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# The French occupation: a historiographical view

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The French Occupation: A Historiographical View

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Arab and Islamic Civilizations


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**Introduction**

When Napoleon Bonaparte landed on Egypt's Mediterranean coast near Alexandria on 1 July 1798, he wanted to colonize Egypt; usurping control from the powerful Mamluks who had "exclusively favored English commerce" to the detriment of French trade interests.[1] Aside from these economic interests and following the ideas of the French Enlightenment to liberate people from their suppressive regimes, Napoleon seems to have believed that the local population would be receptive to the French.[2] He was horribly mistaken: the Egyptian population did not welcome the French and consequently, Napoleon's objectives to establish a French government and implement French systems failed. Three years later in March 1801, British and Ottoman forces defeated the French in Egypt and ended this episode in Egyptian history.

I have used the phrase "French occupation" throughout this thesis to refer to this three-year episode. Referring to it as an occupation poses a question about its very nature. Was it an expedition? Was it an invasion? Or was it an occupation? Since 1798, this episode has been referred to in a variety of ways, sometimes reflecting historical periods or the point from where the critic speaks.[3] Since the arrival of the French in Egypt, many European scholars have referred to it as an expedition, beginning with large volumes of work composed by savants who accompanied Napoleon Bonaparte and his troops.[4] This term was widely used throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century.[5] Another term used was campaign or *hamla* in Arabic. This term was used by the Egyptian historian

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[1] Robert Matteson Johnston, trans., *The Corsican: A Diary of Napoleon's Life in His Own Words* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin co. 1910) ,78.

[2] Johnston, *Corsican*, 80. Also see Geoffrey Symcox, "The Geopolitics of the Egyptian Expedition 1797-1798" in *Napoleon in Egypt,* ed. Irene A. Bierman (Ithaca Press, UK, 2003).

[3] See Aijaz Ahmad, "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality," *Race & Class* 36:3 (1995) and Arif Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism," *Critical Inquiry* 20:2 (Winter, 1994).

[4] The *Description de l'Égypte,* was written at the time of the French in Egypt and later published between 1809 and 1821 and calls it an expédition.

[5] For example, Haji. A Browne, *Bonaparte in Egypt and the History of To-day,* (London 1907) uses the term expedition. Also see articles written by Nelly Hanna, Geoffrey Symcox, and Stuart Harten in Bierman, *Napoleon in Egypt*, which all refer to the episode as an expedition.

'Abd al-Raḥman al-Jabārti who witnessed and chronicled the French episode as it happened.[6] More recently, this episode has been referred to as an invasion or an occupation.[7] I too have chosen to use the term occupation, defined as the "control of a power over a territory to which that power has no sovereign title, without the volition of the sovereign of that territory".[8] While one could argue that the term occupation describes colonialism in terms of pure binary opposition, I have decided to use this term to draw a contrast with the early narratives that posited the episode as a glorious moment for the people of Egypt.[9]

For over 200 years, the French occupation has been a source of discussion and debate among scholars and laypeople alike. Most of the discussion and contentious debate has centered on the degree of impact or influence the French occupation had on the subsequent history of Egypt. This thesis will attempt to analyze the varying views in historiography regarding the French occupation. That is, how historians of the past 200 years have viewed the French occupation and its impact on Egyptian history. This thesis will not focus on the French occupation as an event but on the changing interpretations of the French occupation as evident in the works of individual historians.

Historiography allows us to consider who wrote the history and what agenda they had in mind. Historiography also provides insight into what could have contributed to this agenda by examining factors such as sources or social and political movements. Lastly, historiography has the potential to expose possible biases and prejudice in history. The study and writings on Egyptian historiography has been undertaken by many with varying focuses and conclusions.[10]

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[6] Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann, eds., *'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabārtī's History of Egypt: 'Ajaʿib al-athār fi'l-tarājim wa'l-akhbār,* 4 vols in 2 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 1994).

[7] For example Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and Elliot Colla, "Non, non! Si, Si: Commemorating the French Occupation of Egypt (1798-1801)" *MLN* 118:4 (Sep 2003).

[8] Eyal Benvenisti , *The International Law of Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004), 3.

[9] See Elliot Colla, "Non, non! Si, Si". Colla argues this point but believes that this episode in Egyptian history can be seen as an Occupation *and* Expedition, both opposing *and* ambiguous.

[10] For example Jack Crabbs, *The Writing of History in Nineteenth-Century Egypt: A Study in National Transformation,* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1984); Gamal al-Din al-Shayyal, *A History of Egyptian*

This is nowhere more evident in recent works like Anthony Gorman's *Contesting the Nation* and Yoav Di-Capua's *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*.[11] Both works focus on the interaction between intellectual history, scholarship and politics in twentieth-century Egypt, but their focus and conclusions are different. Di-Capua focuses on the modern idea of history and argues that it "is a form of thought and habit of mind that arrived in Egypt in the late nineteenth century, bringing with them specific institutions and modes of reasoning". He continues:

> Modern history as Egyptians read, write, think and know it today is of fairly recent origins. It was forged as a comprehensive system of knowledge, in fact as a new idea, only at the very end of the Ottoman era. As a system of thought, it served as a necessary prerequisite for the existence of modernity itself. Similar to the eighteenth-century Europe, in which the modern idea of history constituted the essence of the Enlightenment/modernity effort, the Egyptian project of modernity and nationalism, the Nahda, was also dependent on history for its own successful realization.[12]

Di-Capua's argument follows the line of thought that intellectual history in Egypt was taken from European thought and has been stuck in the same rut ever since, with little innovation.[13]

Differing from Di-Capua in scope and thought, Gorman focuses only on the twentieth century (starting at 1919 and continuing into the 1980s), and argues that the "development of Egyptian historiography in the twentieth century has been the product of a complex interaction of political social, cultural and intellectual factors".[14] Gorman gives special attention to histories that were not considered part of the mainstream historical scholarship; the Copts, the Islamists and the "Egyptianised" foreign residents. By extending his focus outside the mainstream national narratives, Gorman paints a more

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*Historiography in the Nineteenth Century,* (Alexandria: UP, 1962); Youssef M. Choueiri, *Modern Arab Historiography: Historical Discourse and the Nation-State,* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

[11] Anthony Gorman, *Historians, State and Politics in Twentieth Century Egypt: Contesting the Nation,* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003) and Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writing in Twentieth Century Egypt,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

[12] Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers, 3.*

[13] Di-Capua invokes the late historian Albert Hourani remark that "Arabs are looking at themselves with eyes given to them by Europe" and comments that his book is a study of those "eyes"; *Gatekeepers,* 337.

[14] Gorman, *Historians, State and Politics,* 197.

complex picture of historiography in the twentieth century that challenges Di-Capua's view that Egyptian historiography is deeply rooted in nineteenth century intellectual tradition. Furthermore, Gorman addresses what Di-Capua seemed to ignore, the challenging or "contesting" voices to mainstream historiography that are present.

While the aim of this thesis is not to discuss twentieth-century Egyptian historiography, nor to champion Gorman's thesis, the study fits within his discussion on Egyptian historiography. In researching historians' views and conclusions about the French occupation, it becomes clear that there is a wide spectrum of opinions, not all of them rooted in a nineteenth century European tradition or in line with the national-secular consensus. In this thesis, I argue that the interpretations of the episode of the French occupation in Egypt's history have not always followed the dominant national discourse that posits the occupation as a critical moment for what was to come in the twentieth century. Rather, contesting voices have argued that the French occupation had little to no impact on the changes that would be seen in the twentieth century. Some of these contesting voices are discussed in the third and fourth chapters. It should be noted that this thesis does not fully explore all the schools of thought that challenged the national-secular consensus in Egyptian historiography: the Islamist voice is notably absent. This discourse began in the early twentieth century and uses a framework for historical interpretation that evaluated political, economic and social phenomena in the context of a specific concept of the Islamic community.[15] Due to my linguistic limitations, I had no access to Islamist writing on the French occupation. This thesis is divided into four chapters, reflecting what I have classified as the four historiographical periods on the French occupation. Each historiographical period discusses themes evident in the works of historians and examines how these historians viewed the French occupation. I did not intend to imply a strict chronological progression of these periods nor do I intend to argue that all works fit within one of these periods.

Chapter one discusses the first historiographical period, titled the orientalist period. This period began with the French occupation in 1798 and lasted into the late nineteenth century and consisted mainly of European scholars. Influenced by

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[15] For a good explanation of the Islamist voice and its context in Egyptian Historiography see ibid, *chapter 4.*

Enlightenment ideas of the late eighteenth century, these scholars emphasized the need for science and reason in their methodological approaches. Additionally, many of them saw Europe as a model of progress, which greatly affected how scholars viewed non-European societies and cultures. Scholars who wrote on the French occupation expressed a grandiose notion of Ancient Egypt, comparing it to what they believed was utter decline, stagnation and backwardness of Ottoman Egypt prior to the French occupation. Thus, the French occupation was a watershed moment for Egypt on its path to modernity in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Chapter two discusses the second historiographical period, titled the nationalist period. During this period, which began in the late nineteenth century and continued until the late 1950s, Egyptian scholars, many of whom had been educated in Europe and influenced by nationalism, sought to define their identity in their Arab roots, while still defining progress in Western terms. Similar to the orientalist period, nationalist scholars who wrote on the French occupation believed that Ottoman Egypt was in a state of decline and stagnation prior to the French occupation. However, in order to bolster the national narrative, other actors such as Muḥammad ʻAlī and his dynasty, and other events such as revolts and revolutions, were given center stage. Therefore, 1798 and the coming of the French marked a critical moment for the modernity of Egypt.

Chapter three discusses the third historiographical period, titled the revisionist period, which began in the 1960s and persists in some ways until today. This period witnessed activity from both Arab and Western scholars, although the impetus for this period began from within the Arab world. Arab scholars began questioning the viewpoint from which their own history had been written. Focusing on new methodologies and approaches, Arab and non-Arab scholars began writing social and economic histories, challenging previously held assumptions such as the decline paradigm and the theory of modernization. They shifted their focus away from political and military events of Egypt to the state and society of Egypt within the seventeenth, eighteen and nineteenth centuries. In their conclusions, the French occupation could no longer be seen as a critical moment for Egyptian modernity.

Chapter four discusses the last historiographical period, titled the post-colonialist period. This period began in the 1980s and continues today. Similar to the revisionist

period, this period also began in the Arab world, specifically with the work of Edward Said in 1978. Influenced by developing post-colonial theories that emphasized text, meaning and representation, scholars of the post colonialist period began focusing on new domains. These domains were centered on colonial discourse, colonial encounters and the subaltern. Similar to the orientalist and nationalist period, the post-colonialist scholars who studied the French occupation saw the episode as an important event in Egyptian history, but not for the same reasons. Post-colonialist scholars saw the French occupation as the moment that imperial domination of the Arab world began.

*Inspiration, Methodology and Limitations*

Interest in the French occupation in Egypt began during my course work at AUC. Discussions raised by Dr. Nelly Hanna on the changing interpretations of history in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and new interpretations that challenged the French occupation as a turning point in modern Egyptian history peaked my interest. Shortly after my course work was completed, I was called up by the U.S. military reserves to serve in Iraq. I returned to AUC from my experience in the American wars with questions. How do people view invasions/occupations? Has their view of it changed overtime? With the thoughtful university discussions and my experience in Iraq fresh in my mind, I began researching the changing views of the French occupation in Egypt.

The research for this paper began with the examination of works written on the French occupation from 1798 until the present. Limited by language ability (see below), I was unable to conduct an exhaustive review of all material written on the French occupation since 1798. Rather, I relied on accessible primary and secondary sources. Through examination of selected works, I determined periods that I saw as characterized by evident themes and conclusions in the writings on the French occupation. Concurrently, I used historiographical works that explained theories, methods and approaches, as well as political and social histories to understand events that impacted historiography through these periods.

However, limitations and biases of my research should be mentioned. While I do possess intermediate Arabic proficiency, my ability to conduct research in Arabic was limited. Therefore, I relied on works in English that covered some of the Arabic works and referred back to the Arabic sources if I had questions. Additionally, I am not fluent in

French. Therefore, I relied on translations of French sources to gain important information. The limitations mentioned above could result in biases of my study. Because I was unable to delve into Arabic and French sources, I mainly relied on the views and perspectives of mainly Western scholars, specifically on studies related to historiography. Additionally, specific genres of literature were excluded, such as the Islamist works previously noted.

While this study on the historiography of the French occupation in not fully inclusive, it highlights the complexity and changing views on events in Egypt's past and how these views were influence by political and social factors. The French occupation of Egypt will continue to be a viewed in various ways for various agendas.

**Chapter 1**

**The Orientalist Period: A Watershed Event**

This chapter will discuss the first historiographical period of the writings on the French occupation of Egypt and three of the main themes that were evident in the works written during this time. I have titled this period orientalist, as it predominantly featured European scholars studying the Orient.[1] While the orientalist period is characterized more by ideas and perspectives than an actual timeframe, many of the historical works analyzed within this period began with France's occupation of Egypt in 1798 and continued into the late nineteenth century. The first section of this chapter will discuss the broader societal and historical contexts that influenced the scholars and their works which I have classified in the orientalist period. The second section will focus on themes prevalent in these works. I argue the prevalent themes were 1) a grandiose notion of Ancient Egypt; 2) the state of decline of Ottoman Egypt; and 3) ideas of a superior European civilization and progress through the Enlightenment. Scholars of the orientalist period saw the French occupation as a watershed event that transformed Egypt and brought it into modernity.

*Understanding the Broader Context of the Orientalist Period*

Scholars of the orientalist period were influenced by the ideas and events of the late eighteenth century. During this period, the context of what has been termed the Enlightenment impacted the ways in which scholars approached their work. Additionally, a milieu of Europe as a model of progress existed and greatly affected how scholars viewed non-European cultures. While the culture of Europe was seen as superior, interestingly a pre-occupation with the Egypt of old (Ancient Egypt) developed.

Beginning in eighteenth century Europe, a secular movement to reform society focusing on the importance of reason and science began to develop. As described by Habermas and Harvey, the Enlightenment Project was an intellectual effort on the part of

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[1] The term orientalist has historically been used to describe European scholars studying the "Orient" which included the Arab world. According to Maxime Rodinson, "The term *orientalist* appeared in English around 1779 and in French in 1799. The French form, *orientalisme,* found a place in the *Dictionnaire de l'Academie Françoise* of 1838". See Maxime Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), 57.

Enlightenment thinkers to liberate their thinking from the irrationalities of myth, religion, superstition and the dark side of human nature by developing rational forms of social organization and rational modes of thought.[2] For Enlightenment thinkers there was only one possible answer to any question and they believed the world could be controlled and rationally ordered through scientific representation.[3] Enlightenment thought embraced the idea of progress and believed that this could be achieved through scientific discovery and the pursuit of individual excellence in the name of human progress.[4] This scientific discovery often manifested itself in voluminous encyclopedic work. An example is the famous *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, or "Encyclopedia or a Systematic Dictionary of Sciences, Arts and Crafts," which was edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert but included contributions by many named contributors, such as Voltaire and Montesquieu. The encyclopedia was published between 1751 and 1772 and aimed to "change the way people think" by incorporating the entire world's knowledge for dissemination to future generations.[5]

Another example is the *Description de l'Égypte,* one of the few primary sources of the French occupation.[6] When Napoleon landed on the shores of Alexandria, he had

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[2] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Blackwell, 1992), 12.

[3] Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 27; Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 35.

[4] Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity,* 13.

[5] Denis Diderot as quoted by Isaac Kramnick, "Encyclopédie" in *The Portable Enlightenment Reader,* ed Isaac Kramnick, (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1995), 17.

