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The First Egyptian Student Mission to France under Muhammad Ali

*Alain Silvera**

In March 1826, Charles X's sloop *La Truite*, with Captain Robillard commanding, docked in Alexandria. Accompanied by his first and second mates, the captain proceeded to Cairo for an audience with Muhammad Ali. The French party was then escorted on a sight-seeing tour of Guizeh and Sakkara, rounding off its visit with a full-day's inspection of the new artillery barracks at Abu Za'bal where General Boyer, who for the past two years had been drilling the Viceroy's recruits along Western lines, greeted his compatriots with a makeshift but creditable parade consisting of two of his choicest detachments. However Captain Robillard's mission had nothing ostensibly martial about it, for his orders were to carry back with him to France the first contingent of forty-four Egyptian subjects—all civilians—to be sent by Muhammad Ali to pursue their studies in Paris. On 13 April, *La Truite*, laden with its cargo, set sail for its month-long voyage to Marseilles.¹

Thus, with this first trickle of what was to grow into a steady flow of further batches of Egyptian students to France, 'the founder of modern Egypt' took yet another, this time novel, step in opening his country to the West. His motives (not unlike those of his suzerain who was quick to follow his rival's example by sending an even larger group of Turkish students to Paris the following year)² were prompted quite plainly by the desire to bring to Egypt the practical wisdom of the French, not so much in order to regenerate his country in their image, but rather to consolidate his power by mastering their superiority in the art of war. Regarded as an integral part of Egypt's first efforts at autocratic modernization, this so-called *Mission égyptienne*, along with the simultaneous growth at home of the translation movement, the secularization of education, and much else besides, has been rightly interpreted as being dictated by military ambition—the *primum mobile*, or in more contemporary academic terms, the independent variable, responsible for Muhammad Ali's grand design to assert his independence from the Porte and then turn to the Ottoman provinces around him as areas of military expansion.

But if the driving force behind the creation of Egypt's *Nizam-i Cedid* was to discover and emulate the secret of Europe's military might, the means employed to achieve that goal were to give way almost imperceptibly to something more far-reaching, so that the result of a student mission that produced in Rifa'ah al-Tahtawi the forerunner of a new sense of national identity, represents an indirect and quite unforeseen consequence of the Viceroy's original intent. It also illustrates on the French side the ambiguous legacy of Bonaparte's occupation—that dazzling escapade in which the French Revolution's civilizing mission went hand in hand with the harsher necessities of military aggression. For if the Albanian despot now found his French allies only too willing to satisfy his need for more engineers and military advisers as a way of regaining some influence in their lost colony, he

could also not help encountering among many of those who stood ready to support him a genuine conviction that this technical assistance could become the instrument of a more extensive scheme of social and cultural transformation. Itself a distant by-product of Bonaparte's fertile imagination, the educational experiment conceived by its French champions as the entering wedge of a cultural regeneration that their fallen Emperor could still fondly contemplate from his exile, was adopted by Muhammad Ali from less exalted motives.³ Seen in this light, an examination of the first Egyptian student mission to be sent to Europe brings out in tangible form some of the ambiguities lying at the root of Egypt's first faltering steps along the road to westernization. A closer look at its origins and at the Parisian odyssey of *La Truite's* passengers may therefore serve to draw attention to the cultural strand within these two broader patterns of contact during such a formative phase in Franco-Egyptian relations.

The idea of sending young Orientals to be trained abroad can be traced well before the French invasion to the early 18th century missionary efforts of the Franciscans, and to a lesser extent the Jesuits among the Copts of Upper Egypt.⁴ These efforts, very modest in scope when compared to the hundreds of Coptic children attracted to their missionary schools in Asyut, Luxor and Aswan by the 1750s, came to naught, as did a Jesuit attempt in the 1730s to send Coptic and Armenian children to Marseilles to be brought up in the Catholic faith.⁵ The attempt was repeated some forty years later when the Vatican College of the Propaganda tried to lure to Rome some of the children of Christian refugees from Syria encouraged by Ali Bey el Kebir to escape religious persecution in their homeland by settling in Egypt.⁶ This too was abortive, although the Syrian newcomers, settling in Egypt in large numbers, contributed to swelling the ranks of the Franciscan 'convent' schools now spreading to the Delta. J. Heyworth-Dunne has succeeded in identifying one notable result from this early period of contact—the appearance of the first printed book to be used in Egypt, the *Missale Copto-Arabicum*, compiled in the College of the Propaganda in Rome in 1736 by a certain Raphaël Turki. A Coptic convert to Catholicism, Turki appears to have been the first native-born Egyptian to have been educated in Europe.⁷ However it is not unlikely that Turki may have had a few isolated predecessors among the *jeunes de langue*. These were young Levantines initially recruited by the Capuchins both in Istanbul and other French *Echelles du Levant* to be sent to Paris for the dual purpose of being trained as both native missionaries and consular interpreters in a special school called the *Salle des Arméniens* attached to the celebrated royal college of Louis-le-Grand. Among the thirty-six dragoman cadets educated at the school in the 20 years after its foundation in 1720, at least one, bearing the Greek name of Constantin although born and raised in Egypt, is listed in the records as having chosen to return home soon after his arrival on the ground that he was soon 'découragé par la sévérité de la règle.'⁸ After 1721, however, and until the eventual incorporation of the school into the *Ecole des Langues Orientales* in 1826, what could have become a promising channel of communication with Europe changed drastically in character. The Levantines, regarded as unreliable and slow-witted, were henceforth excluded to be

supplanted entirely by French boys, many of them born in the *Echelles*, who were alone considered capable of undergoing the rigorous linguistic training required to serve as dragomans in the French diplomatic and consular corps throughout the Levant.⁹ Combining scholarship with practical experience, the school turned out such notable Orientalists as Amédée Jaubert, who translated Idrissi and served as Napoleon's diplomatic agent in Persia, and Pierre Ruffin, the Turkish linguist who also had the misfortune of being the French *chargé d'affaires* in Istanbul at the time of the Egyptian invasion. Among the *jeunes de langue* who accompanied Bonaparte to Egypt, the venerable Venture de Paradis, the general's chief interpreter and translator of his Arabic proclamations, stands out as one of the finest products of the school.¹⁰

It was not until 1798 that the original missionary objective lying behind the creation of the *jeunes de langue* was revived—this time, however, adapted by Bonaparte to meet the revolutionary spirit of the new era. His purpose is clearly revealed in the measures he took immediately after the capture of Malta. On the grounds, as he so succinctly put it, that 'education is the pillar of both prosperity and public safety', he gave orders shortly before sailing on to Alexandria that a batch of sixty of the most promising Maltese youngsters picked from the wealthiest families on the island and ranging in age from 9 to 14 should be promptly shipped to Marseilles in order to be educated in the Republic's *collèges* at their parents' expense.¹¹ But once in Egypt, he soon discovered that local conditions, to say nothing of the setback of Aboukir, ruled out any possibility of repeating such an experiment with the children of Muslim notables. Yet there is ample evidence that the use of education as a tool to win over the minds of a native elite to the revolutionary principles he so self-consciously incarnated was never absent from Bonaparte's mind. Indeed, the whole thrust of his native policy, from the creation of the various *diwans* to the pageantry lavished on the celebration of Islamic and Republican festivals, was directed to the purpose of using education in its broadest sense to spread the gospel of the French Revolution among Muslims and minorities alike.¹² In addition to propaganda, this was also to some extent accomplished by his policy of amalgamating native recruits into selected infantry detachments decimated by the ravages of combat, disease and the British blockade. Thus, less than two weeks after Nelson's victory, orders were given to conscript 2,000 Mamluk slaves into French service. Soon thereafter, the nucleus of a Cairo police force was enlarged by Colonel Papazoglou, a Mamluk turncoat from Chios, into a full-fledged Greek legion which, together with a handful of Knights of St-John conscripted into the Maltese legion, helped the French in suppressing the first Cairo insurrection of October 1798.¹³ In the following year, the heavy casualties suffered in Syria led Bonaparte to go one step further in trying to relieve the growing shortage of manpower. On 22 June 1799, he ordered General Desaix campaigning in Upper Egypt to purchase at his own expense 3,000 black slaves from Abdel Rahman, Sultan of Darfur, reminding him in a second letter one week later, that 'je n'ai pas besoin de vous faire sentir l'importance de cette mesure'.¹⁴ Given time, the amalgamation of such blacks into French units organized along the lines of Carnot's *demi-brigades*

on the Continent may well have produced the only example of a racially mixed colonial army which, in Bonaparte's mind, was designed to combine military training with French schooling.¹⁵ Colonel Sève's Aswan training camp, created two decades later, bore some resemblance to this precedent, though Napoleon's insistence on stressing French education would not recur until 1828, when, albeit in a somewhat modified form, Muhammad Ali decided to add a contingent of blacks to his *Mission égyptienne* in Paris.

