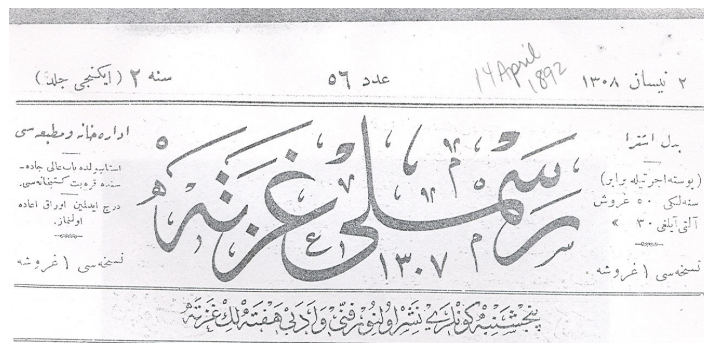


Japan's Progress Reified: Modernity and Arab Dissent in the Ottoman Empire

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The apparent success of Meiji Japan's rapid modernization project in the latter half of the nineteenth century did not go unnoticed by inhabitants of Ottoman lands concerned with their Empire's survival, including Ottoman statesmen and political activists determined to achieve the same results.[1] After the Restoration of 1868, the Japanese continued to resist Western imperialism and preserved their independence, promulgated a Constitution, provided modern, universal, compulsory education to the citizenry, and created a conscripted, technologically superior military that demonstrated Japan's newfound power through victories over China in 1895 and Russia in 1905. For the provincial Arab population who shared these hopes to see Islamic civilization in its current Ottoman expression reclaim former glories, and who were becoming more aware of themselves as Arabs within a larger Ottoman-Islamic society, Japan served as an instructive model. The East Asian nation came to represent the potential of non-European peoples everywhere to realize modernity through the proper assimilative balance of indigenous (read: Eastern) culture and Western technological know-how and application.[2] Japan was believed to have simultaneously repelled the West while borrowing from it the necessary material attributes so that Japanese moral values were not lost as Japan assumed its place among the Great Powers. Japanese ancestry, character traits, and patriotic behavior were considered bases of the country's national strength.

Portrait of Japanese Meiji Emperor in military garb, in the Ottoman Turkish journal *Resimli Gazete* circa 1892.



زاپونیا ایمپراطوری حشمتلو موجهیتو حضرتلری

The degree to which this narrative of Japan appearing in Ottoman and Arabic sources was historically accurate is not so significant.[3] More relevant is its usefulness as an illustrative tool for discerning how the provincial Ottoman Arab elites from urban areas around Damascus and Beirut formulated their understanding of modernity at the turn of the twentieth century, and how implicit in this understanding was a distinct conception of Arab identity that would become increasingly politicized in the years following the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. Discursive images of Japan and the Japanese appearing in the Arab press after 1909 came to reflect the particular characteristics Arab writers highlighted to denote their aspirations for a similar progression towards nationhood and modernity. They also echoed the dissatisfaction felt by



Frequently published image of the admired Japanese Admiral Togo, hero of the Russo-Japanese War.

الاميرال طوغو

قائد العمارة اليابانية في الشرق الاقصى

Ottoman Arabs as the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) regime implemented policies designed to centralize the administration that were interpreted as Turkist-inspired discrimination against Arabs along ethnic lines. Comparisons of Japanese accomplishments with Ottoman shortcomings in the pages of the press subtly conveyed the sense of frustration experienced by alienated middle-class Arab journalists. In critiquing the CUP by deployment of the analogy of modern Japan, a country whose statesmen the Ottoman Unionists respected and with whom they identified,[4] Arabs in the Ottoman provinces were taking part in the production of a discourse the Young Turks themselves had popularized and

the CUP political organ had proliferated before and after the deposition of Abdülhamid II: the notion of “Eastern” progress that guaranteed survival in a Western-dominated world, and that had been most definitively achieved by Japan. In essence, the Ottoman Unionists and their Arab opposition in the provinces converged upon this same Japanese referent of modernity.

Unlike the CUP, however, who touted themselves as the Ottoman equivalents of the Meiji leadership, the Arabs juxtaposed Japan and Japanese against a

failing Ottoman Empire whose leadership had undertaken a superficial program of Westernizing reform and modernization without the proper grounding in Ottoman-Islamic culture.

The Arabic Press and Dissemination of a Morality Model

A word about the role played by Arabic periodical literature in cultivating a social and political consciousness among the Empire's Arab population is in order. First, the emergence of the Arabic press conformed to the pattern of print-capitalism very much as Benedict Anderson has described.[5] Previous scholarship on the development of nationalism in general and on Arabism and Arab nationalism in the Empire in particular has decisively demonstrated the didactic nature of the press at this time as a forum for "imagining the community" among a sector of the population—in the Ottoman-Arab case, by encouraging pride in Arab language, literature, and cultural heritage while still identifying oneself as a member of a larger Ottoman society—and as an outlet for the public expression of political views when possible.[6]

Second, in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire witnessed a growth in the publishing industry and in subscription purchases despite attempts by Sultan Abdülhamid II to curb free expression through stringent censorship laws.[7] Prior to his ascension to the throne, the city of Beirut had already become a site for many newspapers owned, edited, or published by Lebanese Christian journalists. This trend continued in Lebanon after 1876, albeit gradually; Egypt very soon became the center of a flourishing Arabic press (produced by both Christians and Muslims) during the Hamidian period.[8] In the wake of Abdülhamid II's suspension of the Ottoman constitution and Parliament in 1878, under the pretext of war with Russia, many professionals and journalists from Lebanon and Syria, frustrated by religio-ethnic tensions, the lack of economic opportunity, or the Ottoman censor, chose to emigrate to the freer press environment of British-occupied Egypt (from 1882 onwards) rather than endure life in the provinces. For Fāris Nimr and Ya'qūb Şarruf, for example, founders of the famous Arabic scientific journal, *al-Muqataṭaf* that was published initially in Beirut in 1876, Cairo proved a better location to continue their publication without interference; they shifted its offices to Egypt in 1884.[9] Greek Orthodox Christian émigré Jurjī Zaydān also published his Arabic scientific and literary monthly *al-Hilāl* in Cairo.[10] These prominent Arabic periodicals, as well as a host of other newspapers and journals published in Egypt by Ottoman Arab emigrants or by Egyptian nationalists, nonetheless made their way into the hands of the Ottoman Arab readership of the Empire.[11] Generally speaking, the meager press that did exist in the environs of Lebanon and Syria prior to 1908 operated

at the mercy of Ottoman authorities who were vested with the power to close the publishing offices of any editor whose newspaper expressed what were considered to be “seditious” sentiments. As a result, most of the local Arabic press published printed news and analysis considered unthreatening to the Sultan and his administration: for example, cables on international events or conflicts, explanations of recent scientific discoveries abroad, or relatively politically benign exposés on various foreign countries, their respective dignitaries, and their histories and cultures. Articles were often reproduced from other domestic publications originating in urban centers like Cairo or Istanbul. Wires received from European capitals, from cities in the United States, and from further afield were translated and reprinted.