[6] French accounts were not the only primary sources that were written during this time. Niqula Turk was a court poet to the Amir of Lebanon under the Ottoman Empire and was sent to Egypt during Napoleon's invasion to document events, as well as to fill the role of translator and Arabic advisor for Napoleon. Turk wrote two works, one covering the French occupation from 1798 to 1801 and the other covering the rise to power of Muḥammad Ali. These works were written in Arabic but translated into French in 1838. An Egyptian historian also chronicled the French occupation as it happened: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabārti wrote a multi-volume work, *ʿAjāʾib al-athār fi-l-tarājim wa-l-akhbār*. An incomplete translation of his work was published in French in 1838, alongside Turk's work; a more complete 9-volume translation in French was published in between 1888 and 1896. Authors of secondary literature on the French occupation, writing from the 1820s and 30s into the late nineteenth century, relied heavily on these primary works. See George

with him more than 150 French scientists and scholars whose purpose was to document the events of the imperial venture and compile encyclopedic knowledge of Egypt. Their work was later published between 1809 and 1821, under the title *Description de l'Égypte,* and contained 10 volumes of text, 885 plates, a three-sheet geographic map and a 47-sheet topographic map of the country.[7] A recent scholar, Anne Godlewska convincingly argues that the topographic mapping and scientific exploration behind the *Description de l'Egypte* were products of the 'Enlightenment Project' and reflected its values[8]. Godlewska explains that *Description de l'Égypte* was a coherent work that exemplified the mission of scientific representation as a guiding ideal for all of its authors. She continues:

> That ideal found its strongest expression in the maps which expressed most clearly the Enlightenment concern to know the truth about all that lay within the human and physical realm.[9]

Godlewska points out that *Description* was an example of an interest in the application of graphic and mathematical rigor with concern for measurements, numbers, accuracy and truth. For example the plates, which depicted monuments surrounded by landscape, were based on careful, nearly exact measurements. Many of the landscape sketches included cartographic-style index numbers for quick reference, and plate legends provided the view in which they were taken from.[10] Maps were frequently

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M. Haddad, "The Historical Work of Niqula El-Turk 1763-1823," *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* 81:3 (1961); Abdurahman al Djabarti, *Merveilles Biographiques et Historiques ou Chroniques du Chiekh Abd-El-Djabarti ,* 9 vols (Cairo 1896). al-Jabārtī's work was later translated into English in 1994: Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann, eds., *'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabārtī's History of Egypt:'Aja'ib al-athār fi'l-tarājim wa'l-akhbār,* 4 vols in 2 (Stuttgart : Franz Steiner Verlag,1994).

[7] Henri Munier, *Tables de la description de l'Egypte suivies d'une bibliographie sur l'expédition française de Bonaparte* (Cairo, Société Royale de Géographie d'Egypte, 1948) is an invaluable summary and explanation of the structure, composition and detailed publication chronology of both editions of the *Description.*

[8] Anne Godlewska, "Map, Text and Image. The Mentality of Enlightened Conquerors: A New Look at the Description de l'Egypte," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series 20:1 (1995).

[9] Ibid, 10.

[10] Ibid, 12.

described as "truth" because they were based on measurements and a measured grid. All in all, what was at issue was "the 'truth' and 'true' possession of 'true' Egypt."[11]

The Enlightenment age not only manifested itself in works of science and mathematics but also in public discourse and culture. Generally, Enlightenment views included criticism of religious fanaticism, the exaltation of tolerance, confidence in observation and experimentation, critical examination of all institutions and customs, the definition of natural mortality, and a reformulation of political and social ties on the basis of the idea of liberty. This discourse included words such as equality, citizenship, justice, liberty and inalienable rights.[12]

While Enlightenment thinkers struggled to dissolve myths by providing what they saw as objective science, they believed that civilization was a teleological process that would lead to a climactic end point, and that they were the ones leading this effort through their advanced technology and their scientific research. In their minds, modernity only came from these efforts and they were the model and standard of modernization and progress. Essentially the model of progress was Europe and the West was seen as the example and standard for modernization. This concept can be seen throughout the nineteenth-century writings, and beyond.[13]

With the concept of modernity came the belief that Egypt, and more generally the Orient, was in decline. Far from the days of the grandiose "classical" Egypt, the Ottoman state had steadily deteriorated.[14] Europeans were not the only ones to believe that the

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[11] Ibid, 12. Also see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* (London; New York: Verso, 1991), specifically chapter 3 "Census, Map, Museum."

[12] See Ellen Wilson and Peter Reill, *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (New York: Facts on File, 2004). Also see Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984), 21.

[13] This idea would later be developed in the 1950s as modernization theory, which held that economies and political systems could only achieve modernity by passing through five stages of development. Examples of this development were primarily Western democracies. Following these stages or steps of development would eventually bring the Ottoman Empire and Egypt into modernity – or so the argument went. Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1965); Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

[14] Godlewska, "Map, Text, and Image," 7.

Orient was in decline. Beginning in the late sixteenth century, writings by Ottoman elites described the "good old days" of the empire and complained about corruption and incompetence. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these ideas were picked up by Ottoman chroniclers, who believed that the Ottoman Empire was in decline, blaming it on internal corruption, abuse and incompetent rulers. Many of these ideas were found in *nasihatname* (advice letters) literature.[15]

The orientalist period was also characterized by a desire to connect to "classical" Pharaonic times. In the minds of the Enlightenment thinkers, and even subsequent European travelers and writers in Egypt, Pharaonicism was a forerunner of their own civilization.[16] Ancient Egypt was the birthplace of cultural superiority, which was then passed to the Greco-Romans, and then to the Europeans of the day.[17] This connection to Ancient Egypt was later echoed by Egyptians as a way of constructing their own Egyptian identity.[18] This effort was influenced by the West and resulted from the growing popularity of Egyptology, the attractiveness of Western modernity, and exposure to European education and culture. Egyptology had flourished and Egyptians were beginning to get involved in the interpretation of their ancient heritage as well.[19] The present day scholar Israel Gershoni explains that in the nineteenth century, a culture created by westernized Egyptian elites drew its identity from Egypt's non-Islamic heritages: Pharaonism, Hellenism, and the Roman-Byzantine heritage.[20] He called this a

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[15] The authors of this literature were influenced by the ideas of Ibn Khaldun (1406) regarding the rise and fall of empires. See Virginia H. Aksan, "Ottoman Political Writing, 1768-1808," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 25: 1 (1993).

[16] Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity-An Incomplete Project," in *Postmodern Culture,* ed. Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1980), 4.

[17] See Godlewska, "Map, Text, Image," 7. She references H. Laurens, C. Gillespie, J.C. Golvin, and C. Traunecker, *L'Expedition d'Egypte1798-1801,* (Armand Colin, Paris, 1989): 16-17.

[18] Donald M. Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) see conclusion, 287-298.

[19] Donald M. Reid, "Indigenous Egyptology: The Decolonization of a Profession?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* 105:2 (1985).

[20] Israel Gershoni*,* "The Evolution of National Culture in Modern Egypt: Intellectual Formation and Social Diffusion 1892-1945," *Poetics Today,* 12:2 (1992): 325-350, 328. Also see Gershoni*, Egypt, Islam, and the*

Westernizing Egyptian culture and described this as Pharaonicism, *al-fir'awniyya;* the idea that the people of contemporary Egypt were the direct descendants of the people of Ancient Egypt and as such possessed the same essential characteristics, qualities and potential. Gershoni argued that this began in the nineteenth century and continued until the 1930s.[21] This discourse sought to replace traditional references with contents and symbols taken from Egypt's Nilotic and non-Islamic past.

Using the *Description de l'Égypte* as an example, Godlewska echoes Gershoni's ideas. Godlewska explained that, for the French authors of the *Description*,

> The fantasy itself was that the only true Egypt was ancient Egypt; that it was still imbued with meaning and worth far greater than anything the present inhabitants could bring to the country; that there was an intimate association between modern France, French scholars, French engineers and the civilization of ancient Egypt; and that the monumentality of the Description was part of the proof of France's association with the monumentality of Egypt. The purpose of this truth-imbued fantasy was constantly and convincingly to evoke the larger truth of the superiority and depth of French civilization.[22]

The remainder of this chapter will highlight a selected few of the works of the orientalist period that specifically address the French occupation and provide examples of prevailing themes argued. The first prevailing theme was grandiose notions of Ancient Egypt and the developing identity of Egyptians as ancestors of Ancient. The second theme was the state of stagnation and decline of Ottoman Egypt. The third theme was European cultural superiority and progress through the Enlightenment.

### *A Grandiose Notion of Ancient Egypt*

The *Description de l'Égypte* was the first work on the French occupation that exemplified the grandiose notion of Ancient Egypt. As previously mentioned, this voluminous work was the construction of more than 150 French scientists and scholars who aimed to document the imperial venture and compile encyclopedic knowledge of Egypt. In addition to their positivist approach of detailing the current landscape of Egypt, a large number of their work was focused on Ancient Egypt. Most of their focus on

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*Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), Introduction.

[21] Gershoni, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs,* chapter 8.

[22] Godlewska, "Map, Text and Image," 18.

Ancient Egypt was seen in the plates and maps. For example, there were more topographic maps of ancient monuments than there were of modern maps. Modern villages close to antiquities were blacked out, giving no representation of contemporary life in Egypt. Locals were only used as graphic devices in the sketches of ancient monuments.[23] These images reflected very little of the daily lives of an average Egyptian, but rather focused on the remnants of Ancient Egypt.[24] As a result, the expedition and subsequent publication of *Description de l'Égypte* piqued the interest of many who traveled to Egypt to see for themselves the monuments displayed in the encyclopedic work. Due to security measures put in place by Muḥammad ʿAlī and the growing role of the British Consulate to assist the growing numbers of British merchants, the 1820s and 1830s saw an influx of such travelers.[25] Many of these travelers, such as Sir Gardner Wilkinson, Robert Hay, James Burton, Joseph Bonomi, and Henry Salt, were intrigued by the emerging discipline of the study of Ancient Egypt and thus the study of Egyptology was born.[26]

A few Egyptian historians were preoccupied with Ancient Egypt as well. Rifāʿa al-Ṭahṭāwī was appointed imam and was part of the first mission sent by Muḥammad ʿAlī to study in Paris between the years of 1826 and 1831. While in Paris, Ṭahṭāwī studied social and political philosophy, mathematics, and geometry, and became fluent in French. In 1835, Ṭahṭāwī founded the School of Languages and was influential in the

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[23] Ibid.

[24] It should be noted that *Description de l'Égypte* does contain two volumes devoted to the lifestyles and activities of Egypt's inhabitants, titled *L'État Moderne Tome I, II*, but this is minimal when compared to the focus on Ancient Egypt.

[25] R.R. Madden, *Egypt and Mohammed Ali: Illustrative of the Condition of his Slaves and Subjects* (London: Hamilton, 1841), 25-26.

[26] See Jason Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle* (Austin: University of Texas, 1992). Others, such as John Burckhardt and Edward Lane, focused on the life and culture of Egypt through proverbs or customs respectively. John Lewis Burckhardt's *Arabic Proverbs; or the manners and customs of modern Egyptians* was completed in 1817 but not published until 1830. Edward William Lane (1801-1876) was an ethnographer, translator and lexicographer, best known as the author of the *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1863).

development of science, law, literature and Egyptology in the nineteenth century.[27] Between 1870 and his death in 1873, Ṭaḥṭāwī wrote a two volume work which was intended to be a complete history of Egypt, titled *al-Murshid al-Amīn li-l-Banāt* and a work on Egyptian society titled *Manāhij al-Albāb al-Miṣriyya fī mabāhij al-Adāb al-ʿaṣriyya*.[28] In these works, Ancient Egypt was linked to the concept of "progress" in Western terms. Ancient Egypt was the source of knowledge and capabilities of civilization. This knowledge was transmitted to all other nations.[29] However, Ṭaḥṭāwī linked modern Egyptians to the Egyptians of ancient times: "the physical constitution of the people of these times is exactly that of the peoples of times past, and their disposition is one and the same."[30]

Ali Mubarak was another French-educated Egyptian who wrote on the French occupation in his voluminous work titled a*l-Khiṭaṭ al-Tawfīqiyya* published between 1886 and 1888.[31] In the first of the twenty volumes, Mubarak wrote on the history of Egypt, from the Arab conquest to the modern events of his time.[32] In his writings on the French occupation, Mubarak relied heavily on the *Description de l'Égypte* as a source of

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[27] See James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: a History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 133-134, 160-161.

[28] Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī wrote additional works that are discussed in some detail in Albert Hourani's *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See chapter 4, titled "The First Generation: Ṭaḥṭāwī, Khayr al-Din and Bustani," 67-103.

[29] Darrell Dykstra, "Pyramids, Prophets, and Progress: Ancient Egypt in the Writings of ʿAlī Mubārak," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114:1 (1994): 62.

[30] Taken from Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* 79, quote from Ṭaḥṭāwī's *Manahij*, 87. For Ṭaḥṭāwī's history of pre-Islamic Egypt, see Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?,* 108-112.

[31] The full title of the work is *al-Khiṭaṭ al-Tawfīqiyya al-Jadīda li-Miṣr al-Qahira wa-muduniha wa-bilādiha al-qadīma wa-l-shāhira.* See Jack Crabbs, *The Writing of History in the Nineteenth-Century Egypt: A Study in National Transformation* (Cairo: American University in Cairo,1984), chapter VI "The Encyclopedists: 'Ali Mubarak and Amin Sami" 109-129.

[32] Ibid, 117. Mubarak divides the topics as follows: 1) History of Cairo from its foundations under the Fatimids down to 1517, 2) Ottoman Egypt 1517-1798, 3)The French Occupation, 4) The reign of Muḥammad 'Ali, 5) Ibrahim, Abbas I, Said Ismail and Tawfiq and 6) Geography and topography of Cairo.

information.[33] According to Mubarak, Ancient Egypt had been the source of thriving civilization were, "old, just and equitable laws prevailed" in ancient times.[34] He believed that Egypt remained that way until the Ottoman invasion, which was followed by decline. For Ṭaḥṭāwī and Mubarak, Ancient Egypt was a source of pride, a glorious civilization marked by economic prosperity and social justice.

Haji Abdullah Browne, who lived in Egypt for more than thirty years, was another historian that expressed grandiose notions of Ancient Egypt. Best known for his work titled *Bonaparte in Egypt and the History of To-day*, published in 1907, Browne recalled the "brilliance" of Ancient Egypt.[35] Browne writes:

> In it Egypt was an independent country with a social system of an advanced type, the spontaneous product of the genius of the people, and it was the one in which, under native rulers, the land was filled with the marvelous pyramids, temples, and sculptures that, now in ruins, still excite the admiration and wonder of the world.[36]

Browne, like Ṭaḥṭāwī saw the Ancient Egyptians as ancestors of the modern Egyptians:

> A few words to show how the Egyptian of to-day linked with his ancestors of far distant ages, and a short sketch of the social and political conditions existing in the country at the close of the eighteenth century will tell the reader all he need know to enable him to comprehend the story of the years that have since elapsed.[37]

These notions of Ancient Egypt and the connections of modern Egyptians were echoed well into the twentieth century. Take for example Salama Musa, an Egyptian journalist in the 1930s stated: "We are Egyptians. We are a family living in this valley for more than ten thousand years." Musa asserted that there was not a single person born and

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[33] See Gabriel Baer, "Ali-Mubarak's *Khitat* as a Source for the History of Modern Egypt," in *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt: Historical Studies from the Ottoman Conquest to the United Arab Republic,* ed. P.M. Holt (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968) 18.

[34] Ali Mubarak, *'Ālam al-dīn,* 4 vols (Alexandria, Maṭbaʿat Jarīdat al-Maḥrūsa, 1882), 3:983-1007 and *Nukhbat al-fikr fī tadbīr nīl miṣr* (Cairo: Maṭbāʾat Wadī al-Nīl, 1879-80), 176-84. As quoted by Dykstra, "Pyramids, Prophets, and Progress," 63.

[35] Haji. A Browne, *Bonaparte in Egypt and the History of To-day,* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907) 23.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid, 6.

raised in the Nile Valley "who does not have a drop of that same blood which flowed in the veins of Ramses, Khufu, Khaf-Re and Akh-en-Aton."[38]

Scholars who contributed to the body of historical work in this orientalist period clearly had a pre-occupation with the Egypt of old. This pre-occupation centered on the belief that Ancient Egypt was a superior civilization and an identity of Egyptians as ancestors of this civilization began developing. Alternatively, the implication of this notion was that Ottoman Egypt was currently in decline and in need of a catalyst to move it forward into modernity. That catalyst was the French occupation.

### The State of Decline of Ottoman Egypt

The decline of Egypt was a prominent theme in the orientalist period and expressed in many of the works written on the history of Egypt. One example is the work of A.A. Paton who spent considerable time in Egypt after the French occupation. Paton traveled and lived in Egypt and Syria between the years 1839 to 1846, serving as private secretary to the British Consuls General, Sir George Lloyd Hodges in Egypt and Sir Hugh Rose in Syria. In 1863 he published a two volume work titled *A History of the Egyptian Revolution, from the Period of the Mamelukes to the Death of Mohammed Ali; from Arab and European Memoirs, Oral Tradition and Local Research.* Paton used a variety of sources, although they were not detailed throughout his volume. He briefly covered the history of early Egypt and relied on al-Maqrīzī (1442 d.) and De Sacy as sources.[39] Paton also used drew from Arabic sources, such as al-Jabārtī and Niqula Turk as well as his own observations and personal relationships.[40] Perhaps influenced by these

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[38] Salama Musa "Naḥnu al-Miṣriyyūn" 8 Oct 1933. Translation taken from Gershoni, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs,* 165.

[39] Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawāʿiẓ wa-al-iʿtibār : bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa- al-āthār* (Cairo, Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīnīyah, 1987) and Antoine Isaac Silvestre De Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des druzes, tiré des livres religieux de cette secte, et précédé d'une introduction et de la Vie du khalife Hakem-biamr-Allah* (Paris: L'Imprimerie royale,1838).