More significant in the event was the actual creation in the course of the French occupation of an independent Egyptian unit—Mu'alleem Jacob's Coptic legion—a few weeks before Kléber's assassination. From its modest beginnings as a motley assortment of tax collectors participating in Desaix's campaign against Murad in Upper Egypt, it eventually grew into a well-disciplined auxiliary force of well over a thousand fighting men whose remnants chose to be evacuated with Menou after the Treaty of El-Arish. It was from the ranks of these so-called 'Egyptian exiles', wretchedly quartered with their families in Marseilles, that the French were to select the interpreters required to greet Muhammed Ali's students on their arrival in France twenty-five years later.¹⁶ It was also in their name that the notorious Chevalier Théodore de Lascaris, the former knight of Malta who had cast in his lot with the French, drafted a bizarre scheme, the first of its kind, for Egyptian independence to be carried out by a handful of Copts under the First Consul's auspices.¹⁷ The scheme, eccentric, abortive, and premature, can be dismissed as the work of an unbalanced mind, illustrating the lunatic excesses that can be unleashed when romanticism is transplanted in the East. Bonaparte, more soberly, recognized the limitations of the forces he had himself set in motion when he confided to Kléber that only with the gift of time could education bridge the gulf that separated Egypt from the West.¹⁸ As for his hopes for accelerating that process by sending a native élite to be schooled in France, it is significant that the only time he reverted to the Maltese precedent was in his parting instructions to Kléber, entrusting the fate of his beleaguered army to his command. 'If 5 to 600 Mamluks could not be found', he ordered, 'then send to France an equal number of Arab lads and *Cheikhs el Balad*. After a couple years' residence among us, these individuals would be dazzled by our greatness. Having mastered our language and adopted our culture, they would become the sturdiest champions of our cause on their return to Egypt.'¹⁹

Neither Kléber, nor Menou after him, was able to comply. Yet the lingering hope of realizing Bonaparte's design was kept alive by two veterans of the expedition, the French consul Bernardino Drovetti and the geographer Jomard. Of the two, Jomard was the more persistent; Drovetti, a Piedmontese born in Leghorn who had become a fanatical Bonapartist, more supple and persuasive.²⁰ As the man on the spot, it was Drovetti who succeeded in diverting the Pasha's instinctive tendency to look to Italy, which presented no political threat, rather than to France as a source for foreign cadre, although it is Jomard's name that has become indissolubly linked with the trials and tribulations of *La Mission égyptienne* in Paris—an institution which, formally at least, was to survive until the 20th century.

Edmé-François Jomard, whose passionate dedication to all that pertained to Egypt was to earn him the sobriquet '*le vieil Egyptien de l'An VII*' or simply '*Jomard l'égyptien*', had been a member of Jacotin's élite corps of 'engineer-geographers' forming part of the Egyptian Institute's *Commission des Arts et des Sciences*. Like so many Frenchmen, notably the Saint-Simonians, who were later to serve as Muhammad Ali's advisors, he was a graduate of the prestigious *Ecole Polytechnique*. His three years in Egypt were largely devoted to a pioneering topographical survey extending beyond the Delta to the confines of Nubia, to drawing up the first accurate maps of Cairo and Alexandria and to compiling the first truly scientific estimate of the country's population going beyond Volney's earlier approximations. On his return to Paris, he became a founding member of the *Société de Géographie*, personally promoting and publicizing the African explorations of Cailliaud, Caillié, d'Abbadie and others, and the founder and, until his death in 1862, curator of the Map Section of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, which originally consisted of his own private Egyptian collection. His chief title to fame, however, was as editor of the monumental *Description de l'Égypte*—a position that was rewarded in 1818 by his election to the French *Institut*. The publication of that great collective enterprise, finally completed in 1828 after almost twenty years of preparation, confirmed his reputation as France's leading authority on Egypt past and present.²¹

It was his lively interest in the transformations brought about by Muhammad Ali that led him as early as 1811 to submit through Drovetti for the Viceroy's consideration 'a plan', as he put it, 'for civilizing Egypt by means of education'.²² The original document, pressing the Viceroy to waste no time in sending his choicest subjects to be educated in France, has survived neither in the Citadel Archives nor in Jomard's papers deposited in the French Academy. Nor is it mentioned in Drovetti's consular reports, or in his published correspondence beginning only in 1819.²³ It is summed up by Jomard himself, however, in a confidential memorandum, transmitted this time through the French consul Cochelet on 27 June 1839, aimed at persuading the Viceroy to put his house in order so as to win the sympathy of the West on the eve of the resumption of hostilities with the Porte. The memorandum's lengthy rubric on education, severely critical of Egypt's modest achievements in this area, contends that one of the major reasons 'why Egypt is now almost one generation behind in the formation of its indispensable élites' could be attributed to the Viceroy's rejection of Jomard's advice some twenty-five years earlier to establish a permanent mission of Egyptian students in France. Jomard wrote in 1839:

Some dozen years after the French conquest one of the members of that expedition, placing his faith in the native qualities of the Egyptians whom he had closely observed under favourable conditions and firmly believing that the seeds which had thus been planted on the banks of the Nile would ultimately bear fruit, conceived the notion of perpetuating the intellectual regeneration of that country . . . by urging the Prince to send a contingent of students to France, to remain there long enough in order to receive, in spite of the divergencies of culture, a complete and

thorough education. . . . He also stressed the dangers inherent in the method of instruction by means of interpreters and dragomans, which had a distorting effect on imparting and inculcating knowledge.

