.³⁵ 'Abd al-Raḥman provided a detailed account of why the Pasha did not

control the situation on the ground. The reason is that the Mamluk Beys intentionally isolated the Pasha and undermined his legitimacy by preventing the people from filing complaints.³⁶

Political instability was also related to the Ottoman Sultan's political condition in the midst of a battle against Russia. For this reason, one of Egypt's noble families, al-Maḥrūqī, complained that the Pasha's power was limited against Mamluk opposition, and particularly after achieving independence from the Ottomans.³⁷ The grave socio-political conditions depicted thus far were ascribed to the Mamluks. The Mamluks were blamed for all of Egypt's plights. Even 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr, one of the most representative Mamluks of the time, is represented as the foremost evildoer: "'Alī Bey al-Kabīr was the boldest, the greatest and the most powerful Mamluk, but he sought independence and began to invade neighboring country."³⁸

Al-Maḥrūqī criticized 'Alī Bey for working in close and exclusive cooperation with the Coptics.³⁹ Al-Raḥman noted that since the emergence of Islam, Sultans and Caliphs only depended on the advice of 'ulamā', Islamic jurisprudence, and Shaykhs and religious leaders. He did, however, criticize 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr for acting in the opposite way.⁴⁰

However, the strongest views on the Mamluks were expressed by al-Maḥrūqī, who said that "it is strange that [the Mamluks] claimed to be part of Islam, as it cannot possibly accord with their deeds, which even the Pharaohs and Magi would not think of. The Turkish Pashas had lost their power, leaving the authority in the hands of the Mamluks."⁴¹ Moreover, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr is portrayed not only as a corrupted ruler, but also as one who violated an agreement with 'Abd al-Raḥman. The influential noble family al-Maḥrūqī appealed to 'Alī Bey to free Ḥasan, son of al-Raḥman, who had been conscripted by the Mamluks. 'Alī Bey rejected this request by explaining that he did not make exceptions for anyone, and that every family was obligated to defend Mecca. Before long, the Mamluks of 'Alī Bey accepted 'Abd al-Raḥman's merchandise in compensation for freeing Ḥasan; however, 'Alī Bey demanded not only 'Abd al-Raḥman's conscription, but also payment of more merchandise for the liberty of his son, Ḥasan. With all this, 'Alī Bey violated the agreement by drafting them both, even after accepting their bribe.⁴² 'Alī Bey's polygamy, in the form of six wives, is also used against him.⁴³

The climax of the negative campaign against 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr is the fact that Muḥammad Abu Dhahab's betrayal of 'Alī Bey and the latter's defeat are presented as justified. A monk interpreted the defeat of 'Alī Bey by Muḥammad Abū Dhahab not only as a punishment by God, but also as the result of divine providence:

It is Muḥammad Abū Dhahab's loyalty to the country, and his desire for Sultanship that led 'Alī Bey's defeat. In addition, it seemed that 'Alī Bey oppressed people unjustly. Thus God halted these acts and punishment awaits him. I've heard it with my own ears.⁴⁴

Ḥasan, the son of 'Abd al-Raḥman, agreed with the monk by adding that the Mamluks deserved God's punishment.

The tyranny [oppression] destroyed the country's pillars and as a result the immense suffering of impoverished widows and orphans demanded the destruction of the Mamluk dynasty. How did God not answer this prayer?⁴⁵

As for Ḥasan, Muḥammad Abū Dhahab is not less disloyal than 'Alī Bey, telling the monk that he does not believe Abū Dhahab is superior, and adding:

Abu Dhahab is also disloyal to 'Alī Bey because he obtained education in the house of 'Alī Bey, ate delicious food and married his daughter. 'Alī Bey loved him very much and trusted him from the bottom of his heart. Dhahab's battle [against 'Alī Bey] will be a grave betrayal, but God empowers him [Dhahab], and he will prevent the country's betrayal ['Alī Bey's betrayal of Ottoman]. However, Abū Dhahab will also be betrayed by someone, and the unjust will not be lucky.⁴⁶

However, not all blame is put on 'Alī Bey. The description of oppression by other Mamluks prevailed in the novel. The Mamluk army had reached the gate with violence, plundering, injuring, and killing.⁴⁷ They did not even respect women.⁴⁸

There is one interesting episode that shows how much the people abhorred the Mamluk crimes. 'Alī Bey ordered his soldiers to execute Sālīma, the wife of 'Abd al-Raḥman, but instead they took her to a Coptic monastery. Recognizing that the Mamluks were waiting at the gate, its inhabitants were afraid to open the gate, knowing that the Mamluks were threatening.⁴⁹

Particularly, 'Abd al-Raḥman expressed critical views of Mamluk quite significantly, including internal struggle among the Mamluks. He said, "I believe God [will] subdue these tyrannical Mamluks since [a] small number of them rule most Mamluks and they struggled [with] each other for leadership and authority. They even sought help from the enemies against their master and grabbed their [master's] property."⁵⁰

Al-Raḥman accused the Mamluks of oppression, and asserted that there is no solution and power except God, if we ask help from Him. “If the Mamluks entered the city [Syria], we won’t know what their tyranny and abuse will bring here.”⁵¹ Moreover, al-Raḥman lamented over his life and blamed it again on the Mamluks as follows. “The Mamluks spoiled my life and scattered my gathering and stole my fortune and took my boy (Ḥasan) away.⁵² Al-Raḥman even attempted to convince Shaykh Ḍāhir of Acre to defect from ‘Alī Bey. By means of prayer, he wished for Mamluk destruction: “Our lord Sultan Caliph messenger of Allah will expel rebellious ‘Alī Bey’ regime.”⁵³

In addition to al-Raḥman, Ḥasan also harshly criticized the Mamluks, speaking to a priest at Saint Ilya monastery in Beirut:

We pray to Allah that may he destroy the administration of the Mamluks. History has never before witnessed any more brutal ruthless and oppressive ruler than them.⁵⁴

In contrast to the seemingly negative representations of the Mamluks, the Ottoman Sultan and his regime are glorified. ‘Uthman Pasha of Egypt persuaded Muḥammad Abū Dhahab Bey to obey the Sultan and praised his greatness. He warned him: “If you do not surrender to the Sultan, you will not only betray our lord [the Sultan], but also the Messenger (God bless him and grant him salvation!) and His Law (Sharia).”⁵⁵ The expanded version of this novel elaborates the scene:

The Queen of Russia has helped you overcome the Muslims [in the Balkans] in order to satisfy her goals there. Imagine that you take Hijāz and Syria. What significance does the small piece of territory bear when compared to the much broader Ottoman Empire. How can the relatively smaller armies of Hijāz and Syria be a match for the powerful Ottoman armies which conquered the world with all their courage and strength.⁵⁶

Although Egyptian nationalism is almost unnoticeable, the Egypt-centered view has emerged in the formula of the “people of Egypt” and the “Egyptian army.” For example, ‘Umad al-Dīn referred to the parents of Ḥasan as people of Egypt.⁵⁷ ‘Abd al-Raḥman arrived at al-Arish and entered a Syria ruled by Muḥammad Bey Abū al-Dhahab and saw that the people of Syria were ready to defend the Egyptian army.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Muḥammad Abū Dhahab’s army is referred to as the “Egyptian army” or “Egyptian soldiers.”⁵⁹

In many respects, this novel is similar to Zaydān's other historical novel, *Mamlūk al-Shāriid*, analyzed in the preceding subsection. In both novels, Zaydān's pro-Ottoman and anti-Mamluk orientations are made patent. In light of Zaydān's pedagogical approach to historiography,⁶⁰ the novel aims to critique his contemporary socio-political conditions through use of the past. Against the overwhelming wave of Western penetration of Egyptian society, Zaydān seemed to believe that Egypt should be under the protection of the Ottoman Empire. It is in this context that we should view the contrasting black-and-white depictions of the Mamluks and Ottomans. Another interesting aspect of the novel is its moralizing quality. By denouncing both Abū Dhahab and 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and accusing them of betrayal, Zaydān attempted to address a moral question to an Egypt that underwent tremendous socio-political change. It is evident that Zaydān's moral question is also closely connected to the newly forged relationship between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. Zaydān seemingly used Abū Dhahab and 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr to persuade his readers to remain loyal to the Ottoman Empire.

SHAJARAT AL - DURR (BY JÜRJĪ ZAYDĀN) (THE FIRST EDITION APPEARED IN 1912; I REFER TO THE 1932 VERSION)

This novel differs from Jūrjī Zaydān's other novels discussed in this chapter in two primary ways. First, it is Zaydān's only novel that was first published in the twentieth century. Secondly, unlike the two novels that deal with the Mamluks in the Ottoman era, this novel focuses on the Baḥrī Mamluks, and particularly on the female protagonist Shajarat al-Durr.⁶¹

Any historical novel can serve as a tool to express the author's worldview. Zaydān's political orientation in the two previous novels⁶² can be summarized by two central elements: a pro-monarchist/khederalist (Muḥammad 'Alī) viewpoint and an Egypt-centered position. Thus, one of the primary missions in analyzing this novel in the context of the present study is to examine whether the author's political views changed over time and, if so, how and to what extent. Of course, this task demands a closer look at the representations of the Mamluks.

The protagonist of this novel, Shajarat al-Durr, is a multifaceted character. She is portrayed as a complex human being who acts as a result of a variety of motivations. Shajarat al-Durr is presented as a nationalistic

leader who is concerned about the future of her country: “Shajarat al-Durr worried about the internal division among the Mamluk army over Ṭūrānshāh’s action and nodded.”⁶³ The internal division among the Mamluk leaders was a more immediate danger than the external ones: “I worried that division among the Mamluk soldiers would persist and the enemy would take advantage of it and return.”⁶⁴

Moreover, Shajarat al-Durr is depicted as a tough and self-confident woman. “She did not open her heart easily to anybody and did not trust anyone with her decisions, thus the Mamluk leaders were afraid of her and esteemed her.”⁶⁵ Above all, it was Shajarat al-Durr’s burning ambition to be the first Sulṭāna that was a decisive factor determining her fate. Indeed, she was depicted as extremely ambitious. For instance, she ordered Ṭūrānshāh⁶⁶ to be killed and whispered to herself:

God will not raise him and kill ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak, my beloved [ḥabībī]. He is my beloved, but he is wicked and thus I do not trust him.⁶⁷ However, if I am determined to be the first Sulṭāna in the history of Islam, I will take ‘Izz al-Dīn because he has my best interest at heart.⁶⁸

She even dared to tempt Baybars, swearing that she would help him to usurp the Sultanate. She lowered her voice and said to him, “you shall slay ‘Abbasid Sultan Musta‘ṣim and you would be a good Sultan.”⁶⁹ It would be safe to conclude that she surreptitiously lusted for power.

Considering Shajarat al-Durr’s hunger for power, it is not surprising to find that she made many enemies. One merchant blames her for shifting her loyalties to gain her master’s trust. Saḥbān (a carpet merchant) said to another slave girl of King Ṣāliḥ al-Ayyūbī, Sallāfa: “Shajarat al-Durr exploited her loyalty to gain the Master’s affection.”⁷⁰ Hearing Shajarat al-Durr’s unprecedented political aspirations, the jealous Sallāfa began operating all channels in order to prevent their fruition. She called ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak and warned him to heed Shajarat al-Durr. Sallāfa attempted to gain ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak’s favor by hinting that the ‘Abbasid Caliph would not recognize Shajarat al-Durr as a legitimate Sultana. Before this meeting, she had already plotted to de-legitimize Shajarat al-Durr by expressing the latter’s desire for power to ‘Abbasid Caliph.⁷¹

Much like Sallāfa’s wish, Caliph Musta‘ṣim sent a letter to the ministers and leaders of the Egyptian army. The letter asserted that “if there is no man who will be Sultan, we will choose and send him to you.”⁷²

Having heard this news, the Egyptians demanded a male Sultan from the Ayyūbid family.⁷³

In her “campaign” against Shajarat al-Dūr, Sallāfa even went as far as to hatch another plot with ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak, in an attempt to separate her from the slave girl Shūkār. She attempted to convince Shajarat al-Durr that Caliph Musta‘sim wanted to marry Shūkār.⁷⁴ Subsequently, Shūkār departed for Baghdad, and Sallāfa came to Baybars and promised him that she would try to bring his beloved Shūkār to Egypt.⁷⁵ Sallāfa believed she was truly in love with Baybars.⁷⁶ This romantic element adds to the novel’s appeal.

So far, Baybars appeared as a straightforward man and even confessed that he and other Mamluk leaders killed Ṭūrānshāh. He justified the killing by saying to Shajarat al-Durr that Ṭūrānshāh did not go out to fight and was fickle, impatient, and temperamental.⁷⁷ Like Shajarat al-Durr, Baybars saw himself as the most powerful man and knew that ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak would be his most powerful rival.⁷⁸ Similarly, it is clearly stated that Baybars desired to be the Sultan of Egypt.⁷⁹

In the meantime, Baybars was determined to travel to Baghdad to find his beloved Shūkār. On hearing of Baybars’ visit, Wazir Mu’ayyid al-Dīn applauded him by saying that he fulfilled his vision as, during the war against the Crusaders, God had asked him to do so. Saḥbān uncovered his high expectation of Baybars and added that “he participated in the battle against the Europeans and liberated Egypt from their hands [and] may even help us to liberate Baghdad from other Europeans.”⁸⁰

Baybars finally came to Egypt to find his beloved Shūkār and met Saḥbān and Mu’yid al-Dīn, and promised them he would help the new Caliph to rule Egypt.⁸¹ Caliph Musta‘sim recognized Baybars’ heroic and brilliant military achievement in saying that he would let him “head [Musta‘sim’s] army to fight against the Mongols.”⁸² Wazir Mu’ayyid al-Dīn joined to “put in a good word” for Baybars, remarking that he is a brave hero and a wise man, who once united Egypt.⁸³

Under the pressure of Hülegü’s (Mongols) persistent attack, Baybars began to think of transferring the Caliphate from Baghdad to Cairo. He thought to himself, “If I transfer the Caliphate to Egypt from Baghdad, Cairo will be the center of the Islamic world. It does not necessarily require an Amir or a Sultan, but does need a Caliph to maintain an independent administration.”⁸⁴ However, Baybars had not seriously considered

transferring the Caliph from Baghdad to Cairo before he met Saḥbān. It was Saḥbān who inspired Baybars to enthrone the Caliph in Egypt.

As in the case of other novels, Baybars is represented as a symbol of Egyptian nationalism, but one important difference is found in this particular work. As mentioned above, Baybars only began to consider moving the Caliphate after his meeting with Saḥbān. A heated debate between Baybars and Saḥbān on the legitimacy of Egypt to the Caliphate symbolically conveys two contrasting views of past and future. For Baybars, a symbol of the past, it was a radically new idea to establish a Caliphate in Egypt, let alone a Shiite Caliphate. By contrast, for Saḥbān, a symbol of the future, and a Shiite Muslim who fled from Baghdad to Cairo, the geographical shift was not only possible, but also a blessing from God:

[Baybars:] There are no lands that are free from the ‘Abbasid Caliphate.

[Saḥbān :] They say so, but things have changed, no doubt.

[Baybars:] Are you doing this to be free from the Caliphate?

[Saḥbān :] Certainly not, my Lord.

[Baybars:] From where do we obtain a Caliph [deputy] and who establishes our authority in Egypt?

[Saḥbān:] Is it not true that stabilization came only from Iraq? Is it not right that stabilization will come from Egypt? Was Egypt not such a brilliant Caliphate [deputyship] for at least for 100 years?

Baybars could not endure it and said: You mean the country of slaves and those of Shiite [Fāṭimid].

[Saḥbān:] What’s wrong with being a Shiite or a Sunni – these are not Muslims from Qurayshi. The only difference is that the center of the Caliphate will be in the country [bilad, Egypt] in which its wealth is growing, trade is expanding and fleets are built. It [Egypt] even passed Iraq in sublime authority rather than being subdued to its power.⁸⁵

Agreeing with Saḥbān, Shajarat al-Durr said to Baybars:

Oh Baybars, now it is your turn to speak and I will not add to what you heard from him [Saḥbān] about Baghdad’s weakness or about the Egyptian Sultanate that has been enslaved in the hands of Atabeg ‘Izz al-Dīn for eight years.⁸⁶

In addition to the Egypt-centered view, there are other contemporary socio-political contexts that are reflected in this passage. First, secular

liberalism flourished in Egypt's political arena in the 1910s, competing with Egyptian nationalism and reformist Islam. During those days, liberal nationalist political parties, such as Umma and the National Party (*al-Ḥizb al-Waṭani*), were born. Above all, many liberalist periodicals, particularly *al-Muqtataf* and Zaydān's *al-Hilal*, began to publish articles on classics on European law, politics, history, geography, and philosophy, and many new translations of these texts saw light.

At the same time, Pan-Islamism also emerged in Egypt in the 1910s. When Shaykh 'Alī Yūsuf advocated this ideology in 1906–7, he not only expressed opposition to the British presence in Egypt, but also succeeded in mobilizing Egyptian support for the Ottoman Empire. Under these distinctive, but not necessarily contradictory, ideologies—Western egalitarianism and Pan-Islamism—Zaydān encouraged the Egyptians to lift the invisible divide between Sunnis and Shiites and create one united Egypt.

Parallel with a liberal political sentiment, Zaydān underlined his Egyptian-centered standpoint by comparing Egypt with Baghdad. As mentioned, Musta'ṣim recognized the supremacy of Baybars' military prowess. Moreover, Aḥmad Abū Bakr, the son of Caliph Musta'ṣim, made the mistake of ordering his army to plunder the mostly Shiite people of Karak.⁸⁷ During these atrocities, the people of Karak, including Saḥbān's parents, were plundered by the Caliph of Musta'ṣim's army. More seriously, in the midst of the operation, Aḥmad found Shūkār, abducted her, and did not report it to his father.⁸⁸ The army's oppression of the people signifies that the downfall of the 'Abbasid dynasty after Baghdad was at the hands of the Mongols. It seems that Zaydān sensed this shift in the regional division of power and felt a duty to rouse the Egyptians to prepare for Egypt's new and enlightened age.

Despite Baybars' long and fierce debate with Saḥbān, he was not yet certain of the viability of establishing a Shiite Caliphate in Egypt, adding that it "is not only wrong, but also not sensible."⁸⁹ Saḥbān made persistent efforts to amend Baybars' antipathy toward the Shiite, and particularly toward the Alawite. After hearing that the Alawite played an important role in the battle against the Mongols, Saḥbān said to Baybars: "It seems that Alawites are defeating Mongols." Baybars' impatience with the Alawite (Shiite) receded, and he replied to Saḥbān that the Alawites had been "ill-treated."⁹⁰ Saḥbān kept arguing that there should be an Egyptian Caliphate again. Saḥbān asked Baybars:

Is it possible to persuade Hülegü to leave the ‘Abbasid Caliph? Is he really determined to destroy it?

[Baybars:] It is sheer annihilation. He aims to kill the sons of ‘Abbasid.

....

[Baybars:] He is eradicating the ‘Abbasid dynasty, the gold of Islam.

[Saḥbān:] We will return to the Faṭimid Caliphate.

[Baybars:] You suffer from hallucinations.⁹¹

Apart from Baybars, the Mamluks are collectively represented in negative terms.

[Muyid al-Dīn:] We have been living in the sublime country for hundreds of years.

[Critical of the Mamluks, Saḥbān responds:] Do you mean Egypt, where we are now? Turks ruled Egypt, and they [the Mamluks and Turks] fought each other for power.⁹²

Finally, Sallāfa confessed her love to Baybars, expressing her enduring devotion and declaring that he is now the “Sultan of Egypt.”⁹³ Sallāfa was executed after revealing her plot to kill Shajarat al-Dūrr and ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak.⁹⁴

The main theme of this novel is thus summarized in three parts. First, Zaydān intentionally chose this turbulent period in the history of Islam and the Arabs in order to awaken his readers to Egypt’s glorious past. More importantly, through this story, Zaydān tacitly called upon his Egyptian readership to reclaim the country’s honor and glory. This sentiment is undoubtedly related to a prototype of Egyptian nationalism.

The other message hinted at in the novel is related to the sub-plot of unity between Shiite and Sunni Muslim. The unity of Egypt’s different sects and sectors was a fundamental factor in any form of nationalism. It is therefore not surprising that Zaydān applied this theme. A much more significant point is that the Shiite merchant Saḥbān played a decisive role in transferring the Caliphate to Egypt. This call for unity also promoted equality between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Lastly, Shajarat al-Durr symbolizes an independent and national female heroine with self-confidence and excellent political skills. Through reshaping this new and modern female image, Zaydān aimed at taking issue with the subject of gender equality in Egyptian society.

SHAJARAT AL - DURR (BY MUḤAMMAD SA‘ID AL-‘ARYĀN)

Muḥammad Sa‘id al-‘Aryān (1905–1964), a senior Egyptian writer, graduated from Dār al-‘Ulūm (a teacher training college) in 1930 and was the first paid teacher there. He then moved to the Ministry of Education and took part in the publication of a large number of children’s stories in magazines. He became famous for his historical novels. His greatest accomplishment was his work on *Sindbad Magazine* for children in early 1952, and he worked for the publishing house as chairman and editor for more than ten years.

While working at the Ministry of Education, he was involved in building school libraries in Egypt and the establishment of public centers abroad, through which he attempted to impart knowledge to the public and also worked hard to remove barriers to the export of books published in Egypt.

He began his career immediately after graduating from Dār al-‘Ulūm in 1930 to work as a teacher in a primary school, *Sherbin*. In 1932, he moved to the School of Qasida in *Ṭanṭā*, and in 1936 to the *Shubra* Elementary School for Girls. In 1942, he moved into the Ministry of Education where he supervised the public culture, and in 1944 he became head of the press office of the Ministry. On **October 18, 1945**, under a penname he criticized in newspapers some educational decisions issued by the Minister ‘*Abd al- Razāq Sanhūrī*. As punishment, the minister transferred him to a school in Gerga along with the separation of his daughters from school, and when he resisted, he submitted to a disciplinary trial. However, it was found that the order had been personal political revenge after he defended himself.

He returned to work in 1946 to be the director of the artistic office of the Ministry of Education under *Muḥammad Ḥasan Shamawī*. However, once again he criticized the minister ‘*Abdul Razāk Sanhūrī* and his policies, and transferred as a secondary school teacher in 1948; he then decided to leave government service and devote himself to literature and journalism, but the Minister of Education, ‘*Alī Ayyūb*, persuaded him to abandon his request, and he moved to a library of technical observers as assistant to the works of art in 1949, and *Ṭaha Ḥusayn* and the Ministry of Education in 1950 kept him in the same post.

Many of his articles in Egyptian and Arab magazines covered different areas of literary criticism and perspectives. He regularly wrote in periodicals such as *al-Thaqāfa* (1935–1945), *al-Risāla* (1935–1953), *al-Nadha’*

(1947–1948), and the *Dār al-‘Ulum* newspaper (1936–1943), as well as *Pioneer*, a journal issued by the teachers’ union in Egypt (1954–1964).

Shajarat al-Durr is the second of al-‘Aryān’s novels discussed in this study. Unlike *‘Alā Bāb al-Zuwayla*, which deals with the Circassian Mamluk era, this novel sheds light on the Bahṛī Mamluk era, and particularly on Shajarat al-Durr. The novel’s composition marks another significant shift from other novels. As the author remarks in the preface, the work is accessible, even to a younger audience. In order to achieve this end, al-‘Aryān used foreshadowing to develop his story. Thus, it is difficult to find much dramatic story development since the end of novel is revealed to the reader at an early stage. For example, Abū Zuhra predicted that Aybak would be Sultan, but his friends, Qalāwūn, Baybars, and Aqṭāy, did not take it seriously and mocked him.⁹⁵ Abū Zuhra warned Aybak that he would die before getting married,⁹⁶ prophesying that Shajarat al-Durr would be Sultana and that Aybak’s Mamluks would remove her.⁹⁷

One of the most important keys to interpreting the representations of the Mamluks is to understand the novel’s central theme, which is inevitably connected to the author’s worldview. In the preface, al-‘Aryān remarked that the protagonists of the novel are Queen Shajarat al-Durr and her husband King Sālīh al-Ayyūb.⁹⁸ More clearly, al-‘Aryān made positive allusions to Shajarat al-Durr, some even verging on glorification, by stressing the importance of Shajarat al-Durr to the history of Islam and Egypt.⁹⁹ Therefore, the ideological background that lies at the core of this adoration of Shajarat al-Durr should be examined.

However since discussion of al-‘Aryān’s second novel will follow, we will critically define al-‘Aryān’s political and ideological orientation manifested in Egyptian nationalism later on. In this novel, al-‘Aryān’s nationalistic views were composed of two main sentiments: an Egypt-centered standpoint and the significant role of anonymous Egyptians’ role in the country’s historical development:

The name of Shajarat al-Durr is renowned as she was the first Sulṭāna in Islamic history.¹⁰⁰ Mongols were defeated at the hands of the Egyptian army at ‘Ayn Jālūt in Palestine. It was a fatal defeat. During the reign of Shajarat al-Durr, the Egyptian army protected al-Hijāz [Mecca].¹⁰¹

Another marked nationalist sentiment seen in the preface is the blurred line between the Mamluks and the Egyptian army. This trend clearly indicates that al-‘Aryān assimilated Mamluk history into Egyptian national history. Furthermore, al-‘Aryān’s identification with Egyptian territorial

nationalism reshaped the war between the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria: “It was the Egyptian Mamluks or the Egyptian Army of Shajarat al-Durr who fought against Nāṣir al-Ayyūb and his Mamluks.”¹⁰² One of the prominent features of Egyptian nationalist historiography was the pivotal role it attributed to the Egyptian public in shaping events. This role was, indeed, more significant than that awarded to its leaders. Accordingly, the novel depicted women and children as active participants in the war against the Crusaders:

At the Al-Manṣūra battle, the Egyptian army could not stop Louis IX’s forces. Behind the Egyptian army, there were thousands of people from the city, men, women, children seized by death. The country was soon filled with dead bodies. Fakhr al-Dīn did nothing.¹⁰³ ... The Egyptians were the ones who resisted the Crusaders [Louis IX] and defended Egypt.¹⁰⁴ ... Women, children and the elderly participated in the battle against the Crusaders at Damietta.¹⁰⁵

Returning to Shajarat al-Durr, she was sanctified not only as a woman of noble origins, but also as a great beauty. “She is neither Turkish nor Armenian, nor Circassian nor European, but rather the daughter of Eve. She is immensely beautiful, with a unique skin tone and a clever and heavenly voice.”¹⁰⁶

Moreover, the novel convincingly narrated the secret of Shajarat al-Durr’s birth, thereby providing the quintessential element of melodrama. In fact, Shajarat al-Durr was the daughter of Fāṭima Khātūn, the wife of Sultan Azbak al-Bahlwān of Tabriz. Fāṭima Khātūn was the daughter of Toḡrūl of Seljūq.¹⁰⁷ Fāṭima Khātūn forged an alliance with Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārizm Shāh (the last Sultan of Khwārizm) and married him, sending her daughter, Shajarat al-Durr, to Badr al-Dīn Ṣāhib al-Mosul. Although Shajarat al-Durr was of much more respectable origins than the daughter of Badr al-Dīn, she was nevertheless humiliated.¹⁰⁸

Shajarat al-Durr was further portrayed as an ambitious, power-thirsty woman. Although she remembered the prophesy of Abū Zuhra—that she would be the Sultana of East and West but would die as a consequence—Shajarat al-Durr did not forfeit her three main goals: men, the throne, and military prowess.¹⁰⁹

The fact that Shajarat al-Durr was female did not seem to affect her military skills. When Baybars headed the troops that guarded the gate, Shajarat al-Durr commanded the battle.¹¹⁰

However, Shajarat al-Durr’s most significant quality was her political and diplomatic skills. She appeared to have enough political acumen

to command the country. Shajarat ordered her servant (Jihān) to gather information about Baybars¹¹¹ and, more importantly, saved Šālih al-Ayyūbī by deceiving ‘Ashūr Khatūn, Nāšir Dawūd’s wife. Shajarat al-Durr promised that if ‘Ashūr Khatūn freed Šālih al-Ayyūbī, ‘Ashūr Khatūn’s husband Nāšir would become Sultan of Syria and Egypt in compensation.¹¹² After his release, Šālih Ayyūbī left for Egypt, and Shajarat al-Durr removed Sayf al-Dīn, appointing Nāšir as Sultan of Syria, as promised. However, it did not take long before the relationship between Nāšir and Šālih Ayyūbī deteriorated.¹¹³

Thanks to her excellent political and diplomatic skills, Shajarat al-Durr enjoyed great popularity among the Egyptians. After the killing of Tūrānshāh, Shajarat al-Durr’s rights to the sultancy were not contested, although the case of a female Sultana was unprecedented in Islamic Egypt.¹¹⁴

So far, we have examined the glorification and beautification of Shajarat al-Durr, but we should also refer to different descriptions later on. In opposition to Shajarat al-Durr’s positive representation, the Mamluks were collectively portrayed in negative terms:

Many of these Mamluks’ lives revolved around the pleasures of food and prosperity. When they convened, they engaged in mere mockery. When alone, they only craved food, drink, and slave girls.¹¹⁵

Shajarat al-Durr and all the other Mamluk leaders were depicted as power-thirsty. Baybars, Aqṭāy, and Qalāwūn complained about Aybak’s rise to the throne:

Baybars: Thanks to good luck and her excellent leadership, Shajarat al-Durr brought us victory at the battle of al-Manṣūra and the battle of Fārskūr

Aqṭāy: You should deny it, since the victory was your achievement. Without your bravery, the battle may have turned out very differently.¹¹⁶

Baybars: What are you and I and those Turkmens altogether? If we are not the army of the country, what are we and why did we not stop the disaster befalling our country? Indeed, we have full rights to this country.¹¹⁷

Aqṭāy: Furthermore, she [Shajarat al-Durr] neglected our rights and brought Aybak upon us!

Qalāwūn said Abu Zuhra al-Manjim prophesized that he (Aybak) would be Sultan.¹¹⁸

Aqṭāy: Since the Turkish Mamluks were emancipated from the hands of Crusaders, it is impossible to go back to Kurdish Sultan [Ayyūbids]. I will push her away if Aybak al-Jāshankīr will succeed the throne.¹¹⁹

Aqṭāy, in particular, is portrayed as a greedy man who lusted for power in the introduction of the protagonists in the last part of the novel.¹²⁰ Aqṭāy complained about Aybak's empowerment, and thus plotted his assassination:

Aybak has no right to the kingship as he is not a Mamluk of Ṣāliḥ and who is neither the most powerful nor oldest nor bravest Mamluk.¹²¹ Aqṭāy planned to kill Aybak,¹²² but was killed by him,¹²³ thus fulfilling Abū Zuhra's prophecy.¹²⁴

It is unusual to find that someone other than Baybars Quṭuz, the Mamluk of Aybak, defeated the Mongols at the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt,¹²⁵ while Baybars is referred to as a pious Mamluk king.¹²⁶

The Egypt-centered view, a crucial component of Egyptian nationalism, is clearly present in the discussion of the letter sent to Shajarat al-Durr by Aybak, who was in Baghdad. Having received the letter that suggests the need for a male Sultan, Shajarat al-Durr was not confident she could fill the position and hesitated over whether she should obey 'Abbasid and appoint a male Sultan.¹²⁷ Aybak encouraged Shajarat al-Durr by advising her that Egypt did not depend on Baghdad but had voluntary relations with it.¹²⁸

However, the tragic strife between Aybak and Shajarat al-Durr had developed long before, stemming from Aybak's wish to take a wife:

Aybak wanted a child by Shajarat al-Durr, but she could not have one. Quṭuz attempted to persuade Aybak that he had the right to rule Egypt and marry Badr al-Dīn Lūlū, daughter of the Emir of Mosul, who resided in Baghdad.¹²⁹ Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Shanjāri, Qāḍī al-Quḍā of Egypt advised Aybak to watch out for a Fitna (civil war) between Egypt and Ayyūbids, as in the daughter of a prince (Shajarat al-Durr) resides in his house.¹³⁰

As a result, Shajarat al-Durr's mental condition was drastically aggravated. At last, she became delusional:

Shajarat al-Durr had a hallucination in which Aybak sought advice with Badr al-Dīn Mosul's daughter and they were mocking her. She even saw al-Manṣūr Ṣāhib Ḥamā sitting on the throne in her stead.¹³¹

Possessed by the fear of dethronement, Shajarat al-Durr turned to Nāṣir Salāḥal-Dīn Ṣāhib of Damascus and asked him to attack Egypt.¹³² She also ordered a slave to slay Aybak.¹³³

Aybak's death is a turning point that dramatically shifts Shajarat al-Durr's initial heroic portrayal, re-positioning her as an ordinary, flawed human being. Shajarat al-Durr felt guilty about the killing of Aybak, and repeatedly cried for help. Possessed by Satan, she was unable to make any plan to rule.¹³⁴ The mother of 'Alī ibn Aybak explained to her son what had happened to Aybak:

[Mother of 'Alī ibn Aybak:] Aybak did not die a natural death. Shajarat al-Durr killed him.

['Alī ibn Aybak:] What made you think so?

[Mother of 'Alī ibn Aybak:] Because Aybak wanted to scare her by taking on another wife.

['Alī ibn Aybak:] Why did you not kill him on Shajarat al-Durr's wedding day?

[Mother of 'Alī ibn Aybak:] I had been waiting for him.¹³⁵

...

From the last scene of the novel, the emerging question is why al-'Aryān attempted to characterize Shajarat al-Durr as an ordinary human being, in contrast to the heroic image that appears in the first half of the novel. One possibility is that in this episode al-'Aryān attempted to convince the readers of Shajarat al-Durr's complexity, which stands in contrast to other heroic characters. Orit Bashkin sheds light on Shajarat al-Durr's intricate character.

Bashkin argues that three important discourses about women and their roles in society are echoed in Zaydān's historical novels. The first is a debate pertaining to women's isolation and lack of education. Many other Egyptian scholars addressed the issue of female seclusion. The feminist intellectual Malak Hifnī Nāsif (1886–1918), for example, compared women's seclusion to the practice of burying girls alive in the pre-Islamic Arabia.¹³⁶ The works of the influential Egyptian intellectual Qāsim Amīn (1863–1908),¹³⁷ which denounced woman's seclusion and called for their education, generated important discussions about womanhood in Egypt.¹³⁸

Much like these scholars, al-‘Aryān raised the question of whether Shajarat al-Durr’s seclusion stemmed from Aybak’s intention to marry another woman. It seems that in the sub-plot of *Shajarat al-Durr*, al-‘Aryān aimed to achieve two goals. First, he justified Shajarat al-Durr’s killing of Aybak, presenting it as an inevitable measure; second, he addressed a contemporary issue of women’s rights and liberties in the changing Egyptian society of the 1930s.

In sum, al-‘Aryān used the Mamluks and their history in order to underline two emerging contemporary issues: Egyptian nationalism and freedom, and women’s rights. Among many other Egyptian nationalistic sentiments, the Egypt-centered view is clearly highlighted in Aybak and Shajarat al-Durr’s discussion on the relationship between Egypt and Baghdad. In Shajarat al-Durr’s portrayal as an ordinary, flesh-and-blood woman, al-‘Aryān succeeded in presenting to his readers the issue of women’s rights.

‘ALĀ BĀB ZUWAYLA (BY MUḤAMMAD SA‘ĪD AL-‘ARYĀN)

Before embarking on a critical analysis of the Mamluk representation in this novel, I will begin with a brief summary of its plot. Ṭūmānbāy, the last Mamluk Sultan, was kidnapped as a child and taken from the Caucasus to Syria, where he was sold as a slave to Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. Qānṣūh treated Ṭūmānbāy as a favorite despite the fact that he discovered he was the son of Arkamās, with whom Qānṣūh had been waging a blood-feud, and whom he now believed to be dead. However, Arkamās was not dead, and killed Qānṣūh in the great battle of Marj Dābiq, in which the Ottomans defeat the Mamluks.

Meanwhile, Ṭūmānbāy’s mother had set out to find her lost son, and after a difficult journey of many years she met her husband, Arkamās. Arkamās had just returned to Egypt after killing Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. He learned from his wife that Sultan Ṭūmānbāy was his son. Without revealing his identity to his wife, who had not recognized him, he took her to Cairo to help her meet her son. However, Ṭūmānbāy was defeated by the Ottomans and publicly hanged on the Zuwayla Gate.¹³⁹ The novel is filled with melodramatic elements, such as its tragic ending, foreshadowing, and the secret birth storyline, and is deeply engaging for these reasons.