[40] Paton used Arabic sources, "so as to show not only how Egypt and the Egyptians appeared to the French and English, but also in what light the Frank invaders and Allies appeared to the Moslems [sic]." Paton's use of Arabic sources was limited by his language skills: he explains that "although I was able at one period of my life to speak Arabic fluently, and even to converse in the choice language of the Ulema [sic], I never got the length of deciphering manuscripts with any degree of ease and satisfaction" Therefore, Paton had

sources, Paton described the century of Egyptian history prior to the French occupation as "dreariest monotony" and stated that the Ottoman Empire was in decline.[41] According to Paton, in the "sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Pashalic was a reality but after that period, when the power of the Porte began to decline…her government of Egypt became more or less nominal, and such was the state of affairs up to the period of the French invasion." He concluded by saying that "no portion of Egyptian history is so uninteresting as this."[42] In Paton's analysis, 1798 brought an end to the middle ages and modern Egypt began.

The decline paradigm is evident in the work of Browne as well but not in the same way as Paton. Browne considered all Ottoman rule of Egypt, not just the eighteenth century, as a period of decline. He divided Egyptian history into three phases, the first being from 5000 B.C. to the conquest of Egypt by the Persian King Cambyses II in 529 B.C., the second from 529 B.C. until the late eighteenth century, and the third period starting when Napoleon set foot in Egypt. The first period, according to Brown, was the longest and the most brilliant. The second period was one of decline and he likened Ottoman control of Egypt to the dark ages of Europe, blaming the foreigners (Turks) for this decline.[43] However, the French occupation and the British occupation reversed this decline and set Egypt on the path to modernity. Browne believed that "not a single ruler, patriot statesman, demagogue, artist or author…no man or woman that lived before the

shaykhs read aloud slowly to him in Arabic while he made condensed translations in English. One of those shaykhs was Hassan Attar, the shaykh of al-Azhar. Paton also relied on his own observations, dressing up in "Oriental costume" and visiting the buildings he wanted to describe. Lastly, in his writings about Muḥammad Ali, Paton drew from his personal relationships with Muḥammad Ali's friends and the contacts he had made while serving as private secretary. Additionally Paton drew on the fourth and fifth volumes of Napoleon's correspondence, then recently published; Edouard de Cadalvene, *Recueil de médailles grecques inédites* (Paris: De Bure frères 1829), Amédée Ryme, *Égypte sous la domination française* (1848) and J.De Breuvery's *Damas Palmyre, Fragment Inédit d'un Voyage en Orient* (1830)., as well as other popular French sources, such as *Description de l'Égypte*. Andrew Archibald Paton, *A History of the Egyptian Revolution from the period of the Mamelukes to the death of Mohammed Ali; from Arab and European memoirs, oral tradition and local research.* (London, Trubner & Co, 1863) vi, vii, 56.

[41] Ibid, 71

[42] Ibid, 71.

[43] Browne, *Bonaparte in Egypt,* 23-24.

dawn of the modern period has been instrumental in the making of Egypt or the Egyptians what they are now."[44]

Another example is the work of French historian Louis Brehier who wrote a work titled *L'Egypte de 1798 à 1900.*[45] Brehier hoped to present the truth about the events of the early nineteenth century, which he believed would shed light on the present state of Egypt. In his chapter about the French occupation, Brehier did not use Egyptian or other Arabic-language sources but relied only on British and French travel journals and historical works.[46] According to Brehier, Egypt had been in a "long sleep" for 600 years prior to the French occupation. According to him, it was the French who woke them from their sleep and brought modernity and change and were directly responsible for Muḥammad 'Alī 's subsequent success.[47] Interestingly enough, Brehier's work published during the British occupation of Egypt, expressed his fear that Egypt, under the control of the British, might return to the "long sleep."

> L'oeuvre a réussi malgré tous les obstacles, mais après son achèvement, des fautes impardonnables ont permis à la puissance anglaise d'en recueillir tous les bénéfices. Aujourd'hui l'Angleterre règne en maîtresse sur les bords du Nilet, après avoir apaisé les dernières convulsions de la crise qui lui a permis de s'y implanter, il semble qu'elle veuille persuader aux Egyptiens de reprendre le long sommeil que le XIX siècle a interrompu.[48]

The state of decline of Egypt which was first evident in the grandiose notions of Ancient Egypt -  namely that while once brilliant, Egypt was now in a state of decline - were further demonstrated by the works of  Paton, Browne and Brehier.  Their works framed the French occupation (and additionally the British occupation) as bringing modernity to a culture that was stagnating and in need or revitalization.

*A Superior Civilization and Progress through the Enlightenment*

As discussed previously, scholars of the Orientalist period believed that Egypt was in a state of decline and it needed Europe to rescue it and put Egypt on the path to modernity. Part of this conversation dealt with the ideas that European civilization was

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[44] Ibid, 26-28.

[45] Louis Brehier, *L'Egypte de 1798 à 1900*  (Paris: Combet, 1903).

[46] Ibid, 24-25, 80-81.

[47] Ibid, x, xi.

[48] Ibid, x.

superior to the East. The first example comes from the preface of *Description de l'Egypte,* written by Joseph Fourier. Fourier's *Preface* was filled with ideas of an objective scale of civilization, of which European civlization reigned superior. Fourier depicted the period of Islamic domination as a barbarous interlude. When comparing the Barbarian conquest of Europe to the Arab conquest of Egypt, Fourier points out that at least the European barbarians had the insight to recognize the superiority of the conquered people. Arabs, he believed, were incapable of recognizing this.

> The Arabs, by contrast, had more fixed customs and opinions, which suffered from the confusion and superstition of the ancient doctrine of the Orient. Persuaded that they knew all that was true and useful, they rejected a priori the customs and arts of the conquered people.[49]

What had destroyed Egypt was the "ancient doctrine" of the Arabs, and it was his hope that the French would restore Egypt's past civilization. Fourier portrayed Egypt as a garden ready to receive Europe's crops.[50] He argued that French law and technology allowed Egypt to progress and realize its full potential.[51] According to Fourier, Egypt needed France, its culture and science, if it wanted any chance to progress towards modernity.

> For a long succession of centuries Egypt benefited from an enlightened and powerful government: the laws, the public customs, the domestic practices converged on the same aim; they were based on the knowledge of human customs and on the eternal principles of order and justice, which are engraved on all hearts.[52]

Here, Fourier speaks to an innate quest for "order and justice" from the Egyptians. He insinuates that Egypt has lost these principles but that Napoleon was the one to bring them back to Egyptians. He describes Napoleon's aim as being to

> abolish the tyranny of the Mamluks, spread irrigation and culture, effect continuous communication between the Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf, found commercial establishments, offer the Orient the practical example of

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[49] J.B Fourier *Préface historique, Description de l'Egypte* (Paris, Imprimerie impériale,1809-28) xiv, xv. Translation taken from Godlewska, "Map, Text and Image," 8.

[50] Ibid, xxxi.

[51] Ibid, xcj.

[52] Fourier, "Preface historique," *Decription de l'Egypte*, 2nd edn. (Paris: C.L.F Panckoucke, 1821-30) viii. Translation and quote taken from Godlewska, "Map, Text and Image," 9.

European industry, and finally, give the inhabitants a better life and provide them with all the advantage of a perfected civilization.[53]

Paton saw Arab rule in a more positive light than Fourier, but still through a prism of European cultural superiority. Paton describes the early Arabs as having a "scrupulous regard for truth and love of personal and political independence, skill in horsemanship, constant exercise in arms and frequent locomotions."[54] However, he also viewed the Arabs as inferior to Europeans. He described the Arabs as barbarians when they entered Egypt, but argued that "the luxury and the art of the Greeks had, in course of two centuries, exerted a considerable influence on their manners."[55]

While it could be argued that Paton was not directly inspired by the Enlightenment because his works were written thirty years after the occupation, there are examples of how Enlightenment ideas played a central role in his belief that the French occupation was what Egypt needed to progress. According to Paton, "the zeal of scientific investigation which marked the period must always be regarded as a marvelous explosion of human intelligence."[56] According to Paton, the French occupation "was a scheme of colonization, in which science should supply the place of numbers and overcome the obstacles interposed by the soil, by the elements and by manners and religion."[57] Paton believed that Enlightenment ideas, which focused on science as a way of finding the truth, could prevail over religious and cultural differences. In promoting equality and liberty, Paton believed that the French attempted to introduce laws, such as the law of inheritance by women, but blamed any failure to do so on inconsistencies with the Qur'an and Arab traditions.[58]

Similar to Paton, Brehier also described Egypt as barbaric and in a "long sleep" prior to the French and claimed that Egypt had "ceased to be part of the civilized world". According to him, it was the French who woke them from their sleep and enriched Egypt

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[53] Ibid, ix. Translation and quote taken from James Gelvin, "Napoleon in Egypt as History and Polemic" in *Napoleon in Egypt*, ed. Irene A. Bierman (U.K: Ithaca Press, 2003), 141.

[54] Paton, *History of the Egyptian Revolution,* 6.

[55] Ibid, 10.

[56] Paton, Egyptian Revolution, 204.

[57] Ibid, 213.

[58] Ibid, 177.

by providing things such as machines to make coins, whiten fabrics and increase water consumption, to name a few.[59]

Browne, who lived in Egypt during the British occupation, aspired to represent Egyptians in an unbiased way but notions of an objective scale of civlization still plagued his analysis. Although he described the Egyptians as "less backward than the Spaniard, less bigoted than the Portuguese, less fanatical than any other Oriental," he still believed that they were mentally different from Europeans.[60] He believed that the Egyptian mind was incapable of seeing different aspects of an issue. Browne believed that, "No matter how many-sided a question may be, they [the people of Egypt], as a rule, can see but one aspect of it at a time."[61] Browne described the French as bringing the "gospel of liberty, equality and fraternity" in his chapter "The Proclamation that Failed." As suggested by the title, Browne believed that French were not entirely successful, but still credits the French as one of four events that brought Egypt into the modern age.[62] In Browne's mind, the British continued and finished what France started. In Browne's conclusion, he answered the question of what the British occupation has done for Egypt. In his response, one can clearly see his adherence to Enlightenment ideas.

> It has secured them the personal freedom they so highly prize, it has given them the liberty of getting, keeping, or spending wealth, a free press, a knowledge and keen appreciation of the advantages of a properly organised [sic] government, a clearer perception of the natural 'rights of man' and of personal dignity of the humblest, and as a result of these, enlarged ambitions and aspirations, greater independence of spirit, and a better conception of the interdependence of each on upon his fellow-men.[63]

Enlightenment ideas can also be found in the French-trained Egyptian scholar, Ṭaḥṭāwī. Ṭaḥṭāwī believed that the French occupation was a watershed event, introducing science and technology that would modernize Egypt. He looked fondly on his French education and believed that Egyptian education should include modern science. The modern scholar Hourani attributes this to Ṭaḥṭāwī's French education and his readings of

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[59] Brehier, *L'Egypte de 1798 à 1900, x.*

[60] Browne, *Bonaparte in Egypt*, 17.

[61] Ibid, 39.

[62] Browne, *Bonaparte in Egypt*, 69. The other three events that Brown considered important for modern Egypt were the rise of Mohamed Ali, the British occupation and the evacuation of Fachoda by the French.

[63] Ibid, 387.

eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers, such as Voltaire and Montesquieu, some of whose works Ṭahṭāwī later translated into Arabic. The ideology that "man fulfils himself as a member of society, that the good society is directed by a principle of justice, that the purpose of governed is the welfare of the ruled" made sense to Ṭahṭāwī.[64] However, his views on Western science were bit more complex. As Livingston points out, Ṭahṭāwī's attitudes toward science and its principles were often inconsistent and contradictory. He commended the profound benefits of science and technology on human society but avoided what he believed to be the alien and almost perfidious source from which these benefits were drawn.[65] Ṭahṭāwī wrestled with the ideas of western science and traditional Islam, and wondered whether they were conflicting or could be reconciled. Despite internal conflicts, Ṭahṭāwī believed that Egypt's main problem was traditionalism and aristocratic attitudes that believed science was inferior to pure thought and knowledge. If Egypt was to climb out of stagnation and progress with the rest of the world, Western science must be adopted within the limits of Islamic traditions. [66]

## *Conclusion*

The works on the French occupation that I have classified as part of the orientalist period have mainly been dominated by European authors, who approached the

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[64] Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* 70.

[65] Livingston believes that Al-Ṭahṭāwī's later writing display more conflicting thoughts on Western science than his earlier writing when he was in Paris. John W. Livingston, "Western Science and Education Reform in the thought of Shaykh Rifaa al-Ṭahṭāwī," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 28:4 (Nov., 1996): 543-564, 548.

[66] There are a few interpretations concerning Ṭahṭāwī's role or contribution to the *Nahda,* intellectual awakening movement that started in the late nineteenth century. Ehud Toledano, and Gamal al-Dīn al-Shayyāl view Ṭahṭāwī as a reformer who initiated intellectual synthesis of Islamic beliefs and a modern world view. Anouar Abdel Malek believes Ṭahṭāwī paved the way for science and new ideas in Egypt. Youssef Choueiri believes that Ṭahṭāwī lacked the historical consciousness to assimilative Western science into Egyptian thinking. Ehud Toledano, *State and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15; Gamal al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, *A History of Egyptian Historiography in the Nineteenth Century* (Alexandria, Egypt: Alexandria University Press, 1962), 23-46; Anouar Abdel Malek**,** *Idéologie et renaissance nationale: l'Égypte moderne,* (Paris: Éditions Anthropos 1969), 184; Youssef Choueiri, *Arab History and The Nation State* (London: Routledge, 1989), 15; Livingston, "Western Science and Education Reform."

occupation from their own Western perspective, using mainly western sources. The first work produced by the occupation, *Description de l'Égypte,* was largely used by subsequent authors as the authority on the events of the occupation. Egyptian authors who wrote on the French occupation, such as Ṭaḥṭāwī and Mubarak, also relied heavily on *Description de l'Égypte,* and other western sources. Educated by the French in France, these Egyptian authors approached the French occupation of Egypt from a European perspective, and came to similar conclusions regarding the impact of the occupation.

The lens of analysis they adopted were influenced by Enlightenment ideas, western concepts of modernity and decline, a connection to Egypt's ancient past, and a belief in the cultural superiority of Europeans. Enlightenment ideas that permeated the writings of these authors centered on the ideas of liberty, justice and equality and stressed the importance of science in finding the truth. In the narrative of Egyptian history within this historiographical period, it was the French who ended the injustice and oppression of Ottoman or Mamluk rule. It was the French who introduced the ideas of equality and liberty to a population that was blind to Enlightenment. Western concepts of modernity and decline posited that Europe was modern and had developed economically and socially. Thus, Europe became the model for Egypt. The authors discussed in this chapter wrote about the decline of Egypt under Ottoman control and the introduction of modernity to Egypt at the time of the French occupation. A connection with Ancient Egypt and the grandiosity of the Pharaonic times dominated the orientalist period. To the Europeans of this period, Ancient Egypt was a reminder of their own greatness, one that had been passed to the Greco-Romans and then to their own civilization. The obsession with Ancient Egypt was taken up by the Egyptian authors of this period, but used to begin formulating a national identity, one that would later shift to being more Arab focused, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Lastly, a view of the Egyptian people and culture as inferior inundated the thoughts and analyses of the historians. While these views were held predominantly by European scholars, the case has been made that even Egyptian scholars views, specifically as they related to the need for advancement as seen in Enlightenment ideas, reflected a belief that some aspects of European culture were superior. Based on the themes and influences prevalent in the writings of these authors, it

is not hard to see why scholars in the orientalist period viewed the French occupation as a watershed moment, or starting point for modern Egypt.

**Chapter 2**

**The Nationalist Period:  An Important Event**

This chapter will discuss the second historiographical period of the writings on the French occupation of Egypt and some of the main themes that are evident in the works written during this time. I have titled this historiographical period as the nationalist period based on the influence of nationalism and the time frame which began in the late nineteenth century and continued until the 1950s.  Most of the historians classified in this historiographical period are Egyptian, but undoubtedly other non-Egyptian historians could fall into this period as well. The first section of this chapter provides a chronological summary of important events, identifying the key people in these events, as well as the impact these events had on how the French occupation was interpreted.  The second section will focus on the themes prevalent in the works of nationalist scholars. This chapter will argue that the themes of the nationalist period were 1) nationalism that connected Egypt to its Arab past 2) decline of Ottoman Egypt and an emphasis on progress and 3) a new-framing of cultural superiority. Furthermore, while scholars of the nationalist period saw the French occupation as an important event that brought modernity to Egypt, they emphasized other figures such as Muḥammad ʿAlī and other events, such as resistance and revolution to bolster the national narrative.