According to Jomard, his advice was turned down by the Pasha at that time on the grounds 'that his subjects were too ignorant to benefit from European travel'. And when, seven years later, Jomard instructed Osman Nourredin, the first Turk in Egyptian service to be sent to study abroad, to persuade the Pasha to reconsider, this was again to no avail. In Jomard's words, Muhammad Ali's reply to Nourredin on his return to Cairo in 1817 was: 'Now that you've acquired all that learning abroad, why don't you create a school of your own right here with the means at your disposal? When your students have attained a certain level of proficiency I shall then send them to Paris.'²⁴

But even by 1826, their 'level of proficiency' had clearly fallen below expected standards. This can be attributed to the piecemeal and haphazard manner in which the various schools had been established; to the drawbacks of the double-lecture system imposed on students by foreign, mostly Italian or Italian-speaking, instructors; and to the calibre of the students themselves dragooned into quasi-military establishments where the relevance of the knowledge imparted, only dimly perceived by their interpreters, could scarcely be expected to arouse their interest. At first the students were drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the household Circassian Mamluks inherited by the *Wali* from his predecessors to receive military training supplemented by the traditional *kuttab* curriculum as well as a smattering of Persian in a school set up within the walls of the Citadel in 1816. Some two or three years later, a separate Palace School, the *Dar al-Handassah*, was founded within the Citadel, this time recruiting its students from a somewhat broader Ottoman ethnic mix consisting of Turks and Georgians, Greeks, Armenians and Kurds, but not Egyptians. It was this establishment that became the nucleus of yet a third school, the *Madrassat al-Handassah*, or School of Geometry, founded in Bulaq in May 1821 with the purpose of training land-surveyors to replace the Copts. J. Heyworth-Dunne, in his pioneering study of Egyptian education, regards the latter, repeatedly expanded and modified after its transfer to Qasr el-'Aini in 1825 to become the famous Abu Za'bal school of 1836, as the forerunner to a type of school primarily designed to train administrators to meet the needs of Muhammad Ali's *Nizam-i Cedid*, which in turn can be traced back to its modest beginnings in the first Citadel School for Mamluks.²⁵ The evidence itself, however, suggests a less rigid separation between civilian and military schools—at least during this formative and rather chaotic period. Although the Citadel Mamluks, later to be replaced by black slaves levied from Nubia and the Sennar (and only as a last resort by Egyptian *fellahs*) did in fact constitute the bulk of Colonel Sève's earliest trainees in the Aswan camp which only began operating effectively after 1818, it should be noted that a good many others also found their way into the *Madrassat al-Jihadiyah al-Harbiyah*—an expanded version of the Bulaq school which opened its doors to no less than 600 fresh students in its new location of Qasr

al-'Aini in July 1825. Yet it should also be noted that Qasr al-'Aini remained no more than a military depot, originally set aside for billeting transient slaves, still sedulously purchased by the Pasha, en route to their military assignments.²⁶ These naturally mingled with the new students in their midst—students composed of the same ethnic elements as their predecessors in Bulaq, but now receiving a somewhat sounder education in a more regimented and disciplined ambience. A cadastral survey of Lower Egypt, which had been the chief practical task assigned to students and teachers alike in the original Bulaq school, fell by the wayside, or what is perhaps more likely, continued to be carried out in a sporadic way within the confines of Qasr al-'Aini. It is this work that may have served as the basis for a map of Lower Egypt drawn up in 1827 by Pascal Coste, a gifted Marseilles architect and Islamic art historian who stands out as the only man of any talent among the Bulaq teachers.²⁷

The first director of both these schools was the notorious Osman Nourredin, a son of Muhammad Ali's *saqqa bashi*. A quick-witted adventurer, it was Nourredin who at the instigation of the Swedish consul Bokhty, himself an Italian, was sent from 1809 to 1817 on a leisurely tour of Italy to study engineering, printing and military science in Leghorn, Milan and Rome, and finally, for less than a year, to Paris where Jomard eagerly took him under his wing.²⁸ A miscellaneous assortment of books that he collected along the way was to form the core of the Bulaq library. His stormy life, culminating in his defection to Turkey in 1834 as a result of arousing the Pasha's displeasure by his mild rule as governor of Crete, has tended to obscure the earlier phase of an erratic career which included his appointment as Egypt's first chief of staff in 1825, and three years later, 'admiral' of an Egyptian navy that he 'westernized' by the adoption of the French naval code he had brought back from Paris.²⁹ His European itinerary points to the *Wali's* instinctive desire soon after seizing power to look to Italy in particular for the training of his cadre and technicians rather than continue to depend on the unreliable and generally incompetent foreigners attracted to his country. The names of the other students, estimated at twenty-eight in all, also sent abroad either individually or in small batches up to 1818, have not survived the fire that destroyed the Citadel records in 1820,³⁰ except for the Syrian typographer, Nicola Musabiki, who on his return from Milan in 1819, was placed in charge of the famous Arabic printing press established in the Bulaq school.³¹ The location is significant: the printing and translation movements were to go hand in hand with the needs of technical education.³² Equally significant is the title of the first book to come off the press in 1822—the Bolacco *Dizionario italiano-arabo* put together by the Melchite priest, Don Raphaël de Monachis. Don Raphaël, a savant of sorts, formerly employed as Arabic teacher at the *Ecole des Langues Orientales* in Paris, had been the only native 'Egyptian' elected to Bonaparte's Egyptian Institute.³³ Italian, still the *lingua franca* of the Levant, served as the chief medium of instruction in all these early schools. And until the Bulaq press could begin to turn out adequate text-books and manuals, consecutive translation with all its pedagogical drawbacks continued to be the only feasible way for the motley assortment of teachers to discharge their duties.³⁴

It was the mediocre results produced by Qasr al-'Aini at great expense that finally persuaded the *Wali* to turn once again to Europe as a quicker and perhaps cheaper way to achieve his purpose. Nourredin, fearful that such a course would undermine his privileged position (in addition to being its director, the Bulaq records list him as the school's sole 'French professor'), was quick to raise objections.³⁵ Boghos, the Foreign Minister, seemed to have favoured sending the students either to Italy or England. He consulted his friend Drovetti who, in a reply dated 7 January 1826, showed where his real loyalties lay by dismissing Italy. Italy's universities, he wrote, were languishing under reactionary regimes; its people, filled with religious prejudice, were especially hostile to Muslims. Paris, on the other hand, was noted for its tolerance and generosity to foreigners, its healthy climate, its fine institutions of higher learning; and despite 'la guerre que fait maintenant S.A. contre les Grecs', he reassured Boghos that French public opinion could be expected to display 'de la bienveillance pour les Turcs'.³⁶ On 26 February, after several weeks of intrigue between the pro-French and pro-Italian factions, General Boyer could at last report to General Belliard in Paris that the champions of France had prevailed.³⁷ Without further ado, the forty-four members of the *Mission égyptienne* were ordered to assemble in Alexandria for embarkation.

Little is known as to how they were selected save for a passing reference in the French consul's dispatch of 4 April to the Foreign Minister, le baron de Damas, confirming that the decision to send them at all had been reached only after considerable debate. Malivoine, replacing Drovetti who had left for Alexandria to recover from his exertions, reports that the majority came from well-to-do families 'qui ont toutes ambitionnés comme une faveur de se voir préférer dans cette occasion'.³⁸ This was certainly the case with the four gifted Armenian Catholics in the group, Sikyas Artin and his brother Khusru, Estafan and Yusuf – all of them protégés of Boghos, their co-religionist. Almost all the others, belonging for the most part to the ruling classes, seemed to have been picked out of favouritism rather than ability, but it is easier to determine their ethnic origins rather than their family ties from the list compiled by J. Heyworth-Dunne on the basis of the works of Prince Omar Toussoum, Yacoub Artin (Sikyas' eldest son) and Ali Mubarak.³⁹ The only contemporary source, Jomard's own *liste nominative*, included as an appendix to the lengthy progress report he published on the students in *Le Nouveau Journal Asiatique* in 1828 unfortunately omits all the information he had gathered on their family background for the sake of brevity.⁴⁰ By then, the *Mission* had dwindled to thirty-seven, five of the original batch having left the capital for practical training in the provinces, and two of its five Egyptian sheikhs, Sheikhs Muhammad Rukaiyyak and El Alawi, as well as a certain Wahbah Effendi, having returned home, to be replaced, however, by two additional Egyptian students identified only by name in Jomard's report. The predominant element in the group – made up, almost entirely, as Jomard confirms, of the scions of Cairo notable families – was, of course, Turkish or Turkish-speaking. Sixteen of them were born in Egypt, the remaining eighteen in other parts of the Empire. At least two of them came from Pasha's home town of Kavalla. Having had the opportunity

to observe them at close hand for almost two years, Jomard noted that those who had arrived in Egypt before the age of fourteen were more advanced than the others, with the notable exception of the precocious and versatile Artin, born in Constantinople in 1800. No less than twenty-five of the students claimed to have matriculated from Bulaq or passed through Qasr al-'Aini, but like the other five who had studied elsewhere or with private tutors, had acquired no more than a rudimentary knowledge of elementary arithmetic. A few of the Turks could converse in Arabic, and some of them even possessed a smattering of Italian. With the exception of the four Armenians, all of them were Muslim. As is well known, it was only at the behest of his Azhar teacher, Sheikh Hassan al-'Attar, that Sheikh Rifa'ah al-Tahtawi was attached to the *Mission* at the last minute to serve as its *imam*. At twenty-five, Rifa'ah was only slightly younger than the others, whose average age was twenty-six, ranging from the thirty-seven year old Abdi Effendi, one of the three leaders of the group, to Muhammad Assad, who was barely fifteen. Assad, an Egyptian, was destined to be trained as a typographer. Other menial professions, such as medicine and pharmacy, were also reserved for Egyptians. Not a single member of the *Mission* knew any French.