الامبراطوران المتحاربان امبراطور اليابان

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٢ - امبراطور اليابان



امبراطور اليابان على جواده

يدعو اليابان مملكتهم « نيبون » أي «شرق الشمس» ويسمونها أحياناً نيبون العظمى كما يسمى الانكليز مملكتهم برطانيا العظمى لانها مؤتمه من جزر نيبون اكبرها . ويلقبون امبراطور اليابان « كرناي » ويعرف في الخارج باسم الميكادو أي « الداب الشريف » على نحو تسعة حكومة الدرلة الثمانية بالباب العالي . واليابان بكرهون التفخيم في القاهم

والامبراطور الحالي اسمه « موتسو هيتو » ولد في كيوتو سنة ١٨٥٣ فهو الآن في الثانية والخمسين من عمره وخلف اياه على كرسي الملك سنة ١٨٦٧ وهو في الخامسة

القيصر نقولا الثاني

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القيصر نقولا الثاني بلباس القوزاق

فصدر أمرها بالعفو عنه ولما جاء لمقابلتها بعد العفو قال لها اني ارجو جلاتك في امر صغير قالت ما هو قال ان اسمحي لي بنظرة من كوه نور او هي تلك الالماسة العظيمة فاني اشتاق لرؤيتها اكثر من شوقي لرؤية الوطن والحلان فامرت الملكة باحضار الجوهرة وقدمتها له فاخذها بيده وجعل يقلبها ويعجب بباهر نورها ثم ردها الى الملكة قائلاً اني بكل احترام اقدم هذه الهدية العظيمة الى امباطورة الهند وملكتي المعظمة فقبلتها الملكة باسمه شاكراً وانصرف الرجل . وابن هذا الامير الهندي اسمه البرنس فكتور دوليب سنغ ربي في انكلترا واقرن بانه الاورد كرفرتي احد اشراف الانكليز من عهد غير بعيد وجاء القطار المصري متزها غير مرة » اه

Article on the Japanese Emperor and Russian Czar appearing in Jurjī Zaydān's Arabic scientific, literary monthly *al-Hilāl* in 1904.

Studies of the life and personality of Sultan Abdülhamid II indicate that he vigorously pursued any information that would assist in preserving the

sovereignty of his Empire and his position as Ottoman ruler, whether through his vast network of informants within Ottoman lands to keep tabs on potentially subversive activities, or through the constant exercise of collecting and surveying newspapers and other printed matter to learn about the imperial schemes of European powers and the potential to resist their interference in Ottoman affairs. He had his own personal fascination with the nation of modern Japan. A look at the holdings in his private library, the views expounded by the newspaper and Palace mouthpiece, *Malûmât*, and memoirs of those close to him reveal an enthusiasm for Japan's ability to challenge the imperialist powers of Europe, demonstrated most notably when Japan stopped the advance of Czarist Russia in East Asia in 1905.[12] The Sultan had even dispatched an Ottoman military officer, Colonel Pertev Bey, to Manchuria to observe the war firsthand.[13]

Abdülhamid II looked to Japan as a pattern for non-Western morality and modernization schemes that could reassert Ottoman sovereignty in the face of both European encroachment and challenges to his authority from within.[14] In his view, Japan retained the Japanese Emperor as the custodian of Japanese culture and organizing principles much as the Sultan considered himself the center of Ottoman-Islamic political loyalties. While he permitted *Malûmât* and a few other periodicals to discuss aspects of Japanese technological achievements and indigenous morality (embodied in the Emperor himself), there was a dangerous reality imbedded in Japan's recent political revolution that was conspicuously absent from most indigenous Ottoman press coverage of the Japanese at this time: Japan had abandoned the traditional Tokugawa past, overthrowing its absolutist Shogun in favor of a reformed secular, parliamentary system and modernizing Meiji statesmen resembling European counterparts. Additionally, it was rumored that Sultan Abdülhamid II was sensitive about the defeat of the absolutist Russian Czar by Japan in 1905 and the political implications of this event for his reign.[15] This explains the relative lack of discussion of Japanese political institutions in this period in periodical literature published in areas firmly under Ottoman control, such as Damascus or Beirut.[16]

Despite the overall suppression of the press in the Arab provinces of the Empire prior to 1908,[17] here and there the historian can find some discussion of Japanese political achievements that might be construed as controversial by the contemporary Ottoman regime. Jurjî Niqûlâ Bâz (1882–1959), a Beiruti who edited the journal *al-Hasnâ* ' (1909–12) and published articles in women's periodicals,[18] delivered an "historical" lecture to the Benevolent Sun Society in Beirut in 1902 called *The Progress of Japan*, which was later published in the local newspapers *al-Maḥabba* and *al-Rā'id*. [19] In it Bâz traced Japan's

transformation into a modern state, interjecting into his historical narrative editorial remarks on the extraordinary character of the Japanese, in contrast to what he considered shortcomings “in us.”[20] Bāz claimed that the Japanese government always recognized what was most beneficial, most advantageous for the people, whether it be allowing freedom of religion or building schools to teach modern sciences. The Japanese love of science and respect for the learned led to knowledge being associated with action as one of the most important and fundamental principles behind their success. Bāz claimed “the Japanese did not consider any act beneficial or useful to their country unless they could manifest it from the realm of speculation to the realm of execution.”[21] Japanese strength of character combined with good government policy was the secret behind their success.

Implicit in Bāz’s discussion of Japanese political history was a subtext of anti-Hamidian thoughts that certainly might have concerned the Ottoman censor for its political content: first, the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and victory for the Mikadō meant the country would “have a respite from oppression and tyranny.”[22] Japan was said to have exchanged “a tyrannical, absolutist regime” for one with “constitutional authority” and the inauguration of parliamentary government with a House and Senate of three hundred members.[23] Considering the pressure placed on Sultan Abdülhamid II by his Young Turk critics to reinstate the 1876 constitution at the turn of the century, public statements such as this one were likely a blatant criticism of continuing autocracy in Ottoman lands. But Bāz also mentioned another sensitive issue that currently impeded Ottoman authority. Japan’s progress, he argued, was dependent upon the establishment of true sovereignty through international treaties:

Japan entered the ranks of the Great Powers upon [signing] the Shimonoseki Peace Treaty with China in 1895. First it abrogated Consular privileges on its soil and made foreigners and [Japanese] citizens equal before the law, in consideration of national rights.[24]

The Ottoman inability to nullify the Capitulations with European Powers had been a frustration to the Sublime Porte for decades. Japanese success in this endeavor was the basis for rapid progress and political and economic development, in contrast to the Ottoman failure to protect subjects’ rights and the Empire’s subsequent misfortunes in the international arena. Bāz concluded his speech by pondering what was different between Japan and the Ottoman Empire, particularly given Ottoman proximity to Europe and the longevity of relations between the two. “Do we not have a just government and a sovereign who loves to advance his people?” he quipped rhetorically.[25] His response,

quoted below, may have cleared him from censure by the Ottoman authorities, but the underlying tone of his words nonetheless could be construed as a subtle criticism of the current political situation:

Yes, yes, we have a sovereign fervent in the welfare of his nation. Vigilant over the advancement of his people, he loves the progress of his sons. And we also are in an era of enlightenment. But it is habit and restraint. It is imitation and separatism, a lack of patriotism, and self-love that are the issues dropping a curtain over our eyes, leaving us unchanged. Whereas our brothers, the Japanese, progress day by day, year by year, we are content to observe their news. We console ourselves that they are Easterners and in the East are found states that tend to themselves, preserving their independence. It is necessary to discover the arm of determination and initiative and to strike out under a banner of unity. To resist the spread of evil customs. To reconcile knowledge and action. And provide well for educating our youth, men of the future, and plant in our minds sound principles and love of homeland and self-reliance, like the Japanese.[26]