*Summary of Important Events, Key People and Works*

By the late nineteenth century, the state of Egypt under Khedive Ismāʿīl looked bleak. Egypt faced large debts that could not be repaid and the country's finances were controlled by representative of France and Britain. Large parts of the society were dominated by Europeans, such as the business world and systems, such as a parallel legal system, was established to serve the interest of the Europeans. In was Khedive Ismāʿīl statement in 1879 that captured the state of Egypt under his rule: "My country is no longer in Africa; we are now part of Europe. It is therefore natural for us to abandon our former ways and to adopt a new system adapted to our social conditions."  While the evidence of European influence grew, so did the opposition to European influence and the predominantly Turco-Circassian led government. Drastic cuts to the army between 1874 and 1879 created a large class of unemployed and disaffected army officers in Egypt.  In 1879, Ismāʿīl was disposed by the British and his son, Tawfīq, became

Khedive. Tension between the new Khedive and native Egyptian officers increased in the summer of 1881, and by September, Colonel 'Urābī and other native Egyptian officers ordered the dismissal of the Turco-Circassian generals and a new elected government. In January, 1882 the government collapsed and a new government was established with 'Urābī as the Minister of War. The 'Urābī revolution eventually prompted the reaction of the British who invaded Alexandria on July 11, 1882, and began what would be a 70-year British occupation of Egypt. With the support of the British, the Khedive sentenced 'Urābī and his colleagues to exile, convicted on charges of treason.

It is within this context and timeframe that we see some of the first authors in this second historiographical period emerge. Inspired by the 'Urābī Revolt and emboldened by the British occupation, nationalist figures began to voice their opposition to British control and formulate a nationalist vision for Egypt. Muṣṭāfá Kāmil and Muḥammad Farīd are two examples of nationalist historians who became active in the late nineteenth century. Muṣṭāfá Kāmil was born in 1874 and in 1891 attended law school in Egypt, studying at an Egyptian law school during the day and a French law school at night, in hopes of participating in Egypt's Mixed Courts.[1] Beginning in 1894, Kāmil began traveling to Europe, mostly France, and became involved in advocating for Egyptian independence against British rule. In June 1895 Kāmil wrote an article titled "The Dangers of the British Occupation" and in 1896 he wrote three letters to the British Prime

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[1] Muṣṭāfá Kāmil studied at the Khedival Law School during the day and the French "free school of law" (*Ecole Libre de Droit*) . The *Ecole Libre* was created by the French Consul to train Egyptians on European law in hopes they would be instructors at the Khedival Law School. This created an influx of qualified Egyptians jurists, which prompted the British to tighten their control on the Egyptian judicial system, to prevent these Egyptians into taking positions on in the Mixed Courts. The Mixed Courts were established in 1875 to hear disputes between natives and foreigners, or between foreigners of different nationalities. The Mixed Courts were mainly staffed by foreign elements and prevented a fully educated and qualified Egyptians from realizing their careers in the judicial profession. This undoubtedly influenced Muṣṭāfá Kāmil's attitude toward British colonial rule in Egypt. See Byron D. Cannon, "Social Tensions and the Teaching of European Law in Egypt before 1900," *History of Education Quarterly,* 15:3 (Autumn, 1975) . For information on Muṣṭāfá Kāmil and *Ecole Libre* see Abd al-Raḥmān al-Rafī'ī, *Muṣṭāfá Kāmil bā'ith al-ḥarakah al-waṭanīyah : tārīkh Miṣr al-qawmī min sanat 1892 ilá sanat 1908* (Cairo, Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣrīyah1950) 33-35.

Minister, William Gladstone, urging him to grant Egypt's independence.[2]  Kāmil wrote many articles and editorials, and gave numerous speeches in France and in Egypt on the cause for independence. In 1898, Kāmil wrote a historical work titled *al-Mas'alah al-Sharqiyyah* ("The Eastern Question") on European diplomatic history relating to the Ottoman Empire and Egypt. The book mainly focused on the nineteenth-century events, but extended its analysis to the Russo-Turkic Wars of 1768-74 and 1786-92.[3] In his writing, Kāmil looked on the French occupation as a critical moment when French ideas and the founding Western principles were given to Egypt. In a speech in Toulouse, Kāmil expressed his gratitude, saying, "France ... has generously awakened Egypt from its profound sleep and has always treated us like its dearest offspring, earning in the process our eternal respect, emanating from the depths of our hearts and souls"[4]. However, as Fahmy explains, Kāmil sought to sway European public opinion toward the Egyptian nationalist cause and benefit from colonial rivalries.[5] So when the audience was French, Kāmil acknowledged the irony of using French colonial discourse to counter Britain's colonial ambitions.[6]

Muḥammad Farīd was also a nationalist historian who was active in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In 1887, Farīd received a law degree in Egypt and

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[2] Crabbs, *Writing of History,* 154.

[3] Crabbs, *Writing of History,* 157. Kāmil focuses on the event as early evidence of many subsequent Russian efforts to undermine the Ottoman Empire.

[4] Kāmil's 4 July 1895 speech presented in Toulouse, reprinted in Moustafa Kamel Pāshā, *Egyptiens et Anglais* (Paris: Librairie Academique Didier,1906), 26-27, 43, quoted in Ziad Fahmy, "Francophone Egyptian Nationalists, Anti-British Discourse, and European Public Opinion, 1885-1910: The Case of Muṣṭāfá Kāmil and Yaʿqūb Sannūʿ," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East,* 28:1 (2008): 177.

[5] Fahmy, "Francophone Egyptian Nationalists", 170-183.

[6] In a letter to the Khedive's secretary, Kāmil writes: "Like any realistic person knows, nations only cater to their best interests. The French, just like the English; regardless of how they pretend to be loyal to us, will do whatever is in their best political interests. Therefore through our rapprochement and our amicability toward them we are merely employing a purposeful political maneuver to gain their trust and perhaps, even if it temporary, we can benefit from them politically." Kāmil, 18 Sep 1895 letter to ʿAbd Al-Rahim Ahmad, in Kāmil, *Awraq Muṣṭāfá Kāmil,* 51-52. Translation taken from Fahmy, "Francophone Egyptian Nationalists," 177.

later met Kāmil in 1893. The two formed a friendship and Farīd took on the work of Kāmil after he died in 1908. Farīd published two major historical works: one on Egypt under Muḥammad ʿAlī titled *Kitāb al-Bahjah al-Tawfīqīyah fī tārīkh muʾassis al-ʿāʾilah al-Khidīwīyah* and the other on the Ottoman Empire titled *Tārīkh al-Dawlah al-ʿAlīyah al-ʿUthmānīyah.* Farīd, like Kāmil, viewed the French occupation of Egypt as an important historical moment. "Although it was a military expedition which had as its goal the conquest of our country," he declared in a speech in Paris in 1910, "it had a propitious and salutary influence on our forefathers."[7] Unlike some of the subsequent historians, Kāmil and Farīd did not produce numerous historical works, but their contribution and insight was nonetheless important. Their views provided insight on the nationalist perception of the French occupation.

Another author who was not solely a historian but who wrote works that are pertinent for this study was Jurji Zaydan.[8] Zaydan was born in Beirut in 1861 and traveled between Beirut and London before finally settling in Egypt in 1886. During the British occupation, Syrian immigration to Egypt rose sharply. Most of these immigrants were proponents of Western ideas and progress. Zaydan was no exception. A journalist and historical novelist, Zaydan blurred the boundaries between fiction and history but did produce one history book titled *Tā'rīkh Miṣr al-ḥadīth* in 1889. In this book Zaydan marks 1798 as a historic turning point for Egypt.[9]

Opposition to British occupation continued into the early twentieth century, culminating in the 1919 Revolution. Led by a new political delegation, the *Wafd*, whose leader Saad Zaghlul had been arrested and deported to Malta, Egyptians pressed for independence from the British protectorate. In 1922, the British declared Egyptian

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[7] Translation taken from James Gelvin, "Napoleon in Egypt as History and Polemic", 143. *Campagne de Mohamed Bey Farīd, Chef du Parti National Egyptien: Paris, Lyon, Londres : Mai-Jiun 1910* (Bruges: St. Catherine Press, Ltd., 1910) 16-17.

[8] Crabbs, *Writing of History,* chapter titled "The Syrian Egyptian Historians," 185-198. Also see Yoav Di-Capua, "'Jabarti of the 20th Century': The National Epic of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rafīʿī and Other Egyptian Historians," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 36:3 (Aug, 2004): 429-450, 431.

[9] Di-Capua, "Jabarti of the 20th Century," 431.

independence but continued to influence administrative and governmental functions in Egypt until 1952.

Beginning in the 1920s, a fresh group of Egyptian and European historians undertook the writing of Egyptian history. Some of these historians have been categorized as a new breed of "trained" or professional historians.[10] These historians used unpublished archival sources along with primary sources to construct Egyptian history. Documentation and reference styles mirrored that of their European counterparts.[11] As in the case of the European historians who were discussed in the orientalist period, these historians were influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. Similarly, these historians ascribed to historical positivism, the idea that they could gain truth through scientific research.[12] As Shafīq Ghurbāl, an Egyptian historian trained in Europe, wrote, "Science (*'ilm*) in and of itself has a responsibility that cannot be borne by our nationalist forces in their current stage. Hence, for the society at large, science should be the slogan of the current Cultural Revolution… both for the realization of the goals of the nation, and for the sake of science itself."[13] Ghurbāl, and historians that followed him, believed it was science that could answer the questions of the past and present, and bring the nation together by giving historical "truth."

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[10] Crabbs, *The Writing of History, 389* and Youssef M. Choueiri *Arab History and the Nation-state: A Study in Modern Arab Historiography 1820-1980* (New York: Routledge Curzon 2003) 77-124. Also see Peter Gran's review of Choueiri's work that speaks of historians of this period as having to "invoke science as part of their arsenal to keep their influence," referring to the use of archival and primary sources used by these historians. *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* 169 Mar-Apr 1991, 45. Di-Capua "'Jabārtī of the 20th Century" discusses "academic" historians and "popular" historians and argues that they both worked within the rise/decline paradigm, but that the former perceived the monarch as a generating historical force while the later perceived the people as a generating historical force. Also see Anthony Gorman, *Historians, State and Politics in the Twentieth Century Egypt: Contesting the Nation* (London, RoutledgeCruzon, 2003) Chapter 1.

[11] Choueiri, *Arab History and the Nation-State,* 77.

[12] See Di-Capua, "Jabarti of the 20th Century."

[13] Quoted in Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahim Muṣṭāfá, "Shafīq Ghurbāl mu'arrikh," *Al-Majalla al Tarikhiyya al-Misriyya* 13 (1963): 278. Translation taken from Di-Capua, "Jabarti of the 20th Century," 430.

Many consider Shafīq Ghurbāl (1894-1961) to be one of the first professional historians.[14] In 1915 Ghurbāl began his study at the University of Liverpool in England and then in 1922 he returned to England to study at the London Institute of Historical Studies. Trained at a time where the study of history focused on archival work as a source of objective knowledge, Ghurbāl conducted research and eventually published *The Beginning of the Egyptian Question* in 1929.[15] Under the supervision of Arnold Tonybee, Ghurbāl undertook a diplomatic historical survey of the twentieth century, drawing on original and unpublished sources in the British and French archives. The focus of his research centered on Muḥammad ʿAlī as stated in his preface: "the object of this essay is to trace the diplomatic history of that wonderful episode of the events which led to the rise of Mehemet ʿAlī, the founder of modern Egypt."[16] In his analysis, Ghurbāl argued that the French occupation was not a purely military episode; he believed that Bonaparte wanted to bring "back to the light of day a civilization long buried under the sands of the desert" and to "ameliorate by all possible means the lot of the Egyptians."[17] However, he concluded the impact of the French occupation was minimal.

> It does not seem that the French occupation produced a general change of outlook. The rule of France was too short, the conditions under which it was exercised were too adverse for it to produce profound changes. A longer duration of French rule would no doubt have induced the excitable, sociable and imitative Egyptian to doubt the all-sufficiency of his religion and to feel the desire for change and action grow-as it were-upon him.[18]

However, Ghurbāl saw the French occupation as a precursor for Muḥammad ʿAlī, and thus a turning point in Egyptian history. Ghurbāl describes the contact of French troops in Egypt as setting the "indispensable condition for the rise of a new Egypt."[19] While Muḥammad ʿAlī took the title of the "founder of modern Egypt," the French occupation

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[14] See Di- Capua, "Jabarti of the 20th Century" and Muḥammad Anīs, "Shafīq Ghurbāl wa-madrasat al-tā'rīkh al-Miṣrī al-ḥādīth," *al-Majālla* 58 (1961), 12-17.

[15] Shafik Ghurbāl, *The Beginnings of the Egyptian Question and the rise of Mehemet Ali: A study in the diplomacy of the Napoleonic Era based on researches in the British and French Archives* (London: George Routledge, 1977).

[16] Ghurbāl, *The Beginnings,* xiii.

[17] Ibid, 33,34.

[18] Ibid, 208-209.

[19] Ibid, 51.

was critical in making that happen. In 1945, Ghurbāl established the Egyptian Historical Society and its journal, further promoting scholarship and professionalizing the disciple of historical study. Under Ghurbāl's supervision, many new historians began undertaking the task of writing Egypt's history.[20]

One of the historians who worked under Ghurbāl was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl. Shayyāl wrote numerous works, including a history of the Mongol Empire, a history of Alexandria and a book on Ṭahṭawī.[21] However, it is his work related to the late nineteenth and twentieth century Egypt that is of interest to this paper. In books titled *al-Tārīkh wa-l-mu'arrikhūn fī Miṣr fi-l-qarn al-tāsi' 'ashar* and *Tārīkh al-tarjama fī Miṣr fī 'ahd al-ḥamla al-Faransiyya*, Shayyāl argued something slightly different than his predecessors. Shayyāl described an indigenous spontaneous awakening in Egypt, free of Eastern or Western influence, which occurred in the late eighteenth century. When the French occupied Egypt, Egyptians were introduced to the "manifestations of a scientific awakening that were in fundamental contrast to those of the Egyptian awakening in every field" and Egyptian scholars "began to compare the knowledge they possessed with that possessed by these Frenchmen.[22] According to Shayyāl, the spontaneous indigenous awakening came to a halt and awakening from the French began, all for the betterment of the country. Thus, the French occupation was an important event that allowed Muḥammad 'Alī to succeed in modernizing the country.[23]

Another professional or trained historian was Egyptian historian Muḥammad Rif'āt. After receiving a M.A. from the University of Liverpool, Rif'āt taught at the Higher Teachers College, became the general director for secondary education in 1946,

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[20] Such as Aḥmad 'Izzat 'Abd al-Karīm, Aḥmad Aḥmad al-Ḥitta, 'Alī al-Jiritlī, to name a few.

[21] Ghurbāl , *Tā'rīkh dawlat abāṭirat al-Mughūl al-Islāmīya fi-l-Hind* (Alexandria : Munshā'at al-Ma'ārif, 1968); *A'lām al-Iskandarīya fi-l-'aṣr al-Islāmī* (al-Ẓāhir : Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīnīyah, 2001); and *Rifā'ah Rāfi' al-Ṭahṭāwī, 1801-1873* (Cairo : Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1980).

[22] Translation taken from Gabriel Piterberg in his chapter titled "The Tropes of Stagnation and Awakening in Nationalist Historical Consciousness: The Egyptian Case," in *Rethinking nationalism in the Arab Middle East,* ed. James P. Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) 51.

[23] Gamal al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, "Some Aspects of Intellectual and Social life in Eighteen-Century Egypt," in *Political and Social Change* P.M. Holt ed. (London, New York: Oxford U.P., 1968) 117-132.

and then was appointed education minister in 1952. His work titled *Ta'rīkh miṣr al-siyāsi fi-l-'āẓīma al-ḥadītha* became the most important educational text on modern Egyptian history for high school students.[24] The book was later published in English under the title *The Awakening of Modern Egypt.* Rifʿāt argues that the beginning of modern Egypt was an accomplishment of Muḥammad ʿAlī but that the French occupation was a precursor for this change. In explaining Egypt prior to the French occupation, Rifʿāt contended:

> Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Egypt was still in a deep slumber, a slumber that had lasted for three hundred years. It began in the sixteenth century ….continued until the end of the eighteenth century, when in May, 1798 Napoleon set sail for the East.[25]

According to Rifʿāt, it was Egypt's contact with the French that allowed for modernity in the twentieth century. He concludes: "although they failed in Egypt from a military point of view, they actually succeeded in discovering modern Egypt politically, socially and culturally."[26]

Egyptians were not the only ones to write about the history of Egypt during this time. In the 1920's a historiographical project was sanctioned by King Fūʾād to perpetuate the Muḥammad ʿAlī dynasty's history – that is, to preserve the idea that members of the lineage beginning with Muḥammad ʿAlī and extending to King Fūʾād had founded modern Egypt. Fūʾād summoned a group of foreign historians to work in the newly opened archives and produce works that "placed the monarchy at the heart of the modernization process."[27] Some of these historians were Francois Charles-Roux, Angelo

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[24] Muḥammad Rifʿāt Bey, *Ta'rikh Misr al-Siyasi fil-Azmina al-Haditha* (Cairo: Wazarat al-Ma'arif al-Umumiyya, al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1949). This book was written in 1920 and revised in 1932 to cover the post British era of Egyptian history.