Contrary to Drovetti's assurances, the Egyptians' arrival in Marseilles on 15 May was greeted with a revival of local philhellene sentiment, provoked only two months earlier by the news that Muhammad Ali had commissioned Lefébure de Cérisy to build two new Egyptian frigates in the city's shipyards.⁴¹ The students thus found themselves unwittingly embroiled in the broader issues of Egypt's role in the war of Greek independence. The radical press condemned them as the instrument of Prime Minister Villèle's pernicious pro-Turkish policy, only to be taken to task by the sober and scholarly Parisian *Revue encyclopédique*. Inspired no doubt by Jomard the *Revue* stressed the necessity of drawing a distinction between, on the one hand, Egyptian extermination of the Greeks in the Morea—a policy, the journal alleged, forced upon the reluctant Pasha by his suzerain—and on the other, 'la détermination pleine de sagesse et féconde en résultats que le même prince vient d'adopter' by choosing France as the place to send his élite to seek enlightenment.⁴² As the controversy subsided, the *effendis*, after being released from their eighteen-day confinement in quarantine, devoted the months of June and July to mastering the French alphabet in a rented hotel set aside for their classes, and were rewarded for their pains by Sunday outings in the city parks and streets. It was there that they encountered for the first time the strange mores of a western metropolis—newspapers, unveiled women, and the cafés they frequented as they were taken sight-seeing along the Canebière. What Tahtawi found most startling about these noisy and crowded establishments was the enormous number of people that could be squeezed into such small quarters. Bewildered by the sight of both himself and his companions in the midst of exact replicas of all the other patrons, he suddenly realized that the cause of his optical illusion was the reflection produced by the surrounding wall mirrors—something he had never seen before.⁴³ Such endearingly naïve experiences, recurring in many of the early passages of the *Takhlis*, set the tone to only one aspect of a

work that was to mark the beginning of the author's evolution into the first, the very first exponent of a radically new sense of Egyptian self-consciousness. That a man of Tahtawi's stature was included in the mission at all was an entirely fortuitous event, pregnant with meaning for the future. Yet for all the undeniable merits of his great book, its first impressions of a weird and unfamiliar world could scarcely avoid drawing attention to such seemingly bizarre or trifling phenomena as the use of knives and forks, of beds raised above the floor, or of the chimes of church bells heard for the first time as *La Truite* docked into Messina. These, like other observations in the same vein scattered throughout the *Takhlis*, represent of course a very insignificant part of the work as a whole, but serve nonetheless to underline all the more dramatically the formidable obstacles that stood in the way of the other less talented students as they set forth to begin their studies in Paris.

In order to facilitate their adjustment to the new conditions awaiting them in the capital, Jomard had taken the precaution of adding five interpreters to the mission. These were all drawn from Mu'Allem Jacob's colony of Egyptian 'refugees' and their families, still subsisting on a War Ministry dole since their settlement in Marseilles in 1802. Their names, recorded in the Château de Vincennes archives, are mere cyphers—Jean Pharaon, Michel Halabié, Eid Bajaly, and Joseph Awad.⁴⁴ But the fifth, Joseph-Elie Agoub, deserves to be singled out, not only because he served as permanent liaison with the student mission throughout its stay in Paris, but also because his collection of poetry, *La Lyre brisée*, was the only literary work by a fellow-Egyptian that Sheikh Tahtawi saw fit to translate into Arabic.⁴⁵ One of the major themes of this romantic extravaganza was a eulogy to Muhammad Ali, singing the glories of the heir to Egypt's Pharaonic past:

Mais sous tes vieux débris ta gloire ensevelie,
 Se réveille aux rayons d'un jour inattendu:
 Quel est cet étranger sur tes bords descendu
 Des plages de la Romélie?
 Aly! que des beaux arts la splendeur t'environne!
 Rends à l'antique Isis ses honneurs disparus;
 Rends—lui les Pharaons! héritier de leur trône,
 Hérite aussi de leurs vertus!
 Les bienfaits sont suivis d'une longue mémoire:
 Veille aux destins du Nil, à tes mains confiés
 Que ses troubles sanglants sous ton règne oubliés
 Cessent d'épouvanter l'histoire . . .
 Vois dans l'Europe un juge, et marche vers la gloire!⁴⁶

It is unlikely that such verses, originally published in 1824 at the height of the Parisian vogue for Egyptology, made any direct impact on Tahtawi's nationalist sensibilities. But they did accomplish the author's purpose of bringing his name to the Pasha's attention, for after being translated into Turkish by Boghos Yusuf for his master's edification, Agoub was awarded the post of Jomard's assistant with a generous monthly allowance of 1,000 francs.⁴⁷

Born in Cairo in 1795 of an Armenian father and a Syrian mother, Agoub belonged to that curious group of Levantines from Egypt who in the wake of the French occupation came to play a not insignificant part as cultural intermediaries between their homeland and their country of adoption. Among the others were Don Raphaël de Monachis, Champollion's Arabic teacher at the *Ecole des Langues Orientales*; the Copt Ellious Boctor, his successor to that post, which in turn was coveted by the younger Agoub, and the author of a colloquial Arabic-French dictionary completed after his death by Caussin de Perceval; the Syrian Basil Fakr, French consul in Damietta under the Consulate and the Empire who, according to his biographer, Auriant, was the real initiator of the Egyptian translation movement; and Joanny Pharaon, perhaps the most gifted of the lot, sometime professor of Latin at the prestigious Parisian college of Saint-Barbe, author of the first Algerian grammar, *Grammaire élémentaire d'arabe vulgaire ou algérien à l'usage des Français*, who ended his career as chief interpreter of the French expeditionary force to Algeria—all of whom contributed in a modest way to promoting a Franco-Egyptian *rapprochement* in the admittedly restricted scholarly circles in which they moved.⁴⁸ Agoub stood out from the rest, however, by being first and foremost a man of letters, sedulously applying himself to projecting a highly romanticised image of Egypt, both ancient and modern, by his literary efforts. These were highly prized in the Paris salons he frequented, notably Madame Dufrénoy's, where he made his literary début in the 1820s. Lionized because of his exotic origins by Béranger, Nodier and Lamartine, he found an admiring audience among the Parisian literati for such maudlin and stilted poems as his *Dithyrambe sur l'Egypte*, couched in the same flamboyant style as the historical introduction he contributed to adorn Felix Mengin's *L'Egypte sous le gouvernement de Mohammed Aly*, first published in 1823. More significant in the long run was his skilful translation of the *maouals*, the Arabic popular songs he had heard recited in his youth by his fellow exiles in Marseilles. This showed him at his best, revealing a more authentic Egypt to his French readers and inspiring at least one of them, Gustave Flaubert, to write the only original work resulting from his voyage to Egypt, *Le Chant de la Courtisane*.⁴⁹ It also confirmed a rare ability for rendering colloquial Arabic into rhyming French prose. And the help he gave Jomard in revising the transliteration of all the Arabic words appearing in the successive volumes of the *Description de l'Egypte* was rewarded by an appointment as part-time lecturer in Arabic at the *Ecole des Langues Orientales* following the death of Boctor in 1821. A vain and rather superficial man, whose scholarly pretensions could not match Boctor's or Don Raphaël's, he is nevertheless credited by Jomard for having performed yeoman's service for the *Mission égyptienne*, supervising its day-to-day activities and assuring the personal well-being of the students placed under his care.⁵⁰