The Beirut monthly founded by Jesuit priest Father Luis Shaykhu in 1898, *al-Mashriq* (The Orient), has been compared to both of the scientific, literary Arabic journals, *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Hilāl*, published by Syrian Christian émigrés in Egypt.[27] Articles on Japan in the Christian Arab *al-Mashriq* were among the few to appear at all in Greater Syria around the time of the 1905 Russo-Japanese war; given the sectarian rift in the Levant between French-supported Catholic Arabs and Greek Orthodox Christians under Russian protection, it would be no surprise that this journal subtly rejoiced at Japan's victory over Russian forces in Port Arthur.[28] Typical of pre-1908 Revolution Beirut, the heart of Arab literary renaissance culture but under watchful Ottoman *mektûpçîs*, images presented in this monthly reflected the focus of the writers on what they conceived as a rational, scientific examination of the Japanese nation. Contributing writers concentrated on ethnic, linguistic, and historical defining characteristics of the Japanese to mimic their Christian Arab orientation towards similar notions of Arab identity. According to the Jesuit fathers, ethnicity, morality, and language bound the Japanese together, as did their indigenous spirituality, which was significant insofar as it formed a Japanese resoluteness and firm will to reform and modernize the country.[29] Thanks to this moral resolve and not to any material advantage, the Japanese had redesigned their capitulatory privileges granted to foreign powers so that extraterritoriality was prohibited, yet foreigners could move about the country, buy property, and engage in commerce freely under Japanese law.[30] In these ways, Japan had proven its

civility by conforming to nineteenth-century ideas of international law, thereby gaining acceptance from the Western Powers. In addition, the Japanese were now endowed with a parliamentary government that further guaranteed civilian rights and private property, in accordance with European principles.[31] While not directly challenging the authorities with politically sensitive comments, nonetheless implicit in *al-Mashriq*'s discourse on Japan was an appeal for a more liberal, representative government. Both Bāz and Father Shaykhu ascribed the implementation of just, constitutional principles of government in Japan to the tenacity of Japanese moral character, which effected a patriotic spirit. This was a typical view of a variety of Ottoman writers in this period before the 1908 Revolution who observed Japan and whose orientations, while typically Ottomanist, ranged from Islamic modernist to secular Westernizer; they believed generally that Ottoman solidarity could elicit the same process in the Empire, and some even expressed the conclusion that this would result at last in the reinstatement of parliament.[32]

Politicized commentary on Japan in the Damascene and Beirut press was generally the exception rather than the rule prior to 1908. Before this, Japan functioned primarily as a romanticized trope of anti-Western, pan-Asian solidarity among a provincial Arab population receiving news reports from various sources on the happenings surrounding the Russo-Japanese war. A common understanding of Russia as the timeless enemy of their Empire, for which their sons were drafted into the military and died fighting the Czar's forces, united Ottoman officials and the peasantry in this pan-Asian solidarity.[33] People enthusiastically expressed admiration for Japan in the course of their daily exchanges about Japanese victories in battle.[34] Parents named children after Japanese war heroes.[35] A Druze sheikh and his entourage in a remote village in Lebanon who rejoiced at Russian defeats went so far as to claim the Japanese were actually an army of Druzes prophesied to arise out of the East to reconquer the world![36] Poetry memorized and recited by schoolchildren and adults conveyed a distinct message about the Japanese nation, its moral fiber, and its success against Western imperialism.[37] For Fāris al-Khūrī, a Syrian Protestant lawyer and dragoman for the British Consulate who eventually became involved in Syrian politics in the post-World War I era, a fictional old Japanese woman and her warrior-son were evidence of the Orient challenging Western political and moral hegemony, through engagement in warfare and the supreme sacrifice for the nation: he wrote to Syrian journalist Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī (then living in Cairo) in 1904 that

Today I read a short story *al-Diyā* ' published called "The Old Japanese Woman" in which she committed suicide in order not to obstruct her son from plunging into the deluge of war. I saw it as an extraordinarily

good portrayal, and the quintessential line from it was a saying in Japanese: “if we are yellow, what harm is it for us? Does yellowing spoil gold?” If you come across the latest issue of *al-Diyā*, read it and take pleasure in it.[38]

For al-Khūrī, “yellow” (a reference to the prevailing European fear of “Yellow Peril”) was merely an outward manifestation of Eastern “gold”: the inner purity, the noble virtues, and the superior character of the Japanese, who currently represented the apex of Asian culture. Combining superior Eastern heritage with modern science had allowed Japan in effect to move beyond the ephemeral achievements of the West, reversing the inferior position of Asia in the world. Al-Khūrī was moved enough by Japanese heroism to write his own lengthy panegyric about the Russo-Japanese War shortly thereafter.[39]

Politicizing the Japanese Trope

The 1908 Ottoman constitutional revolution demonstrated that its supporters no longer subscribed to the seemingly timeless legitimacy of an Islamic polity headed by an Ottoman Sultan-Caliph. In the modern era, ideas from the French Revolution demanded that a state guarantee its citizenry individual rights by providing a constitutional arrangement that included representative government. Formerly the *millet* system had been a way to manage the various religious communities in the multinational Ottoman Empire.[39A] In the twentieth century, however, provision for parliamentary government seemed even more imperative for equal treatment of individuals from different backgrounds. The increasing awareness of an ethnolinguistic communal bond among the Arabs in Ottoman lands fueled this desire for a representative administration that would in a sense coincide with political recognition of Arab cultural specificity within the Islamic-Ottoman polity.

In the immediate aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, a relatively short-lived sentiment of exuberant optimism and of confidence in the continued existence of the Ottoman Empire as a multiethnic, multireligious polity prevailed. New cultural clubs and political associations were founded.[40] Spurred on by the knowledge that the 1876 Ottoman constitution had now been reinstated and that parliament would reconvene, political activists and intellectuals in the Arab provinces of the Empire believed with certainty that their place in this rejuvenated Ottoman confederation would be guaranteed by their participation in the exercise of power, in part as elected representatives in the Ottoman parliament. Their enthusiasm for the newly reestablished Ottoman political system and the freedoms it was expected to cultivate was aptly demonstrated with the numeric explosion of the Arab

political press in provincial urban areas such as Beirut and Damascus. Arabic periodical literature in this region went from a mere handful of Arabic newspapers and journals before 1908, mostly published in Beirut, to roughly ten times that in several urban areas after 1908. Articles expounded upon domestic news and international events; writers and editors simultaneously put forth their views with pedagogical intent—to enlighten the readership regarding constitutionalism and parliamentary government, to emphasize the value of modern education, and to explicate the determinants of identity—all contributing factors to the meaning of modern progress among an Arab population gradually awakening to the ideas of nationalism.

Members of this provincial Ottoman Arab middle class were influenced in their identity formation both by the previously-mentioned Arab literary awakening earlier in the nineteenth century, and by Islamic modernist and *salafī* thought as propounded by such influential figures as Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, and Rashīd Riḍā.[41] As a consequence, most of the journalists and political activists in this rising middle class tended to acknowledge the role of the Arabs in Islamic history and culture while still strongly adhering to a non-separatist doctrine of Ottomanism; that is, they viewed themselves as loyal, patriotic citizens of an Ottoman-Islamic polity which respected their status as the descendants of the forefathers of Islam. According to Corinne Blake’s study of Syrian Arabs at the Ottoman school for civil service (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*), graduation from this academy had provided one avenue for entrance into the Ottoman elite that dominated the administrative and military spheres of government in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[42] Syrian Arab students such as Shukrī al-‘Asalī (later a political activist elected to Ottoman Parliament in 1911), ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Ingilīzī, and Sāti’ al-Husrī (later an official in the Ottoman Ministry of Education) associated frequently with non-Arabs in the academy whose socioeconomic backgrounds resembled theirs, cultivating a sense of solidarity that would preclude ethnic differences. Nonetheless, while these Arab graduates penetrated the ranks of the culturally Ottoman upper class, for many of them, their sense of possessing an Arab identity simultaneously became more pronounced.[43] Supportive of or directly involved in the Young Turk opposition movement against Abdülhamid II,[44] recipients of a modern education, and somewhat socially mobile thanks to this or other connections, they anticipated an unhindered share in governing with their revolutionary cohorts of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) after the reinstatement of a parliamentary regime. But, as Hasan Kayalı describes, after the revolution, competition for political power ensued between the Palace, the Porte (the Ottoman cabinet), and the CUP, and between civilian and army officials; provincial Arabs were affected dramatically by these struggles.[45]