[25] M.Rifʿāt Bey *The Awakening of Modern Egypt,* (Longmans, NY, 1947), 1.

[26] Ibid, 15.

[27] Di-Capua, "Jabarti of the 20th Century," 434. Di-Capua explains that the archives started as a project to establish a research library, sanctioned by Fūʾād but led by the Italian librarian and medieval historian Eugenio Griffini. Jean Deny, a French linguist, was asked to continue this project after Griffini's death in 1925. Under Deny, a vast effort began to collect, translate and ship documents in English, Turkish, German, Greek, Russian, French and Italian that were about the dynasty. The material was from 1805 onward, the period to which the monarchy wanted to trace its origins and mark the beginning of Egypt's modernization. King Fūʾād had control of these resources.

Sammarco, Pierre Crabites, Georges Douin, Gabriel Hanotaux and Henry Dodwell.[28] These authors had access to new material printed by the Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte, under the supervision of Fū'ād. This body of work was the result of the efforts of Jean Deny, whom Fū'ād commissioned to collect materials in English, Turkish, German, Greek, Russian, French and Italian on the period starting in 1805. The archival research undertaken during this period had its limitations. First, Fū'ād controlled the material brought for archival research as well as access to already available material. As pointed out by Cuno and others (and discussed subsequently), Fū'ād wanted to legitimize the dynasty beginning with Muḥammad 'Alī and foster a national history, which meant that material before 1805 was not included in the project.[29] The second limitation was language. While the language of the administration after Muḥammad 'Alī gradually shifted to Arabic, many records from the eighteenth and nineteenth century were in Turkish.[30] While many historians knew English and French, they were not as proficient in Turkish. Many Egyptian historians thought there was little value in studying the Turkish archives.[31] Thus, documents pertaining to the French occupation and to a great extent the Ottoman Empire prior to 1805 remained untouched. Consequently, these historians, Egyptians and non-Egyptians alike, mainly relied on French primary sources like the *Description de l'Égypte* and secondary sources for writing about the French occupation

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[28] Important works include: François Charles-Roux, *Angleterre et l'Expedition en Egypt* (Cairo: Societe Royale de Geographie d'Egypt, Publications Speciales, 1925); Angelo Sammarco, *Histoire de l'Egypte moderne depuis Mohammed Ali Jusqu'a l'occupation Britannique (1801-1882)* (Cairo: Impr. de l'Institut Français d'archéologie orientale, 1937); George Douin *Histoire du regne du Khedive Ismā'īl* 3 vols., 6 parts (Cairo: Societe Royal de Geographic d'Egypt, Publications Speciales, 1933-36); Gabriel Hanotaux, ed., *Histoire de la Nation Egyptienne,* 7 vols. (Paris: Ouvrage Publie Sous les Auspices et le Haut Patronage de sa Majeste Fouad Ier, Roi d'Egypt, 1930-37,) Henry Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt: A Study of Muḥammad 'Alī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1931).

[29] Kenneth Cuno, "Reform or Modernization: Egypt under Muḥammad 'Alī," in *Reform or Modernization? Egypt under Muḥammad Ali,* R. Abbas ed. (Cairo: Supreme Council for Culture, 2000) 93-119.

[30] See Stanford Shaw, "Turkish Source-materials for Egyptian History," 28-48, in. *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt: Historical Studies from the Ottoman Conquest to the United Arab Republic,* P.M Holt ed (Oxford University Press, New York 1968).

[31] Rifaat Al Abou-el-Haj, "The Social Use of the past: Recent Arab Historiography of Ottoman Rule," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 14:2 (May, 1982): 193-194.

and the history that preceded it. Aside from using mainly Western sources, many of the Egyptian historians had received a European education or spent significant time in Europe.

While the material used and the focus of the projects was not directly relevant to the French occupation, it is still useful to see how these "historians of the dynasty" viewed that period and the impact it had on Muḥammad ʿAlī. Dodwell, who had studied British India, compared Muḥammad ʿAlī's policies and work in Egypt to what the British had done in India, while conveying his anti-Turkish views.[32] While he declared Muḥammad ʿAlī the "founder of modern Egypt," he believed that this process of modernity started with the French occupation. According to Dodwell:

> It [French Occupation] had been far indeed from fruitless. It had shaken Mameluke [sic] power; it had fully awakened English minds to the strategic importance of a country placed midway between East and West; it had illustrated Turkish incompetence; and incidentally it had brought to Egypt an Albanian adventurer, Muḥammad ʿAlī. [33]

To these Western historians, the French occupation was the event that began Egypt's transition to modernity.

Although ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rafīʿī was not trained in the same way as Ghurbāl, Shayyāl or Dodwell, his work in the 1920s and 1930s must be included in the present discussion. al-Rafīʿī was educated in the field of law but undertook the writing of a sixteen- volume historical work in the 1920s titled *Ta'rīkh al-ḥaraka al-qawmiyya*.[34] In

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[32] Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt*, 236. In comparing the two he says "He [Muḥammad ʿAlī] had many things in common with the English administrators who built up the Company's Indian dominion. Like them, for instance, he found himself ruling provinces of a derelict empire under the shadow of a majesty that had ceased to have any real justification for existence beyond the memory of vanished glory. Like them, he was impatient of the corrupt stupidity ruling at the imperial court and refusing to look even a little way beyond existing circumstance. Like them, he sought independence, in part no doubt from personal ambition and the strong desire that his name should survive to coming generations, but in part also because he hated disorder and corruption and misgovernment. Like them, he desired freedom in order that a new and better form of administration might be framed."

[33] Ibid, 9.

[34] This work later became known as the "National Corpus" (*al-Mawsuʿa al-waṭaniyya)* and al-Rafīʿī later became Egypt's most awarded and celebrated historian of the twentieth century. See Di-Capua " Jabarti of the 20th Century."

his first volume, al-Rafī'ī focused on the French occupation as a point of departure for a national movement and drew an analogy between the struggle against the French and the 1919 revolution against the British. al-Rafī'ī considered all events prior to the French occupation as belonging to an era of "nationalist *jāhiliyya"* and briefly discussed Ottoman history, not mentioning anything prior. While al-Rafī'ī did not look fondly on the French occupation, he did consider is an important part of history where Egypt's revolutionary character and national spirit began.[35]

Fū'ād's son, Faruq, became the tenth ruler of the Muḥammad 'Alī Dynasty in 1936 and ruled until the overthrow of the monarchy in the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. On 23 July, a military *coup d'état,* led by Gamal Abdel-Nasser, successfully abolished the monarchy and ended the British occupation of Egypt. Following the revolution, Egypt faced many trials which, as Gelvin believes, later prompted Nasser to re-establish Egypt's goals and reconstruct its past.[36] In 1962, President Nasser called for the rewriting of "national" history when he issued the National Charter, *mithāq al-amal al-waṭanī*, which stated:

> Successive generations of Egyptian youth were taught that their country was neither fit for nor capable of industrialization. In their textbooks, they read their national history in distorted versions. Their national heroes were described as lost in a fog of doubt and uncertainty while those who had betrayed the national cause were glorified and venerated.[37]

Nasser wanted to perpetuate an interpretation of Egyptian history, though not the same as that of King Fū'ād, for the events of 1952 had overthrown the dynasty. Nasser's focus

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[35] See Di-Capua, "Jabarti of the 20th Century," 436.

[36] Gelvin believes that the following incidents prompted Nasser's efforts to re-write Egyptian history: the Baghdad Pact of 1955, a pro Western alliance made between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and the United Kingdom; the construction of the Aswan High Dam, the Bandung Conference and the formulation of the doctrine of "positive neutralism"; the "tripartite aggression" of 1956; the promulgation of the Eisenhower Doctrine and the American and British military intervention in Lebanon and Jordan; the disastrous Egyptian military campaign in Yemen; and the unification of Syria and Egypt followed by Syria's withdrawal.

[37] As cited in Sami A. Hanna and George H. Garner, *Arab Socialism: A Documentary Survey* (Salt Lake City University Press, 1969), 393. This prompted the project to investigate the causes of the Revolution of 1919, which was taken on by Muḥammad Anīs. See Jack Crabbs, "Politics, History and Culture in Nasser's Egypt" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6:4 (Oct 1975): 386-420, 393.

was a push against tyranny and foreign occupation, positing the events of 1952 as the last episode in a long Egyptian struggle for freedom. As Gelvin explains, the focus on reconstructing history was meant "to transform a coup d'état into a revolution and to recast military officers as a popular vanguard by situating the events of 23 July 1952 within a historical continuum that included the Cairo revolts against the French, the 'Urābī uprising, and the Revolution of 1919."[38]

One example of a historian that fits within this vision was Muḥammad Anīs. As a result of the Charter, Anīs was made chairmen of a committee to investigate the roots of the Revolution of 1919 and later to write a study of the popular resistance to the French occupation.[39] Anīs saw the French occupation as the beginning of a resistance movement against foreign occupation. Thus, the French occupation was pivotal moment in Egyptian history because it brought national awareness to the Egyptian people. In his work titled *Madrasat al-ta'rīkh al-miṣri fi-l-'asr al-'uthmānī*, published in 1962, Muhammad Anīs spoke of Ottoman neglect and decline in Egypt and Egyptian isolation from the rest of the world as a result of this decline. While he does not directly credit the French occupation of 1798 for bringing modernity to Egypt, his focus on decline in the eighteenth century and Egypt's transformation in the nineteenth and twentieth century makes it hard to deny that it had an impact. According to Anīs, the Ottomans had no "civilization capital" (*raṣīd ḥadārī*) to enrich the life of Egyptians, nor did Ottoman rule allow foreign economic and social contact, which, in Anīs' view, would have changed and developed Egypt.[40] Anīs' view that "Western culture" generated change in Egypt allows for his work to be classified in this historiographical period. Other historians, motivated by Nasser's desire to reconstruct Egyptian history were Muḥammad 'Amāra, Muḥammad Farag, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān Husayn, and 'Abd al-Azīz Rifā'ī, all of whom

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[38] James Gelvin, "Napoleon in Egypt as History and Polemic."

[39] Muḥammad Anīs, *Dirasat fi wathā'iq thawrat 1919* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣrīyah, 1963); "al-Muqawāma al-sha'biyya fi 'ahd al-iḥtilāl al-fransī," *Al Akhbār,* June 5 1964. See also Crabbs, "Politics, History and Culture" 394.

[40] Rifaat Al Abou-el-Haj, "The Social Use of the Past",193-194.

posited the French occupation as an important moment in the Egyptian history of resistance.[41]

While the aforementioned works do not represent a comprehensive list of all the works written in this historiographical period, they serve as a reference for the themes. During this period the themes that were prevalent were nationalism that connected Egypt to its Arab past, a continued belief of the decline of Ottoman Egypt, and continued notions of cultural superiority.

## *Nationalism Connecting Egypt to its Arab Past*

While nationalism or nationalist rhetoric might be seen much earlier than the late nineteenth century, by the early twentieth century such feelings were clearly articulated in the writings of these historians. The subject of nationalism is widely written about in Middle East history.[42] It is not the purpose of this paper to engage in a debate of what nationalism is or where it was rooted but rather to show how nationalism played a part in the writing of these authors and how this influenced their analysis of the French occupation. This section will highlight the theme of nationalism by arguing that it sought to define progress in Western terms, connect Egyptians to their Arab past, and emphasize the struggle of the Egyptian people against foreign tyranny.

According to historians of the nationalist period, Western modernity, progress, and enlightenment marked out the road map for a successful nation capable of independence. Countering British colonial discourse contending that Egyptians were incapable of running their own country, the early nationalist historians, such as Kāmil and Farīd, allied themselves with the French and began positing the French occupation, along with French education and influence, as a legitimizing factor in bids for Egyptians

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[41] Muḥammad ʿAmāra, *al-ʿUrūba fi-l-ḥadīth* (Cairo, 1967); Muḥammad Farag, a*l-Nidāl al-shaʿbī ḍid al-ḥamla al-fransiyya* (Cairo, n.d.); Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Husayn, *Nidāl shaʿb miṣr, 1798-1956* (Alexandria, Munshaʾat al-Maʿārif, 1970); ʿAbd al'Azīz Rifāʿī, a*l-Kifa al-shaʿbī fī miṣr al-ḥādītha: Suwār tāʾrīkhiyya min al-baṭulāt al-shaʿbiyya* (Cairo, 1966).

[42] For differing views on nationalism see, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); *Thought and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1966); *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971). See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1991).

statehood. By positing the French occupation as a "good" occupation, these early nationalist historians demanded Egypt's independence based on the level of civilization it had reached, which was equivalent to a nation state in Europe.

Shayyāl, Ghurbāl, and Rif'āt also defined nationalism in Western terms. Acknowledging Muḥammad 'Alī's success in creating a nation, Shayyāl believed that "Egypt had to copy from the West if its true aim was revival and if it was not to be left behind on the road to progress."[43] Ghurbāl presented the image of a nation molded along European lines in describing Egyptians' success under Muḥammad 'Alī:

> They became homogeneous in serving one master, they were drilled into soldiers and sailors and marched to victory against the Sultan, they were forced into schools and the production of wealth, they were governed and taught to expect and find security.[44]

According to Muḥammad Rif'āt, a national army brought unity and patriotism:

> Egypt derived from the army inestimable cultural and national benefits [*fawā'id adabiyya waṭaniyya*]. The army was the symbol of its [Egypt's] unity, since Copt and Muslim were equal in it, and it established within the country an orderly nationalist spirit [*rūḥ niẓāmī qawmī*] that had been lost for centuries, while the country was secured from the afflictions of the oppressive and chaotic groups. And we must not forget the patriotic spirit that was born following the army's formation, for Egyptians would compete in the arena of [martial] faculties, and the spirit of confidence and pride pervaded their hearts.[45]

Nationalism in this period sought to define Egyptian modernity and progress according to Western standards. It is therefore no surprise that the French occupation was considered a critical moment in Egyptian history, for it was presented as the moment when Egypt came into direct contact with West.

Nationalism also sought to define an authentic identity, as one that began with a Westernizing Egyptian culture (as discussed in the previous chapter), emphasizing Pharaonicism, eventually transitioning into an emphasis on Islamic-Arab culture, focusing specifically on Arab identity. Gershoni explains that by the 1930s, Westernizing Egyptian culture drastically declined, thanks to the rapid spread of anti-Western, anti-

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[43] Gamal al-Din el-Shayyāl, "Some Aspects of Intellectual and Social Life," 129.

[44] Ghurbāl, *The Beginnings,* 284.

[45] Quote taken from Barak A. Salmoni, "Historical Consciousness for Modern Citizenship: Egyptian Schooling and the Lessons of History during the Constitutional Monarchy," in *Re-envisioning Egypt, 1919-1952,* edts., Amy Johnson and Arthur Goldschmidt (American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 181.

secular and anti-Pharaonic sentiments in the public. While is hard to draw a line between these two periods, most of the historians of the nationalist period would fall into the latter category. [46] Gershoni explains that this socio-cultural process rooted in Arab-Islamic identity was an attempt by more traditionalist groups to formulate a national culture that was modern, but anchored in traditional frameworks of identity and values. Disillusioned by the European-style Egyptian state and connected to indigenous Islamic culture, this group sought to create a national identity grounded in their Islamic past rather than in Western concepts. Thus, this culture objected to a national culture based exclusively on Pharaonic foundations and themes. Rather, this culture drew from the Islamic civilization and is Arab past. As Gershoni explains:

> The new perspective held that Arabic language and culture, Egypt's Islamic-Arab history, and the Arab heroes and myths were symbolic reservoirs from which could be constructed modern values, symbols, mythology, literature, poetry, and art. These were depicted as alternatives to the Westernized EgyptiAnīst culture, which derived its contents and symbols from Pharaonic or Greco-Roman civilizations. From the societal standpoint, a new cultural-linguistic loyalty was proposed, transcending the "narrow," territorial, Egyptian "nation" and the traditional local loyalties of kinship, both rural and urban; henceforth, one would owe allegiance to the greater Arab national community. [47]

An example is in the writing of Muḥammad Rifʿāt:

> The Egypt whose civilization and riches had given rise to the legendary splendors of the Thousand and One Nights, had been forgotten. [48]

Here, Rifat refers to the literary work, Arabian Nights as part of Egypt's great civilization.

Muṣṭāfá Kāmil was one of the first to express an Egyptian national culture rooted in a strong Islamic-Ottoman orientation. [49] Others, such as Muḥammad Farīd followed in his footsteps, emphasizing an Islamic-Ottoman identity that supported the Ottoman

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[46] For a complete list of Egyptian authors that Gershoni puts in this category, see Appendix: Milestones in the Historical Evolution of National Culture in Egypt, 341-346, in Israel Gershoni "The Evolution of National Culture in Modern Egypt: Intellectual Formation and Social Diffusion, 1892-1945" *Poetics Today,* 12:2 (1992): 325-350.