Upon their arrival in Paris, the students were at first lodged in a hotel on the rue de Clichy, then in what was to become their permanent residence—an elegant left bank *hôtel particulier* rented for the occasion by Jomard, the former *hôtel de la Guiche* at 15 rue du Regard, not far from the Luxembourg gardens in the Latin Quarter.⁵¹ Their preparation was so woefully inadequate

that Jomard had no choice than to revise his original plan of study, deferring specialization until the students had acquired a basic working knowledge of French. This had the effect of setting back his carefully designed program by at least a year, though in addition to French, a distinguished faculty of *lycée* professors and military instructors provided daily instruction in such subjects as drawing and calligraphy, elementary arithmetic and geometry, history and geography. Since all the classes were conducted in French, the interpreters were no longer needed, and all of them, save Agoub, were sent back to Marseilles after only a couple of months in Paris. According to Tahtawi, the only student to have left any record of his experience, the schedule was a rigorous one, consisting of constant drilling in French grammar and conversation interspersed with the other subjects taught almost without interruption from seven in the morning till six at night with only a short break for lunch.⁵² Yet progress was slow, even slower than Jomard had expected, largely because the students tended to revert to their own language when left to themselves.⁵³ Following a disappointing performance by the group as a whole on a final exam given at the end of their first year in July 1827, it was therefore decided to accelerate the pace by breaking them up into smaller groups and dispersing them according to merit in nearby *pensions*—or more frequently, in the homes of their teachers—where it was hoped that their language proficiency could be improved by mingling with their fellow French boarders preparing to pass their entrance exams into the *grandes écoles*. Thus Artin, his brother Khusru and young Mazdar, the most diligent member of the Turkish contingent, became paying guests in the house of Goubaux, the founder of the Collège Chaptal, whereas Tahtawi and others were lodged with Lemercier, Jomard's private secretary and successor as director of the *Mission égyptienne* after his death in 1862.⁵⁴ Formal classes still continued to be held in the rue du Regard, however, which also served as a social center and occasionally as an overnight residence. Discipline was strictly regulated according to a quasi-military code of conduct enforced in rotation by three of the group leaders – Abdi, Mukhtar and Hassan effendis, all of them Turks – under the watchful eye of Jomard, who supervised the activities of his wards down to the most minute detail.⁵⁵ Although the Mission's funds were in the hands of Abdi, it was Jomard who advised him in deciding the amount of pocket money each of them deserved to receive,⁵⁶ made arrangements for Thursday and Sunday visits to theaters and museums, and composed for their information a lively digest of current affairs, *l'Almanach pour l'an 1244 de l'Hégire*, carefully omitting any reference to the Greek war of independence.⁵⁷

Yet in Paris, unlike Marseilles, the war scarcely affected the public's reaction to the new arrivals in their midst. Jomard spared no effort to keep them in the public eye, issuing a steady stream of news releases on their academic progress, hailing them as ambassadors of good will—the *avant garde*, as he put it in one of his many communiqués to the press, of what would soon become Egypt's new westernized élite.⁵⁸ At a banquet held in their honor by some of the surviving savants of the Egyptian expedition, General Belliard expressed a similar view, describing the effendis as the

vanguard of their country's future.⁵⁹ Outside such academic circles, however, the tone was much less solemn, since the popular *boulevardier* press could hardly resist the temptation of bringing out some of the more farcical aspects of the students' first encounter with the West. Conspicuous in their native robes and turbans as they were marched two by two from one museum to another, they soon became the butt of satirical journals depicting these disoriented Orientals as noble savages bewildered by the unfamiliar sights of a large Western metropolis. *La Pandore*, for instance, evoked in vivid and irreverent detail the vain attempts made by one of them during a stroll in the Palais Royal to recruit all the unveiled damsels within sight for his harem in Damietta, while a vaudeville writer, harking back to the light-hearted *turqueries* of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, made them the central characters of a comic opera which enjoyed a long and successful run at the *Théâtre de Vaudeville*.⁶⁰

Then, in 1827, the general curiosity aroused by the arrival of an Egyptian giraffe, a personal gift from Muhammad Ali to the King, at the *Jardin des Plantes*,⁶¹ revived the capital's interest in the Egyptians and inspired two Marseillais poets, Barthélemy and Méry, to portray them as the comic heroes of *La Bacriade ou la guerre d'Alger*. This mock-heroic epic poem written in rhyming couplets represents the students as the innocent victims of an international intrigue. Dispatched to France by the Viceroy in response to the Bey of Algiers' appeal for help in recovering a stolen fortune that Nathan Bacri, a Jewish-Algerian embezzler, was squandering in Paris, the bungling students merely succeed after a series of far-fetched accidents and miscalculations to be duped by the wily Jew into provoking the French government to declare war on Algeria for meddling in its domestic affairs. Bacri, 'the Helen of Troy of the Algerian War,' as the authors call him, was a real character. And for all its frivolity, the amusing plot, combining fact with fancy, proved to be remarkably prophetic, for the Bacri affair was indeed used by the Polignac ministry as a convenient pretext for invading Algeria three years later.⁶² But in a more immediate sense, the enormous success of the *Bacriade*, which went through several editions, served to focus attention once again on the real students, paving the way to the wide publicity that Jomard gave to their final oral exam in 1828 held in the main auditorium of the *Ecole des Langues Orientales* on the rue de Lille on February 28 and March 1.

The solemnity of the occasion was underscored by inviting a distinguished group of dignitaries to witness the proceedings. These included some of France's most prominent Orientalists—Jaubert, Bianchi, Garcin de Tassy; members of the French Academy; General Belliard, Costaz and other veterans of Bonaparte's expedition; and, in a significant gesture to mark the international importance of the event, Sir Sidney Smith of Acre fame accompanied by the British consul David Morier. The examining board was chaired by the Comte de Chabrol, another veteran of the Egyptian campaign and collaborator to *La Description de l'Egypte* who had become the prefect of the department of the Seine. The oral had been preceded one week earlier by a written examination divided in two parts: a one-hour test on French composition and a one-hour-and-a-quarter test covering

arithmetic, algebra and geometry, as well as drawing. From Jomard's account, which includes all five of the arithmetic questions, it is quite obvious that little was expected of the students beyond simple computations.⁶³ More impressive was the performance of at least some of them in the French essay test, which took the form of writing a letter home describing what had most impressed them during their two years in Paris. The prize-winning essay by Mazhar, the only one to be reprinted in its entirety in Jomard's report, shows a sound command of idiomatic French combined with a wry sense of humour. Mazhar, who was also awarded the first prize in geometry, had admittedly benefitted together with the four Armenians from courses he had taken the previous year at the collège Bourbon, where he had ranked sixth out of a class of seventy.⁶⁴ Jomard regarded him and Baiyumi as the two most promising Turks in the batch, and indeed his subsequent career as a military engineer who assisted Mougel in building the Delta barrage and the Alexandria lighthouse and rose to become the *Nazir* of the Egyptian Department of Public Works before his death in 1872 confirmed Jomard's expectations. Another Turk who, according to Jomard, showed a real literary flair on the oral part of the French exam was Khalil-Mahmud. Khalil can be cited as an example of those students who were misemployed on their return to Egypt. Reduced to earning his living as a tourist guide, he was highly regarded by Maxime du Camp, Flaubert's travelling companion in 1849, who used him as an invaluable source for the chapters of his book covering Egyptian culture.⁶⁵ Although the Egyptians did not fare as well as the Turks on the exam, Jomard is careful to point out that their record, based on the number of first and second prizes awarded, placed them only slightly behind those Turks who, like Mazhar and Baiyumi, were born in Egypt, the least successful group being the category of Turks born elsewhere. Surprisingly enough, Tahtawi received no prizes, and is even mocked for his clumsy performance on the orals, but he is nevertheless praised for his able translation of a treatise on mineralogy as well as of Jomard's almanach.⁶⁶