Compared to other novels that deal with the Baḥrī Mamluk era, this novel’s historical background, as presented in this chapter, is unique, as it focuses on the Circassian Mamluk periods and particularly the last days of the Mamluk dynasty, from the end of Mamluk al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy’s reign to

the Ottoman conquest (1490–1517). Six Sultans ruled during this period, and none of them died from natural causes due to the struggle for power, which included numerous plots and assassinations. The author seemingly chose the Circassian Mamluks due to the precarious socio-political condition of his day, as will be discussed later on.

In addition to the power struggles, the novel vividly portrays the greed of the Mamluk ruling class and the injustices suffered by the Egyptian people, who were crushed by confiscations and increasing taxation, especially during the reign of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (1501–17).¹⁴⁰ This tendency to portray the Circassian Mamluks in an unflattering manner is by no means new and may be encountered in Egyptian textbooks and present-day historiography. The negative portrayal may stem from the bloodshed and power struggles, as compared to the Baḥrī Mamluk era.

In contrast to other historical writings that deal with the topic, this novel offers an interesting and novel background to the power struggles and oppression, which may be far more plausible and apologetic than that of the accepted and monolithic tone. The novel begins with the Mamluk leaders' veiled enmity and intrigues, as usually encountered in descriptions of political life of the palace. Qānṣūh and Akbardī's power struggle emerged¹⁴¹ in the palace, and Qānṣūh hatched a plot to remove his rival, Akbardī, in order to advance his favorite, Sultan Qāytbāy.¹⁴²

There were ample rumors of conspiracy and suspicious deaths. After the mysterious death of Karatbāy, who did not die of natural causes, it was believed that his wife, Miṣrbāy, had murdered him in order to be united with Sultan Nāṣir Ibn Qāytbāy. Jānibāy denied this rumor, suggesting that Qānṣūh deceived her and killed Karatbāy in order to increase his power.¹⁴³ Finally, an assassination plot was hatched to depose Sultan al-Qāytbāy. Allegedly, Qānṣūh, Khāir Ibn Malbāy, and Ṭūmān Ibn Akhī al-Ghawrī took part in it.¹⁴⁴ In the meantime, Ṭūmānbāy complained about the Qāytbāy:

Is it not enough for this young boy [Sultan Qāytbāy] to cause a disaster and disgrace in the household? The women even cooperated with his uncle in slandering a girl [Miṣrbāy] whom he desired, beginning his betrayal and breaking his oath. Why did these people [Egyptians] bear the blame for the crime of the young Sultan, who did not even listen to others when they cried for help?¹⁴⁵

One day, Sultan Qāyṭbāy was killed, and al-Zāhir Qānṣūh assumed the throne,¹⁴⁶... inviting a series of plots against new Sultans, such as the ones that aimed to kill al-Zāhir Qānṣūh¹⁴⁷ and Sutlan al-Ashraf Jānbulāt.¹⁴⁸

As a result of the ongoing internal strife, even Mamluk leader Qānṣūh expressed exhaustion: “I feel disgust with the attempts to pacify the sons of the Circassians – some will die at the hands of others, and they will rob all this country’s resources (tools).”¹⁴⁹ It is further stated that, since the death of Sultan Qāyṭbāy, after many years of bloodshed, the basis of succession of the throne remained unchanged in Egypt.¹⁵⁰

It is interesting that the power struggle had become the ridicule of the Ottomans. Jānibāy’s husband, Khushqadam, betrayed the Mamluk Sultan and mocked the Mamluk succession system in front of Ottoman Sultan Salīm: “They kill each other,” he stated, “and enjoy themselves until other Mamluks kill each other.”¹⁵¹

Interestingly, neither the Sultan nor the Mamluk leaders are accused of these vicious power struggles. This new interpretation sets this novel apart. Interestingly, it is al-‘Aryān who blamed the Sultan’s mother, Aṣḷbāy, for Sultan Qāyṭbāy’s isolation. “Aṣḷbāy [the Sultan’s mother] monopolized the Sultan and controlled his relations with the world. He was disconnected and emotionally detached from his family and surroundings.”¹⁵²

According to al-‘Aryān’s keen insight, not only the Sultan’s isolation but also the terrible power struggles stemmed not from greedy Mamluk leaders, but from the lack of stable succession. Al-‘Aryān viewed this abominable custom as a flaw in the system, rather than as the responsibility of individual Sultans.

When the Mamluk leaders attacked the palace, Qānṣūh made efforts to defend it, but it did not take long before the palace fell. The rebellion was immediately supported by Qānṣūh’s men. The third-person narrator justified this betrayal by asking: “Those Mamluks were not older than Qānṣūh. Are those Mamluks who are older not dead and buried? This violent dethroning replaced the proper succession of the throne. Regulated succession was desperately absent during the Circassian Mamluk era.”¹⁵³

Slave merchant Malbāy pointed out the paradox in the origins of the Mamluk slave system:

Is it surprising that all Sultans who have succeeded the Pharaohs for over one hundred years produced slavery? For why criticize those who hand over [surrender] their necks to slaves and promote them [slaves] to the throne. Is it their concern to maintain the power [authority], honor and Sultan?¹⁵⁴

Following Ṭūmānbāy's death, internal palace politics entered a new phase. Sultan al-Ghawrī was the first chosen by a council designed to select a Sultan to succeed Ṭūmānbāy, without internal strife and bloodshed.¹⁵⁵ Sultan al-Ghawrī assured Aṣḥbāy he would not confiscate the wealth of the deposed Sultan or dislodge him.¹⁵⁶ It initially seemed that this reform in the succession system was likely to settle the power struggle among the Mamluk leaders, but the reality on the ground was far more complicated.

Despite this new succession regulation, the fragile political condition, prone to internal struggle, remained unchanged as the faction of young leaders was as preoccupied with its honor (nobility) and rank as it had been before. Mostly, they understood that the only way to assume the throne would be for the Sultan to die of natural causes.¹⁵⁷ After Ghawrī was chosen by agreement, none of the Mamluks struggled for that particular position; nonetheless, they continued to fight and kill each other.¹⁵⁸

Sultan al-Ghawrī appeared to have no choice but to follow the previous practice and strengthen his power. As in the cases of previous Sultans, al-Ghawrī tried to maintain his throne in a similar manner, ignoring all issues except for the goal of removing his enemies and sparking dispute among them.¹⁵⁹ Although he was not greedy (he did not ambitiously pursue revenues and fortune), he required wealth in order to remain in power. Hence, his economic policy concentrated on the accumulation of wealth. He even went as far as to trade in food and clothes, sell government posts, and monopolize business and taxation revenues.¹⁶⁰

Undoubtedly, al-Ghawrī's most fatal mistake, and the one that determined his fate, was to betray his adherents and those who supported him. Not having distributed the booty among his peers, he accumulated much wealth, abandoning those Egyptians who contributed to it and helped al-Ghawrī defeat his rivals and consequently strengthened his power.¹⁶¹

It is in this episode of Sultan al-Ghawrī that al-'Aryān novelty can be seen. By presenting al-Ghawrī's dilemma, al-'Aryān succeeds in posing the paradox of governance arising from the confrontation between the wealth of the state and the welfare of the people, thus posing to the reader questions of political philosophy. The presentation of these general issues may also reflect the author's critical mind, considering Egypt's contemporary socio-political situation. The conversation between al-Ghawrī and Ṭūmānbāy II shows the former's dilemma much more clearly.

Ṭūmānbāy II came to al-Ghawrī with complaints about the spreading poverty and suffering. Ghawrī replied that it was inevitable to govern the

country and defend it against its enemies, such as the Ottomans. In addition, Ghawrī asked: “Did not they see great buildings such as mosques, fortress and vessels?” Ṭūmānbāy II replied by arguing that “the people of Egypt did not think like you and they wanted food, security, clothes.” Ghawrī asked, “Did not they know that the pirates of the Indian Ocean used French canons?”¹⁶² Ṭūmānbāy II replied, “As long as the gold and silvers are used for building the Sultans’ houses, the people will not be convinced.”¹⁶³

Following the failure of his reforms, the last days of Sultan al-Ghawrī are presented in a similar manner to those of previous Sultans: betrayal of the Viceroy and internal division. Badr al-Dīn Ibn Muzahir, Khāir Ibn Malbāy (Viceroy of Aleppo), hatched a plot against Ghawrī.¹⁶⁴ Ṭūmānbāy informed al-Ghawrī that Jānibāy had seized the people’s money and property, and they now suffered from poverty and economic hardships.¹⁶⁵ Facing Ottoman Sultan Salim’s attack on Syria, Mamluk leaders were still divided by internal strife. The council charged Khāir Ibn Malbāy, the Viceroy of Syria (Aleppo), with an attempt to assume power and reported this to Sultan al-Ghawrī.¹⁶⁶

There is no difference in the case of the last days of Ṭūmānbāy. An Egyptian man named Abū Bakr al-Rammāh described the last moments before the fatal Ottoman attack, blaming the last Mamluk Sultan for Egypt’s miserable state:

He [the Ottoman Sultan] is a man of wealth, passion and power. Don’t you see soldiers are getting ready to depart for war? Don’t you see our master seeking only to take possession [vilayet] and the power to rule it? It is no wonder that Ṭūmānbāy decided to take the burden and it is foolish that he is going to surrender himself to his enemy and abandon the homeland to the Ottomans. It seems that they will fall under Ottoman sovereignty.¹⁶⁷

The Mamluk oppression of the Egyptians is detailed:

Men ceased to walk or ride on the streets for fear of death and all kinds of menace. Women and children withdrew their heads to observe [watch] the street, waiting for their detained fathers and husbands to come home.¹⁶⁸ The Mamluks attacked houses, plundered merchants, broke gates and snatched turbans. All these kinds of behavior weakened the Sultan and caused unrest, civil war [*fitna*] and violent protests.¹⁶⁹ And these also provoked internal war between other Mamluk leaders.¹⁷⁰

At last, the Mamluk oppression led to the revolt of the youths and Arabs:

Taxes were imposed on the people in the name of the Sultan. The people were oppressed by the burdens of tax and tyranny. Arabs and youths awaited an opportunity for strife and internal revolt in order to destroy these Circassian Mamluks and avenge the Mamluk regime.¹⁷¹

In contrast to these negative images of the Mamluks, Ṭūmānbāy I is presented as a good, faithful, and clever Sultan. In an impressive scene, Ṭūmānbāy I accepted his painful fate. The fortune-teller Arkam al-Ramāl visited Ṭūmānbāy I and warned him that a new brilliant star would rise. Ṭūmānbāy I already knew about Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī¹⁷² and was not startled by the prophecy. Rather, he thanked God for appointing a successor.¹⁷³ Ghawrī seized the throne by removing Ṭūmānbāy.¹⁷⁴

Ṭūmānbāy II is depicted as another good but tragic and even nationalist Egyptian figure.¹⁷⁵ He is depicted in the following positive terms: He is a friend of the people, a son of the people. He has eyes that see, ears that hear, a heart that feels, and a hand that gives.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, Ṭūmānbāy II is described as an excellent Sultan.

There was no unrest among the people and no one disturbed this peaceful condition created by Ṭūmānbāy's administration. The Sultan had full command of the army and defended the borders.¹⁷⁷

The best example of his popularity among the people can be found in the phrase "He was the most beloved Sultan by the people."¹⁷⁸

Another important issue is the Egyptian nationalism embodied in the novel, which is closely related to the political orientation and worldview of al-'Aryān. There is no significant difference in the Egyptian nationalistic ethos compared to other historical literatures considered in the present study. In one passage, al-'Aryān emphasizes the eternity of Egyptian sovereignty—one of the primary essences of nationalism.

There was an Egyptian empire extending between the Byzantine Empire [Roman Empire or Anatolia] and the eastern and western Libyan desert, from the border of Yemen on the Indian coast to the eastern and western part of the Roman shores. The empire enjoyed full independence and freedom and no country from the east or the west threatened its sovereignty and self-rule. Thus, it enjoyed self-sovereignty.¹⁷⁹

Turks from ʿĪlūnids and Ikhshid and Arabs from Caliphs and slaves of Fāṭimids, Kurds from Ibn Ayyūb and Mamluks – despite the different regimes the empire has never been under the sovereignty of a foreign country.¹⁸⁰

In many instances, the Egyptians are described as nationalistic and brave people who do not fear the Ottomans. Even after hearing that the Ottomans are preparing another attack on Egypt, none of them sighed or became feeble. They were happy to defend Egypt and Syria and called upon Egyptians, Arabs, and the Mamluks to protect their honor and women.¹⁸¹ ‘Izz al-Dīn writes the following:

This is justice, for what this enemy came to us for Circassian? For the sake of Egypt? What are these Circassians in Egypt for? They are only a ruling minority that enjoys a luxurious life.¹⁸² Although these people [Circassians] would be dead we should defend our Harem, property, and our homeland. Abū Bakr should rise to the throne.¹⁸³

Due to the diverse aspects of Egyptian nationalism touched upon in the novel, it is difficult to define al-‘Aryān’s Egyptian nationalism as one steady pattern. However, it could be asserted that he showed a tendency toward integralist Egyptian nationalism. Decisive proof of integralist Egyptian nationalism can be seen in two different stories: one story tells of a foreigner who joined the Egyptian revolt, and the other reports of Arabs who sympathized with the Egyptian cause and assimilated into Egyptian society:

Alī Ibn Raḥāb was not one of those greedy Mamluks. He did not identify with the rebelling Egyptians. Rather, his Egyptianism [*miṣriyatahu*] forced him to observe the affairs in the country between people and their generals (leaders).¹⁸⁴

These dangers united the spirit of Egyptians that is transmitted from generation to generation and declared at other times. There were neither evil troops nor Arab [Bedouin] attacks on the borders, but they silently expressed their sympathy with the Egyptian mind, identity [*nufus*] that is composed of various components as water in the pot will water the edge of the vessel.¹⁸⁵

In his integralist Egyptian nationalism, al-‘Aryān also articulates a very positive view of Arab Egyptian nationalism:

The Mamluks established their own type of regime and continued their corrupted system. Indeed, they plundered and attacked.¹⁸⁶ There is only one way for liberation: a unity of authority for correcting the crooked in order to bring to the throne an Arab or Egyptian Sultan, or one of Circassian descent.¹⁸⁷

The best example of Arab Egyptian nationalism is manifested in a conversation between an Arab and a Shaykh:

The Arab said: Our country is not the country of the Circassians, who arrived here as slaves sold by slave traders. One day they rose against us and¹⁸⁸ even purchased our slaves and confiscated our property. They pursued a different order, which made our wives and daughters concubines in their palaces. Indeed, the throne of this country should belong to Arabs as recited in the Quran. And we put our faith in the hands of Kurds until the Mongols attacked us, then the Kurds handed us over to the Mamluks, and the time has now come to restore the people's trust!¹⁸⁹

Shaykh: If one heard your words he would consider you as the sons of Egypt.

Arab: Sons of Egypt? They will not change unless the defeated [Egyptians] are guided like a camel that fears its nose.

Arab: Slowly, oh brothers, we are all sons of Egypt, Circassian, Arab and Egyptian. We are all equal in the right and duty. The despotic Sultan subdues us by this *'aṣabiya* [esprit de corps, solidarity], that breaks us altogether.¹⁹⁰

As expressed in the words of the Arab, al-‘Aryān seems to have dreamed of a liberalized Egypt without social class or ethnic division. Perhaps he was seized by nostalgia for an experiment of liberal politics in Egypt that he himself witnessed in the 1920s. Another possible explanation is that he kept on believing that liberalism was the only alternative to the right-wing Egypt in which he lived.

Regardless of these considerations, al-‘Aryān elaborated his liberal political view with criticism of the Circassian Mamluks, in many ways similar to the turbulent and radical periods of 1930s and 1940s Egypt:

For Egyptians, the present time is a period of historical decline, as there is not agreement on the rule of the Circassian regime, imposing on it obedience and loyalty. Thus they [Egyptians] were oppressed by the burden derived from the wrongdoing of the Mamluks. Thus, they desired to remove the yoke of the sultans who were on the Egyptian throne for 300 years.¹⁹¹

They did not rule justly, did not share the resources, did not provide a high quality of living or freedom.

Their goal was to enjoy a life of luxury. Thus, the people were in a state of deprivation and humiliation and suffered from hunger and sickness.¹⁹²

These Mamluks maintained Egypt's reputation among the eastern and western countries, but if the people were not free [liberated] by themselves and if they were not allowed to hold independent opinions and views and participate in the regime in order to lead respectable lives.¹⁹³

What is the benefit of freedom and independence if the people do not feel free?¹⁹⁴

Even the People of the Book (non-Muslim adherents) joined the revolt against the Mamluk tyranny:

Egyptians, Circassians, Shaykhs, merchants and young men revolted against the Sultan's oppression. The *'aṣabiya* [cohesion] united us against oppression of the Sultan and tyranny of the leaders. Those who recited the Koran and the People of the Books participated in the revolt.¹⁹⁵

In sum, al-'Aryān attempted to offer a critical view of the socio-political condition of 1930s and 1940s Egypt in the context of the last days of the Circassian Mamluks. He succeeded in finding a common ground of political instability between the two periods. In al-'Aryān's view, Egypt saw two primary types of radical nationalism: the Muslim Brotherhood (1928–) and Young Egypt (1933–). He viewed this reality as not very different from that of the Circassian Mamluks, in which Egyptians suffered from oppression and tyranny.

Against the overwhelming wave of radicalism, al-'Aryān attempted to call the Egyptians to strive for liberalism, underlining the precious value of individual freedom, political participation, and proper division of political power. He may have believed that if Egyptians had enjoyed political and individual freedom, Egypt would not be radicalized to such an extent.

In al-'Aryān's liberalistic project, the role of the Circassian Mamluks seems very marginal and limited to that of villain or oppressor. Although Ṭūmānbāy, as indicated above, is depicted as a symbol of Egyptian nationalism and as a righteous Sultan, his fate was not much different from that of previous Sultans. In Ṭūmānbāy's last days, facing the Ottoman Sultan's fatal attack, the Viceroy of Syria betrayed the Sultan decisively.

Therefore, the episode of Ṭūmānbāy shows that in the absence of orderly succession and good governance, the Ottomans succeeded in defeating anyone. To put it differently, al-'Aryān's Mamluks or Sultans

were not a direct cause of tyranny and oppression. In some sense, the Mamluks stood apart from al-‘Aryān’s bitter criticism of the socio-political destruction of Egypt. He stressed that the cause was the succession system and governance. In this respect, Ṭūmānbāy was not a symbol of success, but rather a failed and tragic hero. It is this element that sets this novel apart from others. Therefore, it is plausible that al-‘Aryān employed Ṭūmānbāy as an allegory for King Farūq of Egypt, expressing the urgent need for political reform and liberalization.

One more significant difference is that the Mamluks, including many Sultans in the novel, are not portrayed in clear black-and-white terms, as compared to the Ottomans. Namely, the Mamluks are not set as an antithesis to the Ottomans, as is the case in other novels. Instead, they are represented as unfortunate heroes, who struggle to reach beyond their limits, in a structural contradiction like that of the fate of Ṭūmānbāy, who was hanged at Bāb Zuwayla just before uniting with his parents.

‘*ALĪ BEY AL - KABĪR* (BY AḤMAD SHAWQĪ)

Aḥmad Shawqī’s (1868–1932) historical novel *‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr* was first published in 1893, and later, in 1932, revised and republished. Aḥmad Shawqī was a neo-classicist writer and poet and was born, in Cairo, to a prominent family associated with the court of Khedive. On his paternal side, he was of Kurdish and Arab descent, whereas his maternal ancestors came from Turkey and Greece. When Shawqī’s father had wasted the family fortune, Khedive Tawfiq had to take care of the family, and Shawqī grew up in the palace.¹⁹⁶

In early 1891, after having worked for a while in the translation department of the palace administration, thanks to Khedive funding he went to France to study at the University of Montpellier.¹⁹⁷ When he came back to Egypt the British government exiled him from the country.¹⁹⁸ Shawqī’s great talent was the topicality of his poetry, which reflected the political situation of his day. He was not religious, his political ideology was not clearly defined, and his nationalism was a blend of Pan-Islamism and Egyptian nationalism.¹⁹⁹ In light of his close relationship with Khedive it is no wonder that he was loyal to Khedive Tawfiq, against whom the rebellion of Aḥmad ‘Urābī was directed. This intimate relationship may explain Shawqī’s anonymous diatribe against ‘Urābī upon the latter’s return from exile, for which he was frequently condemned later on.²⁰⁰ Shortly before

his death, Shawqī was appointed chairman of Apollo, a society of poets founded in 1932. This group was dominated by neo-romantic poets.²⁰¹

It should also be noted that Aḥmad Shawqī maintained friendly relations with Khedive Abbas II (1892). It is highly probable that this private relationship had an impact on his literary works, including this play.²⁰² Probably due to his partially Turkish descent, or his desire to rally the support of the Khedive (who hoped for Turkish support in his conflicts with British occupying forces), Shawqī continued to be deeply involved in the political developments in Turkey. He praised the Turkish success against the Greeks and composed poems upon the acquisition of battleships by the Turkish fleet²⁰³ as well as on the pronouncement of the Ottoman constitution.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, Shawqī regretted the abolition of the Caliphate,²⁰⁵ and even the fact that the tyrannical Sultan, ‘Abd al-Ḥamid, escaped a murder attempt, inspired him to write a poem. This annoyed Arab patriots, despite their admiration of Shawqī as an Arab writer.²⁰⁶ During his stay in France, in 1893, Shawqī produced his first tragedy and sent the play to Khedive Abbas II. The Khedive loved the play.²⁰⁷

Therefore, Shawqī could be categorized as a monarchist intellectual with pro-Ottoman sentiments. This political orientation is the point of departure for analyzing representations of the Mamluks. The assumption that Shawqī was a monarchist intellectual raises the following question: As in the case of other monarchist historical writings, did Shawqī reshape the Mamluks in negative terms? It is not a simple question to answer since the Mamluk image in the play is far more complicated. Indeed, the main eponymous protagonist of this play, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, epitomizes the complexity of the Mamluk image.

In light of common perceptions of monarchist and pro-Ottoman historiography, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr should have been presented in a more negative light. It would have made sense to describe him as a betrayer or a rebel, since he was a powerful Mamluk historical figure who announced Egypt’s autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. Interestingly, by contrast, he is not depicted as a despotic Mamluk leader, but rather as a pious one, who cared for his people’s wellbeing:

‘Alī Bey: We fed the poor, who did not have a luxurious castle for eating.

And we irrigated Ibn Sabīl, which is not moistened by water.

And we hugged the orphan, wiping off his tears and found precious shelter from us. And see the increasingly generous charities in the square, packed

with young camels. And we built bases for education and prosperity and erected a center for prayer. And these buildings alleviate their suffering.²⁰⁸

In addition to Shawqī's pious image, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr is also presented as nationalistic leader who rejected the help of foreign powers like Russia (which had a fleet in Acre).²⁰⁹ 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr explained his rejection to the Russian commander by identifying himself as an Arab Muslim. The Russian commander replied to 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr: "Lord, you are king of two peoples, Acre and Egypt."²¹⁰

The only negative depiction of 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr appeared close to the end of the play. After a critical injury, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr looked back on his life:

I fought a war against the Turks [Ottomans] for my country and went as far as to arouse the hostility of our people. I did not trust better servants and boys and caused them to run for fortunes. Like this building of delusion was structured, the victory went into thin air.

In those days I desired the tip of a sword.

I was carried on a bedstead of palm tree branches and treaded jewels of an ancient throne. Thus, I built a dream in this great world.

I saw it, but did not realize it.

Now I stepped down from the throne, the thing of this world.²¹¹

'Alī Bey al-Kabīr's soul-searching implicates two new and significant interpretations of his military campaign against the Ottomans that Shawqī intended to convey to his readers. First, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr's retrospective commentary on his resistance against the Ottomans in fact de-legitimizes his struggle for autonomy. Second, consequent to this interpretation, the Ottoman Empire is automatically viewed as a legitimate ruler that saved Egypt from Mamluk oppression by putting an end to 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr's regime. These two perceptions clearly signify Shawqī's pro-Ottoman sentiment.

In addition to this sentiment, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr played an important role in conveying Shawqī's liberal thought. Shawqī's powerful liberal message in favor of reform and social justice is echoed in 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr's last will for Murād just before he died.

'Alī Bey to Murād Bey: You administered property well, but look at you, you are without wife and father.²¹² Not only the Mamluk system and its weak base, but also the Mamluk regime is fading.

After many ancestors, a wolf was howling and a lion was crying in the Mamluk domain.²¹³

If the morality of the people became corrupt, all was corrupted.

Their associate killed himself, only caring about the body.

By loving women, eating endlessly, building castles and buying more boys.

Thanks to Mamluk cooperation, we ruled the country and could not do so without that support.²¹⁴

If the reformer stands up with a goal and topples the destructive *mujtihad* (Muslim jurist). And if he is devoted to an army of lazy men with zeal—then let him not see zeal, especially not hatred of other.²¹⁵

Murād made an oath of allegiance to the country, and promised to reform it.

Murād, gather the Mamluk troops and awaken their dormant power return them to submission and break despotic injustice.²¹⁶

The scene of the last minute of ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr sheds much light on the character. From his genuine advice to Murād it may be safely concluded that ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr is neither tyrant nor villain. In other words, his eventual tragic death is not a punishment for oppression or tyranny. Rather, the puzzle of his character could be resolved by determinism. Namely, from the beginning ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr is destined to disappear in the footnotes of Egypt’s history regardless of his good deeds. ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr is therefore nothing but the scapegoat of historical necessity.

Indeed, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr’s tragic destiny becomes a paradox that makes this play more exciting and tragic. Although ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr is depicted, at least partly, as a righteous leader who helped the poor and advised Murād on reforms, he was nevertheless destined to be defeated by the Ottomans due to the betrayal of his Mamluk, Abū Dhahab. It is all the more tragic that even his adopted son, Murād, plotted to assassinate him²¹⁷ and joined Abū Dhahab’s revolt. ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr deplored the evils of his times in the following words:

‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr: Bashīr, you suffered enough. Do not make any more mistakes that will only bring greater suffering.

I endured the disaster, but the angry and miserable people attacked me and my territory. Those who angrily demanded this world and my authority were raised by my hands and in my house, and grew up.

Those who were raised as his adopted sons and grew up, intended to destroy his work. Thus, now I will prevent them from doing harm. I will now depart for Syria with my adherents.²¹⁸

In contrast to the complex image of ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, Abū Dhahab is depicted in a black-and-white manner:

Maḥmūd’s mother said: He is not righteous and should therefore receive no credit. Yesterday he was disobedient to his father and hence there was malice between them. Today he will wage a war against the lord [‘Alī Bey].²¹⁹

On the other hand, Murād is a paradoxical character. On the surface, he may seem like an attractive character. Maḥmūd’s mother said to the slave girls: “If you would see him (Murād) walking, you would just love him and see that he loves Egypt. He is famous in Egypt and throughout Mashreq [the East] as the exalted and promising son of the Mamluks.”²²⁰ However, behind the scenes, Murād plotted to assassinate his father, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, by hiring Sa‘īd, a contract killer. Shams, a slave girl, reported Murād’s evil plans to ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr.²²¹ Sa‘īd attempted to assassinate ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, but failed,²²² and confessed that the order to slay ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr had come from Murād.²²³

Shawqī’s successful portrayal of the people’s suffering under constant warfare is indeed impressive. The soldiers in Acre declared the following:

Every time soldiers came from Egypt
 Descended from Jerusalem and departed for Syria, and when Amīr [generals] killed the Turks [Ottomans] in Egypt, pointing their swords, We stood between Egypt and the Turks.²²⁴
 We are sheep between the wolf and the shepherd.
 Which of these two has a greater hunger for us.
 The Russians will attack the castle and there will be plundering.²²⁵

The Egyptian servants complained of the suffering from the warfare between Abū Dhahab and ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr:

We live in days of ignorance and insanity.
 We are in the midst of the anarchy of a sheep pasture and are in need of shelter. We are in the cruel battle of civil wars.
 Eyes are removed and heads are on the plate.
 People woke up in the valley, not in this world and faith, without movement or life.²²⁶ The government has ceased its commerce and trade. People’s livelihood is in peril.

Another servant replies by complaining about the heavy taxes:

In this country there are countless burdens from loans, expenditure, levy and poll tax. Every day a new levy came up, they levied on tax that we never knew from the days of child. Levy poll tax on donkey and peg, bridle.²²⁷

These realistic descriptions of the daily life of simple Egyptians in despair are critical reflections of Shawqī on his contemporary political and socio-economic conditions, with their dramatic socio-political upheavals. Egypt was a recognized autocracy, bolstered by the British occupation, in which power was concentrated in the hands of big landowners, in spite of the presence of a constitutional government. Questions of social justice (especially the rights of peasants) became inevitable, and began to gain momentum among Egyptian intellectuals in the mid-1930s.

Reflecting on these winds of change, the slave girl Amāl raised a question of human rights and social justice, arguing that slave trade is prohibited in Islam:

This [slave] market defiles your glory.
Buying and selling people is not allowed in the kingdom of heaven.²²⁸

‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr defends himself against the ethical challenge by explaining that the slave system is an ancient convention. However, he does request Amāl’s hand in marriage, thus ironically alluding to the truth of her argument.²²⁹

In addition to the issue of social justice, Shawqī attempted to convey a message of moral value to his readers, in the wake of the great transformation undergone by Egyptian society.²³⁰ At the end of the conversation with Abū Dhahab, Ḍāhīr says to himself:

This is betrayal and the Mamluks acted in betrayal. For a long time they have been involved in betrayal and deception.²³¹

Similarly, Muṣṭafā persuades Murād to save himself from sin:

[Muṣṭafā to Murād Bey:] Your masters were uncivil Mamluks, neglecting their royal obligations. I wish you were a righteous shepherd of the country [*waṭan*] and raise its youth.²³²

A clearer sign of moral value can be found in ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr’s advice to Murād: If the morals of the people become corrupt, all is corrupted.²³³

In light of the fact that 1930s Egypt saw the emergence of Egyptian Arab nationalism, it is not surprising to find Arabist sentiments:

[Dāhir to Abū Dhahab:] All of Palestine and Syria have one root that unites people and sect. We all are Arabs and we speak classical Arabic.²³⁴

Another indication of Arabism is, as discussed, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr’s rejection of Russian military aid by identifying himself as an Arab Muslim.²³⁵

In sum, Shawqī resorts to the Mamluk history to promote two political orientations: Egyptian nationalism and liberal values. The representations of Mamluk oppression and tyranny are described as evil practices of the past. By contrast, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr’s views on political reform and his ethical values, as well as Amāl’s call for social justice, could be read as reactions to the social and political reality of 1930s Egypt. Although in this play Shawqī’s position on Egyptian nationalism is more restricted than liberal political value, he shows a tendency toward Arabism in the wake of Egyptian Arab nationalist discourse among Egyptian intellectuals.

IBNAT AL - MAMLŪK (BY MUḤAMMAD FARĪD ABŪ ḤADĪD)

Writer, poet, and historian Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, born in Cairo, was raised and educated in Damanhūr. He went to the ‘Abbasiyya Secondary School in Alexandria, and entered Higher Teachers’ College in Cairo, obtaining his diploma in Literature and Education in 1914. In that same year, he was designated as a board member of Aḥmad Amin’s Lajnat al-Talīf wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr (Committee for Writing, Translation, and Publication). He wrote articles on blank verse for *al-Sufūr* and also wrote for *al-Siyāsa*, *al-Uṣbu’iyya*, and *al-Hilāl*. While teaching, Abū Ḥadīd earned his license from Government Law School in 1924. In 1937, he became one of the founders of the Egyptian Society for the Social Sciences. He then served as secretary to the University of Alexandria (1942), vice-president of Dār al-Kutub (1943), principal of the Higher Teachers’ College (1945), cultural affairs director (1947), and then undersecretary (1950) of the Education Ministry. He engaged in editing work for a revival of *al-Thaqāfa* in 1963 as well as serving as an adviser to Libya’s Education Ministry. His best-known historical novel is *Antara ibn Shaddad* featuring Juha, the Arab folk hero. Entering the Arabic Language Academy in 1946, he won a state prize for literature in 1959 and 1964 and was appointed to the Supreme

Council for the Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences in 1965. In 1967 Abū Ḥadīd died suddenly in Cairo.²³⁶

The main plot of this novel hinges on a vehement power struggle between the Mamluks and Muḥammad ‘Alī, as well as on the Egyptians’ struggle against the British and Ottoman armies. Interestingly, as the story unfolds the author reinterprets the rising of Muḥammad ‘Alī as an inevitability in the course of history. This glorification of Muḥammad ‘Alī is primarily achieved by legitimizing the transfer of power from the hands of the Mamluks to those of Muḥammad ‘Alī. Indeed, the novel ends with Muḥammad ‘Alī’s victory over the Mamluks, despite numerous Mamluk conspiracies against him. As will be seen, the more significant message conveyed in this novel is that it was Muḥammad ‘Alī who initiated a new Egyptian renaissance by bringing the Mamluk era to an end.

In addition to his consistent monarchic tendency,²³⁷ Abū Ḥadīd endeavored to awaken his readers’ interests in Egyptian nationalism. This focus is seen in the preface, in which he states that he writes a history mainly for Egyptian youth.²³⁸ These didactic intentions and messages give us a clue regarding his representation of the Mamluks.

Given the author’s monarchist stance it is no wonder that the Mamluks are depicted as a symbol of the problematic past and as villains who must vanish from history’s stage (including the pious ‘Umar Bey). Among the negative images of the Mamluks, Bardīṣī’s is particularly prominent. Firstly, he appeared as a savage²³⁹ and as a heavy tax collector. The people of Egypt complained about him, exclaiming, “Bardīṣī, what can you extract from us paupers?”²⁴⁰ Bardīṣī replied: “Am I the first to take money from the people? Is not this money the government tax that was collected to feed soldiers and establish an orderly regime?” and “Why did you not cry out before?”²⁴¹

One Shaykh groaned that “this misdeed never existed in any time until the French arrived.”²⁴² Furthermore, Bardīṣī is depicted as having hatched a plot against his rivals al-Alfī and Muḥammad ‘Alī and suggested to ‘Umar Bey that he take part in it. ‘Umar Bey resisted Bardīṣī’s proposal and opposed the plot.²⁴³

Bardīṣī is further depicted as a man of an ambivalent and contradictory nature. On the one hand, he declared to Ibrāhīm Bey that he wanted to be a man like Muḥammad ‘Alī,²⁴⁴ and on the other he looked down on Muḥammad ‘Alī and called him stupid.²⁴⁵ In the meantime, Ibrāhīm Bey agreed to cooperate with Bardīṣī’s plot against al-Alfī and ‘Umar Bey.²⁴⁶

Another Mamluk leader, al-Alfī, is portrayed as a stranger and a foreigner rather than as an authentic Egyptian leader:

He carried a short pistol and had green eyes and yellow hair, although he wore a turban with Egyptian cloth. His language was unintelligible.²⁴⁷

Particularly, the internal strife among the Mamluk leaders is presented not as temporary, but as a constant phenomenon throughout the Mamluk era. Muḥammad ‘Alī judged that the “Mamluk struggle now reached its peak as they were slaughtering each other in their useless factionalism”.²⁴⁸ By this judgment, Muḥammad ‘Alī came to conclude that the Mamluks were not powerful enough to fight against him.²⁴⁹

As in the case of other novels, the Mamluk greed is harshly condemned. One day, ‘Umar Makram advised Muḥammad ‘Alī that “‘Umar Bey would not participate in the plot against [him] since he had enough wealth.” However, Muḥammad ‘Alī thought differently and argued: “I knew the Mamluks have enough fortunes, but that is the only thing they care for.” Muḥammad ‘Alī concluded that “the last thing the Mamluks care for is fortune.”²⁵⁰

In contrast to the stereotyped negative representations of the Mamluks, ‘Umar Bey is the only Mamluk figure who is depicted in a positive manner rather than in stereotyped negative representations. Unlike other Mamluks who were notorious for their plots and treachery, ‘Umar Bey appeared as a straightforward honest man who refused to have any part in the conspiracies. He is generous, kind, and respected by both peasants and dignitaries. He did, however, order to secure Alī’s release from prison. Indeed, Muḥammad ‘Alī recognized his bravery.