[47] Ibid, 330.

[48] M. Rifat Bey, *The Awakening*, 1.

[49] Gershoni believes that other before Kāmil, such as ʿAbd-Allāh al-Nadīm, Ṭalāʿt Ḥarb, Shaykh ʿAlī Yūsuf and the nationalist poets Aḥmad Shawqī and Ḥafiẓ Ibrāhīm contributed to the formation of Islamic-Arab culture. See Gershoni, "The Evolution of National Culture," 344.

Empire and the Ottoman Caliphate, while fighting against British occupation. Following World War I and the aftermath of the Turkish defeat, this cultural identity evolved to emphasize an "Eastern civilization" and "Eastern peoples."[50] By the 1930s and 1940s, Islamic-Arab cultural trends dominated the literate society and strove to integrate Egypt into an Arab, Islamic, and Eastern identity framework.

The British occupation of Egypt, lasting from 1882 until 1952, undoubtedly played a role in Egyptian nationalism and marked the beginning of anti-colonialist discourse. Generally, anti-colonial discourse that emphasized the brutal realities of colonization began in the early to mid twentieth-century. In Egypt, these views were expressed in the early twentieth century and nowhere more visible than in the words of Muṣṭáfá Kāmil when he accused Lord Cromer's of "purposively appointing incapable, indifferent or traitorous men at the head of Egyptian government ministries and other administrative positions. In this manner he not only manipulates these men like instruments under his control but he uses the incompetence of these men to attempt and prove to Europe that our country lacks a governing managerial class."[51] However, as previously stated, brutal British rule was posited against a "good" occupation of the French.

> [France] is the country that offered Egypt an orderly administration and educated its sons. It is the country that raised the Egyptian nation and guided it on the road to progress and civilization. The contrast between past and present is striking: France helped Egypt to advance before 1882 and introduced changes associated with civilization without violating its independence and without exerting real power.[52]

Another nationalist historian who expressed anti-colonial views was Duse Mohamed. Born in Alexandria in 1866, Mohamed was shaped by the nationalism of his time. His father was killed in the battle of Tel-al-Kabir, while fighting under Colonel ʿUrābī. Mohamed founded the *The African Times and Orient Review* journal in 1912, which

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[50] Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 256-267.

[51] Kāmil's 4 July 1895 speech, presented in Toulouse, reprinted in Moustafa Kamel Pasha, *Egyptiens et Anglais* (Paris: Librairie Academique Didier, 1906) 26-27, 43, taken from Ziad Fahmy, "Francophone Egyptian Nationalists," 177.

[52] Yuwāqīm Rizq Murquṣ ed., *al-Khutāb: Muṣṭāfá Kāmil* (Cairo, al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿĀmmah lil-Kitāb 1984), 80. Translation taken from Gelvin, "Napoleon in Egypt."

became a vessel for other nationalists, such as Muḥammad Farīd to voice their objection to British rule.[53] Like Kāmil, Mohmaed vehemently despised British rule and went on to become part of larger anti-colonial movement in West Africa.[54]

References to French colonial subjugation – as opposed to the benefits of the brief French occupation -- surfaced in the 1960s, primarily in efforts to promote the emergence of Egyptian national consciousness.[55] The French occupation was posited as the first of many events that triggered a popular national resistance struggle against foreign occupation and tyranny. Predating Nasser's call to re-write history, Fawzi Girgis believed that the French occupation "was a decisive historical event, forcing the populace to define itself clearly, without confusion or vagueness."[56] According to Girgis, the French occupation brought the Egyptian masses into politics for the first time, introduced principles to Egypt such as representative government, and economically exposed Egypt to the vagaries of the world market. However, the French failed to spark a capitalist revolution because there was no indigenous class able to take control once the French left. Under Muḥammad 'Alī, a new stage of feudalism was inaugurated, that was later crushed by the 1952 Revolution. Muḥammad 'Amāra was another author who portrayed the French occupation in similar terms.[57] According to 'Amāra, Egypt had resisted many invaders through the years, forging an Egyptian identity through its resistance. While 'Amāra believed that Egypt had everything it needed to become a modern nation state prior to the French, the French occupation set the stage for revolutionary social transformation and Egyptian self-rule. The French occupation, 'Amāra believed,

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[53] The full title of the Journal was *The African Times and Orient Review: Politics, Literature, Art and Commerce: a Monthly Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Coloured Races of the World* and was started in conjunction with various West Africans. See Introduction in Duse Mohamed, *In the Land of the Pharaohs : A Short History of Egypt from the Fall of Ismail to the Assassination of Boutros Pasha,* second edition, (London: Franc Cass, 1968) xii, xvi.

[54] After 1920 Mohamed spent most of his time focusing on racial equality and nationalism in West Africa. In 1932 Mohamed moved to Nigeria and remained there until his death in 1945.

[55] James Gelvin, "Napoleon in Egypt as History and Polemic".

[56] Fawzi Jirgis, *Dirasāt fī ta'rīkh miṣr al-siyāsī mundhu al-'aṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Cairo:al-'Arabī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī' 1958), 25. Quote taken from Gelvin, "Napoleon in Eygpt," 152.

[57] Muḥammad 'Amāra, *al-'Urabu fi-l-'aṣr al-ḥādīth* (Cairo, 1967).

introduced the ideas of the French Revolution. These ideas were in turn picked up by Egyptian bourgeoisie and the popular forces.[58]

### *Decline of Ottoman Egypt and an Emphasis on Progress*

Much like those of the first historiographical period, the authors of this period adopted the narrative of decline and stagnation of the Ottoman Empire from the middle of the sixteenth century until 1798, which they believed as turning point for Egypt. As Piterberg explains, a barrier was erected between the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century, which created a clear line between decline and stagnation on one side and, on the other side, modernity and progress.[59] Many portrayed the Ottoman rule as incapable or inept. For example, Muḥammad Anīs described the Ottoman Empire and its Arab province as being in a state of bankruptcy but characterized the nineteenth century as the era of *al-ittijahāt al-jadīda* (the new orientations). Rifʿāt described the Ottoman rule in Egypt as a "deep slumber, a slumber that lasted for three hundred years."[60] Al-Rafīʿī described the Ottoman state in Egypt as one of total political, social and economic decay.[61] Shayyāl concluded: "The truth is that the imprint of the Ottoman rule was so insignificant that mentioning it is not worth the bother."[62]

The reasons given as to why the Ottoman Empire was in this state varied. Some believed it was due to misrule by the Turkish governors and Mameluke Beys.[63] Others believed it was due to the lack of Western contact. Shayyāl concludes, "The stagnation stemmed from the fact that the Ottoman force doubtless prevented the contact of the peoples of the [Ottoman] state with foreign cultures in general….and European culture in particular." [64] Anīs makes a similar argument by saying that isolation imposed on Egyptian society "turned Egypt -- indeed the whole Arab East -- into a stagnant region,

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[58]Ibid.

[59] Piterberg, "Stagnation and Awakening."

[60] Rifat, *The Awakening,* 1.

[61] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rafīʿī, *ʿAsr Muḥammad ʿAlī* (Cairo: al-Naḥda al-miṣriyya, 1930; third edition, 1951)1-8.

[62] Al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-tarjamah fī Miṣr fī ʿahd al-ḥamlah al-Faransīyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1950) 14. Translation taken from Piterberg, "Stagnation and Awakening," 57.

[63] Al-Rafi-i, *ʿAsr Muḥammad ʿAlī,* 1-8.

[64] Al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-tarjamah,* 11. Translation from Piterberg, "Stagnation and Awakening," 52.

which was not affected by the cultural developments undergone by Europe from the Italian Renaissance to the French Revolution."[65] Historians of this period concluded, by and large, that Ottoman rule in Egypt produced nothing of value for Egyptian society, but rather was a time of decline and stagnation that abruptly ended with contact from the West.

More recently, scholars have sought to understand why historians writing during the first half of the twentieth century tended overwhelmingly to view the Ottoman Empire in Egypt as having brought nothing but decline and stagnation. Ehud Toledano and Kenneth Cuno both argue that beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, Egyptian historiography sought to defend the dynasty of Muḥammad ʿAlī, define it as Egyptian, deny its Ottoman background, and denigrate the pre-dynastic Ottoman history of Egypt.[66] Toledano calls this "historiographical amnesia and reconstruction."[67] Toledano states that before World War I, Arab historiography, including that in Egypt, was quite positive about the Ottoman past. However, beginning in the 1920s and 1930s this "official memory reconstruction" began. Toledano uses the social memory of Ottoman heritage to argue his point. He begins by pointing out that sites of memory, such as archives, libraries and museums, are objects that "codify, condense, anchor" a nation. He then argues that these sites of memory in Egypt are void of any proof of Ottoman past. The archives, which held important Ottoman documents were restricted and controlled by Kind Fuad. Libraries are void of many Ottoman chronicles. Egyptian museums are devoid of any trace of Ottoman past. The Ottoman structures that survived, such as the Muḥammad ʿAlī mosque, are not associated with the Ottoman past, but rather with Egyptian nationalism.[68] Even Ottoman ceremonial court rituals that symbolized Ottoman

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[65] Muḥammad Anīs, *Madrasat al-tāʾrīkh al-Miṣrī fi-l-ʿaṣr al-ʿUthmānī* (Cairo: RJāmiʿat al-Duwal al-ʿArabīyah, Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabīyah al-ʿĀliyah 1962), 14. Translation from Piterberg, "Stagnation and Awakening" 52.

[66] Ehud R. Toledano, "Forgetting Egypt's Ottoman Past," in *Cultural Horizons, A Festschrift in honor of Talat S. Halman* , Jayne Warner ed. (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001) 150-167.

[67] Ibid; Kenneth Cuno, "Reform or Modernization?

[68] Toledano, "Forgetting Egypt" 159-160. Toledano points out that the Muḥammad ʿAlī Mosque was completed in the beginning of Abbas's reign (1849) and that it was named the Mecidiye Mosque, after the Ottoman sultan. This name did not stick.

power, that were practiced up until the mid nineteenth century are gone to the Egyptian memory. [69] Toledano concluded that "the process of erasing modern Egypt's Ottoman past attests more than many other phenomena to the crushing -- one may even say gelding -- power of nationalism."[70]

While Toledano focused on Egyptian amnesia, Cuno focuses on the "memory of decline." Cuno argues that this memory of decline was preserved to legitimate the Muḥammad ʿAlī dynasty. He points out that throughout the dynasty, giving Khedive Ismāʿīl as the first example, Egyptians sought to credit Muḥammad ʿAlī with turning the state from "decline and recovery" to "progress and civilization."[71] Cuno shows how this theme was carried over into the British occupation period and by the end of the World War I, Muḥammad ʿAlī began to be named "the founder of modern Egypt."[72] Indeed King Fūʾād solidified Muḥammad ʿAlī's place in Egypt as the "founder of modern Egypt" by sponsoring a national history that legitimized the monarchy as a continuation of the Muḥammad ʿAlī dynasty. As Cuno points out, the image of the founder of modern Egypt is usually juxtaposed against the dark image of Ottoman decline. Thus, under the Ottomans there was political anarchy, intellectual sterility and economic decline; under Muḥammad ʿAlī there was order, the beginnings of an enlightenment and economic growth.

The decline/progress paradigm naturally gave legitimacy to the idea that Muḥammad ʿAlī was the successor to Napoleon Bonaparte. That is, Napoleon had introduced ideas and Muḥammad ʿAlī had carried them out. This link between Napoleon and Muhammad Alī was made more credible by the fact that Muhammad Ali employed French officers in his Army, sent students to study in France and had French scientific works translated into Arabic. This idea was heavily promoted by the royal historians brought in by King Fūʾād. One example is Edouard Driault's book titled**, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon (1807-1814); correspondance des consuls de France en Égypte recueillie et publiée.* Driault began by pointing out, albeit inaccurately, that Napoleon Bonaparte and

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[69] Ibid, 161.

[70] Ibid, 164.

[71] Cuno, "Reform or Modernization," 103.

[72] Ibid, 109.

Muḥammad ʻAlī were born the same year, had the same vision, but failed to meet.**73**
Egyptian historians echoed this connection, calling the occupation a "precursor" of Muḥammad ʻAlī's policies. The link between Napoleon Bonaparte and Muḥammad ʻAlī fit nicely within the ideas of decline and progress.

These historians' ideas of decline were similar to the authors of the previous period, and it can be argued that they were influenced by *nasihatname* literature as well.[74] However, what is interesting and relevant to this thesis is that the authors during the nationalist period all seemed to view the "Western model" as *the* model of progress and juxtaposed that against Ottoman decline. Thus, the French occupation was still a pivotal point for Egyptian history, one that introduced Egypt to Western progress and was eventually carried on by Muḥammad ʻAlī. This idea is evident in Shayyāl's argument. Shayyāl was among the authors who were least critical of the Ottoman era in Egypt, and indeed introduced the idea that there was an intellectual awakening in eighteenth century Egypt. He continued:

> It is most likely that this awakening would have taken the form of a national revival which would bring back to life the old glories and the legacy of the past. But this spontaneous awakening was interrupted by the advent of the French expedition. This was accompanied by a number of scientists and men of learning who brought in their train many features of a culture completely different from anything which the Egyptians had known. A number of Egyptian *ʻulāmāʼ* contacted those scientists, visited the institute which they founded in Cairo, frequented the library and admired the press they brought with them. They were overwhelmed with what they saw and started to *compare* their own culture with that which the French brought with them. After that many developments took place in Egypt. The French evacuated the country: some internal disturbances took place, Muḥammad ʻAlī became vali [sic] of Egypt and a new regime was introduced. The new governor realized from the start that Egypt had to *copy* from

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[73] Edouard Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon (1807-1814); correspondance des consuls de France en Égypte recueillie et publiée,* (Cairo: Impr. de l'Institut française d'archéologie orientale pour la Société royale de géographie d'Egypte, 1925). Muḥammad ʻAlī was more than likely born in 1770, as pointed out by Khaled Fahmy, *Mehmed ʻAlī: From Ottoman Governor to Ruler of Egypt,*( Oxford: One World Publication, 2009), 2-3.

[74] Cuno, not being able to fully answer the question, concludes, "For now, suffice it to note that the rhetoric of nineteenth century reform carried a thesis of pre-nineteenth century decline, which apparently derived from the *nasihatname* literature." Ibid, 103.

the West if its aim was a true revival and if it was not to be left behind on the road to progress.[75]

Shayyāl acknowledged decline, suggested that an indigenous awakening might have brought back the "glory days," but then concluded that it was the Western model that needed to be followed, or in his words, copied to ensure progression. Acknowledging that Egyptians needed to emulate Western progress consequently meant that initial contact with the West, the French occupation, was crucial to making that progress.

### *A New Framing of a Superior Civilization*

The discourse of decline and modernization with 1798 as the beginning of a new era was also connected to a the objective scale of civilization evident in the orientalist period. That is, by positing the backwardness and decline of Egypt prior to the French occupation, even Egyptian scholars could conclude that the country required Western reconstruction.[76] While the nationalist views of Egyptian historians varied slightly from those of the European historians writing on Egyptian history as described in the orientalist period, they can still be characterized as reflecting ideas that the European civilization was superior,, or as Ussama Makdisi calls it "Ottoman Orientalism."[77] While Makdisi focuses on the Ottoman Empire within modern day Turkey, his points are valid for the historians of the nationalist period in Egypt. Makdisi explains that the Ottoman reformers of the nineteenth century acknowledge that the Ottoman empire was the "sick man of Europe" in order to "create administrative, anthropological and even archaeological space to articulate an Ottoman modernity: a state and civilization technologically equal to and temporally coeval with the West but culturally distinct from and politically independent of it." [78] It was the European discourse of progress that paved the way for Ottoman Orientalism. That is, the European blue print for modernity was accepted by the Ottoman Empire and it sought to define itself as equal to the West. In accepting Europe as the model for modernity and representing themselves as equal in world civilization, the past became stagnate and backwards. As Makdisi explains, the

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[75] Shayyāl, "Some aspects," 129.

[76] Edward Said, *Orientalism,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 206.

[77] Ussama Makdisi "Ottoman Orientalism" *The American Historical Review,* 107:3 (June 2002) 768-796.

[78] Ibid, 770.

Ottoman Empire was moving an Islamic state independently toward a Eurocentric modernity and at the same time away from a representation of a stagnate Orient.