It was at about this time, shortly after a graduation ceremony held at the rue du Regard on 4 July, that Jomard announced the arrival of a fresh batch of students, this time young 'Ethiopians' who were to be trained to assist in the exploration of the Upper Nile. The idea had originally been conceived by Drovetti who as early as 1811 had been so favourably impressed by the native intelligence displayed by the black slaves employed in Muhammad Ali's factories that he suggested that some of them if properly educated in France at a sufficiently early age could eventually contribute, as he grandiloquently put it, 'to spreading civilization into the heart of Africa'. It was not until 1827, however, that the Viceroy could be persuaded to approve such a scheme, and in the following year the members of the *Société de Géographie* were informed that six young African slaves, ranging in age from nine to twelve, had been set free by Drovetti to be educated in Paris at France's expense, and were already capable of conversing in French after only a couple of months in the capital. These blacks, who in fact came mostly from Kordofan, although technically members of the *Mission égyptienne*, were lodged throughout their stay in two suburban pensions. Tahtawi makes

no mention of them and it would seem that Jomard was anxious to keep them segregated from the rest of the students placed under his care. Their fluency in French is attested by all the contemporary sources, which also report the amazing progress they were making in geography and natural history. In April 1832, Muhammad Ali assumed all expenses for their upkeep. By then, one of them had died of consumption, but the others remained in Paris until January 1836, when all the remaining members of the first mission were abruptly recalled to Cairo. Since there is no further trace of them after that date, it is impossible to tell to what extent these youngsters succeeded in realizing Drovetti's hopes.⁶⁷

In the meantime, the history of the *Mission égyptienne* entered its final phase as the students, broken up into fifteen groups, were at last allowed to begin their specialized studies in April. Jomard's assertion that they were free to select their own specialties is contradicted by Pierre Hamont, a severe critic of Muhammad Ali's regime, who contends that it was Jomard alone who was responsible for making the decision, which seems more likely.⁶⁸ The system adopted combined group tutorials with attendance at selected courses given at the various *facultés*. Some of the sections were taught by such well-known professors as Lacour in military science, Macarel in administrative law, Olivier in engineering and gunnery, and Gauthier de Chaubry in chemistry. By the fall, at least two of the students, Mazhar and Mukhtar, were sufficiently well-prepared to gain entrance into the *Ecole Polytechnique* and the *Ecole des Mines* respectively, and in the following year, two others, both of them Egyptians, were admitted as full-fledged students to the Faculty of Medecine. Jomard's breakdown shows that three of the Armenians were picked to study law and diplomacy, along with Abdi and Selim effendi, a Georgian.⁶⁹ By 1829, a group of four, including the Armenian Yusuf effendi, having completed a course of study in physics and botany, were sent to the famous experimental farm of Roville, near Nancy, which later became the model for Ibrahim Pasha's agricultural school at Nabahroh. It was there that Yusuf effendi developed a variant of the tangerine, the mandarine orange, which still bears his name.⁷⁰ Another group of five, pretentiously described as naval engineers, were sent to a cadet school in Brest, where in fact, all but one of them were trained to become ship-builders. Many of the others could also hardly be considered as students in the accepted sense. Together with newcomers, Egyptians for the most part, who began arriving in France in growing numbers after 1829, they were scattered in trade schools or workshops, both in Paris and the provinces, to be taught such crafts as metal-founding and silk-weaving, metallurgy, dyeing, printing and engraving. Tahtawi, on the other hand, was singled out by Jomard to become a full-time translator—a task he began carrying out in earnest while his companions pursued their technical studies. In addition to a vast amount of reading in the French classics and contemporary literature, faithfully recorded in the diary that was to become the basis for his *Takhlis*, he was also able to complete the translation of at least four major works before the end of his tour in Paris—Burlamaqui's *Principes du droit politique* and *Eléments du droit naturel*, Depping's *Aperçu historique sur les moeurs et coutumes des nations*, and Jomard's extracts from

Malte-Brune's *Précis de la géographie universelle*, three of which were subsequently published by the Bulaq press.⁷¹ And when put to the test in November 1831, in a special final examination held before a learned body of Orientalists, he successfully demonstrated that Jomard's faith in his prize pupil had not been misplaced.⁷²

By then, a good many of the first contingent of students had already begun to drift back to Egypt. Tahtawi himself left at the end of the year, preceded by half a dozen others who had returned immediately after the outbreak of the July Revolution. According to one estimate, however, the members of the first mission remained in France for an average of about five to six years.⁷³ Encouraged by its results, Muhammad Ali was easily persuaded by Jomard to establish the Mission on a more permanent footing, swelling its ranks with a steady flow of new arrivals, coming either individually or in batches over the next few years. It has been estimated that at its peak in 1833, a total of 115 students were registered with the Paris Mission.⁷⁴ Some, like a group of six who as early as August 1828, in the year following the battle of Navarino, had been sent directly to the Toulon arsenal to study naval construction, clearly consisted of semi-literate artisans who bypassed Paris altogether. But the majority of those studying in the capital tended to be of higher calibre. Most of them, recent graduates of Qasr el-'Aini now in full operation, were trained in engineering and ancillary subjects in the Paris school, where the curriculum was gradually adapted to meet the needs of fresh students arriving with a more solid grounding than their 1826 predecessors. The medical mission led by Clot Bey in 1832 deserves special mention, since it was meant to demonstrate that with its own medical school functioning at Abu Za'bal since 1827, Egypt was now quite capable of holding its own in that area. It was also designed to dispense with the tedious double-lecture system which prevailed in that school by training its twelve members to replace its European instructors on their return. All except one in Clot's group were native Egyptians, originally recruited from El Azhar and selected as the most capable of the twenty who had completed the five-year course at Abu Za'bal. But although their performance on an exam conducted before members of the Paris Medical School enabled Clot to refute the charges made against him by Dr. Pariset and his other French detractors, most of them found it necessary to extend their stay in the capital in order to qualify for a medical degree which required completion of a dissertation in French. It is interesting to note that three of these medical students married Frenchwomen, the first recorded instance of such mixed marriages.⁷⁵

The success which attended Clot's mission was the highpoint in the early history of the *Mission égyptienne* and prompted Muhammad Ali to express his appreciation by sending Jomard the gift of a golden snuff box accompanied by a fulsome letter of gratitude.⁷⁶ The geographer had previously refused any payment in return for his services, rejecting the generous offer of a salary of 10,000 francs a year in a letter that was widely publicized in 1828. His motives, he declared on that occasion, were purely altruistic, representing a genuine desire on the part of France to bridge the gulf that separated Egypt from the West. But for all its rhetoric on the legacy of

Bonaparte's expedition and France's civilizing mission, Jomard's open letter was in fact meant to remind the Viceroy of his responsibilities, for it bluntly warned him that the ultimate purpose of his educational endeavour would never be achieved 'unless the students were allowed a free hand on their return to introduce those principles of justice and order which, alas, have for so long been sadly neglected in their wretched and unhappy country.'⁷⁷