The counterrevolution of 1909 united conservative forces in the Empire who attempted to rescind what they perceived as “anti-Islamic” actions of the CUP in government. Centered in Istanbul, Kayalı suggests that the movement had significant sympathy in Damascus.[46] This failed counter-coup ultimately resulted in the deposition of Abdülhamid II. Despite touting an official ideology of Ottomanism in order to elicit unity from the citizenry, the CUP, recognizing that its political authority was still dangerously fragile, decided to crush both pro-Hamidian and liberal (anti-CUP) opposition through severe means. Restrictive laws concerning freedom of press and of association in the Empire were enacted in 1909.[47] The ruling CUP subsequently purged Ottoman officials perceived as either loyal to the former Sultan or else a potential political challenge to the fledgling regime: dismissal and replacement of former officials (many of whom were Arab) with “reliable” new ones (often Turk) resembled ethnic discrimination on the part of the Ottoman authorities and fueled resentment among Syrian Arabs.[48] The Unionist government’s recentralization program in the Empire after 1909, including censorship and closure of newspapers deemed “un-Ottoman,” curbed political participation of provincial middle-class Arabs. Kayalı argues that both interested European observers and dissatisfied Arab elites portrayed CUP authorities as un-Islamic, and their policies as increasingly Turkish nationalist: this vision of Empire supported CUP political agendas and alienated the non-Turkish, Muslim population of the Empire from its Unionist government.[49] Nonetheless, Hanioglu’s enlightening work on the Young Turks demonstrates the animosity toward Arabs expressed by the inner circle of high-ranking Turkish members of the CUP, and the possibility that the Turks had, at the least, a sense of superiority, and at most, an intention of discrimination. To these non-Arab Ottoman individuals similarly inspired by Japan’s example, certainly Ottoman survival was not linked to any Arabo-Islamic convention, but to perpetuating secular, elite Turkish leadership in the Ottoman state.[50]

Though from this point onwards the Arabs in the provinces often seemed to be divided between supporting or opposing CUP policies, the consolidation in 1911 of several political parties into an opposition called the Liberty and Entente (*Hürriyet ve İtilâf*) that had substantial Arab membership indicates that optimism was giving way to Arab disgruntlement concerning the CUP on several fronts.[51] Disillusionment with the lack of progress towards equality in Ottoman politics following the revolution caused Syrian Arab provincial elites such as al-‘Asalī and al-İnglīzī to join a secret society in 1909 called *al-Qahtaniyya*. This society proposed an Arab kingdom be established with a separate administrative apparatus while remaining an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, presumably to be governed by educated Ottoman-Syrian

Arabs such as themselves.[52] The notion of Arab autonomy had seemed inimical to al-‘Asalī at first because of his conviction that Turk and Arab futures were inextricably linked by the desire to rejuvenate the Ottoman Empire. But his belief around 1909 that the Arabs were not yet ready for complete independence would radically alter when, after 1911, Arab graduates of the *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* got promoted through the bureaucratic ranks more slowly, heightening the sense of discrimination at the hands of the CUP.[53]

Arab discontent over CUP governance was often reflected in opinions expressed in the pages of the provincial press. At the same time, and exacerbated by disappointment with the system, contributors to Arabic publications played a didactic role in defining a more distinct Arab identity for their readers. Some Arab writers blatantly criticized the Ottoman Empire’s steady decline, pointing out the symptoms of failure to protect its provinces from European assault, or the severity of CUP policies in the bureaucracy and education system at the Arabs’ expense. The Ottoman authorities were obviously concerned about the ramifications of Arab journalists’ words.[54] Clear expressions of criticism or outright opposition often had severe consequences. For example, initially one of the more vocal in its complaints, Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī’s Damascus newspaper *al-Muqtabas* had articles criticizing the Ottoman polity and disparaging Turkish language and culture as early as 1909.[55] Confirmed to be anti-CUP from 1911 onwards,[56] his newspaper was often under threat of closure, and was shut down (and reopened under the new name *al-Umma* for a short period) in 1909 because of government dissatisfaction. It was closed again in 1913 and operated under the name *al-Qabas*, with Shukri al-Asali serving as editor.[57] Kurd ‘Alī himself was forced to flee to Cairo on several occasions to avoid arrest; upon his second return and the restart of *al-Muqtabas*, he seems to have reached an entente with the Ottoman authorities (particularly Cemal Pasha) that saved him from execution in 1915–16 and allowed him to continue this publication until 1917.[58]

Provincial Arab intellectuals often attempted to word their disappointment and frustration over political exclusion in the Empire in more discreet terms in order for them to continue publication and to avoid arrest or other punishment. Because of this danger, Arabic press articles after 1909 often centered around subtle discussions of what were the true foundations of modernity for Eastern nations and used the example of modern Japan to illustrate their point.[59] Their tactics included discussions of Japan and its achievements, both domestically and abroad, in comparison with Ottoman shortcomings, and comparisons of Japanese and Arab cultural similarities. An interesting parallel was often highlighted: on the one hand, Buddhist and Confucian-inspired

morality and perseverance of the Japanese, their respect for Shinto belief, and the reverence of Japanese ancestry predisposed Japan to progress politically and materially; on the other, the need for the Ottoman Empire to recognize and honor the distinct place of the Arabs as the founders of the Ottoman state's greatest attributes—Islam, the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad, Arabo-Islamic civilization and heritage, Islamic morality—all of which would yield similar progress in the Ottoman context.

Japan's application of its moral characteristics had made possible a sincere and successful effort to become modern in the realms of government administration and education while adhering to its indigenous culture, the ultimate source of its power. In "Future of the East," published in Aḥmad Ārif al-Zayn's Lebanese journal *al-'Irḩān* 1910, the author wrote of Japanese physical and spiritual strength that made them powerful enough to defeat Russia in war and to develop their own products and institutions at home without prolonged use of foreigners, demonstrating the potential for other Asian nations to progress.[60] Japan had advanced "to the highest degree, Europe rivaled it as a mutual competitor, and [Japan's] progress is spiritual and moral no less than material, it is not excessive, not false, and not fraudulent."[61] Implicit in these remarks was a sentiment that progress (European or Ottoman?) could be specious and deceptive if not grounded in the proper ethical basis. The author complained,

We do not strive to maintain the wonder which God has bestowed upon us, and if we had used our minds in this fashion, then our nation would have been among the utmost nations, for the propensity for progress present in the East is totally nonexistent in the West, and this invariable truth is as immutable as the sun in broad daylight.[62]

For this writer, true progress was only possible in the East, when spirituality and material life were appropriately melded together to create the most advanced civilization. The spiritual strength of the Japanese people was demonstrated by the fatherly stance of the government towards citizens, and the familial sincerity they reciprocated, that

yielded a firm alliance and a bond between the souls of the Japanese by connections of love and unity, giving them a taste of life's comforts and pushing them to put above everything else, in a word, the welfare of the nation and its success.[63]

The power of spiritual unity allowed the Japanese to hire foreigners to assist in modernizing the country without succumbing to the temptations of Western

influence that might be detrimental to Japanese society. This strength stemmed in part from an unwillingness to tamper with the Japanese people's faith, and from maintaining a certain flexibility to regard spirituality as a product of individual hopes and beliefs.[64] Ultimately the author's words were intended to admonish Ottomans for their lack of open-mindedness: though the Ottoman Empire had constitutional government, he wrote, "do not make religion a reason for division among people, for changing their hearts. Let the Japanese spirit, their tolerance in religion, and their aspiration to continue their liberty and preserve their independence creep into you." [65] Japanese ancestral solidarity coupled with religious tolerance provided the perfect foundation upon which to build a modern, patriotic, self-reliant nation.