Many of the authors of the nationalist period echoed the feeling that the European model for modernity was superior and believed that its implementation was essential for generating change. For example, Ghurbāl, as stated previously believed that Egypt had to "copy" from the West to reach modernity. This was often posited by the time prior to the French occupation as completely in disarray and decay. Rifʿāt states: "everything was rudely shaken except men's faith in Islam and in Allah, who had punished them for their sins by giving victory over them to the French infidels. The whole rotten fabric of government tottered at the touch of the French." [79] However, by the end of the British rule, Egypt was civilized and modern. Rifʿāt states that "reforms concerning law courts, assizes, prisons, sanitation, and medical administration, the veterinary department, market-places, slaughter-houses, lunatic asylums, roads" were all part of a "civilized life in the country" and obtained by Egypt.[80] These authors not only looked at political control and economic control of Ottoman Egypt declining, but also viewed the people of the eighteenth century as the "other," incapable of comprehending the changes that Egypt would experience in the nineteenth century. Take for example one historian's relegation of al-Jabārtī to the eighteenth-century side of the wall.

> It is therefore evident that we see in al-Jabārtī the last disciple of the school of Muslim historians in the Middle Ages, and we do not see in him the first disciple of the nineteenth-century school. For Egypt of the nineteenth century was something different, which al-Jabārtī *did not know*, and had he known he *would not have understood it*. The fact that culture was to be developed in Egypt by those who desired renovation…was inevitable. The writing of the nineteenth century drew the sources of its formation from this general cultural awakening. [81]

The foundation of this objective scale of civilization expressed by Egyptians were undoubtedly influenced by Europe's image of the Orient. Taking Europe as a model for modernity, Egyptians began positing the eighteenth century as stagnate and backwards, seeing themselves as different from their eighteenth-century brethren.

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[79] Rifʿāt, *The Awakening,* 7.

[80] Ibid, 235.

[81] Aḥmad ʿIzzat ʿAbd al-Karīm, in the forward of al-Shayyāl's *al-Tāʾrīkh wa al-muʾarrikhūn fī Miṣr fī al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashr,* (al-Ẓāhir : Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīnīyah, 2000). Quote and translation taken from Piterberg, "Tropes of Stagnation," 51.

*Conclusion*

To the historians of the nationalist period, the French occupation was an important part of Egypt's modernity. However, it was not seen in the same way as the historians of the orientalist period. The orientalist period posited the French occupation as a watershed event, responsible for modernizing Egypt. To nationalist historians, other actors took center stage, emphasizing the developing national narrative. During much of the 1930s, Muḥammad ʿAlī was posited as the founder of modern Egypt; the French occupation was merely a catalyst for change and an introduction to Western economic, social, and political ideas. After 1952, popular resistance took center stage, as a way of legitimizing the 1952 revolution. Because the French occupation brought Egypt into contact with the West, it became an important part of revolutionary history setting the stage for a later revolt against colonialism. While the nationalist historians differed from their predecessors in important respects – identifying with their Arab and Islamic past – they often mirrored their predecessors' view of Ottoman rule as a time of decline in Egypt, and thus perpetuated the view of their own superiority of the Ottoman period, which was backward and dysfunctional.

**Chapter 3**

**The Revisionist Period: An Insignificant Event**

This chapter will discuss the third historiographical period of the writings on the French occupation. I have titled it the revisionist period, as will be shown that many of the works produced in this period revised previous assumptions and/or conclusions of history. This period began in the 1950s (and continues even today), and was influenced both by indigenous Arab movements and European thought that challenged the national-secular consensus that posited the French occupation as a critical moment for modernity in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. This period was characterized by social and economic histories and a shift of focus in examining history from a singular isolated unit for analysis to a broader look. Unlike the orientalist or nationalist period, these historians no longer made the French occupation the departure point for their analysis. The first section of this chapter will discuss new theories, models and approaches that were seen in the revisionist period. The second section will focus on the themes prevalent in this period as related to the French occupation. In the second section, I argue that the prevalent themes were 1) the challenge of previous assumptions that posited the French occupation as the focal point for Egyptian modernity 2) a focus on continuity between the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and 3) a minimization of the French occupation's impact. By shifting the focus from the French occupation to a larger context of the Egyptian economy, society and state, these historians were able to challenge the narrative that posited the French occupation as a starting point for Egyptian modernity. Thus, these historians argued that the French occupation had little impact on the modern history of Egypt.

*Theories, Models and Approaches of the Revisionist Period*

Over the second half of the twentieth century, scholars of Arab history began using new theories, models and approaches for studying history. While there are numerous theories and approaches, the works of the revisionist period are characterized

by the following: an ever increasing awareness of a Eurocentric lens used by previous historians, and a strong emphasis on social and cultural history.[1]

Roots of influence for the revisionist periods can be traced back to the end of colonial rule in the Arab world. By the end of World War II, when many European countries that had held colonies in Africa and Asia for the preceding century or more were forced to dismantle these colonies, due to the lack of financial or political support for the colonial project. Growing resistance to colonial rule from the native population, along with external pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union to end colonialism, forced European countries to leave. This process, which happened throughout the world, but mostly in Africa and Asia, was known as decolonization.[2] The decolonization of Egypt followed shortly after the revolution of 1952. On 23 July, a group of army officers, known as the Free Officers Movement, led by Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser, overthrew King Faruq, who had been backed by the British. Under Nasser, Egypt was able to gain control of the Suez Canal and establish a form of state socialism in Egypt. Much of the historical work that was produced during the 1950s was influenced by the 1952 revolution and has been characterized by the nationalist period and covered in the previous chapter. However, a growing concern and awareness of the fact that Egyptian history had been written from a Eurocentric viewpoint materialized.

Beginning in the 1960s, many native Arab historians, and a few European historians became increasingly aware of the biases of previous historians in their approach to Arab history. Much of the work on the Arab world had been written by Europeans through a Eurocentric lens (orientalist period), or by Arab historians also with a Eurocentric lens (nationalist period). In 1963 Egyptian historian Anouar Abdel Malek's article titled "Orientalism in Crisis" argued that European scholars had viewed

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[1] See Israel Gershoni and Ursula Wokock, "Doing History: Modern Middle Eastern Studies Today" in *Histories of the Modern Middle East: New Directions* ed. Israel Gershoni, et all (Boulder, Colorado : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002)1-18.

[2] A special committee for decolonization was even established by the United Nations in 1961, to monitor the implementation of this process. United Nations and Decolonization website, accessed on 6 Feb 2013, http://www.un.org/en/decolonization.

the Middle East as unchanging and bound in the metaphysical essentialism of the classical religious and historical texts.[3] He stated that "it is urgent to undertake a revision, a critical re-evaluation of the general conception, the methods and the implements for the understanding of the Orient that have been used by the West, notably from the beginning of the last century, on all levels and in all fields."[4] He called for replacing methods and paradigms of the past with new approaches. In 1964, Palestinian historian Abdul Latif Tibawi published a critique of Western approaches in Middle East history and asked Western scholars "to show, within the bounds of scholarship, more concern for human relations, more sympathy in handling controversial subjects, and more courtesy in the use of language."[5] Tibawi called on Western historians to examine their assumptions. This idea was further politicized with the work of Edward Said in 1978. *Orientalism* audaciously attacked European representations of the Orient and explained inadequacies and biases in scholarship on the "East."[6]

The discussion of biases lent itself to a larger discussion of writing the history of the Middle East. During this period, some Arab historians objected to the fact that Western scholars had monopolized research on the Middle East and stressed the need for an Arab perspective using Arabic sources.[7] According to Syrian historian Nur al-Din Hatum:

> There is no doubt that the orientalists who wrote about Arab history are scholars we esteem and respect. They were the first to conduct modern, scholarly and methodologically sound research and they were our teachers. But their interpretation of history differs from ours, to put it in a friendly way. Some of them, no matter how hard they tried to be neutral, were influenced by imperial designs. We should not deny that they helped us, taught us how to work in a scholarly way and raised many themes in their teaching and research. But nowadays, this role has ended. We have many historians in the Arab countries with varying fields of specialization. We can now write and teach our own history…This does not in any way,

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[3] Anouar Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis," *Diogenes,* 44 (Winter 1963).

[4] Edward Said, *Orientalism,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994)

[5] A.L. Tibawi, "English-Speaking Orientalists: A Critique of their Approach to Islam and Arab Nationalism," *Islamic Quarterly,* 8, 1-2 (1964).

[6]Said, *Orientalism.*

[7] Ulrike Freitag,"Writing Arab History. The Search for the Nation," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* 21:1 (1994): 19-37.

however, impede cooperation, cultural exchange and benefiting from our mutual experiences.[8]

Alongside this argument, scholars, both native and European, strove to recover the experiences and voices of the native. For years, history had focused on the elite, European conquests or European colonization. A "history of everyday life" was often ignored. Many of these historians sought to recover the everyday life by writing social and economic works, influenced by new methods developing in Europe.

New methods that spurred the focus on social, cultural and economic history emerged in Europe as part of broader political and social movements during the early twentieth century. During this time numerous scholars were influenced by Marxist ideals, frameworks, and scientific guidelines that sought to create egalitarian societies.[9] These scholars began to study history through the methodological frameworks of anthropology, sociology, geography, economics, linguistics and other disciplines. The Annales school supplied one of the main theoretical frameworks adopted by these scholars. This framework originated from a small group of French scholars in the 1920s and focused on economic, social and cultural dimensions of history and criticized the focus on individuals and the concentrated analysis of short periods of history.[10] They also objected to analyzing history from a political-military point of view. Rather, they believed that the focus should be on social groupings, collective mindsets and long-term continuities and changes. For example, Mark Bloch's *Royal Touch* drew from sociology, anthropology and psychology in studying beliefs related to curing a skin disease from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century in France and England.[11] Bloch believed that investigating long-term beliefs about the disease was more revealing than focusing on a limited predetermined period of time. These historians came to be known as the "Annales

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[8] Interview with the Syrian daily *Tishrin,* 9 and 11 August 1986 as cited in Freitag, "Writing Arab History", 21.

[9] Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher, *Approaches to the History of the Middle East: Interviews with Leading Middle East Historians* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1994)1-17.

[10] For a summary of the Annales approach see Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations* (New York: Allen Lane and Penguin, 1993).

[11] Mark Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Monarchy and Miracles in France and England.* See Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School 1929-89* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).

school", deriving its name from the group's journal *Annales d'histoire economique et sociale,* which was formed in 1929 to publish new studies by historians lick Bloch.[12]

Beginning in the 1930s, this European intellectual context came to influence the study of Middle East history. Historians interested in this region became increasingly aware of developing methods, such as the Annales school, and began focusing on a broader historical context and social, economic and cultural dimensions of history.[13] Dissatisfied with previous approaches that centered on European conquest and colonization that drew primarily from western sources, these scholars called for increased use of archival material and a new direction focused on social and economic histories of the Arab world.[14]

During this time, economic and social works made their debut. For example, in 1957 the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* was founded. In the first issue, the editors announced its mission: "While the study of the economic and social history of Europe and America attracts steadily growing attention, many economic and social aspects of the history of the East remain by comparison neglected".[15] Ann Lambton's *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue*

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[12] The Annales school developed rapidly after World War II, thanks to Bloch's student, Fernand Braudel. Braudel's work was published in 1949, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerraneén à l'époque de Philippe II* and translated into English in 1972, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). This work focused on a broader unit of analysis: the Mediterranean encompassing bordering European, Ottoman, North African and Levantine societies.

[13] For example Charles-Anre Julien's *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord* published in 1931 was influenced by Marxist historiography and ideas of the Annales school. This was translated into English, *History of North Africa: Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, from the Arab conquest to 1830,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970). Also see Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord à l'époque des croisades et la principauté franque d'Antioche* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1940) and Bernard Lewis, *The Orgins of Ismai'ilism: A study of the Historical Background of the Fatimid Caliphate* (Cambridge, England: W. Heffer & Sons, 1940).

[14] For example, Bernard Lewis and Claude Cahen also called for the use of archival material and more works on economic and historical works at a conference in 1954. See Denis Sinor (ed.), *Orientalism and History* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1954) for the publication from the conference of the Congress of Orientalists. Bernard Lewis, "Islam and the West" in ibid.,16; Claude Cahen, "L'histoire économique et sociale de l'orient musulman médiéval," *Studia Islamica,* 3 (1955).

[15] *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient,* 1, Part 1 (August 1957) 1.

*Administration* was published in 1953.[16] Charles Issawi's *Economic History of the Middle East 1800-1950* and Maxime Rodinson's *Islam and Capitalism* were published in 1966.[17]

Some of the first scholars, both European and Egyptian, who focused on the history of Egypt from a social and economic perspective were Stanford Shaw, Gabriel Baer, Ra'ūf 'Abbās, Andre Raymond and 'Alī Barakāt. Shaw's work, *The Financial and Administrative Organization and Development of Ottoman Egypt, 1517-1798* (1958) discussed Egyptian revenues and financial administration from the beginning of the Empire until the French occupation.[18] Baer's work, *History of Land Ownership in Modern Egypt 1800-1950* (1962) examined the transformation of how state lands were transformed into private ownership and the development of inequality in the distribution of capital and incomes.[19] 'Abbas's work, *al-Ḥarakah al-'ummālīyah fī Misṛ, 1899-1952* (1967) researched the history of the Egyptian Labor movement.[20] Barakāt's work titled *Taṭawwur al-milkīyah al-zirā'īyah fī Miṣr wa-atharuhu 'alá al-ḥarakah al-siyāsīyah, 1813-1914* (1978) focused on private landownership, similar to Baer.[21] Raymond's

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[16] Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1953).

[17] Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1966). Using commercial, banking, and financial records, Issawi wrote on the economic history of a variety of countries, such as Turkey, Iran, Syria and Egypt *The Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914* (Chicago University Press, 1971)*, The Economic History of Turkey, 1800-1914* (Chicago University Press, 1980)*, and The Fertile Crescent, 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History* (Chicago University Press, 1988)*. Maxime Rodinson, *Islam et capitalism* (Paris: Edition du Seuil, 1966), translated into English as *Islam and Capitalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974). Another economic history work that was published was Zvi Yehuda Hershlag, *Introduction to the Modern Economic History of the Middle East* (Lieiden: Brill 1964) but is not as well known.

[18] Stanford Shaw, *The Financial and Administrative Organization and Development of Ottoman Egypt, 1517-1798* (Princeton University Press, 1962 [c1958]).

[19] Gabriel Baer, *A History of Landownership in Modern Egypt, 1800-1950* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

[20] Ra'ūf 'Abbās *, al-Ḥarakah al-'ummālīyah fī Misṛ, 1899-1952* (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1967)

[21] 'Alī Barakāt*, Taṭawwur al-milkīyah al-zirā'īyah fī Miṣr wa-atharuhu 'alá al-ḥarakah al-siyāsīyah, 1813-1914* (Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfah al-Jadīdah, 1977)

*Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle* (1974) examined the economic and social movements in Egypt during the seventeenth and eighteenth century.[22] However it should be noted that while the revisionist period is characterized by many Marxist and socialist approaches, not all the conclusions, and in turn historians fit within the revisionist period.

The preservation, collection and use of indigenous archival material became critical for examining the social and economic history of the Middle East. Historians began to use archival sources in Ottoman Turkish to better understand the Ottoman Empire and the provinces it ruled. Beginning in the 1950s, historians such as Bernard Lewis, Stanford Shaw, Robert Mantran, Jean Sauvaget, and Uriel Heyd wrote, translated, and published works to encourage other historians to look deeper into the archives.[23] In Egypt the National Archives, *Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyya,* housed most of the resources. These sources included court records, *waqf* documents, and government archives. Historians such as Muhammad Anis and P.M. Holt began to examine the primary sources available in Arabic which addressed Egyptian history.[24] Another

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[22] André Raymond, *Aritsans et commercants au caire au XVIIIe siècle* (Damas : Institut français de Damas, 1973-1974).

[23] Bernard Lewis, *Notes and Documents from the Turkish Archives, A Contribution to the History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (Jerusalem, Israel Oriental Society, 1952) and "The Ottoman Archives: a source for European history", *Report on Current Research,* (Spring 1956), Stanford Shaw, "Archival Sources for Ottoman History: The Archives of Turkey," *JOAS,* (1960) and "Turkish Source-materials for Egyptian History" 28-48, in P.M Holt ed. *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt: Historical Studies from the Ottoman Conquest to the United Arab Republic,* (Oxford University Press, New York 1968). A sample of the archival material was translated into French by R. Mantran and J. Sauvaget, *Règlements fiscaux ottomans: les Provinces syriennes,* (Paris, 1951) and Uriel Heyd, *Ottoman Documents on Palestine* (Oxford, 1960). According to Stanford Shaw, the first to use Turkish sources was actually Tawfiq al-Tawil *al-Tasawwuf fi Misr ibban al-asr al 'Uthmani ,* (Cairo 1938) and Muḥammad Rif'at Ramadan, *'Ali Bey al-Kabir* (Cairo, 1950).