Leaving aside such chimerical hopes, it would be more appropriate to examine to what extent these first European-trained students were able to fulfill Muhammad Ali's less exalted ambitions. From the Pasha's standpoint, the Mission's real objective was certainly not to encourage the penetration of Western ideas among his subjects, but to create the nucleus of a group of hand-picked and loyal servants capable of contributing more effectively to carrying out his ambition of transforming the state along Western lines. Conceived from its very inception as an integral part of his radical program of educational reform, the Mission was primarily designed to become the major instrument for achieving that goal as rapidly as possible. In the long run, the students were expected to furnish Egypt with the necessary engineers, technicians and teachers required to lay the foundations of a modern administrative structure geared to the Viceroy's military machine.⁷⁸ But an even more pressing need was to assist in the translation of the European text books on military and allied subjects made increasingly necessary by the proliferation of the Viceroy's westernized secondary and specialized schools, and ultimately also relieve his treasury of the financial burden of relying exclusively on the growing number of European instructors attracted to his service. If we are to believe Yacoub Artin, the way in which this was accomplished was both crude and arbitrary. His account of how the returning students were kept confined to quarters in the Citadel during their first three months in Cairo not to be released until each had produced an adequate Turkish translation of a book in his specialty may perhaps be dismissed as apocryphal.⁷⁹ But the evidence of other writers bears out his contention that many of the students were not only ruthlessly abused by their capricious master, but were also denied the chance of working in their specialties.⁸⁰ Pierre Hamont, a contemporary source admittedly hostile to the regime, confirms the general view that the Viceroy failed to make the best use of their talents. Thus, Mukhtar and Ahmad, who had studied military science were both posted with the civil service; Mahmud, a naval engineer trained both in Brest and Toulon, was assigned to the treasury department; Estefan, who had specialized in political science and diplomacy, was at first placed in charge of supplies and stationery in the Ministry of Education before finally proving his mettle by succeeding Sikyas Artin as Foreign Minister when the latter fled the country following Abbas' accession; Baiyumi, trained as a hydraulics engineer, became a teacher of chemistry; and the Egyptian Amin, a metal-founder by training, was put in charge of one of the Pasha's new powder factories.⁸¹ Even Tahtawi, the most eminent member of the Mission, could not at first escape from such erratic and haphazard assignments, and it was only after holding subordinate positions, first in the Medical School at Abu Za'bal, then in the Artillery School at Tura, that he was finally appointed director in 1837 of the Cairo

School of Translation created by the Pasha at his own suggestion.⁸² Other, more extreme examples of how some of the members of this and succeeding missions were misemployed on their return, can be cited from the experience of European travellers. Maxime du Camp, for instance, records how astonished he was to discover that a humble book-binder he encountered in the Muski was a former student of the *Polytechnique*, and the painter Prisse d'Avennes also reports coming across two others, one of whom had spent five years studying silk-weaving in Lyons, reduced to earning their living as a shoe-maker and jeweller respectively.⁸³

On the whole, however, and despite all the hasty improvisations and sheer inefficiency that marked Egypt's first steps toward modernization, this pioneering educational experiment cannot be dismissed as altogether futile. Admittedly most of the students arrived in Paris both too old and inadequately prepared to gain much more than a rudimentary knowledge of the subjects they were made to study. Jomard himself acknowledged that in addition to their ignorance of French, it was their age and the fact that they lacked anything like a sufficiently solid educational background that were the major obstacles which stood in the way of carrying out the Mission's objective.⁸⁴ Restricted in their movements by their native garments, their lives strictly regulated by the harsh military discipline that governed the school, most of them found it difficult to adapt to their new surroundings and seemed to have retained little of permanent value from their experience abroad. Yet others, more talented and enterprising than their companions, could not fail to derive some real benefit from their first encounter with the West. Because of their Christian upbringing, the Armenians undoubtedly found themselves in the best position to adjust to Western ways and make the most of their stay in Paris. But there were also some striking examples among such individual Turks as Mazhar, Baiyumi and Mahramgy who, notwithstanding their background, spared no effort to excel in their studies, developing a genuine appreciation for Western culture which they in turn tried to communicate to their colleagues at home. It is noteworthy that all three of them ultimately succeeded in graduating from the *Polytechnique*, where their teacher Auguste Comte held them in the highest esteem, recommending the former to his disciple John Stuart Mill on his subsequent visit to London.⁸⁵ Yet although on their return to Egypt, these students were too few in number to have any immediate impact on the existing order of things, they eventually managed to overcome the hostility of the entrenched bureaucracy to assist some of the more enlightened of Muhammad Ali's French advisers in reforming the state along Western patterns. As members of the Pasha's inner circle, it was the Armenians in particular who were rewarded with the most important posts, Artin and Estefan being successively appointed Foreign Minister following the death of their co-religionist Boghos, while Khusru rose to become first secretary to both Muhammad Ali and his successor Abbas I. Muhammad Ali's Saint-Simonian advisers, notably Lambert Bey and Dr Perron, also prevailed upon the Pasha to make better use of many of the Turks who eventually attained positions of eminence in government service, Abdi and Mukhtar becoming Ministers of Education; Mazhar Director of Public Works; the Circassian

Mahmud Nami Minister of Finance; and Hassan al-Iskandarani, Minister of the Navy after serving as director of the Alexandria dockyards. As for the Egyptians, it was Tahtawi's case which of course stands out as the most significant by-product of this educational endeavour, for it was he, and he alone among all the other members of the Mission, who was able to absorb Western culture to the fullest possible extent. It was also largely as a consequence of his influence that the following missions sent to France as well as other parts of Europe contained a larger element of Egyptians, hybrid products of two contrasting civilizations, who as a result of their exposure to Western ideas were to make a notable contribution to the intellectual and political life of modern Egypt in the years ahead.

NOTES

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 38. France. Archives du Ministère des Archives Etrangères: Le Caire (Correspondence Politique), 26, fol. 282, 4 April 1826. Family connections also helped in the selection of Turkish students sent to Paris. Cf. Richard L. Chambers, 'Notes on the Mekteb-i Osmani in Paris, 1857–1874', in William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers, eds., *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East in the nineteenth century*. Chicago; 1968, 323.
 39. Heyworth-Dunne, 163.
 40. E.-F. Jomard, 'L'École égyptienne de Paris', *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, II (August 1828), 96–116. 'On a réuni quelques notions sur leurs familles qu'il serait trop long de rapporter ici.' 113.
 41. Georges Douin. *Les premières frégates de Mohammed Aly (1824–1827)*, Cairo; 1926, 7.
 42. *La Revue encyclopédique*, XXX (May 1826), 577.
 43. 'Relation d'un voyage en France par le Cheikh Re'faa,' trans. by Caussin de Perceval, *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, XI (June 1833, 231.
 44. Archives du Ministère de la Guerre, Vincennes. 'Refugiés d'Egypte', Carton 17: Dossier Joanny Pharaon.
 45. Cf. *La Gazette de France*, 24 August 1827; *La revue encyclopédique*, XXXVI (October 1827), 208–9.
 46. Joseph Agoub, *La Lyre Brisée*. Paris: 1824, 6.
 47. Giovanni Marro, *Il Corpo epistolare di Bernardino Drovetti* (Rome, 1940), 12–13; see also S. Zavatti, 'Bernardino Drovetti', *Oriente Moderno* (November–December 1965), 878–88.
 48. L. de la Brière, *Champollion inconnu: lettres inédites* (Paris, 1897), 59; Bachtaly, *op. cit.*; E.-F. Jomard, 'Notice sur Ellious Bochtor', *La Revue encyclopédique*, XXII (October 1821), 543–52; Anouar Louca, 'Ellious Bochtor: sa vie, son oeuvre', *Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne*, V (December 1953), 309–20; Auriant, 'Un précurseur du Docteur J.-C. Madrus', *Le Monde Nouveau*, (1–15 September 1923), 176–181, and the same author's *Aventuriers et Originaux* (Paris, n.d.), 70–104, on Basil Fakr. On Pharaon, see André Massé, 'Les Etudes Arabes en Algérie (1830–1930) *Revue Africaine* (1933), 210–11.
 49. Jean-Marie Carré, *Voyageurs et écrivains français en Egypte*. Cairo; 1952, II, 116.
 50. M. de Pongerville, 'Notice sur Joseph Agoub,' in *Mélanges de littérature orientale et française* (Paris, 1835), iii–vii; Bibliothèque Nationale, MS, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises, 3580. fols. 98–103; 163–176.
 51. Charles Mismar, *Souvenirs du monde musulman* (Paris, 1891), 289; Jacques Tagher, 'Les