This Arabic discourse on Japan fulfilled a dual purpose: first, it served as encouragement directed at the Arab reading audience in developing a contemporary (Arab) national ethos through proper Ottoman education that took into account the Arabs, whether Christian or Muslim, as ancestral "custodians" of a universalized Islamic culture. And second, it implied a negative evaluation of Ottoman attempts to adopt Western institutions thus far. In "What We Took from the Westerners," an author faulted Ottoman society for carelessly trying to adopt unsuitable Western ideas. Whereas the Ottoman Empire degraded itself by merely imitating Western behavior, Japan carefully selected appropriate concepts, profited immensely from them, and became one of the Great Powers.[66] Supported by the state government and the general population, dutiful Japanese students even traveled in search of Western science and technology in order to deliver progress to their nation.[67] Implicit in these articles were negative views of Ottomans who disingenuously pursued modern progress through superficial adoption of Western institutional patterns; indiscriminate borrowing undercut indigenous morality while not providing for the true benefits of Western civilization. Arab writers contributing to *al-Muqtabas* continually contrasted this with Japan's successful assimilation of its indigenous culture and Western forms of knowledge in a school system that forged patriotic citizens as the true basis for modernity.[68]

Both Shukrī al-'Asalī and Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī recognized the necessity of modern European education while voicing concern over the failure of secular Ottoman institutions of higher learning, which catered only to those seeking future bureaucratic positions in the government. It tempted many Syrian Arabs to adopt merely superficial aspects of Western civilization; it drove others to attend foreign schools instead, robbing them of their patriotism (via instruction in European vernaculars). All of this led to decadence by eroding traditional morality and Arabo-Islamic culture. Japan's example illustrated for Kurd 'Alī the need to reform the system along modern lines while reinforcing inherent

moral character that fostered patriotic sentiment.[69] Certain moral precepts set the Japanese apart from others; these could be considered the elements of native culture that inspired patriotism.[70] The ultimate objective of Japan's education was to "refine the youngster's soul and instill in him upright principles to which the Japanese attach great importance," for upon this the advancement or decline of their kingdom depended.[71] In Japan moral behavior was rigidly defined, not in purely religious terms (as he saw it to be in the Ottoman Empire), but in an ancient code of societal conduct that had persisted in Japan to that day. This indigenous code defined the direction toward which newly acquired knowledge should be channeled; it was the moral obligation to preserve the nation.

According to a review of his ideas from the journal *al-Muqtabas*, Kurd 'Alī's theory of knowledge assimilation as it related to civilization was a linear, evolutionary progression. He believed that all civilizations developed based on reciprocal exchange and enrichment, and civilizations did not arise in opposition to one another.[72] They merely borrowed positive aspects from one culture and refined them for their own betterment. The greatness of the Arabs in ancient times was in part due to their status as a source of knowledge from which other cultures have borrowed. Thus the current East-West confrontation of civilizations was actually an historic synthesis of cultures which would produce a higher level of civilization, or "modernity." [73] This higher civilization would absorb the modern science and technology of the West, while preserving the cultural superiority of the East. Correct administration of government policy based on these principles of modernity yielded results to which the Ottoman Empire should aspire. Kurd 'Alī believed this process had already occurred in Japan, and that the same assimilation process was currently at work in Egypt.[74]

Kurd 'Alī accepted the Ottoman Empire as a viable political order provided it allowed for diversity of language and culture within its lands.[75] But he felt strongly the need for government provision of the most modern national system of instruction in the students' native language, in order to affirm their culture and identity. He saw the Arab community as a distinctive group within the Ottoman state, deserving of an education in Arabic. The CUP's maintenance of the constitutional clause requiring Ottoman Turkish as the language of instruction in the state schools aggravated the delicate relationship between Arab and Turk and caused Arabs with Ottomanist leanings to question the logic of supporting a state that seemed to discriminate against them. Kurd 'Alī's articles on education and specifically on Japan's education system were either subtle criticisms of CUP policy, or suggestions to the

government made in a non-threatening but illustrative way. In the introduction to a series of articles on “National Education,” he explained that

The question of education is among the most important social questions in the world. . . .National (*waṭanī*) education is the most progressive type of education because of its preservation of races, languages, customs, and nationalities. Because of this you find the struggle over this issue exceedingly great between the dominant nations and the defeated. . . .The Algerians only complain about France because it intends to annihilate their race, language and religion by teaching French principles and language.[76]

Despite his enduring Ottomanist attitudes, Kurd ‘Alī insinuated a parallel between Arabs under the CUP regime and colonized peoples in this discussion; the implication was that Arab national heritage, so necessary for cultivating patriotism, was being neglected under the present Ottoman system.

Epilogue

Apparently the Ottoman authorities were listening to Arab dissent over this issue. In 1913 the regulation concerning Ottoman Turkish as the language of instruction in the state school system was repealed.[77] Among other methods, the provincial Arab press had utilized the Japanese model, a model that clearly resonated within the ranks of the CUP, to argue their position concerning education, moral character, and national progress. This was a “language” the CUP could understand. They had utilized the same “Japan tool” in their earlier diatribes against the Sultan Abdülhamid II.⁷⁸ Arab writings on Japanese ancestral reverence, cultural distinctiveness, and material progress were to promote respect for the rights of those descended from the original creators of Arabo-Islamic civilization—the Arabs themselves. Ottoman Arabs generally remained attached to this Islamic heritage as an inclusive and essential identifying characteristic among their Muslim and Christian Arab brethren. As a binding principle for the rest of Ottoman society, it was an orientation also shared by some non-Arab Islamic modernists in the Empire who expressed such sentiments in the Ottoman journal *Sırât-ı Mustakîm*.^[79] However many Ottoman elites associated with the CUP regime after 1910 (most of whom were Turks) increasingly shifted away from this unifying ideology and toward a discourse of national exclusivity. Influenced by Turkic Muslim exiles from Russia such as İsmail Gaspıralı and Yusuf Akçura as well as by Social Darwinist assumptions of European racial hierarchy, the Ottomans who ruled the Empire emphasized the nature of the Japanese nation as a specifically racial entity in their writings; they made comparisons of themselves to Japan as

another racially distinct nation destined for greatness: the Turkish or Turkic peoples.[80] Inherent in the Arab view of modernity was a particular difference from the Turks in defining the characteristics of their nation. For the Arabs, it was an impossibility to separate Arab identity from their profound contributions to Ottoman society. It was not race, but rather the shared experience of Arab culture, history, and language, of Arabo-Islamic heritage and civilization, that made the Arabs who they were, and that served as the backbone of the Ottoman Empire.

Notes

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[1] For discussion of discourse on Japan that reflected political rivalries between the Hamidian regime and the Young Turks, see Renée Worringer, “‘Sick Man of Europe’ or ‘Japan of the Near East’?: Constructing Ottoman Modernity in the Hamidian and Young Turk Eras,” *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no. 2 (May 2004): 207–30.

[2] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 2, calls this a desire to “culturally re-equip” the “Eastern” nation, transforming it without a loss of distinctive identity: “The search was for a regeneration of the national culture, adapted to the requirements of progress, but retaining at the same time its distinctiveness.” There is a recognition of difference, a “moment of departure,” when it was seen that “the superiority of the West lies in the materiality of its culture, exemplified by its science, technology and love of progress. But the East is superior in the spiritual aspect of culture. True modernity for the non-European nations would lie in combining the superior material qualities of Western cultures with the spiritual greatness of the East” (51). Similarly, anticolonial nationalism “divides the world of social institutions and practices into two domains—the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the ‘outside,’ of the economy and of statecraft,

of science and technology, a domain where the West had proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. In this domain, then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an 'inner' domain bearing 'essential' marks of cultural identity. The greater one's success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one's spiritual culture. . . to fashion a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western." Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

[3] As Barbara Heldt pointed out in "Japanese in Russian Literature: Transforming Identities," in Kinya Tsuruta (ed.), *The Walls Within: Images of Westerners in Japan and Images of the Japanese Abroad* (University of British Columbia, 1988), 247: "The literary image of another country and its inhabitants, especially on the level of popular literature, is often the image held in reality. . . the literary stereotype takes on a life of its own, to the point that the images formed by domestic mental and verbal constructs dominate any emanating from the reality."

[4] See note 1.