[Muḥammad ‘Alī:] “He [‘Umar Bey] is not inferior to the old Mamluks [the Mamluk Sultanate] and dares death.”²⁵¹

An important question arises from the unconventional and pious image of ‘Umar Bey: What motivated the author to depict him in such stark contrast with the typical negative descriptions of the Mamluks? Did the author intend to imply anything by this unusual character? If so, what can it be? A crucial hint may lie in the fateful ending of ‘Umar Bey. Although he was so honest that he did not join a plot against Muḥammad ‘Alī,²⁵² ‘Umar Bey had no choice but to surrender himself to Muḥammad ‘Alī in order to save his adopted son, ‘Alī. Thus, regardless of his virtuous deeds,

‘Umar Bey is destined to surrender to Muḥammad ‘Alī and, as a result, he cannot play an important part in the progress of Egyptian history. In light of the tragic destiny of the faithful and pious ‘Umar Bey, the fate of other evildoing Mamluks is evident. From the novel’s consistently negative description, it may be concluded that good and bad Mamluks alike are destined to be sacrificed for the country’s future.

Abū Ḥadīd’s uniqueness as a novelist resides in the glorification of Muḥammad ‘Alī. Namely, if the Mamluks are portrayed as a symbol of past decadence, Muḥammad ‘Alī is portrayed as the antithesis of the Mamluks, as a symbol of an Egyptian renaissance. Abū Ḥadīd achieved this by referring to Muḥammad ‘Alī’s victory over the Mamluks as the dawn of Egypt’s renaissance.²⁵³ Of course, there is one more possible interpretation of the Egyptian renaissance: that Abū Ḥadīd may have perceived the Egyptians’ successful struggle against the British and the Ottomans as a foreshadowing of the renaissance. Thus, the Egyptian renaissance symbolizes the end of both the Mamluk era and the British and Ottoman armies’ presence in Egypt.

Instead of heralding Muḥammad ‘Alī as a hero, Abū Ḥadīd describes him as an ordinary human being, making the novel far more sophisticated than had he been represented one-dimensionally. Through this juxtaposition, Muḥammad ‘Alī’s character is given convincing texture by two contradicting images of good and bad.

To begin with the bad, many Mamluk leaders saw Muḥammad ‘Alī as posing a serious threat to Mamluk survival. Indeed, most Mamluk leaders testified that he was shrewd. Ibrāhīm Bey, for instance, stated that Muḥammad ‘Alī was the most crafty man he had ever met.²⁵⁴ ‘Umar Bey saw him in a similar way: “We have struggled with him and this fox was not able to deceive us. Indeed, he is a fox but he uses the words of a chicken.”²⁵⁵ Similarly, Suleimān declared: “This man [Muḥammad ‘Alī] speaks with his enemies as an impetuous snake.”²⁵⁶

On the other hand, Muḥammad ‘Alī is also viewed favorably and is depicted as a righteous leader. He dispatched his soldiers to the market and appeased the people, ordering his men to maintain order and prevent wrongdoing.²⁵⁷ Moreover, in order to strengthen commercial activity, Muḥammad ‘Alī made efforts to encourage trade and help the merchants. He promised a British merchant, Mr. William, to promote commercial activity by lowering the price of merchandise.²⁵⁸ When Mr. William doubted the sincerity of this promise, Muḥammad ‘Alī spoke of himself as follows: “I am a soldier – I did not learn and cannot read

very well – but have a natural understanding of some things and can make myself clear.”²⁵⁹ Muḥammad ‘Alī even promised that he would maintain friendship with the British merchants.²⁶⁰

Others also testified to Muḥammad ‘Alī’s greatness and righteousness. Salīm stated, “I thank God for this man, Muḥammad ‘Alī, who has great mercy for the people, unlike the Turkish Pashas before him.”²⁶¹ In the meantime, ‘Umar Makram legitimized Muḥammad ‘Alī’s struggle for power in Egypt against the Ottomans. He told Muḥammad ‘Alī, “I think, God wants from you to do much for this country.” Muḥammad ‘Alī replied, “God wants me most to serve this country and this people.”²⁶² Muḥammad ‘Alī is depicted as an honest man who does not conceal his ambition to rule Egypt. He said, “I will not give up the power and there can only be one leader to this country.”²⁶³

So far, we have explored the negative representations of the Mamluks as opposed to the positive depictions of Muḥammad ‘Alī, as generated by monarchist historiography. We shall now turn to another crucial variable in the representation of the Mamluks: Egyptian nationalism. Considering the fact that this novel was published in 1926, it is highly probable that the impact of Egyptian nationalism on it is substantial, as it prevailed from the 1920s onwards. As expected, many aspects of the novel are narrated from an Egypt-centered standpoint. The most interesting and important phenomenon is that the distinctions between the Mamluks and Egyptians are often blurred. For example, the Mamluks are frequently referred to as “Egyptians.” Ibrāhīm Bey argued that not the Mamluk commanders but rather the Egyptian ones halted the Albanians²⁶⁴ and accused Muḥammad ‘Alī of dividing Egyptian power.²⁶⁵ Muḥammad ‘Alī also used Egypt as one collective identity, declaring to Ḥasan Pasha: “We do not conceal one of our Egyptian brothers.”²⁶⁶

Moreover, Egyptian nationalism reshaped the identity of Mamluk leader ‘Umar Bey as Egyptian. When Bardīsī suggested that ‘Umar Bey join his plot against al-‘Alfī, ‘Umar Bey replied with a question: “Why do you want me to join this plot? Are there no other Egyptians you can trust except me?”²⁶⁷ Similarly, the war between the Mamluks and the Albanian soldiers of Muḥammad ‘Alī is reinterpreted as a war between Egyptians and Albanians.²⁶⁸

Another obvious piece of evidence of the impact of Egyptian nationalism on this novel is the fact that not the Egyptian nationalist leaders but rather the Egyptians appeared as the real heroes to lead the resistance against the British forces during the Battle of Rosetta. On the other hand,

‘Umar Makram, known as one of Egypt’s greatest nationalist leaders, is described as an indecisive leader. Upon the British army’s invasion, ‘Umar Makram ordered the Egyptians to refrain from fighting against the British army, and instead remain and protect their property. An Egyptian Hijāj declared: “If we had not fought against the British army, Makram would not be with us now.”²⁶⁹

Although there was close strategic cooperation between the Egyptians and Muḥammad ‘Alī against the Ottomans, one Egyptian, Maḥmūd, still expressed suspicion of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s army and distrust of anyone who was not Egyptian. Before the battle against the Ottomans, Maḥmūd stated: “Muḥammad ‘Alī’s army will not achieve anything – we should do all by ourselves.”²⁷⁰

The Egyptians are also referred to as sons of the country (*Awlād al-Balad*), and their significant role in the struggle against the Mamluks and the Ottomans is recorded. The sons of the country convened around the Mamluks for protest.²⁷¹ Ibn Shama expected the sons of the country to deny their duty to the Ottomans: “In a moment, the herald will report that the sons of the country (*Awlād al-Balad*) will neither take their arms in a day nor guard the castle at night.”²⁷²

In a similar manner, ‘Umar Makram predicted that the “sons of the country” would play an impressive role in seizing the castle:

Behold this precious people who will be honored. For a long time they were neglected by their rulers, but you will see their deeds in the siege of the castle and they will be glorious.²⁷³

In sum, in this novel, Abū Ḥadīd attempted to convey two ideological messages to his readers: a monarchist ideology and Egyptian nationalism. Within this context, the Mamluks, the British, and the Ottomans become part of the past crimes, whereas Muḥammad ‘Alī and the Egyptians are viewed as the authentic heroes of tomorrow. A constant struggle takes place between “good” and “bad,” symbolizing a power struggle between Muḥammad ‘Alī and the Mamluk leaders and between the Egyptians on the one hand and the British and Ottomans on the other. In the meantime, under the influence of contemporary Egyptian nationalist historiography, the Mamluks are referred to as Egyptians or as Egyptian leaders. However, importantly, they are the Egyptians of the past and not of the future.

CONCLUSION

On the whole heroic poetry is recited aloud and is an invitation to the audience, in the shape of a narrative, to commemorate a person's achievement in warfare, thereby strengthening the group's morale and collective spirit.²⁷⁴ The raw material for the narrative need not be limited to empirical historical elements. Mythology, religion, and pure fiction could be sources of narrative imagination. In general, heroic poetry centers on a conflict—a battle between the representative heroes of the narrative and external forces. Even human beings from another group or tribe become epic heroes.²⁷⁵ It is interesting that in heroic poetry or fiction of this kind, the success of achievement lies in the qualities displayed in the action rather than in the result. The epic hero is not necessarily successful and, for instance, a tragic hero may end in defeat or death, but the narrative nonetheless helps to glorify the honor and courage of the tribe or nation.²⁷⁶

This kind of functional, ideological, historical, or pseudo-historical narrative literature is by no means monopolized by certain nations. Most nations create heroic narratives of one kind or another, which constitute the collective memory of the group, and serve to focus and direct the loyalties or patriotism of its members and encourage them in struggle and other forms of conflict.²⁷⁷ As mentioned, the heroic characters of Egyptian novels are employed to recreate a new Egyptian identity and thereby redefine Egyptian nationalism or underline the author's political orientation.

Of course, the recreation of history for the purpose of such narrative begins with what is remembered and transmitted. Unlike their predecessors, the so-called traditional and classical historians, the "heroic" historians do not simply desire to repeat the previous work and pass on the memories of the past. Rather, they aim to fill its gaps and correct its errors, and their goals are a new understanding and interpretation of the past. These historians may intend to obliterate the past in order to recreate it.²⁷⁸ They recreate the past and may therefore wield a powerful and destructive influence. In doing so, they can enrich the collective memory and cleanse it.²⁷⁹ The historical novel is composed precisely by this recreation.

In this sense, if history describes what happened, fiction remarks on what should have happened; history gives precedence to responding to the demands of knowledge, fiction to the demands of narrative; history seeks rigor, fiction seeks entertaining.²⁸⁰ What greatly matters, therefore, to the historical novelist is not the re-telling or repeating of great historical events, but the imaginative awakening of the protagonist who sees themselves as part of these events. The reader of the historical novel is expected

to re-experience the social and human motives that caused men to think, feel, and act just as the heroes did in historical reality.²⁸¹ We have re-experienced and sensed the feelings of sadness and joy just as depicted in the historical reality created in the novels that deal with the Mamluks. However, through the image and representation of the Mamluks, the instability of the fictional description is apparent, as it is rediscovered and recreated by each historical novelist according to his agendas. The historical reality of the novel is created for the same purpose. Thus, in order to analyze the representation of the Mamluks in a critical manner, the author's agendas and political orientation were extracted from the text.

As noted, the political orientation of Zaydān's first two novels, *Istibidād al-Mamāṭik* and *Mamlūk al-Shārid*, can be summarized by three common components: monarchic/khedival sympathies (Muḥammad 'Alī), pro-Ottoman sentiments, and an Egypt-centered standpoint. Through his monarchist tendency, Mamlūk al-Shārid justifies the 1811 expulsion of the Mamluks by Muḥammad 'Alī, accusing them of political oppression and corruption. In conclusion, the Mamluks are portrayed as the villainous past and as the perpetrators of socio-political ills that should pass away, whereas the Ottomans and Muḥammad 'Alī are glorified as the future (i.e., as heroes, saviors, and reformers).

Likewise, Zaydān's second novel, *Istibidād al-Mamāṭik*, depicts one of the key historical figures, Mamluk leader 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr, as a traitor. In doing so, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr's struggle for power against the Ottoman Empire is delegitimized and presented as treacherous and immoral. Moreover, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr is portrayed not only as a tyrannical ruler but also one who violated an agreement with 'Abd al-Raḥman to release his son Ḥasan from conscription.

Two very different images of 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr are encountered in Zaydān's novel and in Egyptian textbooks. In contrast to the arbitrary image seen in Zaydān's novel, in most history textbooks 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr is presented as an Egyptian nationalist leader who revived the independent Mamluk dynasty in Egypt.

Compared to the previous two novels, which indicate only the prototype of Egyptian nationalism, Zaydān's third novel, *Shajarat al-Durr*, shows that his Egyptian nationalism had become much more concrete over time. Baybars is glorified as a precursor of Egyptian nationalism who transferred the Caliphate from Baghdad to Cairo. Although Shajarat al-Durr is depicted as a power-thirsty woman, she also shows great concern for Egypt's future.

On the other hand, al-‘Aryān’s novel, *Shajarat al-Durr*, conveys a unique political message. Al-‘Aryān attempted to reinterpret Shajarat al-Durr as simply a jealous woman who has little patience for her husband’s affair with another girl. Shajarat al-Durr mirrors contemporary Egyptian women who suffered from social and economic discrimination. With this strong feminist tone, al-‘Aryān sought to address the subject of women’s rights and freedom, which was one of the central issues debated among Egyptian intellectuals at the time.

In the meantime, prominent Mamluk leaders such as Baybars and Quṭuz Shajarat al-Durr are not very different from those encountered in previous novels. They are all considered Egyptian nationalist leaders.

On the other hand, the Islamic and Egyptian nationalist Bākathīr commemorated Baybars and Quṭuz in a different way. For Bākathīr, the two figures are not only Egyptian heroes but also Islamic champions who defended the Islamic world against the Mongols and the Crusaders. In Bākathīr’s novel, Quṭuz has prophetic powers and is a pious and faithful man, ready to sacrifice himself for the Muslims. Even when he was attacked by Baybars’ Mamluks, he ordered his bodyguards not to kill Baybars. Quṭuz is a symbol of genuine Islamism and an Egyptian nationalist hero who would unite the country and rebuild it under the banner of Islam.

Al-‘Aryān’s second novel, *‘Alā Bāb Zuwayla*, is a blend of his two political orientations: Egyptian nationalism and liberal political views. From the perspective of Egyptian nationalism, the Mamluk leaders constitute two categories: nationalist and pious rulers on the one hand and selfish and corrupt individuals on the other. Most Mamluk leaders, such as Sultan al-Ghawrī and Qāyṭbāy, are depicted as greedy and tyrannical figures. The only worthy characters are Sultan Ṭumānbāy I and II. Symbolizing the Egyptian nationalist leader, these two Sultans are represented as a model of piousness and righteousness. Nevertheless, Ṭumānbāy II is not a typical heroic character, since he is defeated by the Ottomans in the end. Interestingly, al-‘Aryān focuses on the absence of orderly succession and good governance as the main cause of the last Mamluk Sultan’s (Ṭumānbāy II) defeat by the Ottomans.

In his critical insight into Egyptian society, the author implies that, in the absence of immediate political liberalization that would yield individual freedom and political power, Egyptian society would become similar to that of the last days of the Mamluk dynasty encountered in the novel. Therefore, the majority of Mamluk Sultans can be seen as representing the Egyptian monarch of the author’s time, particularly King Farūq.

In Shawqī's novel, *‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr* is quite different and complex compared to *Istibidād al-Mamālīk* of Zaydān. Although ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr expressed regret for struggling for Egyptian autonomy against the Ottomans, he is not depicted as a tyrannical ruler. By contrast, he helped the poor and advised Murād to carry out reforms in the Mamluk army and uproot corruption. He somewhat resembles a prophet who calls for redemption. Moreover, Shawqī's Arabism is also expressed by ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, when the latter identifies himself as an Arab Muslim to the Russian military commander.²⁸²

As is the case in Zaydān's novel, Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd's favorable reference to Muḥammad ‘Alī prevails in his novel *Ibnat al-Mamlūk*. Overall, the Mamluks play the part of villains and oppressors, whereas Muḥammad ‘Alī appears as a savior who banished the Mamluks and rebuilt a better Egypt. Throughout the novel, the Egyptian nationalist sentiment is far more prevalent than the monarchist standpoint. More often than not, Abū Ḥadīd stresses that it was not the Egyptian nationalist leader ‘Umar Makram but rather the Egyptian people who led the resistance against the Ottomans and the British army.

Although we have witnessed diverse representations of the Mamluks in which some common patterns are observed, the Baḥrī Mamluks, such as Baybars, Quṭuz, and Shajarat al-Durr, are blended with Egyptian nationalist heroes. By contrast, the Circassian Mamluk era is stereotyped as the zenith of Mamluk tyranny and oppression due to the continuous power struggles of the ruling classes. This turbulent part of Mamluk history is employed to criticize Egypt's contemporary social political reality.

Similarly, the Mamluks under the Ottoman era are not only treated as the perpetrators of social and political stagnation in Egyptian society, but are also presented as the antithesis of Muḥammad ‘Alī, opposing his reforms in government.

In conclusion, Egyptian historical novelists and playwrights viewed the teaching of history as a vital mission, indispensable to shaping and consolidating the nation's collective historical memory in the wake of Egyptian nationalism and the deteriorating social and political conditions. Therefore, Egyptian historical novelists attempted to gain a new historical understanding of the Mamluks through which they could reinterpret and resolve their era's political and social matters. In other words, they utilized the past for present and future goals. Within this context, manifold Mamluk images and representations in the novels and play should be understood.

NOTES

1. Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought* (Beirut, 1979), p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
4. Jūrjī Zaydān, "Muḥammad 'Alī Basha," *al-Hilāl*, June 1902, pp. 517–541.
5. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Al-Mamlūk al-Shāriid* (Miṣr: Maṭba'at al-Hilāl, 1931), p. 31. This novel was first published in 1891.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
23. On Zaydān's Ottomanism see also Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought* (Beirut, 1979), p. 110. In a letter to his son Emile, Zaydān clearly articulates pro-Ottoman attitudes.
24. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Al-Mamlūk al-Shāriid*, p. 139.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, p. 140. In Thomas Philipp's view Zaydān apparently had not yet grasped the full force of nationalism in the Balkans. For instance, Zaydān believed that centrifugal developments in the Balkans were only the result of 'Abdul Ḥamid's misrule exploited by European power interests, a development that could, Zaydān claimed, be restored by fair (i.e., constitutional) rule. Furthermore, Zaydān did not understand that the Balkan nations had also become conscious of their own national and cultural identity in past issues. Philipp concludes that Zaydān might believe that the insistence of these nations to safeguard their identity was created exclusively by a Machiavellian device of European power politics. See Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought*, pp. 75, 113.

27. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Al-Mamlūk*, p.131.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
30. Thomas Philipp holds the same opinion. See his book, *Gurgi Zaidan*, p, 114.
31. Zaydān's pro-Ottoman tendency is detailed in his letters to his son, Emile. See Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought* (Beirut, 1979), pp. 110–111; *al-Hilāl XIII*, 1904/05, p. 131 and also Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan*, p. 112. "Zaydān was foremost concerned with this unity, because he foresaw that the collapse of the Empire would not bring about the political independence of the Arab people, as many of his Muslim Arab contemporaries assumed, but the intensification of European control over the area."
32. Zaydān wanted his son to learn Turkish, as he was doing at the time. "It is the language of the government and will become cardinal to all fields." Moreover, he emphasized that Emile was foremost an Ottoman: "You are an Ottoman by nature, because your parents are Ottomans and because all Egyptians are Ottomans. Even if not all Ottomans are Egyptians, you are also a Syrian Ottoman." Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought* (Beirut, 1979), pp. 110–111.
33. Much like Zaydān, contemporary Egyptian nationalist intellectuals such as Muṣṭafā Kāmil and Muḥammad Farīd expressed pro-monarchy and Ottoman views. See Jack A. Crabbs, *The Writing of History in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Cairo: American Univ. Press, 1984), chapters, 8, 9.
34. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Istibdād al-Mamālīk* (Cairo 1923), p. 5.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, p. 21. For an expanded version of this novel, see *Istibdād al-Mamālīk* (n. d. Dār al-Hilāl), p. 40.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–31.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Istibdād*, (Enlarged version n. d.) p. 200.
47. Jūrjī Zaydān (1923), *Istibdād*, p. 30. On Mamluk oppression and mercilessness see p. 44.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 106–107.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
54. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Istibdād* (Enlarged version n. d.), p. 200.
55. Jūrjī Zaydān (1923), *Istibdād*, pp. 111–112.
56. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Istibdād* (Enlarged version), p. 162.
57. Jūrjī Zaydān (1923), *Istibdād*, p. 97. See also pp. 6, 124.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 108–109. See also p. 94.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
60. Zaydān’s ultimate aim seems to have been the education of the common people. In 1898 he declared :
 “The teaching of the elite alone, which is the situation with most nations, is not enough. The aim is the teaching, educating and training of the common people, because they constitute the public of the nation. No nation will succeed in its plans as long as its common people are ignorant.” See *al-Hilāl* VII, 1898/99, p. 10; Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan : His Life and Thought* (Beirut, 1979), p. 36.
61. The emergence of female characters in historical novels is connected with the rise of leisure-reading among Egypt’s educated middle classes. See Orit Bashkin, “Harems in the works of Jūrjī Zaydān” in Marilyn Booth, (ed.), *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 291.
62. *Istibdād* al-Mamālīk and al-Mamlūk al-Shārid.
63. However, Shajarat al-Durr will later confess she ordered the killing of Tūrānshāh.
64. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Shajarat al-Durr* (Miṣr: Maṭba‘a al-Hilāl, 1932), p. 13.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
68. *Ibid.* See p. 25. “Not only did Shajarat al-Durr desire for love, but she also aspired for power. She loved high-ranked leaders and was even ready to sacrifice all for power.”
69. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Shajarat al-Durr*, p. 91. See also Jurji Zaydan, *Tree of Pearls, Queen of Egypt* Samah Selim (trans.), (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012), p. 83.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–56.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 68–69.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

76. Ibid., p. 98.
77. Ibid., p. 17.
78. Ibid., p. 51.
79. Ibid., pp. 77–78.
80. Ibid., p. 176.
81. Ibid., p. 178.
82. Ibid., p. 198.
83. Ibid., p. 131.
84. Ibid., p. 187.
85. Ibid., p. 74.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid., p. 123.
88. Ibid., p. 121.
89. Ibid., p. 75.
90. Ibid., p. 182.
91. Ibid., p. 201.
92. Ibid., p. 112.
93. Ibid., p. 210.
94. Ibid.
95. Muḥammad Sa‘id al-‘Aryān, *Shajarat al-Durr* (Dār al-Ma‘ārif Bimişr, 1948), pp. 20–22.
96. Ibid., p. 29.
97. Ibid., p. 32.
98. Ibid., p. 7.
99. Ibid., pp. 4–7.
100. Ibid., p. 4.
101. Ibid., p. 6.
102. Ibid., p. 136.
103. Ibid., p. 82.
104. Ibid., pp. 97–98.
105. Ibid., p. 101.
106. Ibid., p. 23.
107. Ibid., p. 26.
108. Ibid., pp. 25–27.
109. Ibid., p. 85.
110. Ibid., p. 101.
111. Ibid., p. 45.
112. Ibid., pp. 61–62.
113. Ibid., p. 64.
114. Ibid., p. 119.
115. Ibid., p. 19.
116. Ibid., pp. 125–128.

117. Ibid., p. 126.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid., p. 128.
120. Ibid., p. 159.
121. Ibid., p. 139.
122. Ibid., p. 140.
123. Ibid., p. 142.
124. Ibid., p. 31, Abū Zuhra said, “He [Aqṭāy] will die before marriage.”
125. Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-‘Aryān, *Shajarat*, pp. 144,159.
126. Ibid., p. 159.
127. Ibid., p. 130.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid., pp. 144–147.
130. Ibid., pp. 147–149.
131. Ibid., p. 150.
132. Ibid., p. 151.
133. Ibid., p. 153.
134. Ibid., p. 155.
135. Ibid.
136. Juan R.I. Cole, “Printing and Urban Islam in the Mediterranean World, 1890–1920.” In Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly (eds.), *Modernity and Culture from Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 344–364; Orit Bashkin, “Harems in the works of Jurji Zaydan” in Marilyn Booth, (ed.), *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 293.
137. Qasim Amin was a revolutionary, not only for the time period during which he promoted his forward-minded position on women’s liberation, but for the culture and faith within which he boldly spoke his mind. Born into an aristocratic family in Egypt in 1863, Amin was a man ahead of his time. He held a law degree and later a high military ranking before leaving Egypt to study in France at the University of Montpellier. There, he became knowledgeable on Western political, legal, and societal thought. This, perhaps above all else, would lead him toward his life’s work. Upon returning to Egypt, in 1885, Amin married into another well-to-do family and was appointed a judge. A disciple and translator of Muhammad Abduh within the Islamic faith, at the age of 36 Amin published bold writings under the title *Taḥrīr al-Marā’* (*The Liberation of Women*), to which his teacher allegedly also made secret contributions. Given the time period—the beginning of the twentieth century—and the traditional Islamic culture within Egypt, Amin’s work was immediately deemed controversial and received much criticism in newspapers and the press.

Nevertheless, it also quickly gained popularity and, controversial or not, his statements in favor of the emancipation of women began to slowly infiltrate the otherwise male-dominated and highly structured society.

138. Orit Bashkin (2010), "Harems in the works," p. 293.
139. Hamdi Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel, and Its Main Trends from 1913 to 1952* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1971), p. 61.
140. Muḥammad Sa'īd al-'Aryān, *'Alā Bāb Zuwayla* (Dār al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, 1947), see chapters 21 and 22; Hamdi Sakkut (1971), *The Egyptian Novel*, p. 60.
141. Muḥammad Sa'īd al-'Aryān, *'Alā Bāb Zuwayla* (Dār al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, 1947), pp. 57–58.
142. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.
143. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
145. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
148. *Ibid.*, pp. 130–139. See also chapter 15.
149. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
150. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
152. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
153. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
154. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
155. *Ibid.*, pp. 165–176
156. *Ibid.*, p. 173
157. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
158. *Ibid.*
159. *Ibid.*
160. *Ibid.*
161. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
163. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
164. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
165. *Ibid.*, pp. 238–241.
166. *Ibid.*, pp. 267–276.
167. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
168. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
169. *Ibid.*
170. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
171. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
172. *Ibid.*, pp. 158–165.

173. Ibid., p. 164.
174. Ibid., p. 176.
175. As another nationalist character, Ṭūmānbāy II demanded Sultan al-Ghawri to reform in governance in order to alleviate the suffering of the Egyptians. See Ibid., p. 202.
176. Ibid., p. 180.
177. Ibid., pp. 298–299.
178. Ibid., p. 333.
179. Ibid., p. 195.
180. Ibid., p. 196.
181. Ibid., p. 300.
182. Ibid., p. 309.
183. Ibid.
184. Ibid., p. 107.
185. Ibid., p. 197.
186. Ibid., p. 73.
187. Ibid.
188. Ibid., p. 71.
189. Ibid., p. 72.
190. Ibid.
191. Ibid., p. 196.
192. Ibid.
193. Ibid.
194. Ibid., p. 197.
195. Ibid., p. 106.
196. Jan Brugman, *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), pp. 35–36.
197. Ibid., p. 36.
198. Ibid.
199. Ibid., p. 39.
200. Ibid.
201. Ibid., pp. 37–38.
202. On the influence of Khediv Tawfiq on Aḥmad Shawqī's poet, see Jan Brugman (1984) op. cit., p. 39.
203. Aḥmad Shawqī, "Al- Duṣṭūr al-'Uthmānī," *Shawqiyat I* (1926), p. 268; Jan Brugman, op. cit., p. 40.
204. Ibid., p. 335; Jan Brugman, op. cit., p. 40.
205. Jan Brugman, op. cit., p. 40.
206. Ibid.
207. Jacob M. Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theater and Cinema* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), pp. 127–128. In 1932, the play

- was revised and republished. See also Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (eds.), "Shawqī Aḥmad (1868–1932)," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* Vol. 2. (London: Routledge 1998), p. 709.
208. Aḥmad Shawqī, *ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr* (Al-Qāhira: Maṭbaʿat Miṣr, 1932), p. 31.
 209. *Ibid.*, pp. 81–85.
 210. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
 211. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
 212. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
 213. *Ibid.*
 214. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
 215. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
 216. *Ibid.*
 217. *Ibid.*, pp. 76–79. According to Saʿīd's confession, he attempted to assassinate ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr under the orders of Murād.
 218. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
 219. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
 220. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
 221. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
 222. *Ibid.*, pp. 76–78.
 223. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
 224. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
 225. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
 226. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
 227. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
 228. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
 229. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
 230. The search for moral values in a changing society is encountered in the works of many other Egyptian novelists, and particularly in Nagīb Maḥfūz's Zuqāq al-Midaqq. Hilary Kilpatrick "The Egyptian Novel From Zaynab to 1980" in M.M. Badawi ed., *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 241.
 231. Aḥmad Shawqī, *ʿAlī Bey*, p. 109.
 232. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
 233. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
 234. *Ibid.*, p. 106. M.M. Badawi also interprets this as a sign of Arabism; see his book, *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 208.
 235. Aḥmad Shawqī, *ʿAlī Bey*, p. 81.
 236. Arthur Goldschmidt Jr., *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt* (Boulder, 2000), p. 12.

237. Abū Ḥadīd's appreciation of Muḥammad 'Alī is declared in the preface: "Representation of the dawn of Egyptian renaissance (resurrection)."
238. In the preface to the book, Abū Ḥadīd remarked, "I present this part of the eternal Egyptian history for my countrymen (*waṭani*).” See also Hamdi Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel and Its Main Trends* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1971), pp. 48–49.
239. Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, *Ibnat al-Mamlūk* (Al-Qāhira, Matba'at al-ʿitimād 1926), p. 40.
240. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
241. *Ibid.*
242. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
243. *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 70–75.
244. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
245. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
246. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
247. *Ibid.*, pp. 152–153.
248. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
249. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
250. *Ibid.*, p. 288.
251. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
252. Historically, 'Umar Bey cooperated with Khurshid Pasha against Muḥammad 'Alī. Thus, Abū Ḥadīd reinvented 'Umar Bey by counter-memory (forgetting the actual historical facts). See Aḥmad Haykal, *Al-Adab al-Qaṣaṣī wa Masraḥī fi Miṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1979), p. 250; Daniel Crecelius "The Mamluk Beylicate of Egypt in the Last Decades before its Destruction by Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha in 1811" in Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (eds.), *The Mamluks and Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 148.
253. Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, *Ibnat*, Preface.
254. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
255. *Ibid.*, pp. 324–328.
256. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
257. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
258. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
259. *Ibid.*
260. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
261. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
262. *Ibid.*, p. 203. Historically, the intimate relationship between 'Umar Makram and Muḥammad 'Alī is doubted. As we know, Muḥammad 'Alī exiled 'Umar Makram. Thus, this is second piece of evidence that Abū Ḥadīd used counter-memory (forgetting the past intentionally) to recre-

- ate the characters. For the first piece of evidence, see note 20.
263. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
264. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
265. *Ibid.*, p. 74. See also p. 364. The Mamluk horsemen are referred to with the phrase “Egyptians are best horsemen.” p. 222, where Egyptians are identified as the Mamluks.
266. *Ibid.*, p. 226.
267. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 257. See also p. 1. ‘Umar Bey is referred to as an Egyptian leader; p. 249. Ḥasīn Bey is also considered an Egyptian.
268. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
269. *Ibid.*, pp. 258–265.
270. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
271. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
272. *Ibid.*, p. 196. Ibn Shama also reported that a battle broke out between the sons of the land and the Pasha’s army. p. 197.
273. *Ibid.*, p. 203. Nevertheless, Muḥammad ‘Alī underestimated the Egyptians’ role in battle. When Ḥasan Pasha asked Muḥammad ‘Alī, “Did you use *Awulād al-Balad* in the battle,” Muḥammad ‘Alī said to himself, “It would not be a good idea at the moment.” See p. 224.
274. Bernard Lewis, *History Remembered, Recovered, Invented* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 43–44.
275. *Ibid.*
276. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
277. *Ibid.*
278. We can refer to this as a “national memory,” the antithesis of the “recreation of memory or history.”
279. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
280. Richard Maxwell, *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 11.
281. Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel* (London: Merlin Press, 1962), p. 42.
282. Aḥmad Shawqī, *‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr*, p. 81.

Representations of the Mamluks in History Books and Periodicals

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will critically analyze the representations of the Mamluks and the Mamluk era from the perspectives of four major historiographic trends: Ottomanist, monarchist, academic, and Egyptian nationalist.¹ Identifying with Ottoman Sultans' allegiance to Islam, Egyptian Ottomanist historians viewed the Ottoman Empire as a protector of Egypt against British occupation and Western cultural penetration. Before discussing in detail the monarchist historians' perceptions of the Mamluks, it is essential to address the Ābdīn Project in order to critically view monarchic historiography within the relevant historical context. In 1920, King Fu'ād initiated an extensive historiographical project at his 'Ābdīn Palace. The Ābdīn Project lasted more than twenty-five years and involved a host of foreign archivists, philologists, and historians such as Eugenio Griffini, Jean Deny, Angelo Sammarco,² and Pierre Crabitès.³ Through this, the monarchist project was introduced to Egyptian historiography, and the first "public archive" was established in Egypt.⁴

Monarchist historians⁵ therefore perceived the past through the perspective of the "founder paradigm."⁶ Their primary goal was to glorify Muḥammad 'Alī and his descendants and to distinguish them from the Ottoman Sultans by delegitimizing the Ottoman regime. They were similarly motivated to marginalize Mamluks, who, with the Ottoman Turks, were described as dictators.

Academic historians followed the “founder paradigm”; however, they distinguished themselves from the monarchists by focusing on the lives of ordinary men and women in addition to the Egyptian monarchy.⁷ They contended that Egyptian historians must “Egyptianize” (*tamṣīr*) history by removing the monarchy and foreigners from the Egyptian historical record.⁸ Like the monarchist historians, academic historians depicted the Mamluks under Ottoman rule as occupiers, no less than the Ottoman Turks themselves, yet they lauded the Mamluk Sultan Zāhir Baybars as a great leader.⁹

Egyptian nationalist historians discussed the Mamluks more extensively than did the monarchist and academic historians. Nationalist historians interpreted the Mamluk Sultanate periods as the heyday of Egypt¹⁰ or of Arab history. In their view, the glory and victory of medieval times offered instruction that could resolve the challenges faced by the modern Egyptian nation. Nevertheless, the Mamluks under Ottoman rule were still depicted as being as tyrannical as the Turks, with the exception of the remarkable Egyptian Ottoman Mamluk leader ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr (1760–1772).

MAMLUK SULTANATE PERIOD (1250–1517)

Representations of the Mamluks in Ottomanist and Monarchist Historical Literature

To begin with Ottomanist historians, Jūrjī Zaydān stands out for his prolific literary activities. From an ideological point of view, Zaydān is a multifaceted intellectual. First, his pro-Ottomanism is best reflected in a letter to one of his friends: “it is language of our governments; after gall of tyranny has been disappeared, after knowledge had prevailed over ignorance and after constitution had been proclaimed, our time has come to demonstrate to the other nations that we are a living nation who knows to gather and to unite, and we help our government with our tongues, pens, and words.”¹¹ In addition, he was an energetic historian and novelist who harbored Egyptian nationalist sentiments, focusing mostly on the positive aspect of the Mamluks. Indeed he continued to present Baybars as the predominant Sultan who transferred the ‘Abbasid Caliphate to Cairo¹² and established the kingdom of Egypt and Syria.¹³

Regarding the origins of the Mamluks, Zaydān offers nothing new: Caliph Mu‘taṣim was first to use the Mamluks.¹⁴ As mentioned, Zaydān differs from most Ottomanist historians in that the Egyptian nationalist

factor had an impact on his narrative. For instance, in his book, Egypt is presented as the most ancient kingdom, successfully preserving its language, character, and homeland.¹⁵ Zaydān's nationalist feeling is manifested best in his description of the Mamluk war against the Crusaders and Mongols. Further, Zaydān clearly refers to the Mamluk army as the Egyptian army in the war with the Syrians.¹⁶ Likewise, the Egyptians taking part in Quṭuz's war against Hülegü at 'Ayn Jālūt are embodied as the real heroes.¹⁷ Another war against Mongol Khan Berke is reshaped as an Egyptian war and a Muslim victory.¹⁸ The only negative mention of the Mamluks refers to their precarious temper.¹⁹

Meanwhile, another Ottomanist historian with Islamic nationalist tendencies, Muḥammad Farīd, shows his pro-Islam and Pharaonist outlook in noting that the history of the Islamic *Umma* originated in the Pharaonic eras.²⁰ Farīd was an enthusiastic political and financial supporter of Muṣṭafā Kāmil, the founder of the Egyptian National Party, and after the latter's premature death in 1908, Farīd was elected as second president of that party. Farīd sought help from the Ottoman Empire while in exile during World War I; however, he also suspected the Turks of undermining Egyptian national aims. Farīd's occasional support for pan-Islamism alienated Egyptian Copts.²¹ Farīd's Islamist nationalist ideology clearly reflected an account of war against the Crusaders: it was the Muslims who halted the French at al-Manṣūra, not the Mamluks, Egyptians, or Arabs.²²

As seen above, with the exception of Zaydān, Egyptian Ottomanist and monarchist historians did not show much interest in the Mamluk Sultanate era.²³ Rather, they endeavored much more to cover the Ottoman era, as we shall see in the following discussion. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that some Ottomanist historians perceived the Mamluk Sultans positively.