- locaux qui arbitrèrent la mission scolaire à Paris existent toujours,' *Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne*, II (1950), 333–36.
52. Tahtawi, *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz* Cairo; 1905, 147–150.
 53. *La Revue encyclopédique*, XXXII (December 1826), 837.
 54. Gabriel Guémard, *Les Réformes en Egypte d'Ali-Bey el Kébir à Méhémet—Ali, 1760–1848*. Cairo; 1936, 302.
 55. Tahtawi, *Takhlis*, 20–21, 150.
 56. This was in addition to the students' pay, fixed according to a salary scale established in Cairo, and ranging from P.T. 5,000 for the Turk Abdi to a paltry P.T. 100 for the lowly Egyptians. Tahtawi's salary was P.T. 250. Cf. Heyworth-Dunne, 159–163.
 57. Auriant, 'Histoire du Cheikh Refaah,' *Les Cahiers d'Occident*, II, x (10 September 1930), 147.
 58. *Le Moniteur Universel*, 13 August 1826.
 59. Belliard to Boyer, Paris, 4 August 1828, cited in Douin, *Une mission militaire*, 132.
 60. *La Pandore*, 22 August 1826, and again 26 August 1826. The opera, entitled 'La Girafe, ou une journée au Jardin du Roi', was composed by M. Théaubon.
 61. *La Revue encyclopédique*, XXXV (July 1827), 258–61. See also Hans Houg, 'La girafe de Charles X et son influence sur l'art populaire et la mode,' *Art populaire en France*, IV (1933), 119–130 and Georges Dardaoud, 'L'extraordinaire aventure de la girafe du pacha d'Egypte,' *Revue des conférences françaises en Orient*, XV, i (January 1951), 3–11.
 62. H. Barthélemy and Joseph Méry, *La Bacriade ou la guerre d'Alger: poème heroï-comique en cinq chants* (Paris: A. Dupont, first 1827 edition); Charles-André Julien, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine. Vol I: La Conquête et les débuts de la colonisation (1827–1871)* (Paris, 1967), 21–28.
 63. The fifth and hardest arithmetic question read as follows: 'Forty-two men at sea must share a fifteen days' supply of drinking water on the basis of a half a litre a day per man. Calculate what each man's share would be if the ship is to remain at sea for twenty-five days.' Jomard adds, however, that the questions had to be answered within a fixed time-limit. Jomard, 98.
 64. Jomard, 102–3, 105.
 65. Maxime du Camp, *Souvenirs littéraires* (Paris, 1882), II, 472–3.
 66. Jomard, 100, 104.
 67. M. Pacho, 'Essai sur la civilisation de l'intérieur de l'Afrique d'après un projet de M. Drovetti, consul-général de France en Egypte,' *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, XII (October 1827), 137–42; Pacho, 'Sur un projet de M. Drovetti, consul-général de France en Egypte, pour préparer la civilisation de l'intérieur de l'Afrique,' *Revue encyclopédique*, XXXVII (February 1828), 344–8; *Le Moniteur universel*, 26 May 1830; 'Education des jeunes Ethiopiens envoyés en France. Extrait d'un rapport présenté . . . par MM. Bally, Coutelle et Jomard,' *Revue encyclopédique*, XLVI (June 1830), 806–809. See also Jomard to d'Abbadie, 30 March 1841, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises 22430, fols. 268–271.
 68. Jomard, 105. Cf. Pierre N. Hamont, *L'Egypte sous Méhémet-Aly* (Paris, 1843), II, 192.
 69. Jomard, 109–10.
 70. Heyworth-Dunne, 151, n.9.
 71. T. X Bianchi, 'Catalogue des livres arabes, persans et turcs imprimés à Boulac en Egypte depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie dans ce pays,' *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, II (1843), 24–60.
 72. 'L'examen final du Cheykh Refah,' *La Revue encyclopédique*, XLVIII (November 1831), 521–23.
 73. Eusèbe de Salles, *Pérégrinations en Orient ou voyage pittoresque, historique et politique en Egypte, Nubie, Syrie, Turquie, Grèce en 1837–1839* Paris; 1840 I, 40.
 74. Anouar Louca, *Voyageurs et écrivains égyptiens en France au XIXe siècle* Paris; 1970, 46.
 75. A. B. Clot Bey, *Compte-rendu des travaux de l'Ecole de Médecine*. Paris; 1833, 219–30; and the same author's *Aperçu général sur l'Egypte*. Paris; 1840, II, 414. For a dissenting view on the quality of the students, see Hamont, II, 107, although Clot's pride in their abilities is borne out by their performance before the medical faculty of Marseilles' *Hôtel-Dieu*, which they visited on their way to Paris. Cf. *Le Sémaphore de Marseille*, 3 October 1832 and *Le Messager de Marseille*, 24 October 1832.
 76. The letter was published by Count Jules Boselli (Jomard's grandson) in 'E.-F. Jomard,' *La Revue d'Egypte*, IV (January–April 1897), 72–8.

77. Cf. *Le Moniteur universel*, 12 March 1828, and *La Revue encyclopédique*, XXXVII (March 1828), 843–5.
78. Victor Schoelcher, the anti-slavery publicist, exposed the Pasha's educational reforms as a mere façade entirely dictated by military ambition: 'Les écoles n'étaient pour Méhémet Ali que des instruments de guerre; il y renonce aujourd'hui que son rôle d'agresseur est fini et qu'il a perdu l'espérance de conquérir le trône du Sultan. Il n'a plus besoin d'armée; il ne veut plus d'école.' *L'Égypte en 1845*. Paris; 1846, 63. See also A. L. Tibawi, *Islamic Education: its tradition and modernization into the Arab national systems*. London; 1972, 55.
79. Yacoub Artin, *L'Instruction publique*, 73.
80. See, for instance, Paul Merruau, *L'Égypte contemporaine de Méhémet Ali à Saïd Pacha (1840–1857)*. Paris; 1858, 88, or J.-H. Guisquet, *L'Égypte, les Turcs et les Arabes*, Paris; 1848, II, 84.
81. Hamont, II, 192–195.
82. Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi'i, 'Asr Mohammed Ali. Cairo; 1947, 414.
83. Maxime du Camp, *Souvenirs littéraires*, I, 545–6; E. Prisse d'Avennes, 'Politique et administration de l'Égypte moderne,' Bibliothèque Nationale, MS., Nouvelles acquisitions françaises 20422, fol. 84.
84. Jomard to Artin Bey, October 1844, cited in Gaston Wiet, 'Quatre lettres inédites de Mohammed Ali', *La Revue du Caire* (October 1944), 37.
85. *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à John Stuart Mill (1841–1846)*, Paris; 1877, 123–24, 169, 177; Francis E. Mineka, ed., *The Earlier letters of John Stuart Mill (1812–1848)*, Toronto; 1963, II, 592, 617.