[5] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

[6] George Antonius' *The Arab Awakening* (1938) was the first study of the *nahḍa*, the Arab literary awakening, which led to many future studies of Arab nationalism, including for example Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983); C. Ernest Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973); Marwan R. Buheiry, ed., *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890–1939* (Beirut: American University in Beirut Press, 1981); Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva Simon (eds.), *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); and many others. More recent scholarship such as James Gelvin's *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998) challenges this approach, claiming that "the attempt to locate nationalism in the region solely within the domain of nationalist elites is essentially ill-conceived" (8) because their capacity "to define and dominate the political field was ultimately circumscribed by the ability of their ideas to articulate with the aspirations of other elements of the population" (9). While Gelvin's critique does require the scholar of Arab nationalism to better situate the

activities of these literate elites within the constraints of late nineteenth-century Ottoman society (including the relative illiteracy of the masses, for example), public spaces such as the coffeehouse, the mosque, the bazaar, or private reading salons provided venues in which ideas and concepts appearing in the press filtered through to the masses, diminishing the divide between classes.

[7] See Caesar Farah, “Censorship and Freedom of Expression in Ottoman Syria and Egypt,” in William H. Haddad and William L. Ochsenswald (eds.) *Nationalism in Non-National State: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977).

[8] See Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 28–69, for an historical tracing of the growth of the Arabic press in the region in the nineteenth century.

[9] Ayalon, 53.

[10] *Al-Muqataṭaf* and *al-Hilāl* are just two of the numerous Cairo-based newspapers and journals that frequently published articles on Japan in the last decade of the nineteenth century and in the period directly surrounding the Russo-Japanese War. Other prominent publications (there are too many to list here) include Rashid Riḍā’s *al-Manār* and Muṣṭafa Kāmil’s *al-Liwā’*.

[11] Lack of space precludes lengthy discussion of the voluminous discourse on Japan appearing in the Cairo press during this era, though its tremendous influence on writers in other Ottoman provinces cannot be ignored. The distinct nature of the Egyptian discussion of Japan, affected as it was by particular historical and “national” circumstances, makes it necessary for me to deal with this topic elsewhere. For now please see my “Comparing Perceptions: Japan as Archetype for Ottoman Modernity, 1876–1918” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001), chapter 7, “Ottoman Egypt: East and West, Christian and Muslim.”

[12] Among the translations commissioned by Sultan Abdülhamid II and extant in Istanbul University Manuscript Library, see I. Hitomi, translated from French by Rıza as *Japonya Ahlāk ve Mü’essessâtına Dair Nümûne*, 1901 (Manuscript 6166); *Japonya Payitahtına bir Seyâhat*, trans. by Ahmed Neremi from Russian; *Japonya Seyâhatnâmesi*, trans. by Ahmed Neremi from French; and *Japonya’dan Kamçatka’ya Seyâhat*, from Russian.

[13] Pertev Bey, later known in the Turkish Republic as General Pertev Demirhan, published several books connected to this experience. See in Ottoman Turkish *Rus-Japon Harbinden Alınan Mâddî ve Manevî Dersler ve Japonların Esbâb-i Muzafferiyeti: Bir Millet'in Tâli'i Kendi Kuvvetindedir!* (İstanbul: Kanâ'at Kütüphanesi ve Matbaası, 1329/1911), and in Turkish (*Türk Gençliğine Armağanı*) *Japonların Asıl Kuvveti: Japonlar Niçin ve Nasıl Yükseldi?* (İstanbul, 1937) and *Hayatımın Hatırları: Rus-Japon Harbi 1904-1905 (Birinci Kısım): İstanbul'dan Ayrılışımdan Port Arthur Muharasına Kadar* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Ebüzziya, 1943).

[14] Selim Deringil's *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1998) and Benjamin C. Fortna's "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, no. 3 (2000): 369–393, address the extent to which Hamidian Islamist policy was an attempt to shore up political power and modernize the Empire through a program of Islamic, scientific education and anti-Western, pan-Islamic propaganda.

[15] According to Sir Charles Eliot, a British expatriate, "I have heard on good authority that when the Sultan's officers congratulated him on the defeat of his old enemy Russia, he replied that he did not by any means consider the result of the war a matter of congratulation, because he and the Czar were the only autocratic monarchs in Europe, and the defeat of the Czar meant a blow to the principle of autocracy." From his *Turkey in Europe*, new ed. (London: Edward Arnold, 1908), 426.

[16] Also missing from the press within the Sultan's reach but noticeable in the Cairo newspapers and in Young Turk opposition papers was discussion of the "imminent" conversion of the Japanese Emperor and his people to Islam. Several writers commented upon the subsequent potential for the Meiji Emperor to assume the post as a more capable "Caliph of Muslims" than the current Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II should this occur. See the following: Abdullah Cevdet, "Rêve Réalisable," *İctihâd* 12 (June 1906): 179–82; "Japonya ve Müslümânlik," *Bâlkân* 121 (19 January 1907): 2; see also articles in Rashîd Ridâ's *al-Manâr* on Japanese conversion to Islam.

[17] Prior to the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, twenty-six papers were published in Beirut during Abdülhamid II's reign whereas Tripoli produced only two, Damascus three and Aleppo three. After the revolution, in 1908 approximately thirty new papers were founded in Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Haifa, and Baghdad; another thirty-two papers were founded in

1909 in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Baghdad. These figures are from Philippe de Tarrāzī, *Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfa al-‘Arabīyya*, vol. 3 (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘at al-Adabīyya, 1914, reprint 1933).

[18] Beth Baron, *The Women’s Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society and the Press* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 77. Bāz’s writings frequently explored the position of the Japanese woman in society.

[19] Jurjī Niqūla Bāz, *Taqaddum al-Yābān: Khuṭāb Tārīkhī* (Beirut: Maṭba‘at al-Qadīs Jāwurjiyūs, 1922). I would like to thank Dr. Khayrīyya Qāsimīyya of the University of Damascus for directing me to this publication. Bāz’s speeches were originally given 18 and 31 January 1902. It is perhaps because of the potentially inflammatory nature of some of Bāz’s remarks that this speech was not published as a pamphlet until 1922. It is very likely that versions appearing in the Lebanese newspapers were heavily edited prior to publication. The 1922 pamphlet was dedicated to Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī, “founder of al-Muqtabas, President of the Scientific Academy, Director of Education in Syria.” The first page contains several verses of the Egyptian poet Ḥafīz Ibrāhīm’s “The Japanese Maiden,” which eulogizes the patriotism and courage of a fictional Japanese woman going off to fight the Russians herself.

[20] “The intense attention of the [Japanese] government and its attracting people to study the proper contemporary sciences” was as important to Japanese progress as was the peoples’ “possession of courage and initiative, patience, intelligence, pride in cleanliness and preservation of order, love of homeland and reverence for ancestors.” Bāz, 5, 7.

[21] Bāz, 15, 18.

[22] Bāz, 10.

[23] Bāz, 11.

[24] Bāz, 21.

[25] Bāz, 23.

[26] Bāz, 24.

[27] Ayalon, 63.

[28] See Jesuit Father Luis de Insлам, “Port Arthur,” *al-Mashriq* 8, no. 2 (15 January 1905): 49–57, and Jesuit Father Yūsuf Khafīl, “Ahm al-Ḥawādith fi’l-Sana al-Ghābira,” *al-Mashriq* 8, no. 2 (15 January 1905): 73–82.

[29] See Jesuit Father Jibrā’īl Lūchank, “Naẓr ‘Āmm fi Aḥwāl al-Yābān,” *al-Mashriq* 7, no. 5 (1 March 1904): 193–204. He describes Japanese character traits as “gentle-heartedness, perseverance, temperance, love of organization, careful consideration in reaching decisions, an inclination towards science (knowledge), seeking honor and desiring progress” (196).

[30] Lūchank, 202.

[31] Lūchank, 201.

[32] Young Turk exiles in Europe were in a uniquely advantageous position to be able to voice direct criticism of the Sultan’s autocracy and their aspirations for a constitutional regime. See M. Şükrü Hanioglu’s *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) and *Preparation for a Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). For a sample of these views on Japan from non-Arab Ottoman subjects, see Worringer, “‘Sick Man of Europe’ or ‘Japan of the Near East’,” 207–30.