Representations of the Mamluks in Academic Historians' Literature

The monarchist historians had a strong impact on the academic school's orientation. Thus, two historians had many points in common such as focus, assumptions, methodology, style, institutions, and, most importantly, their historiographical and political orientation. As the forefather of the academic school, Shaffq Ghurbāl was the most remarkable academic historian. Slowly but surely, Ghurbāl and his disciples carefully modeled themselves on the academic standards of the 'Abdīn Project and formulated a school that regarded itself as professional. In time, Ghurbāl and

his disciples went as far as to develop an ideology of professionalism that distinguished them from populist/amateur historians. An essential component of this new ideology was their stress on vigorous archival research as the exclusive way to rediscover “truth in history.” Acting against the background of an overpowering contemporaneous growth in popular historiography, the academic school strongly emphasized a particular notion of historical objectivity that consolidated their claim to expert authority on history writing. By the 1940s, the academic school became the only school of history writers with a strong ethical devotion to historical objectivity.²⁴

Challenging the ideology of the monarchist historians, the academic historians endeavored to focus on the lives and deeds of ordinary people through extensive research work. Furthermore, unlike the popular-nationalist historians’ comprehensive idea of “the people,” the academic historians attempted, at least ideally, to seek a less faceless view of the populace. In reality, Egyptianization—*tamṣīr*—was a challenging project accompanying the difficult task of navigating through the advantages and disadvantages of European historiography and, ideally, profiting from both worlds.²⁵ In spite of their rhetoric, the most they produced was a division of labor and a great degree of philosophical continuity with the monarchic orientation, rather than a crucial change of focus and interpretation.²⁶

Before embarking on Ghurbāl’s perception of the Mamluks, it is useful to observe his personal background more closely, since it provides a better understanding of the development of his historical thinking. Born in 1894 to a middle-class Muslim family of merchants in Alexandria, Ghurbāl could easily have ended up in any decent occupation, from lawyer to engineer. His parents certainly had enough wealth to send their son to a prominent profession-oriented school in the company of the sons of other members of the *effendiyya* class. However, Ghurbāl wanted to be a historian, rather than a lawyer or engineer.²⁷

In 1915, he graduated from the Higher Teachers’ College (Dār al-Mu‘alimīn al-‘Uliyā). As the only educational institution that granted a degree in the humanities, the college especially appealed to many literary-minded students, such as the literary critic and novelist Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd. Despite being much less prestigious than a university, this school was still a main route to enter the social world of the *tarboosh-wearing effendis*.²⁸

Unlike other young students who harbored nationalist ideas, Ghurbāl was not interested in actual political activity or writing. This non-political trend was the hallmark of his career. With time, his great efforts bore

fruit and, in 1915, at the age of twenty-one, Ghurbāl left Egypt for the University of Liverpool to complete a BA in history. Once there, Ghurbāl was in touch with Muḥammad Rifʿat, who was about to graduate. They became friends and colleagues; Rifʿat was a future influential historian in his own right, who would later work with Ghurbāl in a joint effort to Egyptianize (*tamṣīr*) history writing.²⁹

Ghurbāl's BA thesis focused on the French expedition and the rise of Muḥammad 'Alī, which was based on comprehensive archival work with primary sources and became the groundwork of his future graduate work in London. After finishing a three-year teaching job in Egypt, he won admission to the prestigious London University to pursue his MA under the supervision of Arnold Toynbee. In London, he expanded on his BA thesis by adding several chapters, reshaping some of his arguments, and visiting many different archives. After two years, he submitted an innovative and authoritative thesis that was later published as "The Beginnings of the Egyptian Question and the Rise of Mehmet Ali."³⁰

The work of Ghurbāl's students demonstrates a certain pattern: Aḥmad 'Izzat 'Abd al-Karīm dealt with education, Aḥmad Aḥmad al-Ḥitta studied agricultural reforms, 'Alī al-Jirītī focused on industrialization. Most of his students mainly dealt with nineteenth-century Egypt up to the 1882 British occupation and particularly focused on various aspects of Muḥammad 'Alī's invaluable contribution to the establishment of the modern Egyptian nation-state. Similar to the monarchist historians, it was the founder paradigm that framed and conceptualized the scope and theme of their historical research.³¹

Some of the published works of academic historians indicate the scope of affinity with the 'Abdīn Project. Ghurbāl's students thoroughly embraced the monarchic chronology, especially with regard to Muḥammad 'Alī. A "before and after" (Muḥammad 'Alī's accession to power) approach was considered a clear point of departure for any historical research. Thus, academic historians obviously confirmed significant progress in the status of education, commerce, industry, and agriculture. The dynasty-strengthening Egyptian leadership revived the national spirit of Egyptians and ensured the resurrection of the Arabic language and science, thus directing Egypt toward becoming a modern, European-oriented state. It is reasonable to say that the repression of Egypt's Ottomanness during this period was a common denominator in monarchic and popular-nationalist historiographies.³² As Youssef Choueiri succinctly put it, "Ghurbāl has a

story to tell. It is dominated by a single hero – Muḥammad ‘Alī. All the others are either villains, ignorant, or simply unlucky.”³³

It is of interest that Ghurbāl’s attitude toward the Mamluks underwent some changes. In his 1920s history book, Ghurbāl denounced the Mamluk Sultanate era as a theater of civil wars and brigandage.³⁴ In particular, he criticized the Mamluks over their ongoing internal power struggle:

The new Sultans were not more firmly established than their predecessors. Forty-seven of them followed one another in quick succession in the short period of two hundred and fifty years, and when in 1517 Selim the Grim turned his eyes from Europe to oriental conquest, he was able to make short work of the Sultans and to turn Egypt into a Turkish province.³⁵

In his 1940s book, however, a significant positive switch occurred in Ghurbāl’s perception of the Mamluks. He exemplifies the Mamluk Sultanate era as the glory of Egypt revealed in Egyptian history, a dynamic community comprising factions and groups, from lords of swords to men of the pen, from peasantry to traders, carpet masters to educators, etc.³⁶ Of the many Mamluk Sultans, Baybars’ reign is reinterpreted as Egypt at its highest point: Egypt was the center of the Arab world. It was at its peak, standing alone in the aftermath of the collapse of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate.³⁷ Furthermore, the Mamluk Sultans are depicted as righteous rulers, protectors of the people in the interest of the public struggle and the improvement of the life of the people.³⁸ How can we explain Ghurbāl’s substantial shift from negative to positive with regard to the Mamluks? His critical view of the internal power struggle among the Mamluk Sultans, cited in his 1920s book, is widely accepted by many Egyptian historians, regardless of their different historical points of view.

It is the intensive discourse on Egyptian nationalism generated in early twentieth-century Egypt that hints at a clue to Ghurbāl’s switch to glorification of the Mamluk Sultans. In the 1930s and 1940s, the ideological environment in Egypt underwent significant changes. Influenced by the Egyptian nationalist fervor that overwhelmed Egypt and Egyptian intellectuals, Ghurbāl needed to discover historic heroes to glorify the Egyptian past. It is to be assumed from this socio-ideological context that this pressing need compelled him to reshape the Mamluk Sultans in the role of Egyptian heroes in his subsequent work.

For Ghurbāl’s student Aḥmad ‘Izzat ‘Abd al-Karīm,³⁹ *‘tamṣīr’* was not merely about studying Egyptian history in Arabic rather than in French

or English. Much more than that, it was “directing attention to the study of modern national history.” Indeed, Al-Karīm’s book on Muḥammad ‘Alī provides an important indication of how the Mamluks are treated in conventional Egyptian history teaching.

To a limited extent, the Mamluks are introduced as a foreign entity in the country. Thus they (the Mamluks) are absent from the stages of history and seem to have avoided mixing with Egyptians, regarding themselves as different from others. Hence, their (the Mamluk) culture remained isolated from the mass culture of the Egyptian Umma.⁴⁰

Al-Karīm’s intention here seems to be to urge contemporary Egyptian historians to assimilate the Mamluks into modern Egyptian national history.

In sum, neither sophisticated nor diverse presentations of the Mamluks are clearly shaped in Ottomanist, monarchist, and academic historical literature, since their main subject of history writing was the Ottoman periods rather than the Mamluk Sultanate era. This marked tendency to forget the uncomfortable past—namely, ‘counter-memory’—is completely counter to remembering the past. Nevertheless, the tide of Egyptian nationalism had an impact on some narratives of monarchist and academic historians, which gave rise to styling Mamluk Sultans as national heroes.

Representations of the Mamluks in Pro-Western Intellectuals’ Literature

Before touching upon Egyptian nationalist perceptions of the Mamluks, one should examine the Egyptian intellectuals who stressed the country’s affiliation with Europe and its Mediterranean neighbors. Pro-Western Egyptian intellectuals seem committed to denying any Egyptian connection with the civilization and mentality of the “Asian” Arabs by postulating a more satisfactory alternative affiliation.⁴¹ For instance, Muḥammad Sharaf, a physician, emphasized that the Mamluks and Turks did not blend with the Egyptians, and viewed Sultan Baybars as a ‘pure’ Arab.⁴²

Arabs mixed with Egyptians but did not marry with (Egyptian) peasantry. The Arabs arrived in Egypt, but did not remain there as they emigrated to north-western Africa. Many Arabs, including Baybars, were killed in the war.

In terms of its origins, modern Egypt is ancient Egypt. Any examination of blood confirms that modern Egypt is neither African nor Asian, but European; i.e., belonging to the peoples who live around the Mediterranean Sea.⁴³

A luminary intellectual, Salāma Mūsa held a similar pro-Western ideology. To critically understand Mūsa's historical thought, we must begin with his Westernism. Denying any Egyptian connection with the civilization and mentality of the "Asian" Arabs, some Egyptianist intellectuals sought to postulate a more palatable alternative affiliation for Egyptians. Since these intellectuals believed that Egyptians were not really linked to the Arabs, with what regions, peoples, or civilizations were they instead affiliated?

For Mūsa, the excellence of European culture and civilization over that of the Arabs was self-evident, and this is the reason he asserted that Egypt would consciously base its economic, social, and intellectual life upon European models. Mūsa's Westernism indicated that not only were apologists for the greatness of classical Arab civilization misguided in evading the important questions of the present, but they by mistake gave the credit for Arab civilization to the great men of that era—medieval Arab civilization was, actually, in debt to previous Roman, Greek, and Egyptian culture.⁴⁴

After staying in England, Mūsa strongly embraced Fabianism. Several prominent members of the Fabian Society, including H. G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw, influenced him deeply. Fabianism was a doctrine that blended economic socialism with an emphasis on social and moral regeneration through the cultivation of traditional moral values such as culture, decency, and order. In particular, Pharaonism enabled Mūsa to anchor his argument that Egypt was part of the West and alien to the East by allowing him to define a progression from the culture of the Pharaohs through that of the Greeks and on to modern Europe. His thought counted heavily on the work of Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, who for several years taught anatomy in the medical school of the Qaṣr al-ʿAini hospital in Cairo. Smith was charmed by Egyptian history, and during the course of his career produced numerous books on the subject. Most of Smith's books focused on the contemporary anthropological problem of the origin and diffusion of civilization. Smith's main thesis was that the Egyptians "created civilization and devised its fundamental arts, crafts, and beliefs, as well as the scientific doctrines of which it was the material and intellectual expression."⁴⁵

However, Mūsa was not only outside the Islamic community of discourse but was also actively opposed to a revival of interest in medieval Arab-Islamic history because of its significant impact on contemporary Egyptian culture. Thus, he persisted much longer than most other writers in preferring a Pharaonic identity for Egypt, hoping thereby to achieve three goals: (1) to inspire the Egyptians to feel pride in their national heritage in order to gain an enhanced sense of their personal as well as national dignity, both of which had been damaged by the colonial experience; (2) to convince the Egyptian public that Egypt's authentic golden age was the Pharaohnic era, which was much greater than the Arab-Islamic heritage by virtue of both its more ancient age and its outstanding accomplishments; and (3) to establish a direct connection between the glorious Egyptian past and the prevailing modern European civilization.⁴⁶

Mūsa attacked the assumptions of the Egyptian advocates of Easternism by denying that Egypt belonged to the East. His racialism holding that various racial types correspond to particular mentalities and national temperaments made him receptive to Elliot Smith's contention that Egyptians, like the Syrians and Iraqis, were "Aryans by blood" and thus distinctive from both Africans and Asians.⁴⁷ In order to verify his thesis that the origin of Syrians was Aryan, Mūsa compared the skull form of Syrians with those of Pharaonic times:

Syrians mixed with Europeans during the Roman periods.
More importantly, during Crusade wars, Syrians' bloods mixed with Europeans'.
But [the] Syrian skull form preserved the form of Pharaonic periods
Semite language, such as Arabic, has no connection with Aryan language
but rather it has similarity with Mongolian language.⁴⁸

To stress apparent differences between Egyptians and Arabs, Mūsa offers as evidence common affinity found in the rituals of Mongols and Arabs:

As in the case of Arabs in China, to prevent growth of their feet, it was necessary for women to wear footwear made of wood or steel...

Ancient Arab women wore white, and this ritual still remains in China...

The religious myth of Hawa is another evidence for similarity between Mongolians and Semites. Hawa is a famous story among Semites but which is not known to Aryans. In contrast, Mongolians knew it from ancient times.

This word, Hawa, in the population of island of Philippines of South Eastern Asia, means woman or rib or Torah (Old Testament), just as Hawa is accepted as a rib of ribs of Adam. [Thus] Mongolians and Semites had one origin.⁴⁹

Of many other Egyptian intellectuals, Salāma Mūsa was probably the most energetic exponent of the idea that Egypt belongs to the Mediterranean or European world rather than the Arab World. As far as he was concerned, Egypt was part of the West rather than the East: “As my knowledge of the East increases so does my aversion to it and my feeling that it is foreign to me; as my knowledge of Europe increases, so does my love and attachment for it and my feeling that I am part of it and it is part of me.”⁵⁰ Mūsa employed quasi-religious language to reject any Eastern affiliations for Egypt and to assert that Egypt’s natural connections were with the West: “I am a disbeliever [*kaḥfir*] in the East, a believer [*mu’min*] in the West.”⁵¹

On the basis of these beliefs, he called upon his fellow Egyptians to take up the historical duty of clarifying their present “customs acquired from Asia” and the parallel necessity of “adopting the customs of Europe.”⁵² In his idea, Egyptians had to become “out-and-out Europeans” [*Amrūbiyyin ṣāliḥin*].⁵³ A substantial part of Mūsa’s historical exploration of the 1920s was devoted to expounding upon this thesis of Egypt’s similarity to Europe.⁵⁴

For both Salāma Mūsa and Dr. Muḥamad Sharaf, the contentions that “Egyptians are not Semitic” and that “Egypt is a non-Eastern nation” could be proved equally by means of geography, biology, and culture. Through a detailed comparative study of the physical characteristics, social customs, language, and material culture of Egyptians with those of other peoples, Mūsa and Sharaf concluded that the Egyptians had close affinity with the peoples of Europe rather than those of Asia. Mūsa and Sharaf were also apparently the first to develop the stance that Egypt was an inseparable part of “Mediterranean” civilization, and thus an integral part of Europe.⁵⁵

To strengthen his contention of Egypt’s western orientation, Mūsa takes us back to ancient Egypt, seeking the root of Egypt. In Mūsa’s theory, Egyptian rulers such as Ikhshidīs, Fāṭimids, and the Mamluk regime are defined as Aryan, and Egypt thereby had a connection with European blood.

The origin of the Mongols was Turks. But Egypt was connected to Macedonian Turks, they were Europeans in terms of blood though only spoke Turkish⁵⁶

Linguistically, the ancient Egyptian language was close to ancient Aryan language. The only distinction between Europe and Egypt is that Europe is built on a culture of industry and Egypt is based on one of agriculture.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Mūsa also represented the Mamluks as a symbol of authoritarianism and tyranny in order to address his preference for European liberalism over Nazi or Fascist dictatorship. In an essay on “The problems of Egyptian youth,” Mūsa estimated the relevance of democratic versus authoritarian principles for Egypt. The essay was concretely pro-democratic. For Egypt, a country at the time debating its national identity and in the process of assimilating to and internalizing modernity, Mūsa was quite convinced that liberal democracy was the best form of government. Mūsa considered liberalism as a combination of freedom and progress, a system of values that permitted political liberty at the same time as it fostered social reform.⁵⁸

Coping with the sympathy with Nazism and Fascism that reared its head in Egypt in the 1930s, Mūsa strongly supported nineteenth-century European liberalism, encompassing religious endurance, the acceptance and advancement of science, and the development of new technologies. Mūsa believed that the majority of the good aspects of modernity derived from liberalism. Thus, instead of relying on any anachronistic form of authoritarian government that would be *de facto* “no different from the tyranny of the Mamluk or the absolutism of Eastern rulers,” what was needed in Mūsa’s thought was “spreading democratic education and imparting the principles of liberalism in Egypt.”⁵⁹

In conclusion, a somewhat contradictory memory of the Mamluks is engendered. In a positive manner, Mūsa reinvented the Mamluk nation as an Aryan root of Egyptians. On the other hand, the Mamluks are one of many other tyrannical regimes highlighted to counter the climate of Nazism and Fascism in Egypt.

Representations of the Mamluks by Egyptian Nationalist Intellectuals and Historians.

Overview

For the Egyptian nationalist historians, the Mamluk Sultanate periods are the major vicissitudes in Egyptian national history. Hence, diverse groups of Egyptian nationalist historians generated and then elaborated data in order to create a new Mamluk identity commensurate with a new Egyptian identity, and even with one another, in line with their own ideological beliefs. Mirroring such a variety of nationalist ideologies, four different types of Egyptian nationalism emerged during the period under

discussion: territorial nationalism, Islamic Egyptian nationalism, Egyptian integral nationalism, and Egyptian Arab nationalism.

Although they have different views on core points, Egyptian nationalists share many common Mamluk characteristics. To begin with the origins of the Mamluks, most nationalist historians consider Sultan al-Mu‘taṣim the founder of the Mamluk military “order,”⁶⁰ except ‘Alī Aḥmad Shukrī, who regarded Salāḥ al-Dīn as the first one to use the Mamluks. The Mamluks are defined as white/colored/slaves/mercenaries.⁶¹ The Baḥrī Mamluk dynasty begins with prisoners and escapees from central and northern Asia who were bought in the slave market.⁶²

The origins of the second Mamluk dynasty, Burjī, are Circassian or Kipchak.⁶³ The Mamluks did not mix with the local population and remained isolated from them.⁶⁴ ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī classified the Mamluk military system into three different groups. The first group as candidates for the Sultan who were sold to the Sultan, inherited from the previous regime, or organized for him. This group, called al-Khāṣakīya,⁶⁵ also served as the Sultan’s bodyguards.⁶⁶ The second group comprised trained soldiers and their offspring.⁶⁷ The third were Mamluk leaders and were equal to the Mamluk Sultans, although they obeyed their orders.⁶⁸

The Egypt-centered view is one of several main components that differentiate nationalist literature and other historical literature, which often interconnected, blurring the border between the Mamluk army and the Egyptian army.⁶⁹ Positing that Egypt and Syria formed one united country, Mu’nis stressed Egyptian leadership by citing historical evidence implying that Egypt freed Syria from the hands of the Crusaders. Mu’nis even predicts what Egypt will do in the future: “It was also the Egyptian army that protected Syria by halting the Mongols and (Insha’ Allah) Egypt will liberate Palestine from Israel in the future.”⁷⁰

Pro-Ottoman nationalist Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl expressed his nationalist sentiments by reshaping Damietta as the first *waṭan* (homeland)⁷¹ and by identifying the army that fought against the Crusaders as the Egyptian army, or Egyptians.⁷²

By the same token, Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan refers to the army of Ṭūmānbāy I as the army of Egyptians.⁷³ In Ḥasan’s vision of nationalist history, Egypt is presented as the geographic hub, with an important role in trade since it was the link between the Red Sea, Arab countries, the Far East, and the Mediterranean Sea en route to other places.⁷⁴ Thanks to this geographical advantage, Egypt rose as a worldwide political center. In reality, the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria extended their rule to Yemen, Hijāz, Tripoli, and Armenia.⁷⁵

The second common characteristic noted in the Egyptian nationalist narrative is the glorification of the great Mamluk Sultans, among whom Baybars is remarkable. Regarding the origins of the Mamluks, Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan changes nothing in adopting the existing theory accepted by most Egyptian historians: the Mamluks were a military regime with slave origins.⁷⁶ Highlighting the Mamluk victory against the Mongols and the Crusaders,⁷⁷ many of the nationalist historians, including Ḥasan, warmly applauded the Mamluk era for attaining Egypt's elevated status and for its far-reaching influence. Parallel to this, the Mamluk regime is believed to have succeeded in establishing a great empire in which the rule of Baybars and Qalāwūn heralded the golden days of the times.⁷⁸

Many of the nationalist historians panegyricized Sultan Baybars as an authentic reformer who reorganized the Mamluk army,⁷⁹ enhanced naval power,⁸⁰ and established a postal network.⁸¹ Abū Usāma glorified Baybars as one who possessed mystical power and saved the world from the Mongols:

He was one of those men who depend on hidden power but also use their rationality.⁸²

Baybars' era was the pillar of our present-day world.

He overcame the worst dangers and withstood the most difficult of trials. Calamity was impending from all directions and the whole Arab world fought against the annihilation by the Mongols.

Baybars united powers (Syria and Egypt) against the enemy.⁸³

The Mamluk Sultans even contributed to some extent, constructing the banks of the Nile River⁸⁴ and encouraging agriculture.⁸⁵ The most interesting feature in the manifold views of Baybars' character, as presented by the historians, is the way they reshaped him morally as a perfect ruler who even freed women from male oppression:

Baybars showed much interest in women's rights and abolished the oppression of women by men. Baybars strove to spread virtue (moral equality).

And he maintained his subjects' standard of living.⁸⁶

In a similar feminist style, 'Azīz Abāza, renowned as one of modern Egypt's most outstanding poets, reshaped Aybak as a supporter of gender equality. When the Mamluk leaders suspected whether Shajarat al-Durr was a rightful heir to the Sultanate, Aybak defended her right as follows. The Mamluk leaders of Syria said that "women are not entitled to rule

according to the law, and men are entitled to own women.” Baybars added that this is what they claimed. In contrast Aybak claimed that “they also are heroes” and asked, “does God really favor the male sex, who is much more ambitious, over the female sex?” At last Aybak concluded that “there is no difference between the two sexes.”⁸⁷

What motivated this extraordinary presentation of Baybars as an advocate of women’s rights? The issue of women’s rights was one of the main themes of Egyptian intellectual discourse on liberalism at the time, and Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr and ‘Azīz Abāza participated in the discourse in an attempt to draw attention to the gravity of the inhumane conditions of women in Egypt.

In addition to Baybars and Aybak, many other Mamluk leaders were rebirthed as national heroes, notably Quṭuz, Qalāwūn,⁸⁸ Shajarat al-Durr, and Tūmānbāy. Quṭuz is glorified as a Mamluk hero who halted the Mongol invasion at ‘Ayn Jālūt.⁸⁹ Shajarat al-Durr, a woman, is presented as a brave ruler who had good foreign policy skills and led a war against Louis IX.⁹⁰ Ḥabīb Jāmātī praised Shajarat al-Durr for her political skill, too.

Shajarat al-Durr kept the serious secret of (the death of Ṣaliḥ Nizām al-Dīn) for three months and continued to collect intelligence on the Europeans. She then stopped their attacks on Egypt.⁹¹

Shajarat al-Durr was the first queen who seized the throne, and the only one to do so throughout the history of Islam.⁹²

In his review of ‘Azīz Abāza’s play, *Shajarat al-Durr*, Anwār Fataḥ Allah noted the contradictory image of Shajarat al-Durr, conveyed through the sharp contrast between her image as a nationalistic heroine and her identity as a woman:

She is an outstanding figure in Egyptian history, as she was the first Muslim queen who took the throne in Egypt when Crusaders threatened its independence.⁹³ In her anger, sadness, and hesitation, Shajarat al-Durr was an ordinary woman. She cried to her husband and tried to save him. Her life consisted of human emotions.⁹⁴

Fataḥ Allah seems to attempt to address seriously the issue of women’s freedom and rights in Egyptian society by depicting Shajarat al-Durr as an ordinary woman, complementarily to her heroine image.

However, one history book still contains a reference that undermines her leadership as a woman:

Al-Musta‘şim sent a letter asking “If you do not have any man, tell me. I will send you a man [from] among us.”⁹⁵

Sultan al-Ghawrī is, in various ways, described as a national hero. In a review of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al Azām’s short historical novel *Maǧālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghawrī*, Muḥammad Laṭfī Juma‘ described al-Ghawrī as a courageous Sultan who defeated the enemy. However, al-Ghawrī had one defect: he was wasteful, and thus needed to levy heavy taxes on the oppressed people.⁹⁶ From a cultural point of view, Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan and ‘Abd Wahhāb ‘Azām portrayed al-Ghawrī as an open-minded leader, who welcomed the Italian emissary Domenico Trevisiano.⁹⁷

Similarly, Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd presented al-Ghawrī and other Mamluk Sultans as pro-Western and highly civilized Sultans who promoted cooperation and exchange:

In the Middle Ages, Egypt was not isolated from Europe. It was the greatest country in the East and maintained relations with Europe in the fields of trade and politics.⁹⁸

Sultan al-Ghawrī intended to sever the relations with Italy when the latter hinted that it would like to breach the previously held friendship; instead, Italy wished to establish relations with Portugal, France, Spain, and England.⁹⁹

The Italian consul in Damascus also irritated the Sultan. However, Italy sent a messenger in order to maintain its relations with Egypt and punish the consul. Finally, al-Ghawrī revived the relations with Italy.¹⁰⁰ Mamluk Sultans, such as Qalāwūn, allowed many Europeans to enter Egypt. Numerous Europeans helped the Mamluk dynasty, and the Mamluk Sultans mastered literary French.¹⁰¹

Moreover, Abū Ḥadīd glorified al-Ghawrī as the Sultan, who was attentive to the people.

Qānşuh was one of the greatest and most glorious Sultans.

He listened to the people.¹⁰²

In contrast to the Western nationalist presentations of al-Ghawrī, Maḥmūd Razaq Salim reshaped Sultan al-Ghawrī in a brilliant Islamic fashion (this is discussed in detail below).

The last Circassian Sultan, Ṭūmānbāy II, is one of a series of Mamluk Sultans who were reshaped as national Egyptian heroes. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda remarked that the Mamluk Sultans did not take advantage of the precarious situation generated by the fierce rivalry between the Ottomans and the Safavids.¹⁰³ In particular, Ziyāda described Ṭūmānbāy II, the last Mamluk Sultan, as the “greatest Sultan.” He was exalted as the sacred servant and protector of Egypt, and even the Pharaohs are said to have been proud of him.”¹⁰⁴

The Mamluks are also praised for their excellence in cultural spheres, such as building construction and arts.¹⁰⁵ During the Mamluk era, Egyptians built great structures¹⁰⁶ and carried the banner of civilization. They were renowned throughout the world for the flourishing Islamic art,¹⁰⁷ as well as for industry,¹⁰⁸ trade,¹⁰⁹ engineering, design, decoration, and textiles.¹¹⁰

Interestingly, ‘Alī Aḥmad Shukrī offers a new theory regarding the long survival of the Mamluk dynasty. According to this theory, the source of their success was not their military capability, as expounded by many historians. Rather, it was their encouragement of the arts and sciences that enabled them to retain their power for so long:

The Mamluks stayed in power for around 500 years, but our regime did so for barely 50 years. The secret of how the Mamluks remained in power for so long is that they did more than just protect their army and regime; they acknowledged that the reason ruling classes and nobles lasted in power is not related to their white skin color. The gift of the Mamluks to Egypt was artistic talent, and our gift to Egypt was science.¹¹¹

Who can ignore the creatures of the banks of the Nile and the roots of the land; the benefits of the Mamluk castles, their mosques and art traditions?¹¹² Cotton was the main reason for foreign trade with Egypt, but it is because of the Mamluks’ culture that many tourists visit Egypt, which no doubt made the lives of [the] Egyptian nation hard.¹¹³

Like Shukrī, Ḥusayn Mu’nis shows an interest in the Mamluk contribution to cultural development, but for a different purpose. Mu’nis offers Mamluk talent and culture as evidence in validation of his contention that the Mamluk regime was more than just villainous and mercenary:

It is not correct to say that the Mamluks are just a band of evildoers and mercenaries sucking the blood of the country and seeking all kinds of luxury, since many of them were highly endowed with ability, open minds and

good intentions. For instance, it cannot be disputed that the eras of Quṭuz, Baybars, Qalāwūn, Nāṣir Qalāwūn, his son, Lāshīn, and Barsbāy are considered as great Muslim regimes and were excellent in constructing magnificent buildings, as well as developing culture. In addition, they were all faithful Muslims respecting Islam, and many of them followed the path of Islam in defending its territory.¹¹⁴

We thus encountered a completely different image of Mamluk Sultans, in which they are re-conceptualized as extraordinary creators of a great civilization, excelling in architecture, trade, culture, and arts. Egyptian nationalist historians thus succeeded in ‘reinventing’ intelligent and sophisticated Mamluk Sultans who revived the glories of Egypt.

Unflattering references to the Mamluks are made as often as those that are glorifying. Many of the negative references accuse the Mamluk Sultans of internal power struggles¹¹⁵ and tyranny and oppression of the Egyptians. Indeed, the Mamluk regime is defined as one of chaos and intrigue and internal conflict among factions and groups struggling for their leaders and Sultans.¹¹⁶ In his poetry, Yūsuf al-Buyūmī accused many Mamluk Sultans and leaders of injustice and tyranny. For instance, Sultan Mujaffār Hajji (1346) committed mass killing. As for Sultan Nāṣir Ḥusayn Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn, he forced women to serve him¹¹⁷ and subdued the people of Cairo and vehemently killed and choked them.¹¹⁸ Sanjar al-Shajā‘ī (*wazīr diyār* [domestic] *miṣriyya*) is described as the most oppressive tyrant. Barqūq is depicted as one who imprisoned Caliph Mutawākkil.¹¹⁹

‘Adlī Tāhir Nūr allegedly argued that monstrous Mamluks controlled Egypt and made Egypt vicious.¹²⁰ It is very interesting to find that many nationalist historians use critical remarks about the Mamluks to denigrate the arbitrary monarchy of the era. For instance, in order to raise the subject of the socio-political hardship of the 1930s, Ḥusayn Mu’nis drew an analogy between Mamluk tyranny and the autocratic political entity of the 1930s:

Thus, the subjects were weakened and enfeebled, which caused the Mamluks to turn to tyranny and also prevented them from avoiding tyranny in favor of altruism.¹²¹ The more the Egyptians weakened, the more the power of the Mamluks strengthened.¹²² As a result, the first Mamluk dynasty ended with no dialogue between the ruler and the ruled.¹²³

In Mu’nis’ comparative historical analysis, with his nationalist conception, Mamluk tyranny came from the weakness of the citizens, and the same holds true for the 1930s political crisis in Egypt. The autocratic

political entity supported by the Egyptian monarchy, and generated by the Egyptian subjects' weakness, brought about the fierce power struggle among Britain, the monarchy, and the Egyptian nationalists. In Mu'nis' mind, therefore, the only remaining solution was to enable the Egyptians to maintain the balance of power and thereby achieve an independent Egyptian state.

From a different perspective, but for the same purpose, Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan posits the absence of a system of inheritance as the main reason for the fierce power struggle among the Mamluk Sultans.¹²⁴ Similar to Mu'nis' creative correlation between authoritarian monarchy, Mamluk tyranny, and Egypt's turbulent socio-political crisis, Ḥasan implicitly blamed the autocratic monarchy for ruining Egypt, comparing 1930s Egypt to the unstable Mamluk era.

Unlike the previous two stories, 'Aṭṭiya al-Shaykh ascribed the vehement internal struggle for the throne, fought between Sultan al-Jāshankīr and Sultan al-Nāṣir, to two other reasons: vicious cronies and the Sultan's personal greed. Al-Jāshankīr is depicted as a pious Sultan and God-fearing man looking after the treasury, and even forbade any waste and extravagance. According to al-Shaykh, al-Jāshankīr did not place the Mamluks of his father under his orders as others did, but his vicious entourage told him precisely what he wished to hear and concealed that which he did not want to know. Even though the public treasury was empty and the people were starving, al-Jāshankīr demanded more with obstinacy and filled the treasury, and in al-Shaykh's view this is the main factor that made the Sultan isolate himself from the people, who were terrorized by him.¹²⁵

When war was impending, all the Mamluk leaders chased their own interests and the vicious entourages betrayed al-Jāshankīr and had a secret understanding with Sultan al-Nāṣir to topple al-Jashankir. The envious al-Jāshankīr got closer to the people, who elevated him in turn.¹²⁶ However, the mercenaries gathered their bands and hunted for excesses and lived above the means of the nation. They were occupied with plundering the people and betrayed al-Jāshankīr's trust, grabbing the property of the nation, demolishing houses, and spreading poverty and hunger.¹²⁷

No sooner had al-Jāshankīr seized the throne than he began to be involved in evildoing. Due to his misdeeds the people cried in grievance and did not trust each other. Furthermore, the ill-treated people demanded justice from the tyrant.¹²⁸ His misrule worsened economic conditions, and thus the price of wheat soared dramatically. The people even expressed political satire in song: Our Sultan is useless (*rakīn*) rather than a pillar

(*ruken*), and his deputy (*slār*) is tiny.¹²⁹ A popular storyteller in the ‘Aṭṭiya al-Shaykh’s story describes the last day of al-Jāshankīr: the more people sympathized with al-Nāṣir and which crowned the experienced king, the more al-Nāṣir as a new Sultan and al-Jāshankīr was in return humiliated and he [thus] became an atrocious man. At last al-Jāshankīr was arrested by al-Nāṣir and executed.¹³⁰

As seen above, the Sultan’s greed is explained as the main cause of the vehement struggle for power. It sabotaged the relations with his people and generated tyranny and injustice. Al-Shaykh seems to tell his readers that all greedy and despotic tyrants are destined to fall. Of course, this message could also be interpreted differently, as a warning to the arbitrary Egyptian monarchy of al-Shaykh’s time.

Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd also elaborated on the internal struggle between the Mamluk Sultans. After the death of Sultan Baybars, he writes, his deputy Sultan Badr al-Dīn Biyalik ruled the country until the son of Baybars succeeded the throne by concealing Baybars’ death.¹³¹ The main purpose of Ḥadīd’s short story seems to have been to emphasize that a stable succession of the throne is essential for the nation’s stability.

Representations of the Mamluks in Territorial Nationalist Historical Literature

So far, our discussion has focused on common features in the ways nationalist historians utilize the Mamluk past to promote their own ideological beliefs. Below, we intend to trace how each Egyptian nationalist—an Egyptian territorialist nationalist, an Egyptian Islamic nationalist, an integral Egyptian nationalist, and an Egyptian Arab nationalist—portrays the Mamluks and the Mamluk era.