[33] In Gertrude Lowthian Bell’s travelogue, *Syria: The Desert and the Sown* (London: Darf Publishers Ltd., 1985; first published 1907), 156, she recalled a conversation with an Ottoman official named Nâzım Pasha in which she asked him for his opinion on the Russo-Japanese War. “Officially I am neutral,” he replied, but when questioned as a friend, he responded, “Of course I am on the side of the Japanese.”

[34] See for example the Egyptian litterateur Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī’s “al-Ḥallāq al-Tharthār” [The Chatterbox Barber], in *al-Nazarāt*, vol. 3 (6th edition, 1932), an anecdote reflecting everyday life in which a barber gets carried away in his description of the Japanese naval victory at Port Arthur. Not paying attention, he cuts a map of the battle in the hair of a customer, who runs out hysterically upon seeing his head in the mirror. English translation by me in “Pan-Asianism in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1905-1912,” in Camron Michael Amin, Benjamin C. Fortna and Elizabeth B. Frierson (eds.), *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook for History* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2006), 331-338. Expatriate memoirs and other accounts claim the Russo-Japanese War was generally a popular topic of discussion in public gathering areas.

[35] The memoirs of the renowned Turkish writer and feminist Halidé Edib Adivar indicate the overwhelming sense of fascination and awe Japan inspired in Ottoman times: she named her son after the Japanese Admiral Togo: “In 1905, before Ali Ayetollah could walk, the great Japanese war came, and Hassan Hikmetullah Togo, named after the great Japanese naval hero, appeared with red tufts of feathery hair.” English translation, Halidé Edib Adivar, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 219.

[36] From Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, 103–4. The text reads as follows: “The topic that interested them most at .aleh was the Japanese War—indeed it was in that direction that conversation invariably turned in the Mountain, the reason being that the Druzes believe the Japanese belong to their own race. The line of argument which has led them to this astonishing conclusion is simple. The secret doctrines of their faith hold out hopes that some day an army of Druzes will burst out of the furthest limits of Asia and conquer the world. The Japanese had shown indomitable courage, the Druzes also are brave; the Japanese had been victorious, the Druzes of prophecy will be unconquerable: therefore the two are one in (sic) the same. The sympathy of everyone, whether in Syria or in Asia Minor, is on the side of the Japanese, with the exception of the members of the Orthodox church, who look on Russia as their protector.” In every village she entered, the locals immediately asked her for tidings of the Russo-Japanese War. See also 81, 160, 182, 312.

[37] Poetry about the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 flourished, particularly in Egypt. See Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm’s poems emphasizing Japanese moral character and solidarity with the East, such as “Fatā al-Yābāniyya” *al-Manār*, 2 April 1904, 69–70, and *al-Mu’ayyad*, 6 April 1904, 1, and “Qaṣīda fī’l-Ḥarb,” *al-Manār*, 24 November 1904, 718–19, which were memorized in school. See Hideaki Sugita, “Japan and the Japanese as Depicted in Modern Arabic Literature,” *Studies of Comparative Culture*, 27 (March 1989): 21–40. See also Aḥmad Afandi al-Kāshif, “Riwāyat al-Ḥarb bayna al-Ruṣiyya wa’l-Yābān,” *al-Mu’ayyad*, 4 April 1904, 1–2, with poetic sections on the Czar, Japan’s response, the Mikadō, England, Turkey, Egypt; Aḥmad Naṣīm’s *Dīwān Aḥmad Naṣīm* includes “al-Ḥarb al-Yābāniyya,” mentioned in *al-Garīda*, 8 December 1908, 5. See also Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Muṭālib’s *Dīwān* and Ma’rūf al-Ruṣāfi’s “Ma’arikat Tsushima” in his two-volume *Dīwān*.

[38] Fāris al-Khūrī, Awrāq Fāris al-Khūrī (Damascus: Ṭlasdār, 1989), 329. The letter was dated 8 December 1904. The poem “al-‘Ajūz al-Yābāniyya” was written by Shaykh Fu’ād al-Khaṭīb, a teacher in the American school in Ṣaydā’, and appeared in Syrian Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Yazījī’s bi-monthly *al-Diyā’*, 30 November 1904, 112–14, published in Cairo.

[39] Entitled *Waqa'i'a al-Harb* (Events of the War) (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Akhbār, 1906), 68 pp., also published in Rashīd Riḍā's Islamist newspaper *al-Manār*.

[39A] The Ottoman millet system was a confessional one in which members of a particular religio-ethnic sect were treated as separate communities within the Empire (i.e. Armenian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Jews). They paid taxes collectively and their affairs were mediated with the state by the religious head of their particular community. In return for their loyalty as subjects of the Empire, the Ottomans granted them a large measure of autonomy in their schools, legal courts, and religious practices.

[40] Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 75.

[41] See David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), for a thorough look at the epistemology of Islamic modernist thought in the region.

[42] Corinne Blake, *Training Arab-Ottoman Bureaucrats: Syrian Graduates of the Mülkiye Mektebi, 1890–1920* (Princeton University Ph. D. 1991), 239–40.

[43] See Blake, 166–68, 242. Samir Seikaly, “Shukri al-‘Asaḥi: A Case Study of a Political Activist,” in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, Khalidi et al. (ed.), 75, summarizes al-‘Asaḥi's education: he first attended *Maktab ‘Anbār*, the state secondary school in Damascus, where he acquired his ability in Ottoman Turkish; around 1896 he entered the *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* for technical training that would prepare him for civil service. He served in local provincial government posts, including *qâ'imakâm* of Nazareth in 1909, before being elected to the Ottoman Parliament in 1911. Seikaly quotes Ruth Roded's ideas from her “Ottoman Service as a Vehicle for the Rise of New Upstarts among Urban Elite Families of Syria in the Last Decades of Ottoman Rule,” in Gabriel R. Warburg and Gad G. Gilbar (ed.), *Studies in Islamic Society: Contributions in Memory of Gabriel Baer* (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1984), 63–94, and “Social Patterns among the Urban Elite of Syria during the Late Ottoman Period 1876–1918,” in David Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*, (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1986), when he says that al-‘Asaḥi “opted to acquire a modern secular education as preliminary for government employment that

would, in turn, operate to enhance his socioeconomic and political status in the Syrian society of the day.”

[44] See Kayalı, 39–51, on direct Arab participation in the Young Turk movement.

[45] Kayalı, 56–57.

[46] Kayalı, 79.

[47] Kayalı, 76.

[48] See Seikaly, 84–85, for this explanation of Ottoman policies towards Arabs in the provinces.

[49] There is still substantial debate surrounding the degree to which the CUP was Turkist or Turkish nationalist at this early stage. Much of the confusion stems from the misunderstood nature of CUP centralizing policies in the Arab provinces as being conducted along ethnic lines, the so-called “Turkification” policies. Kayalı (82–96) clears up much of the ambiguity in his explanation of the constitutional provisions regarding the Ottoman Turkish language as an attempt to cultivate a literate elite to serve the state: the 1876 Constitution had already stipulated Ottoman Turkish as the official language and required deputies to have a substantial ability in it, an article which was unaltered during and after 1908; Turkish would now be a compulsory subject in elementary school and would become the language of instruction in secondary and higher education after 1908; in 1909 it would become the language of the legal courts, to replace local vernaculars used previously (91–92). In 1913 the CUP repealed laws imposing Ottoman Turkish upon the school and court systems, requiring that officials serving in Arab provinces know Arabic, as a way to accommodate the decentralists in the Arab provinces, to increase Arab participation in the central government, and to provide some local autonomy (Blake, 276, Kayalı, 135).

[50] See M. Şükrü Hanioglu, “The Young Turks and the Arabs Before the Revolution of 1908,” in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi et al., 31–49. For more details on the ideological leanings of the Young Turk movement, particularly their Turkist sentiments, see relevant sections of Hanioglu’s *The Young Turks in Opposition and Preparation for a Revolution*.

[51] Kayalı’s treatment of the complexities of Arab political affiliation with the CUP and the main concerns of Arab activists in the opposition is the most

thorough explanation of political behavior in the Ottoman Arab provinces from 1909 to 1911. See in particular 96–115.

[52] Blake, 270.

[53] Blake, 194–95. She explains that it was a reversal of earlier Hamidian attempts to draw Arabs closer through bureaucratic recruitment. The CUP's corrupt methods leading to the 1912 election results certainly worsened provincial Arab attitudes further. See Rashid Khalidi, "The 1912 Election Campaign in the Cities of Bilad al-Sham," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16:4 (November 1984): 461–74.

[54] Ayalon expresses it best: "The large proportion of journalists among the prosecuted 'agitators' (most of whom Cemal Pasha, commander of the Fourth Army in Syria had tried and hanged in 1915–16) was not coincidental, for both Arab nationalists and the CUP government were aware of the power and the danger that the press had come to represent, both potentially and in practice." *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 71.

[55] Samir Seikaly, "Damascene Intellectual Life in the Opening Years of the 20th Century: Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī and *al-Muqtabas*," in *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890–1939*, ed. Marwan R. Buheiry (Beirut: American University in Beirut Press, 1981), 131.

[56] See Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 129.

[57] Seikaly, "Shukri al-'Asafī...", 90.

[58] See Ayalon, 68, for Kurd 'Alī's dramatic escape, and 71, for his relations with Cemal Pasha during wartime. For further information on various Arab journalists' relationships with foreign powers during this same period, see Eliezer Tauber, *The Emergence of Arab Movements* (London: Frank Cass, 1993).

[59] Of the Arabic press articles published in the Levant surveyed for this study, only one article focused entirely upon Japan's constitutional government. It was a translation of an Ottoman text written by Hasan Fehmî, a student sent to Japan to study, and was originally published in the Islamist, Ottoman Turkish *Sırât-ı Müstakim*. See Muḥammad 'Alī, "al-Majlis al-Niyābī al-Yabānī," *al-'Irfān*, 28 June 1911, 513–18.

[60] Muḥammad ‘Alī, “Mustaqbal al-Sharq,” *al-‘Irfān*, 5 October 1910, 402, and from part 2 of the series, *al-‘Irfān*, 3 November 1910, 467–68.

[61] ‘Alī, “Mustaqbal al-Sharq,” 468.

[62] ‘Alī, “Mustaqbal al-Sharq,” part 2, 470.

[63] Sharīf ‘Asīrān, “Tasāhhul al-Yābāniyyīn al-Dīnī,” [English translation appears in subtitle as “The Japanese Latitudinarianism”] *al-‘Irfān*, 30 May 1911, 433.

[64] Sharīf ‘Asīrān, “Tasāhhul al-Yābāniyyīn al-Dīnī,” 433. Part 2 of this article, in *al-‘Irfān*, 13 June 1911, 461–64, describes Japanese religion as a combination of Shintoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, combining the best elements of all three into a Japanese spirituality that is conducive to “latitudinarianism.”

[65] Sharīf ‘Asīrān, “Tasāhhul al-Yābāniyyīn al-Dīnī,” *al-‘Irfān*, 13 June 1911, 464.

[66] Munīr Ya’qūb, “Mādhā Akhadhnā ‘an al-Gharbīyyīn,” *al-Muqtabas (al-Umma)*, 27 December 1909: “A spring erupted in the land of a people, and its waters overflowed to others who put it to good use by making gardens possessing magnificence and springs. That is the example of Japan, wherein they borrowed from Western civilization to the extent that they raised themselves to be among the nations of prosperity and those advanced in the world. A spring erupted in the land of a people and it overflowed to others, but they did not work at putting it to good use and did not undertake its protection, so that its waters receded and became swamps. This is our example. We fellow Ottomans, we were stricken by European civilization and we started struggling with it unwittingly. . . without rationalizing what is suitable for our customs. . . until we started to go backward and we thought that we were moving forward. The Japanese took from the sources of European civilization what was most agreeable and appropriate for the disposition of their country and the most suitable for their customs and their character. This is what raised them from the depths of ignorance and barbarism to the high, advanced state of prosperity, until their power became strong, and their word great, and their prestige extended to the Far East wherever it could. What did we take from [the West]? Us, we borrowed that which did not suit our conditions and our nature at all and did not suit our interest and our culture. The desire to imitate the European in any way intensified; everyone knows that imitation does nothing except lower the condition and depreciate the status of the one imitating (by opening

them to reproach). The imitator who looks from the deeds of the imitated to his appearance, not comprehending his underlying reason nor the intention of benefit in it, he [the imitator] acts with disorganization and he takes on the matter without foundation.”

[67] One author claimed the Ottomans had copied the Japanese. See “Min al-Gharbīyyīn,” *al-Muqtabas (al-Umma)*, December 29, 1909. See also Zākī Mughāmīr, “Shu’ūn wa Shujūn,” *al-Muqtabas*, June 11, 1910; “al-Madāris fī’l-Yābān,” *al-‘Irfān*, 29 December 1913, 49–51.

[68] See Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī, “Al-Ta’līm al-Adabī fī’l-Yābān,” *Majallat al-Muqtabas* 9, no. 6 (1911): 595–96. He was familiar with the 1890 Japanese Imperial Rescript on Education that provided a national education model for all Japanese schools to follow, deeming it important enough to translate, although he said that “some attribute Japanese patriotism to what the schools inculcate in them. . . but they are mistaken in that because love of homeland is one of the characteristics of the Japanese man.” (596). He maintained that the rescript defines “the true, proper education for all times and places. It includes the moral code to which the entire world should be subject” (597).

[69] *Ibid.*, 596.

[70] “The Japanese nation is centuries old and it believes that it is a big family from a single origin. The king rules as a father; this [Japanese belief] is the reason for Japan’s great respect for the Empire, and so love of the Emperor and of the fatherland are one and the same custom. The Mikado is a symbol of the fatherland. The Japanese go to extremes in respect and veneration of their ancestors, and they risk their lives for the homeland because it is the country of their fathers and forefathers. Twenty-six centuries ago the first Emperor founded the first kingdom. It was not spared from military conquests, although the people of the country united to defend their sacred domain and so were never subjugated by conquerors.” (*Ibid.*, 597.) The Bushidō samurai code was described as the innate guide to Japanese morality.

[71] *Ibid.*, 597.

[72] For Kurd ‘Alī’s ideas, see Seikaly, “Damascene Intellectual Life,” 125–53, particularly 136–37.

[73] Seikaly, “Damascene Intellectual Life,” 137.

[74] Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī, “al-Yābān al-Ḥadītha,” *Majallat al-Muqtabas* 3, no. 6 (1911): 226.

[75] His memoirs mention the vast circle of intellectuals in which he traveled, including Arab journalists of Syrian and Egyptian backgrounds, Ottoman Turks, Kurds, and Armenians whose Ottomanist views he shared. See *Memoirs of Muhammad Kurd Ali*, translated by Khalil Totah (Washington, D.C.: Council of American Learned Societies, 1954), 16, 50, 90–93, for references to friends such as Turkish journalist Celâl Nûrî Bey, the Turkified Kurd Lütî Fikrî Bey, and the Armenian editor of the Ottoman paper *Sabâh*, Diran Kelekian.

[76] Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī, “Ta’līm al-Waṭanī,” *al-Muqtabas*, April 13, 1910. The phrase “Algerians only complain” reflects the caution he had use to when drawing such dangerous negative parallels with the Ottoman government’s education policy.

[77] Kayalı, 135.

[78] See Note 1.

[79] See Note 1 and Kayalı, 93.

[80] See Note 1. See also Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, for further evidence concerning the Young Turks’ understanding of race.