This new territorialist national history was founded on a particular concept of time in which time was made an exclusive function of place. According to this territorial theory, it was the physical environment that shaped the nature of any given period or moment and dictated the rhythm of the flow of time. Namely, time was embodied within the boundaries of geography, and was subordinated to determinist laws of nature predominating within the natural environment.¹³² According to Egyptian territorialism it was a “territorial clock” that formulated Egypt’s life and death. Whatever happened over the country’s long history, all these moments happened in the Nile Valley. Such commonality of place unified successive periods of time into one historical entity. This continuity, rather than

change, was considered the backbone of Egyptian history. Territorialists interpreted that Egypt's "immortal life" underwent only incidental changes over the millennia.¹³³

Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm's writings demonstrate an explicit expression of this territorial conception of time. It was al-Ḥakīm's position that time and place together were the two driving forces that had formed the Egyptian philosophical landscape.¹³⁴ A luminary intellectual, al-Ḥakīm was convinced that Egyptian thought, for thousands of years, had circled around the enormous struggle between time, man, and place. Whereas the "Greeks were obsessed with fate and destiny, the Egyptians are obsessed with time and place [*al-zaman wa al-makan*]." Indeed, for al-Ḥakīm, Egypt's *raison d'être* as a nation was to control time and place and to make them both subordinate to the will of Egypt.¹³⁵ In al-Ḥakīm's insight, Egypt was able to master time through its geographical and human resources. The organic continuity of life in the Nile Valley and the perpetuity of the "Egyptian spirit" stemming from its rootedness in that environment were considered stronger than time.¹³⁶

In a similar vein, for an Egyptian luminary territorialist intellectual, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, Egypt's long history from the Pharaohs to the contemporary period is the history of the fusion (*ta'riḫ al-indimāj*) in which all those who aspired to invade Egypt became the inhabitants of Egypt. A significant pattern is found in Haykal's historical interpretation in which external forces occupied the country but were successful in ruling it only after they assimilated to it, coming under the influence of Egypt's territorial history. Accepting Egyptian customs and eventually becoming Egyptian, external rulers became devoted to the advancement and prosperity of Egypt itself. The secret of their success was their own "surrender to the power of the strong Egyptian character."¹³⁷

Reflecting these territorial nationalist ideas, the second luminary intellectual, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, included all peoples, from the ancient dynasty to the Mamluks, and turned them into Egyptians, as follows:

They were assimilated by virtue of the atmosphere and inhabitants of Egypt... the Hyksos, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Mamluks, all became Egyptians who accepted the authority of Egypt and who completely embodied the spirit of the Nile Valley.¹³⁸

Moreover, Haykal saw the lengthy Mamluk period (1250–1517) as the completion of the process of the regaining of Egyptian independence and

sovereignty during the Islamic era: “The Mamluks even more than Ayyūbids became independent rulers by means of Egypt, and Egypt became independent by means of them.”¹³⁹ The Mamluk period was portrayed as a new golden age for the country due to their assimilation to the genius of Egypt: politically, Egypt expanded south, west, and east; economically, it became “the commercial crossroads between east and west.”¹⁴⁰ Culturally, the Mamluk Sultanate era is embodied as a heyday of Islamic civilization, promoting knowledge, art, trade activities, industry, and so on.¹⁴¹ In Haykal’s glorious nationalist narrative Sultan Baybars is commemorated as an Egyptian hero:

At a critical moment of Islamic history, it was the Mamluks under Baybars who stopped the seemingly inexorable Mongol tide at ‘Ayn Jālūt in 1260 and who forced the Mongols back across the Euphrates. Thus, Islam was saved from “the Tatar invasion.”¹⁴²

Particularly Haykal’s territorial nationalism is clearly manifested in his account of Mamluk military success:

“Mamluk achievements derived from the power of the Egyptian environment rather than from Muslim or Turkish source, it was vitality of the Egyptian national personality, firmly anchored in the sureties of the Nile Valley and expressing Egypt’s eternal aspiration for liberty and independence, which had defeated the Mongols and ushered in an era of Egyptian preeminence in the region and the Umma.”¹⁴³

Even Haykal openly advocates Mamluk tyranny by claiming that most regimes were despotic. He asked if historians were being fair to the Mamluks when they defined their period as “an era of tyranny in the history of Egypt.” He pointed out that ruling regimes everywhere at this time were “despotic regimes,” for the idea of democracy was non-existent.¹⁴⁴

Like Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, another luminary intellectual, Ṭaha Ḥusayn, developed a similar territorial thesis: Soon after having invaded Egypt as foreign conquerors, the Arabs were overcome by the strength of the Egyptian national characteristics and thus assimilated themselves into its territorial patterns. A great number of Egyptian intellectuals embraced this thought, which subsequently prevailed over intellectual discourse in the post-1919 period in Egypt.¹⁴⁵

Egyptianization is the key factor in this thesis since it included an important sub-thesis within itself: that the Arabic language and Islamic

religion brought to Egypt by Arab conquerors had been assimilated by the Egyptian people only after both had undergone a process of Egyptianization.¹⁴⁶ Ṭaha Ḥusayn perceives the Arab conquest of Egypt in a similar manner. The Arab invasion of Egypt, to him, was only one example of a cyclical historical pattern that had become an integral part of Egypt's national history. For thousands of years, the Egyptian people had been victims of "a variety of injustices and all sorts of hostility" from many foreign invaders: Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, the French, and finally the English.¹⁴⁷ In Ḥusayn's view, the Arab invasion was the most perilous of this series of foreign invasions, which even jeopardized Egypt's independent historical existence. As a result Egypt became a peripheral country of a larger empire whose civilizational hub was far removed from the Nile Valley.¹⁴⁸

In his book *Mustaqbal al-Thaqāfa fī Miṣr*, Ṭaha Ḥusayn sets out to prove the existence of a distinct Egyptian personality, which has put its stamp on every aspect of life. Although Arabic is common to all Arabs, Egypt has a specific manner of expression.¹⁴⁹ In order to refute the theory put forward by Haykal and others concerning the unity of the nations of the East, Ṭaha Ḥusayn claimed that Egyptian, Greek, Latin, and modern French cultures all belong to a single indivisible culture, which he calls Mediterranean and European.¹⁵⁰

It would be a mistake to suppose that Ḥusayn was now restating the plea for an Egyptian particularism, which many writers, such as Haykal in the 1920s, had acclaimed earlier. Ḥusayn found no contradiction between the call for Westernization and an admiration for Arabic culture. Unlike the champions of the Pharaonic trend, Ḥusayn ranked ancient Arabic literature among the world's finest artistic creations.¹⁵¹ Without doubt, Ṭaha Ḥusayn's territorialism is a key to understanding his perception of the Mamluks. He assimilated the Mamluks into the Egyptian entity by claiming that "the Macedonians, the Mamluks, and the Fāṭimids who opted for Egyptian nationality enjoyed glory and security."¹⁵² Moreover, with their consequent willingness to "assume Egyptian nationality and merge into it"¹⁵³ came victory.

To sum up, Ḥusayn exemplified Mamluk assimilation into the Egyptian entity in order to strengthen his thesis of territorial nationalism in which Mamluks are no longer foreign military slaves but instead commemorated as a symbol of Egyptian glory and security.

In many respects, Aḥmad Amīn adopted the prevailing theory of the Mamluks developed by many other Egyptian nationalist. For instance, Amīn viewed 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'taṣim as the first to have used Mamluks as

mercenaries.¹⁵⁴ The Mamluks learned Islam, science, tradition, and cultural elements. Soon after seizing power from the Ayyūbids, they divided their army into several parts.¹⁵⁵ Quṭuz is reborn as a national hero of the ‘Ayn Jālūt war between the Mamluks and Mongols: “Facing Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt, Quṭuz called help from ‘Ulamā’ (head of ‘Ulamā’ ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām) and halted them.”¹⁵⁶ More importantly, he glorified the Mamluk era by asserting that “during Mamluk dynasty, Egypt became the center of Islamic culture and even surpassed Baghdad.”¹⁵⁷ However, the Mamluks appeared to have neither known Arabic nor enjoyed it; thereby, there was no progress in the field of poets. It was not until Muḥammad ‘Alī’s rule that a new Egyptian resurrection (*Nahḍa*) came into being.¹⁵⁸ In addition, diverse aspects of nationalism are seen in the accounts of the Mamluks. Reflecting Islamic nationalism, Amīn used the terms Mamluk Sultans and Islamic kings.¹⁵⁹ Stressing Egyptian people’s role in historical development, Amīn remarked that both Egyptian Mamluk Sultans and Egyptian people defeated the Crusaders at al-Manṣūra.¹⁶⁰

Under the influence of the powerful wave of this territorial nationalism in the early 1930s, many other intellectuals assimilated the Mamluk past into Egyptian collective historical memory as follows:

Invaders such as the Hyksos, the Persians, the Nubians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, and the Mamluk and Ottoman Turks were all held to have had not the slightest effect on the stability and strength of the Egyptian national personality. Instead, that personality had stamped its characteristics upon them, Egyptianized them, and made them subject to Egyptian historical patterns.¹⁶¹

As a historian and Director of the Egyptian Department of Numismatics, Ibrāhīm Jalāl, in a similar vein, denied that the Mamluks were a different “nation” from the Egyptians. Instead, he contended that “the Mamluks were not a nation but rather individuals who took Egypt as a homeland, adopting and imitating her people’s nature, character, language, science, temperament, and traditions as their model.”¹⁶² According to his insight into Egypt’s past, Mamluks had “settled amidst the Egyptians, assimilated to them, intermarried with them, involved them in power and shared all the country’s resources with them.”¹⁶³ In light of his assimilation of the Mamluks into Egypt, it is no wonder that Jalāl glorified the Mamluk era and Sultan Baybars. Jalāl defined Mamluks as slaves from Kipchaq.¹⁶⁴ The Circassian kings are represented as national leaders who achieved complete

independence for Egypt.¹⁶⁵ Under the Mamluk kings' rule Egyptians' nobility appeared in a variety of fields: Egypt developed the treasures of its Arab legacy, constructed the great mosque in Cairo, and promoted art, history, technology, poetry, etc. The Mamluks were glorified as pious, as were their kings and leaders.¹⁶⁶ Jalāl also praised Sultan Baybars for bringing the 'Abbasid Caliph back to Cairo and restoring the city as his center.¹⁶⁷

An anonymous author referred to the Egyptian excellence that halted the Mongols rather than the Mamluks:

The Egyptian power had stopped the 1260 attacks of the Tatar Army on Africa [no mention is made of Mamluks or Arabs]. It is impossible to know what would remain of the Arab civilization had Cairo and North Africa been destroyed by the Tatars (a clear distinction is drawn between the Arabs and the Egyptians).¹⁶⁸

Representations of the Mamluks in Egyptian Islamic Nationalist Literature

Egyptian Islamic nationalism was an endeavor to rebuild a religion-based alternative to supplant the territorial nationalism that had gained ascendancy in Egypt in the 1920s. It is worthwhile to emphasize that its formulators were both Muslims and nationalists. Thus, it could be said that Egyptian Islamic nationalists were the first Egyptian Muslims who undertook the task of developing a systematic nationalist doctrine whose reference point was firmly rooted in Islam.¹⁶⁹ Overall, Egyptian Islamic nationalists constantly emphasized the universal nature of the Islamic faith: Islam is a universal religion; its credos apply regardless of geographical difference, state structures, racial backgrounds, or class differences. Nothing can influence the validity of its tenets; its jurisdiction is not limited to boundaries; it recognizes no human difference save righteousness; in the words of the Prophet, "the Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab save by virtue of his piety."¹⁷⁰ It was exactly this universal nature that enabled Islam to spread throughout the world, and by which Islam would possibly overcome geographical and ethnic barriers and unite diverse regions and peoples in "one nation (*Umma Wahida*)," bearing the banner of guidance and struggle for the good, for the sake of all mankind.¹⁷¹

Before embarking on Islamic nationalist perceptions of the Mamluks, it is essential to examine Ḥasan al-Bannā's—a luminary Islamist intellectual—understanding of the Mamluk era and the Mamluks. Al-Bannā further developed his Islamist ideas in 1935 in a series of editorials by

called “Da‘watuna” (Our Mission). He defined a dynamic of loyalties in order to reconcile the potential conflict between Egyptian patriotism, Arabism, and Islamic unity. In al-Bannā’s writing, the three allegiances to Islam were seen as interacting with and reinforcing each other. The liberation of Egypt and the establishment of an Islamic order in Egypt was the first step. Secondly, the struggle for Arab unity was essential, since it was a prerequisite for achieving Islamic unity.¹⁷² The revival of the Islamic Caliphate was sometimes referred to as the final aim, though the eventual goal was the universal brotherhood of mankind and the international hegemony of the Islamic nation.¹⁷³

However, al-Bannā vehemently denounced “the nationalism of paganism [*qawmiyyat al-jahiliyya*],” by which he criticized the contemporary effort of modern nationalists in some Muslim countries to “revive the custom of *jahiliyya* [i.e., pre-Islamic pagan Arabia]” that had been superseded by the monotheism of Islam.¹⁷⁴ The idea to replace the bond of Islam by such racially biased nationalism was disgraceful in al-Bannā’s view. He proclaimed that Muslim Brothers “do not call for Pharaonicism, Arabism, Phoenicianism, or Syrianism.” Most importantly, al-Bannā also explicitly criticized “the nationalism of aggression [*qawmiyyat al-‘udmān*],” referring to “racial self-aggrandizement to a degree that produces contempt for other races, aggression against them, and their victimization for the sake of the honor of the nation and its existence, as is advocated, for example, by Germany and Italy.”¹⁷⁵

Ḥasan al-Bannā’s historical point of view was based on the unity of Islam, stressing Egypt’s leading role in struggling against the Crusaders and Mongols, but narrated as an experience of one Muslim community.¹⁷⁶ However, Islamic history took a turn for the worse after its early development and dignity, since many negative factors both internal and external—political and sectarian discord emerged; the devitalizing pleasures of civilization; “the transfer of authority and leadership to non-Arabs... who had never embraced genuine Islam”; intellectual stagnation and self-sufficiency—were responsible for the downfall of the Islamic community after its early days of expansion and flourishing.¹⁷⁷ The long era from 668 to 1517, in which Egypt was ruled successively by the Ṭūlūnids, Ikhshidids, Fāṭimids, Ayyūbids, and Mamluks, is widely regarded as one of political collapse and cultural deterioration for the Islamic community.¹⁷⁸

For the same reason, al-Bannā expressed a negative attitude toward the Mamluk Sultanate by describing it as having “never absorbed genuine Islam, and those hearts never been illuminated with the light

of the Quran...”¹⁷⁹ Apart from this, it is hard to find other references to the Mamluks by al-Bannā. Considering al-Bannā’s Islamic historical point of view, it is not so surprising to see unfavorable references to the Mamluks, who originated from Turkish or Circassian military slaves. An interesting point is the way in which al-Bannā interpreted the seizure of power by the Mamluks. In his view, it was religious corruption and stagnation of piety toward Islam that caused the political breakdown of the glorious ‘Abbasid Caliphate system and, thereby, the Mamluks filled the power vacuum created by the former.

In contrast, according to other Islamic Egyptian nationalists, this era of crisis for the *Umma* as a whole was also a time when Islamic Egypt achieved great prominence. The importance of these independent Muslim dynasties was that they had transformed Egypt into the leading Muslim state of the period, “the heart of the Islamic world and its civilization.”¹⁸⁰

The most prominent aspect of Egyptian Islamic nationalism is its interpretation of the past from the perspective of Islam and the Islamic *Umma* parallel to the Egyptian-centered viewpoint. For instance, Muḥammad ‘Abdallah ‘Inān reinterpreted the Crusader war as the war of the Islamic army against the Crusaders.¹⁸¹ Born in 1891, ‘Inān majored in law in Cairo and then went to Berlin to complete his studies. In the early 1920s, he worked as a lawyer as well as a journalist and began to focus on the Islamic history of Egypt and ancient Islamic civilization. Very soon ‘Inān crystallized his nationalist idea by synthesizing classical Islamic Arab heritage as the basis for the modern culture of Egypt and Arab communities.¹⁸²

As mentioned, Egyptian leadership remained one of the main components of Egyptian Islamic nationalism during the Crusades. Egypt is believed to have played an essential historic role in halting the Crusaders’ threat to Egypt and the East. ‘Inān particularly stressed the fact that Egypt’s war against the Crusaders was to defend not only Egypt, but also Islam and Islamic cities, against the enemy’s barbaric attacks.¹⁸³ ‘Inān’s Islamic outlook is best conveyed in the account of the Mamluk war against the Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt:

Quṭuz shouted ‘Wā Islāma,’ which raised the spirits of the Egyptians and strengthened their power and they finally succeeded in defeating the Mongols. The Egyptian army, led by Baybars, halted the Mongols.¹⁸⁴ It is an important day for Egyptian history and also for Islamic history and for the history of civilization, because the Mongols made a vow to crush

from East to West. If the Mongols crushed Egypt, they would crush the West, Andalusia and maybe Europe, destroying all structures of Eastern and Western civilization, whether Islamic or Christian.¹⁸⁵ It is not only Egypt's victory, but also the victory of the Islamic world...After the downfall of Baghdad, Egypt finally became the center of Islamic thought.¹⁸⁶

In addition to 'Ayn Jālūt, Shajarat al-Durr is reborn as an early symbol of 'Inān's Islamic nationalism.

Shajarat al-Durr was the first and the last queen of Islamic Egypt.¹⁸⁷ Shajarat al-Durr was a patriotic leader who halted the Crusaders.¹⁸⁸ Facing numerous Crusader attacks, Egypt, under the leadership of Shajarat Durr, protected Islam and Islamic countries from the enemies and removed the strongest Christian power in the name of religion.¹⁸⁹

For 'Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥamza, Islam is more than a religion; it is a medium that can bridge between Egyptians and the Eastern and Western world.¹⁹⁰ Clearly indicating such a wider Islamic cultural identity, Ḥamza attempted to recompose the Mamluk era of Egyptian national history through the prism of Islam and Islamic values. Ḥamza clearly shows his preference for Egyptian Islamic nationalism, over the existing nationalism as well as over the Pharaonic past:

Islamic patriotism (*waṭaniyya Islāmiyya*) is older and greater than the national patriotism (*waṭaniyya Qawmiyya*),¹⁹¹ which first appeared in the hearts and feelings of people during the Middle Ages.¹⁹²

The Islamic spirit, in the days of its power, replaced the Egyptians' past, causing them to forget their Kings and Pharaohs, as the Persians forgot their past and like the Turks [...]

Thus, we found that the Egyptians glorified the Pharaohs, but were most interested in what the new culture transmitted in praise of a new religion (Islam).¹⁹³

Although Ḥamza acknowledged the flaws of the Mamluks, he depicted them as pious rulers, serving the Egyptians and faithful to the Islamic leaders:

Such circumstances led Egypt to attain high status and to become the legal head of the Islamic world, protecting the 'Abbasid Islamic Caliphs, and this had a great impact on literature and science.¹⁹⁴ One strange trait of the

Mamluks is that they devoted great effort to the interests of the Egyptian people and were loyal to the Islamic leaders. Historians can perceive this aspect in the Mamluk's public way of life, but there is room for criticism and annoyance with regard to their private lives.¹⁹⁵

Strongly impressed by Mamluk military ability, Ḥamza's respect for the Mamluks extends beyond their military power, including a sense of wonder at their success in building a huge empire:

It is certain that historians could not possibly conceal their amazement at this new race that ruled Egypt – the Mamluks.

They were a group of slaves that their masters bought, trained and treated with special care. It is amazing how, in such a short time, they were able to take control over a rich region like Egypt, not to mention the other regions. How were they able so easily to build a huge empire, to preserve it and protect it, Egypt and Islam from the great threat of raids by such as the Mongols and Crusaders?¹⁹⁶

Like other Islamic nationalist historians, Ḥamza's Egypt-centered view was in harmony with Egyptian Islamic nationalism. Egypt in the Mamluk era is depicted as having enjoyed the golden days of Islamic Egypt, when the Mamluks became great in the Islamic world and far beyond Egypt.¹⁹⁷

Egypt was the religious and political leader since it defeated the Crusaders and the Mongols. After transferring the 'Abbasid Caliph to Cairo, Egypt became the center of the Caliphate.¹⁹⁸

In Ḥamza's ambitious nationalist project for creating a new Islamic Egyptian community, the Egyptians are idealized as a peaceful nation loyal to the Islamic ruler.

Egypt loved authority and submission; the Egyptian nation did not go against the regime. Before the Arab attack, they did not raise general revolt against the Islamic regime. Egypt loved unity and harmony.¹⁹⁹

Even the arrival of the Arabs in Egypt did not hinder, but rather accelerated, the Islamization of the Egyptians:

As soon as Arabs and Egyptians mixed, the Arab soldiers left. Egyptians were at ease in the life of a city from which a new people emerged; that is, the Islamic Egyptian people.

The Egyptian people were content to participate in the building of Islamic civilization. It was the Egyptian peoples themselves, in every city, who established science and civilization.²⁰⁰

In the same manner, Surūr was determined to reconstruct the Egyptian past from the universal Islamic standpoint, by blending the Mamluks into Egyptian history and thereby integrating Egyptian history into Islamic history.²⁰¹ For Surūr, Mamluk history is not simply a part of Islamic Egyptian national history, but rather one of the glorious pages of Islamic history.²⁰²

In highlighting the great Egyptian leadership, Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd positioned Egypt at the forefront of the struggle against the Crusaders as well as a center of the Islamic world.

The Crusaders waged a war against the East, commencing to attack the Arabs in Spain and then launching continuous fights against Muslims in Africa. Thirteenth-century Egypt was the greatest Islamic country and the center of the Islamic world. All Islamic countries grouped around Egypt.²⁰³ Egypt was the heart of the Islamic East, protecting Islamic countries from Mongols and Crusaders. Baybars is depicted as the great protector of the thirteenth-century.²⁰⁴

Focusing on the importance of historical building in creating historical memory, Muḥammad ‘Abd Azīz Marzūq not only utilized dominant historical figures but also used historical buildings as a site of national collective memory. For Marzūq, these historical sites, built by the Mamluk Sultans, became “sites of memory” [*lieux de mémoire*], as termed by Pierre Nora.²⁰⁵ Nora’s sites of memory encompass nearly every social product and cultural artifact: monuments, flags, anthem, museum exhibits, archives, libraries, dictionaries, calendars, and cemeteries.²⁰⁶ In presenting Baybars’ mosque as an early manifestation of Egyptian Islamic nationalism, Marzūq offers it as clear evidence of Baybars’ greatness.

The Mamluks were military slaves and originated from ‘Abbasid.²⁰⁷

The history of this mosque (the mosque of Sultan Baybars) is a part of the history of Islamic Egypt. The inscription on marble says: “Baybars is the pillar of the world and of religion and the Sultan of Islam and Muslims.”²⁰⁸ Baybars halted the Crusaders, such as Louis IX, King of France, at al-Manṣūra,²⁰⁹ and brought back the Caliph to Cairo.²¹⁰ He was the founder of the Mamluk dynasty.²¹¹ The great mosque (of Sultan Baybars) was built by one of the greatest men of Egypt.²¹²

The second site of commemoration is Sultan Ḥasan Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn's school. Despite the fact that Ḥasan was not viewed as a righteous Sultan, Marzūq stressed that the Mamluk Sultans bequeathed their Islamic legacy:

Egypt is still a museum that preserves the greatness of Islamic Egyptian arts. The pyramids were the banner of ancient civilizations. Islamic Egypt raised the banner of the Middle Ages. Sultan Ḥasan's *madrasa* is the best example of Islamic legacy in the world and in Egypt.²¹³ Does Sultan Ḥasan deserve to be named as one who contributed to this splendid Islamic legacy? In order to answer this question we should check the history books.²¹⁴ This Sultan's era is characterized by the grief in the hearts of people, oppression, anarchy, chaos, and personal greed. There were ongoing plots, and even the Sultan's body was not discovered. There is not even a tomb. Despite this turbulent period, we can see the splendid Mamluk legacy.²¹⁵

In addition, Marzūq commemorated Khāniqāh (the place in which Sufis and dervishes performed their ceremonies) built by Baybars al-Thāni,²¹⁶ the Dome of Sultan Qalāwūn, and even Egyptian carpets²¹⁷ as a crystallization of Egyptian Islamic architecture and art.²¹⁸ Marzūq's Egyptian Islamic nationalism overlapped with Arab nationalism, which is best reflected in his dual reference to Qalāwūn as the Sultan of Islam and the King of Arabs.²¹⁹

In a similar vein, taking Islam as a decisive impetus for Egypt's victory against the Mongols, 'Abd al-Wahhāb Azām reinterpreted the war between the Egyptians and Mongols as Jihad against the enemies of Islam. Azām noted that it was Islam that led Egypt to save the Muslims in the war against Hülegü.²²⁰ For instance, even though the Muslims were afraid of the Mongol attacks, following the 'Ayn Jālūt war, the Sultan made a speech about the interest of Islam in facing these attacks. Azām glorified this episode as a significant page of Islamic history that covers Egyptian politics in its Jihad against the enemy of Islam.²²¹ In this epic, Baybars, his leaders, and 'Ulamā' of Egypt succeeded in restoring the 'Abbasid Caliphate in order to unify the hearts of all Muslims.²²² Moreover, Azām did not seem to mind the Mamluks' greed.²²³ Regardless of that "flaw," Azām exalted Baybars as a glorious leader who had halted the Crusaders and the Mongols, and described him as the hero of 'Ayn Jālūt.²²⁴

More comprehensively, Aḥmad Ramzī, Egypt's former consul general to Syria and Lebanon, blended all three commemorative tools—heroic moments, historical figures, and buildings—into one Islamic nationalist collective memory. Overall, Ramzī redefined the Mamluk dynasty as an

Islamic one²²⁵ and presented Egypt as an Islamic country.²²⁶ He further presented Quṭuz, as ‘Ayn Jālūt war hero, as the King of Islamic Egypt.²²⁷ In the same manner, Ramzī identified Baybars with Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn by glorifying him as the greatest of a series of warrior Islamic kings.²²⁸ Following Marzūq’s *mélange* of two different trends of nationalism, Ramzī integrated his Islamic nationalism with Arab nationalism by depicting Baybars as a Sultan committed not only to Islam, but also to Arabism.

Baybars believed that the right of the glorious nation and the greatness of Egypt was reflected in the hearts of Arabism and Islam.²²⁹

Furthermore, Ramzī redefined the fortress of Ḥuṣn al-Akrād as a symbolic temple of Islamic collective memory:

The Islamic army gathered in the fortress of Ḥuṣn al-Akrād.²³⁰

The kings of the Muslims, including Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, fought against the Crusaders.²³¹

Already in the late nineteenth century, the Mamluk style of building and architecture was reinvented. There are several reasons for the revival of the Mamluk style at that time. First, Mamluk history was neglected and Mamluk buildings abandoned after the Ottomans commenced to control Egypt at the end of the Mamluk dynasty. Some interpret the resurrection of Mamluk style as a political expression to counter the effects of colonialism and the huge wave of westernization that Egypt witnessed.²³²

Secondly, Egyptians and Europeans noticed that the traditional form of architecture was facing the threat of extinction and thus started advocating the reuse of the style in order to preserve it. Furthermore, the influx of European travelers to Egypt sparked an interest in the style, making it fashionable back home—for instance, neo-Pharaonic and Islamic-style furniture was very unique in Europe. As argued by Hend Nadim, such a tendency eventually filtered its way back to Egypt, and the European architects who worked in Egypt found a large number of published examples that they could use for their projects.²³³

The third reason for the revival of the Mamluk style was the establishment of the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l’Art Arabe* in 1881 by Khedive Tawfiq. The *Comité*’s role was to document Islamic and Coptic monuments; their role expanded to include the restoration and conservation of the monuments, which helped the revival of the style,

because it raised awareness among a certain section of society, the intellectuals and heritage enthusiasts, a group that included upper-class Egyptians as well as Europeans working in Egypt. These intellectual groups started to build in the revival style, and a domino effect happened within their circle—and a larger group began supporting the style. Furthermore, the Egyptian royal family eventually adopted the style when it came to public buildings, which assured the public that there had been a shift in loyalty. The al-Rifa‘i mosque that was addressed above and the mosque attached to ‘Abdīn Palace, the Khedival Library, and the Arab Art Museum all had royal patronage and all possessed neo-Mamluk elements.²³⁴

Another reason, as argued by some (very much related to the first reason), was a need to fight against colonialism in its various forms, be it British or Ottoman powers. The Mamluk style was not a direct form of nationalism, but rather an indirect one that affected people’s preferences, including architecture as well as other areas of social life. This allowed people to select the style they preferred most, and thus the neo-Mamluk style made its imprint on society in domestic buildings, public buildings (such as privately funded banks and libraries), and in some cases government buildings (museums and ministries). The neo-Mamluk style was used so extensively that it became the national style within a few years. Some argued that the choice of the neo-Mamluk style is a sign of backwardness.²³⁵ However, its emergence proves otherwise. The Mamluk reign in Egypt and Greater Syria was one of the strongest and richest periods in the area’s history; thus, it was a symbol of development and understanding of the circumstances of the time. The emergence of the revival style can be interpreted, by this logic, as another form of nationalism.²³⁶

The neo-Mamluk style is characterized by a hybrid combination of nineteenth-century Western European construction principles and architectural tradition derived from buildings erected during the period of Mamluk rule in Egypt (1250–1517). The Mamluk style was largely limited to decorative elements, though certain aspects of interior design from this period were also incorporated.²³⁷ The style flourished between 1870 and 1930, a period in which Egypt moved from a semi-autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire to an increasing incorporation into the British Empire, starting with the military occupation in 1882 and culminating in the official status of protectorate by 1914.²³⁸ Thus, the emergence of the neo-Mamluk style illustrates the belief that the Egyptian nation is capable of “progress” (i.e., the development of a modern national style in architecture), but only under the terms of a European civilizational framework (which can be viewed as “thematic” in the case of architecture).²³⁹

What remains to be discussed is the question of why it was to the Mamluk, rather than any other period of the country's history, that the creators of an Egyptian national style in architecture looked for inspiration. A significant part of the answer has already been provided in the discussion of the Egyptian restoration practices, which demonstrated that the postulated Mamluk style was promoted as the purest expression of Egypt's national identity, reducing Ottoman elements to the status of an alien influence.²⁴⁰

Going back to Ramzī, the most interesting part of his Islamic nationalist narrative is his elevation of Sultan al-Ghawrī's tragic defeat by the Ottomans into a magnificent epic.

Sultan al-Ghawrī continued to Aleppo with Sibāi al-Kāfli and the leaders of Syria, and there he united all the Mamluk armies of Egypt and Syria in order to prepare for the day of Marj Dābiq.²⁴¹ Although Sibāi al-Kāfli and al-Ghawrī were defeated by the Ottomans, their defeat and demises was a stronger and more powerful lesson than any victory.²⁴²

In contrast to the tragic image of al-Ghawrī, Maḥmūd Razaq Salīm described Sultan al-Ghawrī as a perfect Islamic hero. When Sultan al-Ghawrī showed himself in public, people shouted, "Sultan al-Ashraf is the victory of Allah" and "the beloved of Allah of Islam."²⁴³ Salīm began his story with the oppression of the Circassian Mamluks.

The leaders of the Circassian Mamluks oppressed the people of Cairo, who played a key role in the Mamluk reign and their responsibilities were limited only to choosing the Sultan. The people got used to this regime, and depended on it. Their obedience and hatred endured.²⁴⁴ One explained why the Mamluks were armed: The Mamluks were armed with weapons in order to prevent chaos and escort the Sultan's convoy. The other responded: Did not you know this regime? Or did you forget the vanity of the Jalban and Qarānaṣa (pirates)? What is the difference between animosity and hatred? Do they really serve the country as soldiers? He concluded that the Mamluks generated chaos and were the source of evil and corruption. They were slaves to money and lust.²⁴⁵

Although the man in the passage above gives credit to the Mamluks' military power, such as victory against the Crusaders and the Mongols, he is nonetheless critical of them.

He noted the fact that the Mamluks eliminated the enemies from their country for a long time. In addition, he praised the Mamluks as saviors who stopped, attacked, and halted the Franks and Mongols coveting Egypt and

Sham for 10 years. However, he lamented his misfortune by saying that they were left with the slough of the snake and the throats of animals. He complained about how the Mamluks ill-treated them (the people of Cairo) by asking, Did you forget that they treated us in a dishonorable way? They have been disgracing and plundering us. He harshly criticized the Mamluks, noting that oppression was a part of their being.²⁴⁶ According to him, the Mamluk army was well-disciplined under al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn's control. However, the Sultans who succeeded Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn were not equal to him. Furthermore, their regime was not praiseworthy, and not marked by mercy since the Mamluk Sultans became greedy, mean, and ignored the religious decrees. Many of the Sultans turned away from religion (Islam). Instead, they fornicated like apes, robbed like rats, conned like wolves. Nevertheless, he emphasized that the Sultans did protect them by defeating their enemies. Many Sultans ordered the propagation of Islam. The other man responded: "It is a shame that you remember that they protected you from your enemies, whereas in fact they protected themselves and only defended their reign." He tried to explain that what the Sultans did was actually for them, not for the people: "Even if they did protect you, I will tell you how and why. The Sultans protected you as a shepherd protects its cow, fearing that its milk would dry up and its flesh would be eaten. You were not served by them, but rather served them."²⁴⁷

In addition, Sultan al-Ghawrī is idealized as a leader who understood regional politics. He is further believed to have had a sharp intuition, understanding the urgency of unity by addressing the threat posed by the enemies at the country's gates. For instance, Qānṣuh al-Ghawrī emphasized the unity of the dynasty and denounced the civil war (*fitna*) when Ṭarābāy and others complained about the wrongdoing (greed).²⁴⁸ The Sultan also rationalized the unity by explaining that enemies, such as Safavid and the Ottomans, were at the gate.²⁴⁹ Ghawrī is represented as having indicated a problem in the struggle for power among the Mamluk leaders and said that "a thousand kings passed away since the Mu'izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Jāshankīr in his Baḥrī dynasty and Circassian dynasty, and another thousand elapsed since Zāhir Barqūq Ibn Ans, don't you see this stupidity must be ended in our time of Egypt, no further."²⁵⁰

Even morally, al-Ghawrī is iconized as a generous and merciful Sultan who helped the destitute and downtrodden masses. Interestingly, one character in Salīm's short novel *Shaykh Walī al-Dīn* refers to the Circassian Mamluks as pious Muslims, thus contradicting the previous tyrannical portrayal.

The poet Shihāb al-Dīn said that these Circassian Mamluks filled the road of this wadi with corruption and made alcohols harm than benefit. Ghars al-Dīn (a merchant) elaborated the evildoing of the Mamluks by noting that they oppressed Ra'āyā (subjects) by imposing heavy taxation on them and wasted their fortunes extravagantly. Zakī al-Dīn (tax collector) accused Atabek Qāiṭ of being corrupt and hatched a plot. In contrast, Shaykh Walī al-Dīn highlighted the good will of the Sultan: The Sultan (al-Ghawrī) gave an order to congregate all the beggars (the poor) of Cairo and he himself came to them and offered them a dinar.²⁵¹ Shuhāb al-Dīn denied the good will by noting that sometimes the Sultan refused to approach the poor. Shaykh Walī al-Dīn offers a more favorable reference to the Sultan by explaining that first the treasury of the Sultan must be used for the poor but the palace also needed some wealth. Then Walī al-Dīn stressed that the Sultan needed to cut down his expenditures. In addition, Walī al-Dīn reminded the poet of the days of the Sultan by asking, “don't you remember there were no diseases in Cairo and the city was free?” He also mentioned the fact that the Sultan did not outlaw alcohol and asked, “what do you want the Sultan to do? To pour alcohol and ban hashish?”²⁵²

When Shuhāb al-Dīn worried that the Ottomans were at the gate, Shaykh Walī al-Dīn answered: Do not worry, the Ottomans and the Circassians are all Muslims, and God will send Muslims to revive us.²⁵³ One of Qāḍī referred to al-Ghawrī as: Our lord of Islamic lands.²⁵⁴ Sultan al-Gawrī defined his regime as the most powerful Islamic rule.²⁵⁵

Sultan al-Ghawrī's greatness as a leader is best revealed in an episode in which his critics switched their position and chose his side. At first, Shaykh Walī al-Dīn, Zakī al-Dīn, and Ghars al-Dīn harshly criticized Sultan al-Ghawrī for his acts of oppression and injustice. However, after they witnessed al-Ghawrī's reforms and mercy for his subjects, all three changed their minds, and even defended him.

Shaykh Walī al-Dīn complained that Sultan al-Ghawrī did not listen to the people. He stressed that the people of Egypt would not accept the ways in which the Mamluks ruled and wondered how the Sultan dared collect this fortune through oppression and injustice. Zakī al-Dīn (tax collector) criticized the Sultan for going too far in imposing penalties and filling his treasury.²⁵⁶ In Ghars al-Dīn's (merchant) opinion, the Sultan gathered his fortunes by imposing fines (penalties) and heavy taxes. Zakī al-Dīn honestly confessed that they buy positions from the Sultan or through other means.²⁵⁷ In contrast to the previous negative image of the Sultan, Ghars al-Dīn makes a much more favorable reference to him. He emphasized that people should

not forget that the Sultan handed out fortunes to refugees, his generals, and friends, and gave plenty to his Mamluks. Moreover, he argued that the Sultan's good deeds were the root of the Umma's stability, and this was the reason why he plundered the people. Shaykh Walī al-Dīn glorified the Sultan as a generous-hearted and kind figure who was faithful to his word.²⁵⁸

Zakī al-Dīn defended the Sultan's honesty by noting that he was said to be heedless but in reality this was not so. Ghars al-Dīn said if the Sultan had heard that several regimes thwarted a plan to eliminate a Sultan, who is addicted to play and frivolity he would make efforts to rearrange his army and unify the hearts of the leaders, renewing the frontier area and preparing for potential attack.²⁵⁹ Walī al-Dīn pointed out that the Circassian Sultans were strange but they loved Arabic, Turkish, and Persian literature.²⁶⁰

In addition to Sultan al-Ghawrī, Salīm recalled Quṭuz and iconized him as the precursor of an Islamic Egyptian nationalist hero. According to Salīm, several historians revealed that Quṭuz was Maḥmūd Ibn Mamdūd and he was the son of the sister of Jalāl al-Dīn Shāh Khwārizm, who halted the Mongols.²⁶¹ More importantly, Quṭuz is described as calling his entourage the leaders of Muslims. Furthermore, Quṭuz's army was referred to as an Islamic or Egyptian army. During the war against the Mongols Quṭuz is rebirthed as a pious Islamic leader who shouted at 'Ayn Jālūt, "wā Islāmah" (Oh! Islam).²⁶²

Although Salīm acknowledged the rise of Arab nationalism in Egyptian society, he nevertheless privileged Islamic nationalism:

Under the Arab banner, followed by the Arabs' expedition, Egypt joined the Arab world and assimilated into it.

It is not a shameful thing that the nationalist spirit derived from such assimilation as long as Egypt viewed Islam as [a source of] generous justice, perfect equity and pure brotherhood, and recognized the Islamic regime's, public welfare, righteousness, noble endurance and love of everything good.²⁶³

In Salīm's analysis, the Mamluks partially contributed to the development of a nationalist spirit²⁶⁴; nevertheless, the Mamluk Sultans failed to yield sufficient power to the people, which prevented the crystallization of nationalism under their rule.

The Mamluks were only interested in internal politics and ignored the awakening power of the people.

They disregarded the masses, denied their skills and neglected their rights. Although the Mamluks built a great and powerful Muslim country, they did not seek to empower the people.

Notwithstanding, the Mamluks did both good and bad: They supported the nationalist spirit by denying it.²⁶⁵

Salīm also made efforts to wipe out the ‘warmonger’ image attached to the Mamluks. For example, the Mamluk wars against both the Crusaders and Mongols were regarded as inevitable wars of defense and honor. Thus, it is no wonder that Baybars appeared as a nationalist hero of an Egyptian as well as an Islamic army, and, by contrast, the Crusaders are defined as imperialist.

Egypt’s Mamluk era is one of warfare against two enemies: Tatars and Franks. Nevertheless, the war against the two enemies was not a preemptive war; thus, it is not proper to blame the Mamluks for that war since it was fought to defend Egypt and the sacred Muslim lands. Again, it was not a war of greed and desire.²⁶⁶ Baybars was the sultan of Egypt and led an Islamic army.²⁶⁷

It is obvious why Salīm depicted Sultan al-Ghawrī and Quṭuz as pious Muslim heroes. In Salīm’s view, the root of Sultan al-Ghawrī’s and Quṭuz’s success as political, as well as moral, leaders is none other than their religious piety. Thus, loyal to Islam, Salīm asserted that a new Egyptian nation-state must be built based on Islamic Egyptian nationalism rather than on other Egyptian nationalist ideologies.

In his article on the war against the Crusaders, another Islamist intellectual, Aḥmad Badawī, referred to the army composed of both Egyptians and Arabs as an Islamic army.²⁶⁸ He further rationalized the heavy taxes levied by the Mamluk Sultans as a necessary measure required to defeat the Mongols.²⁶⁹

So far, we have examined various types of Egyptian Islamic nationalist literatures and focused on their representations of the Mamluks and the Mamluk era. There are several points that must be made in this regard. First, Egyptian Islamic nationalism deployed diverse sites of memory, such as heroic moments, epic figures, historical buildings, and even Egyptian art. It iconized outstanding Mamluk leaders, Shajarat al-Dūr, Aybak, Baybars, Quṭuz, al-Ghawrī and Ṭūmānbāy—all of whom served as symbols of Egyptian Islamic nationalism—in order to construct a new imagined community based on Islamic values. In addition, the historical buildings constructed by Mamluk Sultans—mosques, madrasas, and Khaniqa—were immortalized as temples of Egyptian Islamic collective memory.

Second, influenced by the progress of Egyptian Arab nationalism, several Islamic nationalists polished their ideologies by blending Islamic nationalism with Arab nationalism.

*Representations of the Mamluks in Integral Egyptian Nationalist
Historical Literature*

Not all the supra-Egyptian nationalists after 1930 view an external reference, such as the Islamic or Arab communities, as their point of departure. There was also a nationalist ideology retaining a supra-Egyptian dimension, which kept Egypt as its central focus. Unlike other supra-Egyptian ideologies, integral Egyptian nationalism considered external dimensions tactical, strategic, and instrumental, rather than fundamental. Egypt remained its primary concern, while the external Egyptian identity and role were seen as necessary mechanisms to attain specifically Egyptian national purposes. However, integral Egyptian nationalism shared many of the supra-Egyptian elements with Egyptian Islamic and Egyptian Arab nationalism, which maintained an Egypt-centered core.²⁷⁰

The term “integral nationalism” was coined by Charles Maurras with reference to the variant of late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century European nationalist doctrine, which was distinguished by “the exclusive pursuit of national policies, the absolute maintenance of national integrity and the steady increase of national power.”²⁷¹ The general feature of integral nationalism is based on the absoluteness of the nation: “It is not justified by its followers in terms of service to a higher cause; the cult of the nation becomes an end in itself.”²⁷² Internally, integral nationalism tends to be illiberal and subordinates considerations of individual liberty to the demands of national hegemony and externally, which seeks expansionism and militarism, believing the inevitability of the use of power in international relations.²⁷³ If the aspiration of Egyptian Islamic nationalists was to reinterpret the Egyptian past from the Islamic perspective, that of the integral Egyptian nationalists was to redefine it among the Egyptians themselves and others, such as the Arabs and the Mamluks, by assimilating them into Egyptian-ness. For instance, unlike the territorialists, who tend to present the Arabs as foreign conquerors, the integralists opted for a symbiosis between Arabs/Muslims on the one hand and Egyptians on the other.

Embracing typical integral Egyptian nationalism, Ibrāhīm Jum‘a claimed that a historically deep blood connection was formed between Egyptians and Arabs—that they are the same Semitic people.²⁷⁴ Throughout Chap.

5, Jum‘a emphatically elaborated on the way Arabs assimilated into Egypt and the Egyptians.²⁷⁵ The Egypt-centered view continues to dominate Jum‘a’s narrative. Having resisted and halted the Mongols and Crusaders, Cairo replaced Baghdad as a center of Islamic civilization. Egypt triumphantly enjoyed elevated status as the center of the Islamic world.²⁷⁶ A nationalist feature of great importance that should be raised is Jum‘a’s newfound theory that Egyptian nationalism crystallized during the Mamluk Sultanate era:

During this period, nationalism (*qawmiyya*), thought and the arts were seen to mature as a result of the peaceful times enjoyed by Egypt under Mamluk rule.²⁷⁷

Like Jum‘a, Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan regarded integral Egyptian nationalism as a path to creating a new Egyptian identity to form a new Egyptian state by the Egyptian assimilation of the Arabs. However, differing slightly from Jum‘a, Ḥasan views the phenomenon of assimilation between Egyptians and Arabs in a more concrete manner, meaning the total, rather than superficial, integration of Arabs and Egyptians. Ḥasan believed that the Egyptians fully integrated the Arabs by changing their nature, language, culture, and religion.²⁷⁸ Quite interestingly, both the integralist historians, Jum‘a and Ḥasan, vaguely alluded to the Mamluk Sultans as Egyptian rulers without explicitly identifying the Mamluk Sultans with Egyptian Sultans.

Like the latter two historians, Ḥasan Ḥabashī exposed himself as an integralist nationalist by hinting at a preference for an Arab-Egyptian unity instead of a simple replication of the territorial nationalist creed of Arab assimilation:

Arabs have assimilated into Egyptians since seventh century Egypt was actually an Egyptian-Arab unity. It was not officially proclaimed as such, but it emerges that the two naturally cooperated with each other.²⁷⁹

Ḥabashī adduced one more indication of unity between Arabs and Egyptians. This is that the unity of spirit between the Arabs and the Egyptians was discernable in the way the Arabs participated in the struggle against the French military campaign.²⁸⁰ More often than not, Ḥabashī used the term Egyptian army instead of Mamluk army, which implies that he integrated the Mamluks with the Egyptians. Despite his emphasis on the symbiosis between Egyptians and Arabs, Ḥabashī maintained the

Egyptian leadership of the Arab-Islamic world:

The Egyptian army halted the Mongol attack at ‘Ayn Jālūt and allowed the Islamic Arab dynasty to survive. It was Egypt’s destiny to defend Islamic Arab countries during the Middle Ages, without fear of the West.²⁸¹ If the Egyptian army had not stopped Louis IX, Egypt and the Arab East would have been annexed to the French King’s territory. A nationalist spirit (*Ruh al-Qawmiyya*) emerged following this event...

The Egyptian army has been able to protect Egypt and Palestine, as well as the rest of the Arab world, from the threat of European attack since the seventh century.²⁸²

Aḥmad Ḥusayn was a radical Egyptian nationalist intellectual committed to integral Egyptian nationalism. Ḥusayn was convinced that Mamluk achievements derived from the power of the Egyptian environment rather than from Muslim or Turkish sources. It was the vitality of the Egyptian national personality, firmly anchored in the sureties of the Nile Valley and expressing Egypt’s eternal aspiration for liberty and independence, that defeated the Mongols and ushered in an era of Egyptian preeminence in the region and the Umma.²⁸³ Although he did not refer to the Mamluks, Ḥusayn hinted that during the Mamluk epoch Egypt was esteemed throughout the world.

Since the Ṭūlūnid era, Egypt was independent country with its own sovereignty and characteristics. In the subsequent Fāṭimid era Egypt became not only a glorious (famous) country but also emerged as global leader in the Middle Ages. Egyptian empire returned to expanding its territory to the East, West and South and spread its influence in Islamic Empire entirely, which colored science, arts, civilization and everything in Egypt and influenced in world completely.²⁸⁴

Representations of the Mamluks in Egyptian Arab Nationalist Historical Literature

The third Egyptian nationalist ideology, developed in the 1930s and 1940s, is the Egyptian Arab nationalism that regarded the Arab-ness of Egypt as the heart of the matter and rejected exclusive territorial nationalism. Instead, Egyptian Arab nationalist ideology postulated Egyptian identification with a larger entity—in this case, the Arab nation—and to some extent partly overlapped Islamic nationalism, which accepts

the Arab-ness of Egypt as part of Egypt's Muslim identity, as well as overlapping integral nationalism, which views the Arab world as the most immediate arena of Egyptian leadership and greatness.²⁸⁵ However, Egyptian Arab nationalism had its own unique character that distinguished it from its rivals. The most significant difference was in its breadth. The Arabist outlook was less parochial than Islamic nationalism, which, because of its religious focus, did not appeal to non-Muslims or secularists. It was also less solipsistic than integral nationalism, whose aggressive nature alienated many Egyptians. Belief in Egypt as part of the Arab nation possessed greater scope for attraction than either the Islamic or the integralist approach.²⁸⁶ In terms of production, a great number of intellectuals took part in Egyptian Arab nationalist ideology; in terms of reception, it eventually succeeded in appealing to a wider range of Egyptian public opinion. Its content incorporated elements of both Islamism and integralism, as well as earlier territorialism; however, it was revised to suit its particularly Arab perspective. As a result of its synthetic nature, Egyptian Arab nationalism became the most popular supra-Egyptian ideology of the era.²⁸⁷

Based on those tenets of Egyptian Arab nationalism, Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr upgraded Egypt as an Arab country for all Arab nations beyond being a parochial Egyptian country for Egyptians only.

The spirit of nationalism [*Ruḥ al-Qawmiyya*] emerged among local Arabs, many of whom viewed Egypt as an Arab country in terms of its religion and language. Thus, it was reasonable for them to accept an autonomous Arab king [of Egypt] as ruler.²⁸⁸

Just like other nationalist intellectuals, Surūr glorified Baybars as a national hero. He is embodied as a pious hero who worked toward a revival of the Islamic empire²⁸⁹ and struggled against the Mongols and the Crusaders.²⁹⁰ However, what distinguishes Surūr most from the territorialists and the integralists is his reshaping of Baybars as Sultan of the Arabs.²⁹¹

Similarly, another Egyptian Arab nationalist, Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, designated Sultan Nāṣir Ibn Qalāwūn as Sultan of all Arabs, 'Ajam (non-Muslims), and Turks.²⁹²

Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan probably manifested the Arab-ness of Egypt in the most intensive manner. Ḥasan preferred the Egyptian Arab-ness and Islamic Egypt to Pharaonic Egypt,²⁹³ and combined Islamic Egyptian nationalism with Egyptian Arab nationalism as shown below:

The Islamic mark still existed in Egypt. Egypt became the center of political, cultural and religious development in the Islamic world.²⁹⁴

Ḥasan explains two processes of the Arab integration with the Egyptians. Following the Arab occupation of Egypt, the relationship between the two nations was renewed by the interaction between Arabization (*taʿrīb*) and Egyptianization (*tamṣīr*). Through this fusion process, Egypt continued to be the central Arab country²⁹⁵ and the spiritual hub of the Arab Kingdom.²⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Ḥasan viewed the eras of the Ṭūlūnids, Ikhshidis, Fāṭimids, Ayyūbids, and Mamluks as marked by political dissolution and cultural decline for the Islamic community.²⁹⁷

Anwar Zaqlama's endorsement of Egyptian Arab nationalism clearly advocated the placing of Egypt at the center of a wider Arab and Islamic arena:

Egypt was the heart of the Arab East and a source of civilization and art in the Islamic world. Arabic art developed significantly through the flourishing of art in Egypt. Egypt was in the forefront of the Arab kingdoms.²⁹⁸

Concerning Egypt's central position in the world, Zaqlama emphasized that Sultans Baybars and Qalāwūn were pro-Western leaders who had maintained friendly relations with Europe:

Sultan Baybars and Qalāwūn made a pact with the Europeans (e.g. France and England) against the Mongols.

Under the rule of Sultan Nāṣir Ibn Qalāwūn, Egypt won renown for military and diplomatic power and influence.

Throughout the Mamluk era, Egypt was not isolated from world.²⁹⁹

Zaqlama's greatest compliment to the Mamluks was to present their era as the essence of Arab history and as the source of important Arab traditions:

The Mamluk era is the most important period in the history of the prestigious Arab tradition. It can be said that Mamluk art is the most splendid Arab tradition.³⁰⁰

In his description of the Mamluks in contradictory terms, Aḥmad Fakrī may have provided more realistic depictions. Fakrī asserted that "on the one hand the Mamluks held an arbitrary tyranny, brutal and wicked, but on the other hand they were humane, merciful and obedient to God."³⁰¹

Paradoxically, Fakrī viewed the Mamluk greed as the source of Egypt's greatness in the world and as the key to the country's prominence among Muslims.³⁰² He believed that, thanks to such brilliant achievements, the Sultan gained many titles (e.g., the Greatest Sultan, Sultan of Islam and Muslims and Sultan of Arabs, non-Arabs and Turks, Conqueror of Lands, Victor of Kings).³⁰³

Fakrī's critical views of the Mamluks are similar to those raised by others. The Mamluks were disposed toward evil, bore hatred, and hatched plots. Their regime was marked by chaos, anarchy, and internal struggle for power.³⁰⁴ Concerning the Mamluks' origins, Fakrī accepted the prevailing theory that they were descended from Kipchak slaves.³⁰⁵

In contrast to the explicit mention of the Mamluks, several nationalists chose to ignore or forget them and instead referred to the Mamluk era simply as an Islamic or Arab period. In his discussion of the Mamluk era, Yūsuf Haykal spoke of Islamic Arab nationalism³⁰⁶ or Arab nationalism.³⁰⁷ In the meantime, Zakī Mubārak offered the Mamluk era as evidence of integral nationalism, but did so without mentioning the Mamluks explicitly.³⁰⁸

MAMLUKS UNDER THE OTTOMAN PERIOD (1517–1811)

Representations of the Mamluks in Ottomanist and Monarchist Historical Literature

Similar to the 'Abdīn Project, most historical works in this chapter dealing with the Ottoman era cover the years 1760–1820. As a primary designer of monarchist historiography, the 'Abdīn Project started in 1920 as a modest library project that developed into an archival enterprise. Selected documents were published to serve as source material for independent research in the framework of the emerging academe, among others. Since monarchist historiography was primarily designed to rewrite Egyptian history from the perspective of Muḥammad 'Alī and his descendants, it is highly likely that the binary glorification of Muḥammad 'Alī on the one hand, and the delegitimization of the Mamluk Beys on the other, would dominate monarchist literature. In a similar vein, the primary purpose of Ottoman historians was to reshape Egypt's recent past from an Ottoman perspective. On this basis, it is not difficult to assume their antipathy toward the Mamluks, who were the primary political rivals of the Ottomans.

By and large, unfavorable remarks concerning the Mamluks in Ottomanist and monarchist historical literatures converge on two aspects: the internal struggle of the Mamluk Beys and the mismanagement of political and economic affairs.

A monarchist historian, ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ḥilmī al-Miṣrī, criticizes the Mamluks for two evildoings: Mamluk tyranny and the internal struggle among the Mamluk Beys:

Over the centuries, Egypt was ruled by many foreigners...The Mamluks tyrannized it and destroyed what was built for its glory. I read about them in the pages of novels written in blood and I am close to tears.³⁰⁹

During the numerous Mamluk regimes, including, al-Alfī, Bardīsī, Jahin Bey etc. Brother desired to assassinate brother and all were eager to kill Wali. The Sublime Porte wanted to kill them all. In this era, the Egyptian people were oppressed, men were massacred in times of peace. They [the Mamluk Beys] were divided into many factions that fought each other. The Ottoman army would have destroyed the Mamluks if Napoleon had not invaded Egypt.³¹⁰

However, in contrast to the demonization of the Mamluks, the army of Ṭūsūn (son of Muḥammad ‘Alī) is regarded as the army of Egypt³¹¹

Amateur monarchist historian Prince ‘Umar Ṭūsūn remarked that the Mamluks were disloyal³¹² and addicted to power:

From generation to generation, the Mamluks were trained in military skills and were master swordsmen. Some became leaders, but envied European training; none of them wanted to feel inferior to other troops. Eventually, however, they stopped training and teaching and neglected studying, with the result that their interest in military skills decreased. They became angry about being overlooked and about the absence of promotion. Some began to rebel and later plotted against all...In this way they complicated the reorganization of the Egyptian army.³¹³

Unflattering images of the Mamluks are also mirrored in Ottomanist Jūrjī Zaydān’s narrative that degrades the Mamluks as corrupted and treacherous.³¹⁴ The Mamluk era is regarded as an epoch of oppression and tyranny,³¹⁵ which resulted from the internal struggle for power between Bardīsī and Alfī³¹⁶ that completely ruined Egyptian politics. Zaydān clearly demonstrated his pro-Ottoman attitude in describing the Mamluk resistance to the Ottomans as the Mamluk rebellion against the Sultans’ authority.³¹⁷

In contrast to the demonization of the Mamluk Beys, monarchist narratives are marked by an admiration for and glorification of Muḥammad ‘Alī. A prominent monarchist historian, Karīm Thābit, presented the strongest glorification of Muḥammad ‘Alī in the biography he wrote about him, which may be the most comprehensive attempt to fuse monarchist historiography, academic research, and popular writing in favor of the monarchy. Thābit was the first monarchy media consultant in modern Egypt and editor-in-chief of the pro-British daily *al-Muqattam*.³¹⁸ In the preface to his book Thābit stated “All I have done is to read what the Geographical Society published [i.e., the monarchy project] and to use what I felt to be indispensable for us to know about Muḥammad ‘Alī.”³¹⁹ Thābit tells his story in his own fascinatingly unique and creative style, which is to narrate Muḥammad ‘Alī’s life from “childhood to adulthood,” metaphysically hinting at the same trajectory as if undergone by the Egyptian nation as a whole, under the Pasha’s full command. In doing so, each chapter has a decoration quoting that he either found, paraphrased, created.”³²⁰ For instance, Thābit quoted Muḥammad ‘Alī as remarking, “I took Egypt by the sword, and I am not going to give it away in any way but by the sword.”³²¹ In the same manner, as if he was actually present, Thābit portrays Muḥammad ‘Alī as an authentic, courageous, and clever reformer.

Muḥammad ‘Alī declared that he would regenerate the country and predicted that a long period of growth would follow. At the time, he was 107 years old.³²² Muḥammad ‘Alī’s courage and cleverness were amazing.³²³ The Mamluks attempted reconciliation with the Sublime Porte in order to take power in Egypt. Muḥammad ‘Alī did not fear the Mamluks and was determined to get rid of them.³²⁴

Thābit’s portrayal of Muḥammad ‘Alī contains a nationalist theme that is most interesting: he gives two nationalistic interpretations of the Egyptians’ inauguration of Muḥammad ‘Alī as Wali—a title that can be interpreted as local governor or protector—which was the beginning of a new era in Egypt.³²⁵ Likewise, Muḥammad ‘Alī’s purging of the Mamluks is justified on the nationalist grounds of neutralizing their alliance with the English.³²⁶ It is very important to examine the Mamluk expulsion by Muḥammad ‘Alī as it sheds light on the ways in which Ottoman and monarchist intellectuals treated Muḥammad ‘Alī in comparison to the attitude they expressed toward the Mamluk Beys.

Meanwhile, Thābit took the Mamluk massacre as a crucial key to Muḥammad ‘Alī’s legitimacy and invested elaborate efforts to rationalize his justification. Overall, Thābit intriguingly contends that Muḥammad ‘Alī had no choice but to eliminate the Mamluks in building the new Egypt, since they rejected diplomatic solutions.

Muḥammad ‘Alī planned to reconstruct the army, and to this end he collected money for arms and weapons. It may be said that Muḥammad ‘Alī began to base the new Egypt on reforms.³²⁷ As a matter of fact, Muḥammad ‘Alī had two options. First, he wanted the Mamluks to leave freely, since he did not believe in their wrongdoing and suggested the peaceful way, which he preferred. But, just in case, he hatched a plot.³²⁸ After the Mamluks turned down his resolution to demolish the pillars of his government, there was only one way for Muḥammad ‘Alī to eliminate the Mamluks for the sake of his country’s security.³²⁹

Thābit goes so far as to accuse Western historians of misrepresenting the massacre and disregarding its authentic significance:

However, surprisingly embracing the betrayal of the Mamluks, some Western historians described Muḥammad ‘Alī’s measures against the Mamluks as a sad chapter in the history of Egypt.³³⁰ Even twentieth century European historians did not take seriously the fact that Muḥammad ‘Alī intended to secure the country by eliminating the Mamluks.³³¹

In a similar vein, monarchist historian ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ḥilmī al-Miṣrī places the advent of Muḥammad ‘Alī within the realm of Allah and His destination. In his view, after Napoleon and the Ottomans failed to eliminate the Mamluks, Allah sent the great Muḥammad ‘Alī.³³²

Even a pro-Ottoman nationalist historian, Muḥammad Farīd, legitimized the massacre by treating it as an inevitable measure to save the country from the Mamluks’ wrongdoing.³³³

The case of ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, who is regarded as probably the most prominent Mamluk figure in the Ottoman era, is a crucial key in clarifying how the Mamluks are treated by the Ottomanist and monarchist historians. To be sure, Ottomanist historian Muḥammad Farīd had little interest in glorifying ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, whom he viewed as a villain who rebelled against the Ottomans.

‘Alī Bey, Shaykh al-Balad gained almost independent status for Egypt under the Ottomans through his contact with Russia, which wanted an internecine war in the Ottoman Empire.³³⁴ Muḥammad Abū Dhahab revolted against him.³³⁵

By contrast, another pro-Ottoman nationalist, Jūrjī Zaydān, clearly differed from other historians regarding ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr in the context of the nationalist atmosphere that was developing in Egypt at the time. At a critical juncture of this development, Zaydān vividly perceived the emergence of a new Egyptian entity and found it difficult to ignore such a compelling wave of nationalist fervor and discourse. Zaydān’s choice was to infuse the Egyptian nationalist aspect into his narrative, which created a somewhat contradictory image of ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr. On the one hand, influenced by his nationalist concept, Zaydān praised ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr as an independent Egyptian ruler and identified him with the Mamluk Sultanate, while comparing ‘Alī Bey’s Egypt with medieval Egyptian dynasties. On the other hand, he denounced ‘Alī Bey for his links to imperialist countries such as Russia and Italy. Given that, in Zaydān’s day, Russia was an enemy of the Ottoman Empire, it was reasonable that he should censure ‘Alī Bey:

Although ‘Alī Bey had revived the independence of Egypt, such as it was in the Ṭūlūnid, Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid, Mamluk and other periods, he made alliances with Italy and Russia.³³⁶
 ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr was betrayed by Muḥammad Bey Abū Dhahab, who made a pact with Ottomans.³³⁷

Zaydān even justifies Abu Dhahab’s treachery:

On hearing that ‘Alī Bey had betrayed *Umma* and *Watan* – nation and homeland – and had forsaken the blood of Islam by allying with Russia and others of the Christian world. Abū Dhahab gathered the elders of the country and other men. Abū Dhahab exploited them to revolt against ‘Alī Bey.³³⁸

Ambiguously, ‘Alī Aḥmad Shukrī remarked that ‘Alī Bey emulated the ruling system of the Ottoman Empire, which, however, ended with his death.³³⁹

As shown above, both the Ottomanist and monarchist historians evinced binary attitudes toward two major historical subjects of the time: the glorification of Muḥammad ‘Alī and the demonization of the Mamluks, except

‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr. Both the monarchist and Ottoman historians re-conceptualized ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr for their own purposes. Even among the same Ottomanist intellectuals, a certain difference is found regarding ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr. Zaydān used Alī Bey al-Kabīr as historical evidence of Egypt’s independence from the Ottomans whereas Farīd viewed him as no more than a traitor.

*Representations of the Mamluks in Academic Historians’
Literature*

The academic historians aimed at Egyptianizing history by means of two procedures: reclaiming the writing of history from the European historians, and writing Egyptian history by the *tamsīr* process. Consequently, they failed to differentiate themselves significantly from monarchist literature, which is why many common features are to be seen in both monarchist and academic literatures. Thus, the fundamental creed of monarchist historians, particularly the “founder paradigm,” is also the main historical point of departure of academic historians. For instance, Ghurbāl, either unconsciously or implicitly, maintained the founder paradigm in his historical literature. This is well manifested in his glorification of Muḥammad ‘Alī and other historical figures, such as Baybars and Bonaparte.³⁴⁰ Depicted as having extraordinary powers, it is alluded to that Muḥammad ‘Alī understood the secret of moves that enabled him to change everything³⁴¹ and by which he revived industry, politics, and economics.³⁴² One more interesting point is that Ghurbāl redefined Muḥammad ‘Alī as an Ottoman, rather than an Egyptian, ruler:

Muḥammad ‘Alī began, lived and ended as a Muslim Ottoman; among others, his primary goal was to revive the Ottoman power in a new form. He is equal to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in light of his attempt to revitalize the “Land of Islam” (Dāral-Islām) both in the region and in the world. He reestablished Ottoman power.³⁴³

In sharp contrast in his book, published in 1928, Ghurbāl presented Muḥammad ‘Alī as merely an Albanian foreigner who laid violent hands on property.³⁴⁴ Two important questions arise from this contradictory portrayal of Muḥammad ‘Alī: Why did Ghurbāl change his attitude toward Muḥammad ‘Alī from negative to positive? And what motivated his pro-Ottoman remarks? These will be addressed below.

Another academic historian, al-Bās al-Ayyūbī, succeeded in sanctifying Muḥammad ‘Alī as a noble man, by mystifying his birth:

Muḥammad ‘Alī was born into a most exalted family. It is not generally known when and where he born; only one noble family has claimed that he was born in 1769.³⁴⁵

Significantly, the preface to al-Ayyūbī’s book hints that contemporary Egyptian intellectuals perceive Muḥammad ‘Alī in a positive light:

Muḥammad ‘Alī renewed the glorious pride of the Nile River and inspired a new spirit in Egypt; it was the first revival that awakened the Arab East after long sleep. Thus, we (the al-Hilāl administration) asked al-Ayyūbī to collect such messages and write the middle volume of the biography [of] Muḥammad ‘Alī.³⁴⁶

In contrast to the glorification of Muḥammad ‘Alī, most Mamluks under Ottoman rule are presented as the target of criticism, except for the positive role of the Mamluk Beys who acted as mediators between the Pasha and Ottoman subjects and in protecting the Ottomans against others.³⁴⁷ Ghurbāl began his remarks on the Mamluks by comparing two periods between the Mamluk Sultanates and Ottoman Mamluks. Egypt in the era of Baybars differs from the years of Murād and Ibrāhīm only as far as France under the monarchy differs from France in the era of the Revolution and Bonaparte.³⁴⁸ The internal struggle among the Mamluk leaders is Ghurbāl’s main accusation against the Mamluks:

Mamluks and their fellow-plunderers (the Bedouin) perpetrated on their part similar horrors. They moved in Upper Egypt under four chiefs: Ibrahim, the “doyen” of the Corps, but now so enfeebled in body and mind that the “most inferior” Mamluks could disobey him with impunity. Bardisi, the whose character was formed by vanity and arrogant ignorance, Elfi, the “bête noire” of his colleagues-an energetic barbarian, not entirely unattractive, and Osman Hassan, the keeper of the best of the traditions of the race. It was Bardisi and Elfi who counted, for all practical purposes.³⁴⁹

Further, the Mamluks are derided as barbaric and greedy rulers:

The grinding tyranny went on unchecked. The young Circassian slave once he set foot on the soil of Egypt saw a career opening before his eyes and felt

destined to become a lord. He calculated the need his master had of him and demanded his price. In a society whose premium mobile was gold, the Bey's first care was to satisfy the rapacity of his slaves.³⁵⁰

Strangers among themselves, they were not bound by the natural ties of family. Ignorant and superstitious by training, the frequent murders rendered them ferocious, the tumults seditious, the cabals perfidious, the dissimulation cowardly and the unnatural vices corrupt. A happy stroke of the sabre won the Mamluk pre-eminence. But the upstart did not change character; in a lordly station he had the soul of a slave. Power had no other goal than procuring women, horses, jewels and retainers. Gold was to be had whenever found. The poor peasant was as much pillaged as the "Frank" or Levantine merchant.³⁵¹

Given all this oppression and tyranny, it is no wonder that the Egyptians are depicted as the helpless and abject victims of those tyrannical Mamluks.³⁵²

Another academic historian, Muḥammad Rif'at Ramaḍān, clearly differentiates between the Mamluk Beys and Mamluk Sultanates and views the internal struggle as inherited from the Circassian Sultanate era:

The thirteenth century Mamluk dynasty rose and the Mamluk tradition continued till nineteenth century. However, there was no royal heritage and they remained faithful to their lord.³⁵³

With the fear, violence and internecine strife, the Sultans of the second Mamluk dynasty struggled bitterly for power.³⁵⁴

Likewise, the Mamluks of the Ottoman era struggled among themselves for influence and the rank of Bey.³⁵⁵

Quoting al-Jabartī, Ramaḍān thoroughly delineated the rivalry between Faqariya and Qasimiya³⁵⁶ and, later, between Qazdaghuli and Ibrāhīmiya.³⁵⁷ In his demonization of the Mamluks as well as the French, al-Ayyūbī described the French army as wolves and the Mamluk Beys as foreigners:

The Mamluks fought each other to the death and destroyed the country, the treasury and the government.³⁵⁸ Facing attack by the French, the Mamluks escaped and took cover in Syria.³⁵⁹ Bardīṣī asked one Shaykh "What caused this internal split (*fitna*)?" He answered "The wolf will ravish the foreigners (the Mamluks)" Bardīṣī knew that the local population (*Ahl al-Balad*) considered the Mamluks as foreigners. Destruction would follow.³⁶⁰

In al-Bās al-Ayyūbī's narrative, the English army, the Turkish army, and the Mamluk leaders are mainly blamed for engendering chaos in Egypt.³⁶¹ Even after the 1811 massacre of the Mamluks, they are portrayed as never changing their minds:

After the massacre, the remaining Mamluks asked Muḥammad 'Alī, to spare their lives and they were evacuated from the city to other places where they lived in humiliation, but even if they faced being killed, not one of them changed their mind.³⁶²

Citing Al-Jabartī's work "*Ajāib al-Ātbār fī Tarājim wa al-Akbbār*," a student of Ghurbāl, 'Alī al-Jirītī, accused the Mamluk Beys of destroying Egypt and of worsening socio-economic conditions.

Ibrāhīm Bey and Murād Bey and their followers destroyed the country by corruption.³⁶³ The Mamluks struggled with each other for domination.³⁶⁴ During the Mamluk period a new reform plan was introduced, but it did not succeed in raising the standard of living much above the bottom level, and as a result the economic chaos reached its peak.³⁶⁵

The episode of 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr indicates that Ghurbāl's historical point of view changed with time. Through this discussion, we attempt to resolve a puzzle mentioned earlier: why Ghurbāl switched his attitude to Muḥammad 'Alī from negative to positive. Adopting a more positive view of 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr in his book published in the 1920s, Ghurbāl glorified him as the precursor of Muḥammad 'Alī. Comparing 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr to Muḥammad 'Alī follows a pattern that most nationalist historians employed to reshape 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr as a nationalist hero.

The tribute [of Beys] was not regularly paid and efforts were made to declare Egypt independent, notably that of 'Alī Bey, the ally of Catherine II and the precursor of Mehemet Ali.³⁶⁶

Surprisingly, in the book Ghurbāl published in the 1940s, Alī Bey al-Kabīr (who succeeded in establishing Egypt's independence from the Ottoman Empire) is derided as a traitor. Muḥammad Abū Dhahab, who helped 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr, is depicted as an equally unfaithful ruler.³⁶⁷ One possible explanation for such a dramatic development may be that Ghurbāl's world-view gradually transformed from monarchist to Ottomanist. Additional strong support for this hypothesis is that, as shown above, Ghurbāl depicted Muḥammad 'Alī as an Ottoman ruler rather than an Egyptian one.

Nevertheless, it is truly hard to believe that, at a time when the development of various Egyptian nationalist concepts was at its height, Ghurbāl, the founder and doyen of the academic school, switched his historical thinking to Ottomanism. To solve the puzzle, two contexts related to Ghurbāl's book *Muḥammad 'Alī al-Kabīr* (1944) should be raised here. First, Yoav Di-Capua hinted that it was published abridged in the popular series *A'lām al-Islām*. The publisher, greatly affected by the Islamic reorientation of Egyptian society since the 1930s, popularized Muslim figures of great importance, such as Muḥammad 'Abduh, the philosopher al-Farābī, and the poet Abū Nuwwās.³⁶⁸ Thus, Ghurbāl's book is full of Islamic elements and rhetoric, and Muḥammad 'Alī, in particular, is also portrayed as a pious Ottoman Islamic ruler.

The other context is related to Ghurbāl's uncomfortable experience in political life. Ghurbāl's firm resistance to universal education resulted in his automatic removal from the Ministry of Education each time the Wafd came to power (1942–45 and 1950–52), and most decisively in 1942, when Prime Minister Muṣṭafā al-Naḥḥās was searching for a new residence in Cairo. His intensive search yielded a schoolhouse, and he ordered it to be evacuated for his convenience. Ghurbāl refused to comply with the order, and al-Naḥḥās sent him back to academia.³⁶⁹ This particular episode might have pushed Ghurbāl to seek closer cooperation with the Palace.

From the above, two reasonable assumptions can be drawn. First, in light of the rocky relationship with the Wafd, it is far more logical to assume that Ghurbāl intended to get closer to the Palace and King Fārūq by glorifying Muḥammad 'Alī as an independent ruler rather than praising the collapsed Ottoman Empire. Ghurbāl's subsequent political move supports this assumption. Fārūq was delighted, and on the publication of the first edition, he held an official reception in honor of Ghurbāl. The conferral of the title "Bey" was part of this honoring.³⁷⁰ Consequently, Ghurbāl's personal reconciliation with the Palace gave rise to the establishment of the Royal Historical Society (*al-Jam'iyyat al-Malakiyya li-al-Dirāsāt al-Ta'rikhiyya*), the first historical association in the Arab world. It was renamed the Egyptian Historical Society in 1952.³⁷¹

The other assumption, implied in the first assumption, is that Ghurbāl tactically reshaped Muḥammad 'Alī as the Ottoman leader and made some favorable remarks on the Ottoman Empire to popularize his book; nevertheless, whether he truly switched to Ottomanism is open to debate. Decisive evidence for this argument based on nationalist texts that referred to Muḥammad 'Alī gives more weight to the likelihood of a tactical

switch to Ottomanism. Although Ghurbāl once referred to ‘Muḥammad ‘Alī as the Ottoman ruler, he repeatedly emphasized Muḥammad ‘Alī’s “Egyptian-ness”:

Muḥammad ‘Alī left his first homeland [Albania] and emerged in Egypt as a hero in heroic times.³⁷²

Muḥammad ‘Alī was also rejected for being a marauding mercenary in the Ottoman world, which tarnished his reputation for independence, reform, and nationalist fervor.³⁷³

Moreover, it should be noted that, regardless of any ideological swing, Ghurbāl never abandoned his nationalist sentiment, which occupies a central place in his profession as a historian. Thus, in addition to Muḥammad ‘Alī, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr and the Mamluk Sultans are recorded as national heroes in Ghurbāl’s writings in the 1920s and 1940s. In one sense, Ghurbāl’s affection for the Ottomans was even an expression of his grief over the lamentable condition of Egypt and stemmed from his nationalist feeling. That is to say, in the chaotic political crisis of his time, Ghurbāl might have felt nostalgia for the stable days of the Ottoman Empire.

Muḥammad Rif‘at Ramaḍān, another student of Ghurbāl, probably presented ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr in the most glorified manner:

In 1768 ‘Alī Bey became Shaykh al-Balad of Egypt. He became absolute Sultan and his reputation even reached Europe.³⁷⁴

‘Alī Bey had a liberal point of view.³⁷⁵ In his wisdom and tenacity, this outstanding man did not destroy prosperity, culture and broadmindedness; The world was amazed by his greatness and the spirit of tolerance manifested in the Egyptian mind that had been silenced for such a long time.³⁷⁶ ‘Alī Bey worked day and night to establish a new government.³⁷⁷

Quoting Jabartī’s book, Ramaḍān went so far as to compare ‘Alī Bey to Sultan Baybars and Qalāwūn,³⁷⁸ and even identified him with Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha³⁷⁹:

Some historians called ‘Alī Bey Sultan of Egypt and Khan of Seas, Sharif of Mecca.³⁸⁰ But we do not find any one who called him a righteous Sultan or said ‘Alī Bey would be independent for good. And he (‘Alī Bey) himself never used this term.³⁸¹

‘Alī Bey focused on Egypt’s military arts, especially blockades, heavy artillery and navy warfare.³⁸² Reorganizing trade in Egypt, he opened the world

to his people.³⁸³ ‘Alī Bey was a man of great mind and heart. In the chaotic times, Egypt needed a man like him. He restored what the Ottoman Pasha had shattered and subdued the chaos.³⁸⁴

To recreate ‘Alī Bey as a nationalistic figure, Ramaḍān provides a new interpretation, saying that, from the beginning, ‘Alī Bey’s goal was to build an independent Egypt:

The goal of ‘Alī Bey’s independent movement was not to exploit the fact that the Ottoman Empire was at war with Russia. Rather it was to establish an independent Egypt with the revival of absolute Mamluk power.³⁸⁵

Up to this point, Ramaḍān’s narrative does not make any difference, but further on he takes us in a different direction. What makes Ramaḍān different from the rest of the historians is that he criticized ‘Alī Bey for making crucial mistakes. ‘Alī Bey is accused of failing to crystallize the nationalistic concept, of trusting the power of people and politics, and depending too much on Islamic thinking.

In fact, if ‘Alī Bey had urged the populace to take part in the revolt, his status would have been enhanced, because at the time, the Egyptian people did nothing but plunder in various ways. All this came about because there was no crystallization of nationalist thought (*Fikra al-Qawmiyya*) or emphasis on the clear meaning of patriotism (*waṭaniyya*).³⁸⁶

It is agreed that ‘Alī Bey had no nationalistic goal except insofar as it served his own interests. The most important result was that competent people ignored their own rationality and were more interested in religion (Islam) than in politics, so that the Ṣūfī trend was strengthened. In the end, ‘Alī Bey was satisfied with Islamic national thought without defining the national entity.³⁸⁷

From this, we can assume that this is why ‘Alī Bey was on friendly terms with ‘Ulamā’ such as al-Halbāwī and al-Damhūrī, with Ṣūfī Shaykh and others who had political skills. ‘Alī Bey intended to win not only the loyalty of people, but also their satisfaction through his power and ability to influence them. ‘Alī Bey succeeded in achieving such goals, but individuals repressed their anger about their suffering.³⁸⁸

It would seem that by accusing ‘Alī Bey of placing too much emphasis on Islam, Ramaḍān might have proposed integral Egyptian nationalism or Egyptian Arab nationalism as an alternative to Islamic Egyptian nationalism.

In addition to failing to consolidate the nationalist idea, ‘Alī Bey’s foreign policy is criticized for his alliance with Russia. With his thoughtful insight, Ramaḍān judged that ‘Alī Bey’s alliance with Russia was a wrong decision, whereupon Abū Dhahab betrayed him.

‘Alī Bey’s alliance with Russia, which deviated from the way of Islam, together with the war between Russia and the Ottoman, caused Abū Dhahab to change his mind.³⁸⁹ Some historians explained that his personal ambition to be a Sultan led Abū Dhahab to revolt against ‘Alī Bey.³⁹⁰ Other historians say the Sublime Porte secretly contacted Abū Dhahab and reached an understanding with him regarding ‘Alī Bey.³⁹¹

The question that arises here concerns the motive behind this criticism of ‘Alī Bey’s understanding with Russia. Given the fact that one of the main goals of both academic and monarchist historians is de-Ottomanization, it is hard to believe that Ramaḍān intended to flatter the Ottomans. Rather, it is reasonable to assume that Ramaḍān’s argument was that it was inappropriate for the emerging independent Egyptian community to ally with an imperial country like Russia.

In order to glorify Muḥammad ‘Alī as a nationalist hero, many academic historians even justified the Mamluk massacre of 1811. Ghurbāl rationalizes the massacre, noting that all possible diplomatic options with the Mamluks ended in failure:

The Mamluks presented a more serious problem. All efforts at a pacific accommodation between them and Muḥammad ‘Alī proved of no avail. They [Mamluks] could not dispossess the Pasha and he could obtain no decisive victory over them. The result was treachery and the massacre of the major part of them in March 1811.³⁹²

In contrast to the negative image of the Mamluk Beys, Ghurbāl presents the Egyptians in a positive light. Ghurbāl first described the Egyptians as loyal subjects of the Ottomans by arguing that they did not take part in the revolt of ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr against the Ottomans.³⁹³ The Egyptians are also depicted as heroes who stood against the French and English and halted them.³⁹⁴ Another sign of Ghurbāl’s nationalist point of view is that he attributed historical developments not only to Muḥammad ‘Alī but also to the Egyptians:

Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha could not achieve all this, nor was he alone in requesting it. Rather, the Egyptians themselves were drawn to the whole project and desired to see their sons and helpers in the great structures.³⁹⁵

To sum up, facing the strong challenge posed by the overwhelming wave of Egyptian nationalist thought, academic historians had few options other than to respond as best they could. It seems that the only way for them to meet the expectations and fervor of the Egyptian public was to combine the tenets of academic historiography and nationalist sentiment, thereby fulfilling their commitment as citizens of the newly emerging Egyptian nation-state.

Representations of the Mamluks in Nationalist Historical Literature

As far as nationalist historians are concerned, the Mamluks under the Ottoman era are less attractive than those in the era of the Mamluk Sultanate. It is likely that they perceived the Ottoman era as a dark page of Egyptian history and best forgotten. Nationalist historians support this assumption by invalidating the Mamluk Beys, portraying them as tyrants and oppressors in accordance with the two earlier schools of historians.

Before embarking on a critical examination of nationalist historians, a brief review of ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Rāfi‘ī is relevant. Considered to be a major Egyptian nationalist historian, al-Rāfi‘ī was an independent historian whose only formal education was in the field of law. Like many young, enthusiastic Egyptian nationalists at the beginning of the twentieth century, he thought that the law was a vocation needed for reshaping the national reality in Egypt. However, al-Rāfi‘ī, an energetic man, did not limit his activity to any particular field. Not only was he a freelance journalist but also a lawyer engaging in political activity on behalf of the National Party (*al-Ḥizb al-Waṭani*). Nonetheless, from the mid-1920s he devoted most of his time and energy to the writing of sixteen detailed tomes, covering Egyptian history from 1798 to 1959.³⁹⁶ If Ghurbāl is regarded today as the “founder of modern professional scholarship,” and as advocating “scientific” standards of inquiry and “objectivity,” al-Rāfi‘ī, in contrast, is viewed as a politically affiliated and biased historian who delved profoundly, by all possible means, into rewriting history to invent the “nationalist collective memory.”³⁹⁷

By the early 1930s, al-Rāfi‘ī’s views had placed him not only in opposition to the monarchists, but also in opposition to Muḥammad Shafiq Ghurbāl, of Fu’ād University (later Egyptian University), who himself had something to address about this period. Ghurbāl was thirty-four years old when he finally published his authoritative book, *The Beginnings of*

*the Egyptian Question and the Rise of Mehmet Ali.*³⁹⁸ Ghurbāl was young, energetic, and about to commence his lifetime academic mission to “professionalize” historical writing. By contrast, al-Rāfi‘ī was already an authoritative popular historian in his own right at this point. It was then that their sharp differences emerged.³⁹⁹ Contrary to Ghurbāl’s historical viewpoint, al-Rāfi‘ī’s doctrine maintained that “Egypt and the Egyptians created Muḥammad ‘Alī.”

In spite of their individual professional backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, political orientations, or national affiliations, most of the nationalist historians we are about to encounter were in agreement with regard to Egypt’s Ottoman experience. Al-Rāfi‘ī was no exception. To his way of thinking, modern Egyptian history begins in 1798, the day Napoleon first stepped onto Egyptian soil. To the Ottomans, he devoted just one short and insignificant chapter, in which he played down their historical contribution.⁴⁰⁰ Periods and events that preceded Ottoman rule, such as the Mamluk and Pharaonic eras, were not even dealt with in a serious manner.⁴⁰¹ In the words of al-Rāfi‘ī, all events prior to 1798 are defined as an era of “nationalist *jahiliya*.”⁴⁰² The two following points sum up al-Rāfi‘ī’s historiographic activities: (1) Al-Rāfi‘ī aimed to rebut the monarchic historiography of the period from 1805 to 1882, by producing a systematic and coherent national epic. (2) Al-Rāfi‘ī played a pivotal role in the de-Ottomanization of Egyptian history.⁴⁰³

Hence, it is no wonder that in al-Rāfi‘ī’s nationalist narrative the Mamluks and their roles in the historical development are drastically marginalized or overlooked. Al-Rāfi‘ī continued to depict the Mamluks as the oppressors, tyrants, and internecine combatants. He made one notable point in distinguishing the Mamluk Sultanate from the Mamluk Beys by presenting them as respectable rulers:

Literature and erudition flourished in the era of the Baḥrī and Burjī Mamluk Sultanate.⁴⁰⁴ The Mamluk Sultan sustained literature and knowledge.⁴⁰⁵ Egypt was a center of publication for Istanbul as the capital of independent country and the capital of the Arab world as well.⁴⁰⁶

There is clear difference between the era of the Mamluk Sultanate and the era of Mamluk Beys. The era of the Mamluk Sultanate [unlike the era of the Mamluk Beys] is an era of civilization and culture and it learned from its mistakes; many Sultans were erudite men of literature and culture and their epoch is close to the periods of Islamic culture.⁴⁰⁷

The era of the Mamluk Beys is an era of decadence. Some historians mistakenly thought the Mamluk Beys stemmed from the Mamluk Sultanate era. But the (blood) line of the Mamluk Sultanate was severed from the

Mamluk Bey with the Ottoman invasion. Mamluk descendants were disconnected from one generation to the next. According to Jabaratī's memoir, the Mamluk Beys were not descended from the Mamluk Sultanate.⁴⁰⁸

The Mamluk Beys are accused of failing to rule the country correctly when they had the power to do so. In al-Rāfi'ī's view, this political inadequacy led the Mamluk Beys to conduct a fierce internal struggle for power, which proved disastrous for Egypt:

Real authority lay in the hands of the Mamluks (*Shaykh al-Balad*)
The Wali had no solutions and were powerless.⁴⁰⁹The internal struggle
(*fitna*) was waged between Ibrāhīm Bey and Murād Bey.⁴¹⁰
The valiyyet and the Mamluk regime did not deal with administration of the
country and thus damaged trade and production.⁴¹¹
For a long time, the Mamluks tyrannized the administration and the
Ottoman Wali.⁴¹²

The only favorable references to the Mamluks in the Ottoman era are about their brilliant battle skills and loyalty to Islam:

Many of the Mamluks strove to praise, exalt and respect Allah and the Quran. Some were knowledgeable and some had superior military skills, but others wanted to monopolize and exploit Egypt.⁴¹³

In the wake of the French and English expeditions to Egypt, the Mamluks faced a great and fateful ordeal. Certainly, two powerful and advanced European armies were beyond the Mamluk Bey's outdated cultural and military capacity. Indeed, the Mamluks are portrayed as defectors⁴¹⁴ and collaborators.⁴¹⁵ As an undeniable anti-colonialist, Al-Rāfi'ī also blamed the Mamluk tyranny and oppression for England's military intervention in Egyptian politics:

The Mamluks were responsible for chaos and oppression and it was in England's interest to spread the chaos and oppression in the country, using it as a pretext to intervene in the affairs of Egypt.⁴¹⁶

Al-Rāfi'ī perceived the internal struggle of the Mamluk Beys as a chronic, ongoing phenomenon; the new power struggle between Bardīsī and Alfī⁴¹⁷ came on the heels of the previous one between Ibrāhīm Bey and Murād Bey.⁴¹⁸ The Mamluk oppression of Egypt reached its zenith when Bardīsī levied heavy taxation on the Egyptians⁴¹⁹:

Bardīsī imposed new taxes. In 1804 those new taxes caused the people to revolt against the Mamluks.⁴²⁰ People gathered and shouted, “Bardīsī! What can you take from the bankrupt?” The revolt was not only against the Mamluks but also against the evil acts perpetrated by the Albanian soldiers.⁴²¹

The Mamluks indulged in luxuries and material possessions, which weakened their power.⁴²² In al-Rāfi‘ī’s analysis, the only way to break the English imperialist hold on Egypt was to eliminate the Mamluks, who had a secret understanding with England:

The English strengthened their imperialistic policy in the hands of the Mamluk leaders. There was no other way to foil these politics but to rid the country of the Mamluks and eliminate them.⁴²³

For a nationalist and anti-colonialist historian like al-Rāfi‘ī, the purpose of writing history goes beyond replicating earlier writings. Instead, al-Rāfi‘ī’s primary goal was to rediscover the pride and glory of the Egyptians and Egypt as manifested in history, leading to a better present and future. In this respect, it is not surprising to find that al-Rāfi‘ī’s narrative has an affinity with Egyptian territorial nationalism. There are two pieces of evidence in support of this theory. First, al-Rāfi‘ī addressed the point that the people of Egypt are the descendants of Pharaohs and Arabs, so that Egyptian blood is blended with ancient Arab blood.⁴²⁴ Further, he asserts that it is evident that, with the passage of time, the Mamluks of the Mamluk Sultanate era assimilated into the Egyptian people.⁴²⁵

Al-Rāfi‘ī’ also regarded nationalism as a crucial impetus for historical development and presented it as the genuine engine for generating all nationalist movements and resistance against foreign attackers. It was neither the Mamluk army nor the Ottomans that stopped the French expedition; instead, it was the spirit of Egyptian nationalism.⁴²⁶ Negating the monarchist credo founder paradigm, al-Rāfi‘ī’ did not see the heroes of the past as the only contributors to historical developments. In his nationalist narrative, it is rather the anonymous, patriotic Egyptian individual and public which took part in the revolt and the struggle against the Mamluks and the French and English armies and Ottomans, who are reborn as the real heroes and generators of historical force.⁴²⁷ More importantly, no one, including the Turks, Mamluks, and English, could possibly suppress and eliminate the nationalist aspiration (*Amal Qawmī*).⁴²⁸ Nevertheless, as is the case of other nationalist historians, al-Rāfi‘ī’ commemorated Muḥammad ‘Alī as a symbol of Egyptian nationalism⁴²⁹ and a genuine Egyptian reformer, as a leader of people who resurrected the Egyptian industry.⁴³⁰

A nationalist, Muhammad Rifʿat was not one of the ʿAbdīn Project historians; nevertheless, he had a good relationship with Ghurbāl. He was born in an aristocratic Turkish family and obtained overseas postgraduate qualifications earlier than both Ghurbāl and Muḥammad Ṣabrī. Sent to England by the Ministry of Education just prior to the First World War, Rifʿat graduated with a Masters degree from the University of Liverpool under the supervision of Sir Charles Webster.⁴³¹ However, he was not a prolific and daring writer; he produced only a few books, all of which were closely adapted to where the political wind was blowing. Nevertheless, beginning in the early 1920s, he composed the standard school history textbook and was in charge of its continuous updating until 1952. As such, he served several key positions in the Ministry of Education, including that of minister. Cooperating on several occasions with Ghurbāl, Rifʿat had a decisive role in the dissemination of historical significance in the school system. A review of three editions of his school textbook demonstrates the decline of a monarchist interpretation and the acceptance of more nationalist themes. In 1947, clearly reflecting his fervor for Egyptian nationalism, Rifʿat published *The Awakening of Egypt*, which was composed on the model of George Antonius' classic *The Arab Awakening*.⁴³²

Following other nationalist historians, Muḥammad Rifʿat depicted Muḥammad ʿAlī and his offspring, such as Ibrāhīm Pasha and al-Khedīve Ismāʿīl, as symbols of an early independent Egyptian community.⁴³³ In addition, Rifʿat redefined the story of Muḥammad ʿAlī as the most prominent part of the awakening of nationalism by portraying him as both an innovator who restored the army, fleet, industry, and education,⁴³⁴ and a patriotic hero who halted the French and English armies. In Rifʿat's view, this victory enabled the Pasha's name to resound throughout Europe.⁴³⁵

Surprisingly, unlike other historians, Rifʿat recorded the Mamluks of the Ottoman era as the offspring of Circassian Mamluks.⁴³⁶ Aside from this, no significant change can be traced in other portrayals of the Mamluks. On the evidence of no intermarriage with local people, the Mamluks appeared to have not assimilated into Egypt.⁴³⁷ Negative terms such as "corrupted," "tyrannical," and "greedy" continuously characterized the Mamluks, with particular emphasis on the internal division of the Mamluk Beys:

The Mamluk Beys disgraced Egypt by corruption.⁴³⁸

The Mamluks enjoyed a luxurious life,⁴³⁹ disobeyed the Sublime Porte, achieved independence in the country and committed corruption.⁴⁴⁰

The Mamluks oppressed the peasantry, who became slaves and suffered

from the poverty that befell them.⁴⁴¹

The Mamluks wasted or hid their fortunes in ancient Embabeh and then transferred them to Syria.⁴⁴²

The French military campaign eliminated the Mamluk influence.

The Mamluks were divided internally, Muḥammad al-Alfī sided with the English, whereas others preferred to be allied to the French.⁴⁴³

In the wake of the French expedition, the cowardly Mamluks appear to have sneaked away and were ultimately defeated by the new French army:

The French Republic government attempted to help the Sublime Porte to remove the Mamluk faction, in order to consolidate the influence of the Sultan.⁴⁴⁴ The Mamluks fled in the wake of the arrival of the French army.⁴⁴⁵ Fearing the new weapons – canon and rifle – the Mamluks retreated.⁴⁴⁶ At Embabeh the Mamluk army was defeated by the French army.⁴⁴⁷

For Riḥat, the main reason for the Egyptian revolt of 1798 was not just the French invasion, but also the Mamluk oppression: the Egyptians rose against the oppression of the Mamluks as well as against France.⁴⁴⁸

In the English version of the 1940s textbook, Riḥat shows no sign of a change in his antagonistic tone toward the Mamluks. Murād and Ibrāhīm Beys are continuously de-legitimized as cowards who escaped even before the beginning of the battle against the French:

Before the Battle of Embabeh or the Battle of Pyramids, the Mamluks themselves knew they were up against a formidable enemy, of whose tactics, guns and formations they knew nothing, and against whom their personal bravery and their skill on horseback would avail them little. No wonder therefore that both Murād and Ibrāhīm, the joint masters of the country, had made preparations to leave it even before the battle started.⁴⁴⁹

Ibrāhīm Bey with his Mamluks gave up Cairo and fled northwards Palestine and Syria leaving Cairo to the pillagers and to the invaders outside.⁴⁵⁰

For these reasons, the Egyptians are depicted as having hated the Mamluks as much as the French:

The Egyptians, who at heart hated both Mamluks and Turks as much as they did the French, if not more, soon began to nourish a feeling of sympathy towards their brethren in Islam, and when the opportune moment came, they made no secret of their sentiments.⁴⁵¹

Meanwhile the national leaders prepared a manifesto in writing against the Mamluks and for the transfer of Muḥammad ‘Alī. They stated that the Mamluks, if they regained power, would not carry out their pledge to pay an annual tribute to the sultan or send an annual quota of corn and money to the holy places in Arabia. The Shayks of the ‘Ulamā and notables would not endorse any promise given by the Mamluks, whom they accused of plundering the land.⁴⁵²

Although he focused mainly on Mamluk oppression and tyranny, Rifʿat made some favorable remarks regarding the Mamluks’ bravery, battle skills, and familiarity with the Egyptians:

The Mamluks were able to maintain their power for the following reasons: The Mamluks and their offspring became a powerful race when the authority of soldiers and the Wali decreased and they were unable to exploit the wealth of the Mamluks. Thanks to their bravery, the Mamluks were distinguished warriors. The power of *aṣabiya* (group cohesion) among the Mamluks prevented them from assimilating into Egyptians, as others had done, which existed as an independent, common characteristic.⁴⁵³

In particular, Rifʿat stresses the political skill of the Mamluk Beys:

The Mamluks were very closely connected to Egypt’s people, rituals and language and had a complete understanding of the domestic government. The Mamluks had authority and could use it to manage internal and external conditions without asking for Ottoman help.⁴⁵⁴

As noted already, the 1811 massacre of the Mamluks by Muḥammad ‘Alī is an important barometer as it clarifies the understandings of both the monarchists’ and academic intellectuals’ perceptions of the Mamluks. The same is true for nationalist intellectuals. The discussion of the massacre of the Mamluks also provides a crucial route to examine the ways in which nationalists viewed Muḥammad ‘Alī.

Quoting the British consul general, Rifʿat validates the massacre by giving two reasons: it was a necessary measure for reform, and the Mamluks posed a serious threat to Muḥammad ‘Alī :

“The massacre of the Mamluks” in the words of Sir Charles Murray the British Consul-General, “was an atrocious crime, but it was a necessary prelude to all subsequent reforms.”⁴⁵⁵ “For every drop of blood that Muḥammad ‘Alī spilt that day,” said Dr. Bowring, “he saved more than one innocent person.”⁴⁵⁶

But Muḥammad ‘Alī feared that they might again take up arms against him if they knew that his forces were leaving the country to fight in a far-off and difficult country like Arabia.⁴⁵⁷ The story of the creation of a new modern army in Egypt is one that would add more luster to the name of Muḥammad ‘Alī than anything else.⁴⁵⁸

In the same manner, the nationalist historian Sulaymān Bek Abū ‘Izz al-Dīn justified the massacre of the Mamluks by Muḥammad ‘Alī as a necessary evil aimed to end the chaos.⁴⁵⁹ Unlike other nationalist historians, Abū ‘Izz al-Dīn stressed the role of the Egyptian people in the country’s historical development. In his view, it was not Muḥammad ‘Alī but rather the Egyptian people who lay the foundations for the change of regime and chose Muḥammad ‘Alī as their leader.

The Egyptian people gentle-heartedly sought power and took some measures to replace the regime through the French expedition to Egypt. They found orderly government in Muḥammad ‘Alī.⁴⁶⁰

The enemy feared the power of the Egyptian people since such force had never existed in the past.⁴⁶¹

In the meantime, Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd expressed a more critical view of the Mamluks by setting a sharp contrast between Muḥammad ‘Alī, the reformer, on the one hand and the villainous Mamluk Beys and Ottomans on the other.

Since the eighteenth century there [had been] severe chaos caused by the Ottoman army and by the leaders of Mamluks. Muḥammad ‘Alī challenged the Ottoman government. Following the French withdrawal, the Ottoman army, the Pasha and the Mamluk leaders took advantage of the situation and destroyed what had remained from the previous years.

Muḥammad ‘Alī was a real reformer in a variety of fields in Egypt.⁴⁶²

In Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl’s nationalist narrative, the Turks, Mamluks, and British appeared as colonial forces that had denied the power of the people:

The tripartite power struggle between the Turks, Mamluks and British ruined Egypt. The alliance did not recognize the importance of the country and the people behind the curtain. The French expedition awakened the power of the people.⁴⁶³

As an antithesis to the three evil forces, Muḥammad ‘Alī is depicted as an authentic reformer who restored various aspects of Egypt: army, weapons, and arts. Two interesting aspects can be detected in the presentation of Muḥammad ‘Alī. First, al-Shayyāl portrayed Muḥammad ‘Alī as a more or less Western leader, who imported European knowledge, sent students abroad, and built new schools.⁴⁶⁴

The second remarkable aspect is that Muḥammad ‘Alī appeared as a nationalist leader who recognized the power of the people.⁴⁶⁵ Based on this assessment, al-Shayyāl concluded that Muḥammad ‘Alī succeeded in establishing an Egyptian resurrection (*al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya al-Ḥadīth*).⁴⁶⁶

‘Alī Aḥmad Shukrī shows similar antipathy toward the Mamluks,⁴⁶⁷ except for crediting their morale and fighting spirit. Shukrī expressly stated that the Mamluks halted the English army⁴⁶⁸ and bravely fought to the death against the French army⁴⁶⁹ without commenting that they defected, or hid fortunes.

Similar to Shukrī, who praised the Mamluks for their military capability, Ḥusayn Mu’nis also expressed his warm and wholehearted support for the Mamluks. Notably, the Mamluks are viewed as if they slowly assimilated into Egyptians.⁴⁷⁰ Perhaps Mu’nis’ most important point is his glorification of the Mamluks as the earliest symbol of Egyptian nationalism, a point not made by any of the other historians encountered in the present research:

The patriotism generated in the hearts of the Mamluks was clearly manifested when the French came to Egypt. The Egyptian people joined forces with the Mamluks against the French. This is an indication of the Mamluks nationalist feelings.⁴⁷¹

His glorification of the Mamluks as Egyptian nationalists seems to show that in some ways Mu’nis tended toward an integral Egyptian nationalism, from which he derived his extraordinary nationalistic portrayal of the Mamluks. According to Mu’nis’ critical historical review, Egyptian nationalism was as significant in the development of French nationalism as the French expedition was in its influence on Egyptian nationalism and revival (*Nahḍa Miṣriyya*).⁴⁷² Apart from the above nationalist iconization, Mu’nis raised the usual accusations against the Mamluks.⁴⁷³

In contrast to Mu’nis, for Muḥammad Ṣabrī the Mamluks are no more than villains destined to be exterminated for the sake of the unity of Egypt.⁴⁷⁴ Ṣabrī, a French-educated historian, favorably presents the French role in awakening Egyptian nationalism. Born in 1894, Ṣabrī was the first

historian to write a fully developed national history. In every respect, Şabrî was deeply influenced by the rapid social and cultural dynamics of de-Ottomanization. He was greatly interested in Arab literature almost from childhood. At sixteen, he produced his first book on contemporary Arabic poetry.⁴⁷⁵ No trace of Ottomanism is found in his work since Şabrî did not learn Turkish. In 1915, he was already doing graduate study at a Ph.D. level at the Sorbonne. He was soon referred to as “al-Surbuni.”⁴⁷⁶ Even though Şabrî sympathized with Egyptian resistance against the French, as a revolution (*thawra*)⁴⁷⁷ he did not hide his regret that the France failed to eliminate the Mamluks. He believed that if the French army had defeated the Mamluk cavalry in the first French military campaign, it would have given rise to a new Egypt soon after Muḥammad ‘Alî subdued the Mamluks.⁴⁷⁸

An anonymous nationalist writer drew a similar contrast between the Mamluk Beys as an obstacle to Egyptian emancipation on the one hand and the French saviors on the other:

Murād Bey and Ibrāhīm Bey are depicted as greedy rulers.⁴⁷⁹ Napoleon and his army removed the Mamluks who acted wickedly, corrupted Egypt, oppressed the people and incarcerated those who dared to speak out against the Sultan. Napoleon reached an agreement with the Ottoman Sultan to remove the Mamluks from Egypt and emancipate the people from the fire of oppression.⁴⁸⁰ The Mamluks had corrupted the best place on earth.⁴⁸¹

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl also found fault with the backwardness of the Mamluk army, noting that it was unable to defeat the advanced French troops.⁴⁸²

In contrast to Shayyāl and Şabrî, who noted the contribution of the French army to the awakening of Egyptian nationalism, Aḥmad Khakīṭ described the Mamluk army as a national entity by drawing a sharp contrast between the colonial French army and the Mamluk forces joined by Egyptian people.

In the wake of Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt, Egyptian nationalist sentiments emerged. The Mamluks made efforts to defend Egypt against the French army, but failed to do so since they depended on an old defense system.⁴⁸³ The Mamluk leaders ignored the existence of new weaponry.⁴⁸⁴ The Egyptian people joined the Mamluk army to fight against the French.⁴⁸⁵

In most Egyptian nationalist literature, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr is glorified as a righteous ruler as well as the precursor of Egyptian nationalism. As such, Shayyāl and al-Rāfī described ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr as an Egyptian nationalist leader and an early symbol of Egyptian nationalism:

‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr 1766 seized the power and killed his rival and bid farewell to Istanbul and refused paying Jizya. [He] Minted coin in his name and pronounced himself as Sultan of Egypt and established independent country of Egypt.⁴⁸⁶ But he could not stay longer since he was killed by the wicked (sinner).⁴⁸⁷

He went out to the Arabian Peninsula and was nicknamed Sharif of Mecca, Sultan of Egypt, King of Sea. ‘Alī Bey’s campaign in Syria was a failure since his Mamluk officer, Abū Dhahab, betrayed him by cooperating with the Ottomans.⁴⁸⁸

‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr (1768) declared Egyptian independence from the Ottoman, refused to pay Kharaj (tax), and minted coins in his name.⁴⁸⁹

He expanded his territory by conquering the Arabian Peninsula and Mecca, gaining the title of Sultan of Egypt and Khaqan (King) of Sea. He dispatched Muḥammad Bey Abū Dhahab to conquer Syria and Abu Dhahab conspired with the Ottomans (Sublime Port) to betray ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr, who wanted to unite Egypt with Syria.⁴⁹⁰

Likewise, Ṣabīrī depicted ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr as an authentic reformer emulating Muḥammad ‘Alī:

Shaykh al-Balad ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr worked for separation (faṣl) and founded an independent regime with other Beys such as Muḥammad Abū Dhahab. He declared independence in 1771 and expelled the Ottoman Wali from Egypt.⁴⁹¹

He made efforts to end the chaos and to reorganize the administration and treasury. Militarily he conquered Yemen and the eastern part of the Red Sea, Jeddah and Mecca and declared himself Sharif of Mecca, Sultan of Egypt and King of Seas. Abū Dhahab betrayed him.⁴⁹²

In the same way, Muḥammad Rif‘at effectively used ‘Alī Bey’s story to commemorate Muḥammad ‘Alī as the precursor of early Egyptian nationalism:

‘Alī Bey was the most powerful Mamluk Bey during the Ottoman rule. He was the authentic Mamluk ruler and possessed real power. In 1766 ‘Alī Bey declared independence, abolished the Jiziya tax, minted coins in his name (as Sultan of Egypt) and revived the Mamluk Sultanate. He joined forces with Shaykh Dhāhir, Amir of Acre in the struggle against the Turks.⁴⁹³

He initiated military campaigns in Egypt, Yemen, Jeddah, Mecca among others and became known by the nickname of King of two Seas and Sultan of Egypt.⁴⁹⁴ His Syrian campaign ended in failure because Muḥammad Bey (Abū Dhahab) betrayed him.⁴⁹⁵ ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr was a prominent leader in a dark period of Egyptian history and whose achievements match Muḥammad ‘Alī’s reforms in the government. It is not surprising that ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr’s name resounds in history and no other Mamluk bears comparison with him.⁴⁹⁶

There is a great deal of similarity between the preceding two authors’ accounts. However, a common pattern that should be mentioned here is that Abū Dhahab’s secret understanding with the Ottomans is said to be behind ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr’s downfall. The accusation that the Ottomans were responsible for ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr’s downfall is a clear sign that the two nationalist historians were actively delegitimizing the Ottoman Empire.

Another nationalist historian, Nasīb Sa‘īd, glorified the defeat of the Mamluk dynasty by the Ottoman Empire, presenting it as an early revolution and depicting Muḥammad ‘Alī as the precursor of Arab nationalism⁴⁹⁷:

The Arabs did not find shame in the surrender to the Ottoman Sultans who defeated Sultan Tūmānbāy, the last Mamluk Sultan. They [the Arabs] headed towards Damascus, and then towards Jerusalem and Cairo, and all countries and regions (areas) welcomed them.⁴⁹⁸

Ṣabrī continued to present Muḥammad ‘Alī as an Egyptian nationalist hero who annihilated the Mamluks and thereby saved Egyptians from wrongdoings.⁴⁹⁹ Anwar Zaqlama shows no difference in the account of the massacre of the Mamluks by Muḥammad ‘Alī in 1811.

It was not possible for Muḥammad ‘Alī to leave Egypt in the hands of vicious Mamluks. Muḥammad ‘Alī did not exterminate all the Mamluks; after the massacre, many Mamluks survived and lived under the Muḥammad ‘Alī regime and even helped Muḥammad ‘Alī to control them by providing information about their own people.

It was the ‘Urābī revolt of 1881 that actually eliminated the Mamluks in the end. As we know, the revolt was against the dominance of Circassians in the Egyptian army.⁵⁰⁰

However, al-Rāfī tells a totally different story about the massacre. Al-Rāfī differs most from other historians in his critical interpretation of the Mamluk massacre. In a sense, he concedes that for Muḥammad ‘Alī, it was an unavoidable measure to eliminate the Mamluks whom he regarded

as villains devoted to wrongdoing and posing a critical threat to his power. Nevertheless, al-Rāfi openly expresses his objection to the massacre, since such a tragic event had an unintended and counter-productive impact on the Egyptians and consequently hindered the development of Egyptian nationalism:

Since the Mamluk massacre in the Citadel, the [Egyptian] people were seized with an oppressive fear so that, for a long time, bravery and calmness were absent in their minds.⁵⁰¹

The absence of bravery, a great quality that leads nations to aspire to supremacy based on morality and nationalist virtues and the fear that occupied the minds of the people after the massacre in the Citadel, weakened their moral and spiritual power and resulted in the absence of a great nationalism.⁵⁰²

People protested against oppression at the time, and it is to be assumed that the massacre in the Citadel subdued the spirit of protest for a long time and gave way to fear. This new spirit probably brought Muḥammad ‘Alī peace of mind, despite his isolation from authority. For 37 years after the resistance was subdued, responsibility and criticism failed to emerge from the people.⁵⁰³

CONCLUSION

The landscape of commemoration examined in this work was an integral component of the Egyptian enterprise of historical memory as it developed over the course of the early twentieth century. In this setting, four different historians and intellectual groups forged a new historical memory of the Mamluks according to their own ideological tenets. Egyptian Ottomanists, monarchists, and academic historians and intellectuals reimagined and redefined the Mamluks and the Mamluk era in order to modernize the Egyptian community. Egyptian nationalist historians and intellectuals went one step further and aimed to resurrect the Egyptian nation by immortalizing heroic and glorious moments of the Egyptian past. By reevaluating the past, Egyptian intellectuals attempted to design a new Egyptian identity for the sake of both the emerging Egyptian nation-state and its bright future.

Ottomanist historians carefully examined the possibility of unity of all Muslims under Ottoman rule as a weapon against British colonialism. It is therefore not very surprising that Ottomanist historians did not show much interest in the Mamluk era.

For the monarchist and academic historians seeking to record modern Egyptian history by modernizing the writing of history, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt served as a point of departure. As a result, both historical schools preferred to forget the Mamluks as a symbol of the past and instead focused on Muḥammad 'Alī and his descendants. Although the academic historians endeavored to combine professional objectivity with the Egyptianization of history in order to create a supposed gap between themselves and the monarchist historians, they may not have been very successful. In reality, the nationalist historians were the ones who undertook the weighty mission of Egyptianization. For this reason, the monarchists, Ottomanists, and academic historians and intellectuals alike showed little interest in elevating the Mamluk Sultanate periods. Ottomanist intellectual Jūrjī Zaydān is exceptional. With his pro-Ottoman orientation and nationalist sensibilities, Zaydān was more sympathetic toward the Mamluks and believed they should be a symbol of Egyptian pride. Nevertheless, the monarchist, Ottomanist, and academic historians each admitted that the Mamluk Sultans also engendered anarchy, disorder, and bloodshed.

The founder of the academic school, Shafiq Ghurbāl, shifted from very negative depictions of the Mamluks to far more favorable ones. The reason for this shift seems to reside in Ghurbāl's nationalist fervor. Like Ghurbāl, his student 'Abd al-Karīm urged his contemporary historians to include the Mamluks in their historiography.

On the other hand, the Ottomanist, monarchist, and academic historians set the Mamluks during the Ottoman era as the antithesis of the Ottoman Empire, Muḥammad 'Alī, and the Egyptian people, which all symbolized progress and splendor. Karim Thābit and Henry Dodwell's justifications of the Mamluk massacre by Muḥammad 'Alī clearly demonstrate the absolute contrast between Muḥammad 'Alī and the Mamluks. In the same manner, the Mamluk leader 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr, who revolted against the Ottomans, is presented as a traitor. In using 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr as a means to address their ambitions for Egyptian nationalism, Muḥammad Rif'at and Jūrjī Zaydān created the complete counter-narrative: 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr was transformed into the precursor of Egyptian nationalism. The academic historians Muḥammad Rif'at Ramaḍān and Ghurbāl continued to view the Mamluk Beys as power-thirsty oppressors with the exception of 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr, the only Mamluk who is depicted as Muḥammad 'Alī's precursor. In their expressions of nationalist ambitions, Ramaḍān and Ghurbāl vindicated the 1811 Mamluk massacre by Muḥammad 'Alī to safeguard his position as a nationalist hero.

In contrast to the previous three intellectual groups, Egyptian nationalist intellectuals took the Mamluks as the main subject of their work. Not only did they thus create far more diverse images, but they also explicitly used the Mamluks and Mamluk history to serve their nationalist need to construct a new Egyptian identity and state. The nationalist movement, in its successive phases, constructed and reconstructed a wealth of sites of public commemoration intended to disseminate particular national messages in order to build national consciousness and to mold the Egyptian national memory.

The contours of Egyptian collective memory in large part reflect the development of national aspirations, national sentiment, and national identity. In the process, they shared some common nationalist characteristics. First, the border between the Mamluk army and the Egyptian army is blurred. Second, nearly all nationalist historians depict Baybars as the peak of Egyptian nationalism manifested in the Middle Ages. He is even portrayed as a women's rights activist, over and above his role as a nationalist hero who halted the Crusaders and the Mongols.

One fascinating interpretation encountered in both 'Alī Aḥmad Shukrī's and Ḥusayn Mu'nis' texts suggests that the Mamluk interest in and energetic support of cultural development was the secret to the endurance of the Mamluk dynasty. Furthermore, Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan and Mu'nis implicitly addressed the real issue of the era—Egypt's political crisis—by drawing an analogy between the Mamluk tyranny and oppression and the arbitrary Egyptian monarchy.

Recreating the Mamluks and the Mamluk era in an Islamic mode, Egypt's Islamic nationalist historians, Muḥammad 'Abdallah 'Inān and 'Abd Laṭīf Ḥamza, fully integrated Mamluk history into the glorious pages of Egyptian Islamic history. The Mamluk Sultans were thus presented as pious Muslim leaders. For instance, Baybars is glorified as "defence of Islam". The integralists Ibrāhīm Jum'a and Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan put an emphasis on the Egyptian-ness of the Mamluks and Arabs. To some extent, contrasting the integralist redefinition of Egypt, Egyptian Arab nationalist historians, like Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr and 'Alī Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, have newly referred to the Mamluk Sultans as the Sultans of Arabs and others by relocating Egypt as part of a wider Arab culture and region.

In contrast to their exaltation of the Mamluk era, most nationalist intellectuals viewed the Mamluk Beys as villains. On the other hand, Muḥammad 'Alī, 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr, and the Egyptian nation were systematically elevated.

Several important findings should be raised here. First, all four different intellectual groups held a broadly negative view of the Mamluk Beys under Ottoman rule. Their vilification of the Mamluks stems mostly from the belief that the latter were an obstacle to the modernization of Egypt. On the other hand, nationalist historians saw the Mamluks as the enemy of emerging Egyptian nationalism and the nascent Egyptian nation-state. Above all others, ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Rāfi‘ī accused the Mamluk Beys of allowing the British or the French armies access to Egyptian soil. In contrast, Ḥusayn Mu’nis described the Mamluks as partners in the Egyptian nationalist efforts against the French army.

Second, the hegemony of Egyptian nationalism was so strong that it had a great impact on the representations of the Mamluks. Needless to say, nationalist intellectuals and even monarchist and academic intellectuals were pressured by the nationalist wave to reshape the image of Mamluk leader ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr. In this nationalist context, ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr was reshaped as the symbol of Egyptian independence in the narratives of both monarchist and academic intellectuals.

The last, but probably most significant, finding is that the Mamluk Sultans are recreated as the designers of a flourishing civilization: art, architecture, science, and even medicine blossomed under their reign. By annihilating the purely demonic imagery of the Mamluks, nationalist intellectuals re-imagined and perpetuated intelligent and sophisticated Mamluk Sultans as models for their contemporary Egyptian leaders.

NOTES

1. For previous studies based on a similar approach, see Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) and Anthony Gorman, *Historians, State and Politics in Twentieth Century Egypt* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
2. Born in Naples in 1883, Sammarco first came to Egypt in 1922 to take up the position of history teacher at the Italian Lycée in Cairo. From this time on, he dedicated himself to the study of Egyptian history, conducting research, writing, and giving lectures at learned societies such as the Institut d’Égypte and the Royal Geographical Society. In 1925, following the death of Eugenio Griffini, Fu’ad offered Sammarco the vacant post of librarian of ‘Abdīn Palace and asked him to continue the task of reconstructing the history of contemporary Egypt. See Anthony Gorman, *Historians, State and Politics in Twentieth Century Egypt* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 16–17.

3. Pierre Crabitès (1877–1943) was an American judge of the Mixed Tribunal in Cairo and later became Chief Judge. See Anthony Gorman (2003), *Historians, State*, p. 17.
4. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p. 12. For further reference, see Chap. 5.
5. For example, Georges Douin, *Une mission militaire française auprès de Mohamed Aly* (Le Caire, 1923); Henry Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt: A Study of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) first published 1931; Karīm Thābit, *Muḥammad ‘Alī*, 2nd edition (Cairo, 1943).
6. The “Founder paradigm” is based on three assumptions: (1) The acceptance of the modern European-type national-state as the “culmination of history.” (2) The view of Egypt as a unified, singular, self-conscious player and the ultimate subject of modern histories and a suitable unit of analysis. (3) The acceptance of the huge contribution of Muḥammad ‘Alī to the creation of the modern Egyptian nation-state. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, pp.177, 191.
7. For example, Shafīq Ghurbāl, *The Beginnings of the Egyptian Question and the Rise of Mehemet Ali* (London: George Routledge & Sons, LTD, 1947); Idem, *Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Kabīr* (Cairo: Dār Ajya’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya 1944); Aḥmad ‘Izzat ‘Abd al-Karīm, *Ta’rīkh al-ta’līm fi ‘aṣr Muḥammad ‘Alī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1938); ‘Alī Jirītlī, *Ta’rīkh al-Sinā‘a fi Miṣr fi al-Niṣf al-Awwal min al-Qarn al-Tāsi‘ ‘Ashar* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif bi Miṣr, al-Jam‘iyya al-Malikiyya lil-Dirāsāt al-Ta’rīkhiyya, 1952); Muḥammad Rif‘at Ramaḍān, *‘Alī Bek al-Kabīr* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1950).
8. Muḥammad Anīs, “Shafīq Ghurbāl wa Madrasat al-Ta’rīkh al-Miṣri al-Ḥadīth,” *al-Majalla* (November 1961), p. 13.
9. See Shafīq Ghurbāl (1944), *Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Kabīr*, pp. 1–16.
10. For example, Mu’nis, ‘Inān and Rif‘at clearly hold a positive attitude toward the Mamluk Sultanate. See Ḥusayn Mu’nis (1938), op. cit.; Muḥammad ‘Abdallah ‘Inān, *Mawāqif Hāsima fi Ta’rīkh al-Islām* (Cairo: Lajna al-Ta’līf wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr, 1934); Muḥammad Rif‘at, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Siyāsī fi al-Azmina al-Ḥadītha* (Cairo, 1934). However, ‘Abd al-Raḥman Rāfi‘ī’s attitude toward the Mamluk Sultanate is ambivalent. See his books *Ta’rīkh al-Ḥaraka al-Qawmiyya wa Taṭawwur Nizām al-Ḥukm fi Miṣr*, Vol.1 (1929); Idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Ḥaraka al-Qawmiyya wa Taṭawwur Nizām al-Ḥukm fi Miṣr: Aṣr Muḥammad ‘Alī*, Vol.3 (1930).
11. Jūrjī Zaydān, *The Autobiography of Jurji Zaydan*, trans. and ed. Thomas Philipp (Washington DC: Three Continents Press, 1990), p. 78. See also Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought* (Beirut, 1979), pp. 110–111; *al-Hilāl XIII*, 1904/05, p. 131 and Thomas Philipp,

- Gurgi Zaidan*, p. 112. “Zaydān was foremost concerned with this unity, because he foresaw that the collapse of the Empire would not bring about the political independence of the Arab people, as many of his Muslim Arab contemporaries assumed, but the intensification of European control over the area.”
12. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Ḥadīth* Part 1 (1911), p. 319.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
 14. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
 15. Jūrjī Zaydān, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Ḥadīth* Part 1(1911), pp. 3–4.
 16. *Ibid.*, pp. 312–313. Zaydān also refers to the army of Tūmānbāy, Qānshuh al-Ghawri and Qāyṭbāy as the Egyptian army. See pp. 358–362.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 316–317.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
 19. *Ibid.*, p. 334.
 20. Muḥammad Farīd, *Ta’rīkh al-Dawla al-‘Aliyya al-‘Uthmāniyya* First published 1896 (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1987), Preface.
 21. Goldschmidt, Arthur, *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), p. 53.
 22. Muḥammad Farīd, *Ta’rīkh al-Dawla al-‘Aliyya al-‘Uthmāniyya*, p. 31.
 23. Except Wiet, the rest of the ‘Ābdīn Project historians did not deal with the Mamluk Sultanate era seriously, as demonstrated in the first part of this study.
 24. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p.188.
 25. *Ibid.*, p.195.
 26. *Ibid.*, pp. 195–196.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
 28. Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, “Kalimat Ta’bin,” *Al-Majalla al-Ta’rikhiyya al-Miṣriyya* 11(1963), pp. 36–45;Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, p. 189.
 29. Muḥammad Rif’at, “Kalimat Ta’bin,” *Al-Majalla al-Ta’rikhiyya al-Miṣriyya* 11(1963), pp.7–9.
 30. Yoav Di-Capua (2009), *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, pp. 189–190.
 31. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
 33. Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab History and The Nation-State: A Study in Modern Arab Historiography, 1820–1980* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 71.
 34. Shafīq Ghurbāl, *The Beginnings of the Egyptian Question and The Rise of Mehmet Ali* (George Routledge & Sons, LTD 1928), p. 1.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. Shafīq Ghurbāl, *Muḥammad ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr* (Miṣr: Lajnat Tarjamat Dāirat al-Ma‘ārif al-Islāmiyya, 1944), p. 11.

37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p. 12.
39. About 'Abd al-Karīm see Anthony Gorman, *Historians, State and Politics in Twentieth Century Egypt* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 30–32.
40. Aḥmad 'Izzat 'Abd al-Karīm, *Ta'rīkh al-Ta'lim fī al-'Aṣr Muḥammad 'Alī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1938), p. 19.
41. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1986), *Egypt, Islam*, p. 115.
42. Muḥammad Sharaf, "Al-Miṣriyyūn Umma Ghayr Sharqiyya," *Al-Majalla al-Jadīda* June 1, 1930, p. 964.
43. Ibid.
44. Vernon Egger (1986), *A Fabian in Egypt: Salamah Musa and the Rise of the Professional Classes in Egypt. 1909–1939* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), p. 129; Salāma Mūsa, "Al Thaḳāfa wa al-Haḍāra," *al-Hilāl* 36 (December 1927), p. 173.
45. Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, *The Ancient Egyptians and the Origin of Civilization* (Freeport New York: Books for Libraries Press, Reprint of 1923 version, 1970), p. 210. Mūsa published an Arabic summary of this book under the title *Miṣr Aṣl al-Haḍāra* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Majalla al-Jadīda, n.d. 1935).
46. Vernon Egger (1986), *A Fabian in Egypt*, p. 137.
47. Salāma Mūsa, "Qati'at al-Mādi," *al-Ḥadīth* 2 (January 1928), p. 33; Vernon Egger (1986), *A Fabian in Egypt*, p. 129.
48. Salāma Mūsa, "Aṣr al-'Arab wa Sāmūn," *al-Hilāl* March, 1921, p. 973.
49. Ibid., p. 974.
50. Salāma Mūsa, *Al-Yawm wa al-Ghad* (Cairo, 1927), p. 7; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1986), *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs*, p. 115.
51. Ibid., p. 9; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1986), *Egypt, Islam and The Arabs*, p. 115.
52. Ibid., p. 7; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1986), *Egypt, Islam and The Arabs*, p. 115.
53. Ibid., p. 9; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (1986), *Egypt, Islam and The Arabs*, p. 115.
54. Ibid., pp. 113–131, 160–165, 229–257; Salāma Mūsa, *Mukhtarāt Salāma Mūsa* (Cairo 1926), pp. 48–54, 2261–264; Salāma Mūsa, "al-Miṣriyyūn Umma Gharbiyya," *al-Hilāl* (Dec. 1928), pp. 177–181; Salāma Mūsa "Al-Sharq wa al-Gharb," *al-Risāla* Dec. 1928, pp. 46–50; Salāma Mūsa, "al-Sharq Sharq wa al-Gharb Gharb," *al-Majalla al-Jadīda*, (May 1930), pp. 882–888.
55. Ibid., pp. 229–234, 241–242, 247–257; Salāma Mūsa, "Ila Ayyahuma Naḥnu Aqrabu: al-Sharq aw al-Gharb?," *al-Hilāl* (July 1927), pp. 1072–1074; Salāma Mūsa, "al-Miṣriyyūn Umma Gharbiyya," *al-Hilāl* (Dec.

- 1928), pp. 177–181; Salāma Mūsa “Al-Sharq wa al-Gharb,” *al-Risāla* (Dec. 1928), pp. 46–50; Muḥammad Sharaf, “Taḳaddum al-‘Ulum wa al-Funūn: Laysa al-Miṣriyyun Sāmīyyin,” *al-Majalla al-Jadīda* 9 (May 1930), pp. 897–900; Muḥammad Sharaf, “al-Miṣriyyūn Umma Ghayr Sharqiyya,” *al-Majalla al-Jadīda* (June 1930), pp. 961–964.
56. Salāma Mūsa, “Miṣriyyun Umma Gharbiya,” *al-Hilāl* Dec. 37/21928, p. 180.
 57. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
 58. Salāma Mūsa, “Masā’il al-Shabab al-Miṣriyyin,” *al-Majalla al-Jadīda* Apr. 1938, pp. 80–87; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (2010), *Confronting Fascism*, p. 129.
 59. Salāma Musa (1938), “Masā’il al-Shabab al-Miṣriyyin,” pp. 80–87; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski (2010), *Confronting Fascism*, p. 130.
 60. ‘Alī Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, *Ta’rīkh al-Mamālik al-Baḥrī wa fi ‘Aṣr al-Naṣir Muḥammad bi Wajbi Khāṣṣ* (Cairo, 1948), p. 21; Jurjī Zaydān, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Ḥadīth* Part 1 (1911), p. 308.
 61. ‘Alī Aḥmad Shukrī, *Miṣr min ‘Abad al-Mamālik ilā Nihāyat Ḥukm Ismā‘il* (Miṣr, 1934), p. 22.
 62. ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Rāfī (1929), *Ḥaraka al-Qawmiyya wa Taṭawwur al-Niẓam al-Ḥukm*, p. 16.
 63. *Ibid*; Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan (1937), *Fī Miṣr al-Islāmiyya*, p.68; Muḥammad Ṣabrī (1927), *Tarīkh al-‘Aṣr al-Ḥadīth: Miṣr min Muḥammad Aḥī ilā al-Yawm*, 3rd version, p. 18; Jurjī Zaydān, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Ḥadīth* Part 1, (1911), pp. 308, 344; Muḥammad Rif‘at, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Siyāsī fi al-Azmina al-Ḥadītha* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Amīriyya Bibūlāq, 1926), p. 13.
 64. ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Rāfī (1929), *Ḥaraka al-Qawmiyya wa Taṭawwur al-Niẓam al-Ḥukm*, p. 16. Of course, some historians hold the opposite theory, that the Mamluks mixed or assimilated into Egyptians, as we will see below.
 65. ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī, *Ma‘ārik Ḥasima fi Ta’rīkh Miṣr* (Cairo, 1945), p. 75. These Mamluks are named Royal Mamluks, too. See Linda A. Northrup, “The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390” in Carl F. Petry edit., *The Cambridge History of Egypt Vol. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 260.
 66. David Ayalon, “Studies on Structure of the Mamluk Army—I,” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* Vol.15, No. 2 (1953), p. 213.
 67. ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī (1945), *Ma‘ārik Ḥasima fi Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, p. 75.
 68. *Ibid.* On the Mamluk military structure see David Ayalon, “Studies on Structure of the Mamluk Army—I,” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* Vol. 15, No. 2 (1953), pp. 203–228.; *Idem* “Studies

- on Structure of the Mamluk Army—II,” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* Vol. 15, No. 3 (1953), pp. 448–476.
69. ‘Alī Aḥmad Shukrī (1934), *Miṣr min ‘Abd al-Mamālīk ilā Nihāyat Ḥukm Ismā‘īl*, p. 24; Ḥusayn Mu’nis, *Al-Sharq al-Islāmī fī al-Aṣr al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo, 1938), p. 27; Muḥammad ‘Abdallāh ‘Inān, *Mawāqif Ḥasima fī Ta’rīkh al-Islām* 2nd edition (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya bi al-Qāhira, 1934), p. 150.
 70. Ḥusayn Mu’nis, *Miṣr wa Risālatuha* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, n. d.), p. 109.
 71. Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl, *Mujmal Ta’rīkh Damīyāt Siyāsiya wa Iqtisādiyya* (Cairo, 1949), Preface.
 72. Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl (1949), *Mujmal Ta’rīkh Damīyāt Siyāsiya wa Iqtisādiyya*, p. 33.
 73. Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan and ‘Alī Ibrāhīm Ḥasan (1939), *Al-Nuzum al-Islāmiyya*, p. 134.
 74. Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan, *Fī Miṣr al-Islāmiyya* (Miṣr, 1937), p.54.
 75. Ḥusayn Mu’nis, *Al-Sharq al-Islāmī fī al-Aṣr al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo, 1938), p. 25.
 76. Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan (1937), *Fī Miṣr al-Islāmiyya*, p. j.
 77. Ibid.; ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī, *Ma‘ārik Ḥasima fī Ta’rīkh Miṣr* (Cairo, 1945), pp. 65, 74; Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl, *Mujmal Ta’rīkh Damīyāt Siyāsiya wa Iqtisādiyya* (Cairo, 1949), p. 36.
 78. Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan (1937), *Fī Miṣr al-Islāmiyya*, p. 26; Muḥammad Rif‘at, *Ta’rīkh Miṣr al-Siyāsi fī al-Azmina al-Ḥadītha* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Amīriyya Bibulāq, 1926), pp. 9, 13; Aḥmad Shukrī (1934), *Miṣr min ‘Abd al-Mamālīk ilā Nihāyat Ḥukm Ismā‘īl*, p. 24; ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī (1945), *Ma‘ārik Ḥasima fī Ta’rīkh Miṣr*, p. 4; Muḥammad Ṣabrī, *L’Empire Égyptienne sous Mohamed Ali et La Question d’Orient (1811–1849)* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner 1930), p. 19; Muḥammad Ṣabrī (1927), *Ta’rīkh al-Aṣr al-Ḥadīth: Miṣr min Muḥammad Alī ilā al-Yawm* 3rd version, p. 17; Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl (1949), *Mujmal Ta’rīkh Damīyāt*, p. 41; Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyat “Khawṭir Mahājir,” *al-Risāla* Sep. 30, 1940, p. 1502.
 79. Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan and ‘Alī Ibrāhīm Ḥasan (1939), *Al-Nuzum al-Islāmiyya*, p. 244; Abū Usāma, “Malik Zāhir,” *al-Risāla* Nov. 23, 1942, p. 107; Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, “Zāhir Baybars fī al-Eskandriya,” *al-Thaqāfa* May 16, 1949, pp. 21–22, 33.
 80. Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan and ‘Alī Ibrāhīm Ḥasan (1939), *Al-Nuzum al-Islāmiyya*, p. 252.
 81. Ibid., p. 258; Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan (1937), *Fī Miṣr al-Islāmiyya*, p.45.
 82. Abū Usāma, “Malik Zāhir,” *al-Risāla* Nov. 23, 1942, p. 1078.
 83. Ibid., p. 1079.
 84. Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan and ‘Alī Ibrāhīm Ḥasan (1939), *Al-Nuzum al-*

- Islāmiyya*, p. 319.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
 86. Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr, *Zāhir Baybars wa Ḥaḍarat Miṣr fi ‘Aṣrhu* (Cairo, 1938), p. 154.
 87. ‘Azīz Abāza, “Min Shajarat al-Durr,” *al-Risāla* Oct. 24, 1949, p. 1519.
 88. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayāl, “Al-Iskandrya fi Aṣr al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn,” *al-Thaqāfa* Sep. 18, 1950, pp. 10–14. Qalāwūn constructed a canal in al-Iskandriya, too.
 89. Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl (1949), *Mujmal Ta’rikh Damīyāt Siyāsiya*, p. 41. See also ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī, *Ma‘ārik Ḥasima fi Ta’rikh Miṣr*, pp. 4, 65.
 90. ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī (1945), *Ma‘ārik Ḥasima fi Ta’rikh Miṣr*, pp. 64, 72; Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl (1949), *Mujmal Ta’rikh Damīyāt Siyāsiya*, p. 33.
 91. Ḥabīb Jāmātī, “Shajarat al-Durr and Dārbat al-Raml,” *al-Hilāl*, July 1947, p. 102.
 92. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
 93. Anwār Fataḥ Allah, “Masraḥiyat Shajarat al-Dūr,” *al-Risāla*, Nov. 13, 1950, p. 1291.
 94. *Ibid.*, p. 1294.
 95. ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī (1945), *Ma‘ārik Ḥasima fi Ta’rikh Miṣr*, p. 63.
 96. Muḥammad Laṭfi Juma‘, “Majālis al-Ghawrī,” *al-Risāla*, May 5, 1941, p. 632.
 97. Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan, “Al-Sultān al-Gawrī: Yastaqbilu Safir al-Bundaqiyya,” *al-Thaqāfa*, Apr. 4, 1939, p. 26; ‘Abd al-Waḥhāb Azām, “Al-Sultān al-Ghawrī,” *al-Risāla* Sep. 26, 1938, pp. 1574–1577. Azām depicted Al-Sultān al-Ghawrī as a man of literature, history, poet, music, and religion (Islam).
 98. Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, “Manẓar min Mufāwaḍāt Miṣr al-Ta’rikhiya,” *al-Thaqāfa* Dec. 28, 1943, p. 18.
 99. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–25.
 100. *Ibid.*
 101. Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, “Al-Anāṣir al-Ūrubbiya fi Dawlat Ṣalātīn Miṣr,” *al-Thaqāfa*, Dec. 7, 1943, pp. 9–11.
 102. Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, “Sūra min Qānshuh al-Ghawrī,” *al-Thaqāfa*, March 21, 1944, pp. 14–16.
 103. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda, “Nihāyat al-Salāṭīn al-Mamālik fi Miṣr,” *Majalla Ta’rikhiyya al-Miṣriyya*, May 1951, p. 198.
 104. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
 105. Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan (1937), *Fi Miṣr al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 60–94. Popular arts progressed significantly during the era of Sultan Nāṣir Ibn Muḥammad Qalāwūn; see Ṣabrī Farīd “Dār al-Athār al-‘Arabiya bil-Qāhira: Tuḥafhā al-Khashabiya wa al-Ājiya wa al-‘Azamiya,” *al-Muqtataf*, Dec. 1931, pp. 465–67. On buildings and arts, see Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, “Banā

- al-Qāhira al-Muslimūn,” *al-Risāla* Apr. 19, 1943, p. 314. Absorbing Turkish and Frankish (Western) style, Chinese porcelain in Middle Ages Egypt of the Mamluk Sultanate era became a central feature of Islamic buildings. See anon., “Al-‘Umāra al-Islāmiyya fi Miṣr,” *al-Hilāl*, Dec. 35/2 1926, pp. 193–194.
106. On Mamluk building of schools and mosques, see ‘Abd al-Raḥman Zakī, “Al-Dār al-Islāmiyya,” *al-Muqtaṭaf*, Aug. 1941, pp. 217–18. Qalāwūn exalted Egyptian status by constructing marvelous buildings and developing arts and thought; see Aḥmad Jakī Bāsha, *al-Hilāl* Dec. 32/3 1924, p. 263.
107. On the development of the lamp glass manufacturing industry in the Mamluk Sultanate era see Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan, “Al-Mishkāwāt al-Zajājiya fi Aṣr al-Mamālīk,” *al-Thaqāfa*, Mar. 1940, pp. 31–35.
108. The Mamluk era was the peak of the mineral industry, for example copper, silver, and gold crafts; see Yūsuf Aḥmad, “Izdahār Ṣinā‘a al-Naḥās wa Inḥaṭātihā fi Miṣr fi Aṣr al-Islāmī,” *al-Muqtaṭaf*, Jan. 1932, pp. 79–82.
109. The Mamluk Sultans initiated special tax policy for inns to encourage trade activities; see R Tamīmī “Al-Niẓām wa al-Ṭuruq al-Tijāriya,” *al-Muqtaṭaf*, Apr. 1941, p. 404.
110. Ḥusayn Mu’nis (1938), *Al-Sharq al-Islāmī*, p. 26.
111. ‘Alī Aḥmad Shukrī, *Miṣr min ‘Abd al-Mamālīk ilā Nihāyat Ḥukm Ismā‘il* (Cairo, 1934), p. 25.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ḥusayn Mu’nis (1938), *Al-Sharq al-Islāmī*, pp. 24–25.
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122. Ḥusayn Mu’nis, *Al-Sharq al-Islāmī fi al-Aṣr al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo, 1938), p. 26.
123. Ibid.
124. Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan (1937), *Fi Miṣr al-Islāmiyya*, p. 68.

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Conclusion

The present study examined representations of the Mamluks in a variety of historical texts marked by two different types of historical memories: “official” and “public.” From the perspective of social agents, the Mamluk landscape of historical memory and commemoration encountered in this study was an array of images designed by Egyptian Ottomanist, monarchist, and nationalist historians and intellectuals and developed over the course of the twentieth century.

Of course, commemoration shaped and reshaped different identities and aspirations in different contexts and during different times. Hence, Mamluk history is selectively narrated or neglected in accordance with different ideological or political needs. This complexity of representation yielded an intricate web of commemorative sites, reflecting alternative historical narratives, each emphasizing particular objects and messages. The triumph of one narrative was the folly of another, and one writer’s national hero was another’s villain.

Official “historical” representations of the Mamluks were propagated by the Egyptian monarchy and appeared throughout school textbooks between 1920 and 1950 and in the works of ‘Ābdīn historians. Official memory was one of the many mechanisms from which Egyptian rule derived legitimacy, supporting its hegemony in Egyptian society in the face of challenges posed by oppositional groups. Hence, it is little wonder that Muḥammad ‘Alī and his descendants were the foremost protagonists of the monarchist narrative.

Surprisingly, the favorable portrayal of the Mamluk Sultanate can be seen both in the historical works of the *Ābdīn* Project and in school textbooks. *Ābdīn* historian Gaston Wiet addressed the Mamluk era in great length and described it as a glorious time of military power and civilization. Moreover, the authors of the textbooks glorifying the Mamluk Sultans narrated history from an Egypt-centered point of view, referring to the Mamluk leaders as Egyptian or Arab Sultans. The Egyptianization or Arabization of heroic historical figures marks the impact of Egyptian nationalism on school textbooks.

In contrast to the celebration of the Mamluk Sultans, the Mamluk Beys of the Ottoman era are remembered as tyrants and oppressors, except for *ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr*, who is depicted as a forerunner of Egyptian nationalism.

Unlike official forms of memory, a variety of memories of the Mamluks are invented in the forms of public memory. Among the diverse types of nationalist trends, one may find territorialist, integralist, Islamic, and Arab nationalism. Many nationalist intellectuals explicitly used the Mamluk past in order to construct an imagined Egyptian community based on national-historical memory. They did so by portraying remarkable Mamluk Sultans as Egyptian national heroes who halted the Mongols and the Crusaders. However, in accordance with the authors' different ideological orientations, these Sultans could be reborn as Egyptian, Islamic, or Arab. In addition, many nationalist historians and intellectuals noted that the Mamluk Sultans attained the zenith of Islamic or Arab civilization, producing the finest art, science, and architecture. This glorification, they believed, would stimulate Egypt to regain the splendors of the past.

Importantly, some nationalist intellectuals and historians went as far as to iconize the great Mamluk Sultans as creators of a marvelous civilization. Others, in depicting Mamluk Sultans such as Baybars and Aybak as righteous leaders who cared for and restored the rights and freedom of women, took issue with gender inequality. Others implicitly criticized the Egyptian monarchy of their time by using the Mamluk oppression and tyranny as a metaphor for their own arbitrary monarchy.

On the other hand, the Mamluk Beys of the Ottoman era are delegitimized as an antiquated regime that collaborated with the oppressive and corrupt British and French colonialists.

Comparing the historical memories of the Mamluks shaped in official and public memory shows that there is one distinctive similarity discerned between the two types of memory. Both forms of memory address the

Mamluk era as a golden age, but view the Mamluk Beys as a dark time of colonialism and oppression.

As Bodnar states, the boundary between official and vernacular forms of memory is likely to be blurred. Bodnar went even further and emphasized that “public memory emerged from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions.”¹ This also applies to the representations of the Mamluks.

Notwithstanding the heterogeneity of the historical representations of the Mamluks, two salient patterns may be traced in the landscape of memorialization in early twentieth-century Egypt. In focusing on the Mamluk Beys under Ottomans rule, Ottomanist and monarchist historians and intellectuals tended to give salience to the backwardness and oppression of the Mamluk Beys in order to strengthen their ideological and political agendas (the glorification of the Ottoman Empire as a merciful and pious protector of Egypt in the face of Western colonization, or the elevation of Muḥammad ‘Alī as an authentic reformer and savior, who led Egypt toward progress and development, respectively).

By contrast, in stressing the triumph of the great Mamluk Sultans, nationalist historians and intellectuals presented the territorial expansions and victories against the Mongols and the Crusaders as historical evidence of the glory of Egypt. These positive depictions negate the conventional assumptions that most Egyptian historians perceived the Mamluks in a negative manner. Thus, the apparent objective of nationalist historians and intellectuals was to redefine Egyptian identity by reconstructing a national-historical memory for the emerging Egyptian nation-state.

As a result, the historical memory of the Mamluks is shaped in a rather contradictory manner: it is presented in terms of treachery, evil, and decadence, but also as a source of glory, pride, nascent Egyptian nationalism, and hope for the future. In other words, most monarchist and academic historians and intellectuals used the Mamluk Beys as an epitome of evil, oppression, and tyranny. ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr is an exception to the rule and is presented as a nationalist hero. By contrast, nationalist historians elevated the Mamluk Sultans and ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr as emblems of Egyptian nationalism, whereas the Mamluk Beys are de-legitimized as dictators and anti-nationalists. Such blatantly contradictory images of the Mamluks—that is, evil versus good—are the creation of a turbulent Egypt in which many historians and intellectuals with different or conflicting viewpoints on modernity and the nation-state struggled for the promotion of their beliefs.

As the case study of the Mamluks undoubtedly indicates, the fervor for the past surpasses market forces or international politics. History successfully responds to all kinds of identities and necessity, from a better understanding of ourselves and our world, to answers about who we were, what we have to do now, and even what we will be. It is therefore no wonder that many nations have found great interest in representation of the past, in order to identify themselves, define modernity, and create nationalist thought.² History certainly offers many resources not only for the modernity program or the legitimization of the Egyptian monarchy, but also for the shaping of nationalism. The historical memory recovered from the past becomes a driving force of change and a means of constructing new values and ideas, and helps to cope with present difficulties and bring the nation into being. By introducing a highly selective attitude to the past, alternating between rejection and acceptance, suppression and elaboration, remembering and forgetting, the diverse agents of memory have reconstructed a new national memory and tradition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this process, a new nation relies heavily on both invented history and tradition.³

What maintains and fosters nation is the shared commemoration of the nation's splendid achievements and the shared sorrow over its defeats. The deeper history seems to reach into the past, the more concrete and durable the nation appears and the worthier its claims.⁴ Each particular vestige of the past eventually perishes, but all are collectively immortal. Whether it is commemorated or rejected, remembered or ignored, the past is omnipresent.⁵

In this respect, the Egyptians are no exception. The contradictory, and in some cases paradoxical, understandings and presentations of the Mamluks are a product of the struggle of ideological hegemony fought among various social agents.

NOTES

1. John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 1992), p. 13.
2. Margaret Macmillan, *Dangerous Game: The Use and Abuses of History* (New York: A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2009), p. 6.
3. Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995), p. 3.
4. Margaret Macmillan (2009), op. cit., pp. 81–82.
5. David Lowenthal, *Past is Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. xv.

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History ²	16	Primary, secondary	1920–1949
Arabic Reader ³	4	Secondary	1921–1947

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