[24] Muḥammad Anīs, *Madrasat al-Tarikh al-Misri fi-l 'Asr al-'Uthmani* (Cairo: Jāmi'at al-Duwal al-'Arabīyah, Ma'had al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabīyah al-'Āliyah, 1962) and P.M.Holt, "Ottoman Egypt (1517-1798): An Account of Arabic Historical Sources" in P.M. Holt, ed. *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt,* (London:1968). See Daniel Crecelius "Al-Jabariti's Ája'ib al-Athar fi'l-Tarajim wa'l-Akbar and the Arabic Histories of Ottoman Egypt in the Eighteenth Century" in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)* ed.Hugh Kennedy (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001).

important source related to pre-Ottoman history uncovered during this time was the Geniza documents. Shlomo Goitein made this large depository of Egyptian-Jewish community records produced in Fatimid times famous in the 1960s and encouraged other historians to examine them.[25] Even today, historians continue to publish material shedding light on the archives and encouraging others to tap into an often untouched reserve of resources.[26]

As the use of archival material became more prevalent, so did a more critical evaluation of source material. In the 1950s, scholars who began looking at these archives sometimes read these texts as a "mine of facts" rather than text. Take for example the *nasihatname* (advice) literature, written by Ottoman chroniclers who believed that the Ottoman Empire was in decline and blamed that decline on internal corruption, abuse, and incompetent rulers. Scholars such as Bernard Lewis read this literature as fact and continued to propagate the thesis of Ottoman decline that was the characteristic of previous historiographical periods.[27] However, some historians during the revisionist period took a more critical perspective as they considered the political, social, economic, and cultural context that were reflected within these sources.[28] As they researched economic activity in the region, these historians critically examined the literature, instead of constructing a narrative of fact. This critical evaluation and discovery of new material

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[25] This body of material was discovered as early as 1752 but was made famous by the work of S. D. Goitein in his work *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed by the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (5 vols., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967-88). See Amtiv Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (New York, 1993).

[26] Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Syrian manuscript sources for history of eighteenth century Ottoman Egypt," in *Eighteenth Century Egypt: The Arabic Manuscript Sources* edt, Daniel Crecelius (California: Regina Books, 1990).

[27] Bernard Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline", *Islamic Studies,* 1 (1962) 71-87 and Rifa'at Rifa'at 'Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: SUNY Press, 1991) 35-40. Despite using new methnods and sources for history, Bernard Lewis fits squarely in the Orientalist period.

[28] For example, Virginia H. Aksan, "Ottoman Political Writing, 1768-1808," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 25: 1 (1993), 53-69 and Michael Winter's "Attitudes Toward the Ottomans in Egyptian Historiography during the Ottoman Rule" in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)* ed Hugh Kennedy (2001) 195-210.

led to a reevaluation of previously assumed "decline" or stagnation of the Ottoman Empire.

Alongside criticality, came a challenge to a previously held theory that put forward Europe as the model of modernity. Known as the modernization theory, this theory held that there were "stages of economic growth" that all countries had to pass through in order to reach proper economic development.[29] Starting in the 1970s, economic historians, such as Sami Amin, André Gunder Frank, and Immanuel Wallerstein began questioning the modernization theory and argued that societies, culture, political institutions, and economy could not be studied in isolation but rather be seen as part of a global system shaped by developments in the systems. Thus, the dependency theory and world-systems theories were born. The world-systems perspective was a strategy for explaining social change by focusing on the dynamic interactions of inter-societal systems rather than single societies. This perspective focused on the important networks (trade, information flows, alliance, and fighting) that have linked polities and cultures. Rooted in classical sociology, Marxian political economy and the thinking of *dependentistas,* this perspective emerged in the 1970s to formulate the concepts and analyze the history of the modern world-system. According to the theory, the world is divided into three: the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. Core regions are characterized by higher skills and capital-intensive production while the semi-periphery and periphery are characterized by low-skill, labor-intensive production. The system is dynamic and countries can enter or leave the core or the periphery.[30] Aware of the Eurocentric focus of this method, historians of this period studying the Ottoman Empire shifted their focus to Istanbul and its relation with the empire's provinces. While more recent historical works have challenged the world-systems theory of incorporation

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[29] See Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Process of Economic Growth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960)

[30] World systems theory frames worlds systems and not specific nation-states. See Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *World-system Analysis: an Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). Marsot specifically credits Wallerstein's *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974): see interview with Marsot in Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher, *Approaches to the History of the Middle East* (Ithaca Press, 1994),101.

into the capitalist economy, it was still undoubtedly influential for historians of the revisionist period.[31]

While methods and sources discussed above influenced scholars of the revisionist period, not all scholars who used archival material and produced social and economic works could be considered in the revisionist period. For example, the conclusions of Bernard Lewis and Charles Issawi clearly fit within the Orientalist period. Their acknowledgement of Europe as a blueprint for the rest of the world and their conclusions that posit the Middle East as backwards and in need of Western reconstruction jibe with the scholars of the Orientalist period.[32]

The remainder of this chapter will highlight the selected works of the revisionist period that are relevant to the French occupation and outline prevailing themes. The first theme in the works of the revisionist period was a challenge to assumptions made by previous scholars concerning the economic and intellectual decline of Ottoman Egypt prior to the French occupation. The second theme was creating a sense of continuity between the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The last theme was minimizing the French occupation's impact by arguing that specific ideas credited to the French were already seen in Egypt, specific ideas introduced by the French didn't stick, and that specific ideas undertaken by the French and their successors negatively affected Egyptian society.

## A Challenge to the Decline/Progress Paradigm

Armed with new methods, theories and approaches, and recently introduced archival resources, historians of the revisionist period strove to challenge previous assumptions of preceding scholars that posited the French occupation as the focal point for Egyptian modernity. These assumptions, as previously mentioned, stated that Ottoman Egypt was in decline, both economically and intellectually prior to western

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[31] Historians have challenged the approach that treats peripheries as undifferentiated masses, a model regardless of regional differences. See Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Haim Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder,: L. Rienner, 1987).

[32] See Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1993) chapter 10, "The Impact of the West" and Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

contact in the nineteenth century. While the specific work in this chapter does not address the French occupation directly, it bore implications for the conclusions that historians of the revisionist period made about the French occupation.

Regarding the Ottoman Empire at large, the assumption was that the economy of the Empire was stagnating and isolated, and even on the verge of collapse after the Portuguese rounded the Cape of Good Hope in the early sixteenth century. Early economic works echoed similar conclusions of decline. For example, the essays put together by Charles Issawi were rooted in conclusions that fit in the previous historiographical periods.[33] Issawi defined modernization in terms of the Western model, used primarily Western sources,[34] used the economies of Western Europe as a standard for comparison, and emphasized mechanized, factory-based manufacturing as the only valid measure of economic progress.[35] Soon, however, historians began to pay attention to local manufacturers, guilds and artisans, as economic actors in their own right. Roger Owen and Donald Quataert, for example, argued that Ottoman manufacturing history was very much alive, evident through production for domestic markets.[36] While there was still room for discussion of the empire's "decline" during this time, historians were

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[33] Charles Issawi, *The Economic History* (1966).

[34] In an interview with Nancy Gallagher in 1991, Issawi says that not using local sources was a "great regret" and a "big weakness". He blames this on the difficult access to Ottoman archives and the difficult political times also made traveling difficult .See chapter 2, *Approaches to the History* (1994) 58.

[35] Ibid, 58.

[36] Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1981) and "The Study of Middle Eastern Industrial History: Notes on the Interrelationship between Factories and Small-scale Manufacturing with Special Reference to Lebanese Silk and Egyptian Sugar, 1900-1930," *IJMES* (1984). Sevket Pamuk "The Ottoman Empire in the 'Great Depression' of 1873-1896," *Journal of Economic History,*(1984). Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing* (1993) and Donald Quataert edt, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500-1950* (New York: Albany State University of New York Press, 1994). The latter book included work from researchers Soraiya Faroqhi (16th and 17th centuries), Mehmet Genc (18th century), Caglar Keyder (1900-50) and the editor himself. Also see James Reilly, "Damascus Merchants and Trade in the Transition to Capitalism," *Canadian Journal of History* 27 (Apr. 1992) and Faruk Tabaq, "Local Merchants in Peripheral Areas of the Empire: The Fertile Crescent during the Long Nineteenth Century," *Review* 11 (1988) 179-214.

beginning to think beyond a traditional Eurocentric framework and to challenge the assumption that the economy was stagnating and isolated.

Some of the first historians to shed light on the economic state of Ottoman Egypt were Stanford Shaw and 'Abd al-Rahim 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Rahim. Published in 1958, Shaw's work was one of the first to use Ottoman archives to discuss Egyptian revenues and financial administration from the beginning of the Empire until the French occupation.[37] 'Abd al-Rahim's work shed light on administration of land and the system of taxation by using a series of *iltizam* registers from archives in Cairo.[38] However, it was Raymond's work, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*, published in 1974, that made a strong argument against the assumptions of decline.[39] Using court records, reports from French consuls, the *Description de l'Egypte* and al-Jabārti 's chronicles, Raymond argued that Egypt's economy was complex from the mid-seventeenth century on, growing through a time of decline, followed by years of recovery, and then by the late eighteenth century declining again.[40] Egyptian society was dominated by a class of great merchants, *tujjar*, who benefited from the lucrative coffee trade beginning in the sixteenth century. In conjunction with economic history, Raymond also shed light on demographic growth and urban expansion from Mamluk to Ottoman times.[41] Raymond reported that in three centuries of Ottoman rule, 111 public fountains, dozens of mosques, markets, and trade centers were built, in addition to many mansions, in Cairo. The built-up area of Cairo in 1798, calculated Raymond, amounted to 660 hectares compared to only 450 hectares under the Mamluk sultanate, which represented a

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[37] Stanford Shaw, *The Financial and Administrative Organization.*

[38] Originally a doctoral thesis, it was published in 1974. *Al-Rif al-Misri fi al-Qarn al Thamin 'ashar* (Cairo, 1974).

[39] André Raymond, *Aritsans et commercants.*

[40] Raymond concludes that the period from 1690-1740 was a difficult time, 1740-80 a time of recovery and 1780-98 rapid decline.

[41] André Raymond *The Great Arab Cities in the 16th and 18th centuries* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), Nelly Hanna, *An Urban History of Bulaq in the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1983). Justin McCarthy, "Nineteenth-Century Egyptian Population," *Middle Eastern Studies,* 12:3 (Oct 1976). Daniel Panzac, "The Population of Egypt in the Nineteenth Century," *Asian and African Studies,* 21 (1987).

significant growth, mainly in the southern and western zones of the city.[42] Raymond's research led him to conclude that the French occupation did not have the impact that previous scholars had claimed. He states: "The wake-up effect for which the brief French occupation is credited, in an Egypt that had been slumbering since the Ottoman conquest in 1517, has been somewhat exaggerated. The reality is quite different."[43]

Recent works by Nelly Hanna have also shed light on the activity of merchants and artisans in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Cairo.[44] Using court records, Hanna showed that an indigenous economy was developing in Egypt during the seventeenth century upheld by a local merchant class. In her newest work, Hanna showed the life of artisans in the seventeenth and eighteenth century by following the lives of artisan families over several generations, focusing on their work and their relations to guilds and the economy. Using the world systems approach, Hanna included artisans in the model, showing their place in the global and local context. Hanna's contribution challenged the assumption that an indigenous economy did not appear until the nineteenth century, and implied that the French occupation was not the central event that led to modernization in the nineteenth century. She stated: "Instead of the traditional approach of dating the beginning of modernization to 1800, I suggest that certain aspects of the changes taking place then were part of a process that started long before".[45]

Scholars of the revisionist period also challenged the conclusion that Egypt was intellectually and culturally declining until the people of Egypt came in contact with the West (the French occupation). The period prior to the French had been regarded by

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[42] Andre Raymond, *Cairo,* translated by Willard Wood (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000): 221-225.

[43] Raymond, *Cairo,*291.

[44] Nelly Hanna, M*aking Big Money in 1600: the Life and Times of Ismai'l Abu Taqiyya, Egyptian Merchant,* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1998) and *Artisan Entrepreneurs in Cairo and Early- Modern Capitalism (1600-1800)* (Syracuse, N.Y. : Syracuse University Press, 2011), Also for artisans during the nineteenth century see Pascale Ghazaleh, *Masters of the trade: crafts and craftspeople in Cairo, 1750-1850* (American University Press, Cairo, 1999) and "Manufacturing Myths: Al-Khurunfish, A Case Study" in *Money, Land and Trade: An Economic History of the Muslim Mediterranean* ed. Nelly Hanna (London ; New York : I.B. Tauris, 2001) 124-138

[45] Hanna, *Making Big Money,* (1998) 170.

previous scholars as a time of intellectual stagnation and many scholars assumed that society was under a thick fog of ignorance. Some historians questioned the value of works produced between Ibn Iyas (early sixteenth century) and al-Jabārti (late eighteenth century). [46] Works by historians of the revisionist period, such as Peter Gran, Nelly Hanna, challenged these assumptions.[47]

In his work titled *Islamic Roots of Capitalism,* Gran argued that Egyptian culture in the mid-eighteenth century was rich and variegated, and provided evidence by citing little-known theological and historical texts, such as the writings of Shaykh Hasan al-Attar.[48] Gran argued that Egypt experienced an enlightenment beginning in 1760 which produced a major dictionary, language books and historical writings. In his own words, Gran stated that his research was a "work of revisionist historiography challenging the continued use of 1798 as a watershed in Egyptian history".[49]

Hanna provided insight into a middle stratum that produced and valued literary works between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries in her work titled *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century*.[50] She tied this to the economic and political situation in Egypt, explaining that by the

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[46] Ibn Iyas's well-known work was written in 1522: *Bada'i al-Zuhur fi Waqa'i al Duhur.*

[47] Peter Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1998), Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003) and Daniel Crecelius "Al-Jabarti's Ája'ib al-Athar fi'l-Tarajim wa'l-Akbar" (2000). For a work relating to the Porte see the work of Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Leslie Peirce challenges the customary division of Middle Eastern society into a public, male sphere and a private, female sphere by showing that women of the Ottoman Empire were public figures who contributed to the dynasty's public presentation. She explains that the *haseki,* or favorite concubine of the sultan gained political influence beginning with Suleyman I's wife, and this power was later displaced to the sultan's mother. Through her analysis, she challenges an aspect of the idea of a "golden age" followed by decline, by showing how women prevailed into the late seventeenth century and integrated themselves within the dynastic strategy.

[48] These books and manuscripts where housed in the al-Azhar mosque center and the Egyptian National Library (*Dar al-Kutub*).

[49] Gran, *Islamic Roots,* (1998) ix.

[50] Hanna, *In Praise of Books* (2004).

eighteenth century a reduction of cultural space occurred, in which fewer people bought books and literary works changed as a result. Hanna's work argues that literary culture was not in decline prior to the French occupation and that the elements of modernity can be seen in the seventeenth and eighteenth century middle class culture, a progression of the modernity described in the nineteenth century. She concludes:

> Taking this progression into consideration makes modern culture look less flat, more diverse and more complex than it is usually thought to be. This progression means that there is some historical depth to modern culture, that it is not entirely molded from above, either by a ruler's whims or through state policies, and that finally, it was not only the result of *following Western models*. We need to rethink what is meant by the nineteenth-century renaissance."[51]

Hanna's works undermine the conclusion that Egypt was in decline prior to the French occupation and challenges the French occupation as a focal point for Egyptian modernity and cultural enlightenment.

Another important focus that challenged previous assumption of intellectual decline, or at least lent itself to a more critical review of sources was the research of al-Jabārti 's *Aja'ib al-Athar fi'l-Tarjim wa'l-Akbar*.[52] For years, as previously mentioned, scholars of the orientalist and nationalist period had viewed the work of al-Jarbarti as virtually the only historical work of value since the work of Ibn Iyas in 1522. Scholars of the revisionist period began asking questions about the sources of al-Jabārti 's work, particularly of his history covering 1688-1776, a period that al-Jabārti did not witness first-hand.[53] Through careful examination, scholars, such as 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Rahim, Daniel Crecelius, and André Raymond showed that al-Jabariti had borrowed from previous historians' excellent works, such as al-Mallawani, Ahmad Shalabi and Ahmad Katkhuda 'Azaban al-Damurdashi.[54] This discovery not only challenged the assumption

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[51] Ibid, 173

[52] Daniel Crecelius "Al-Jabariti's Aja'ib al-Athar fi'l-Tarjim" 234. Crecelius points out that these sources were made available to the interested reader at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. He cites the example of Ahmad Katkhuda 'Azaban al-Damurdashi's *al-Durra al-Musana* as being copied at'Ali Bey's mosque in Tanta in Safar 1215/June-July 1800.

[53] Al-Jabarti was born in 1753 and started collecting his own notes in 1776.

[54] Ibid.

that great literary works were only seen after the French occupation but also that the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517 led to a decline of writing of history in Egypt.

While the aforementioned works may not be a comprehensive list of all that was written in the revisionist period challenging the paradigm of decline, they serve as an example of the changing conclusions among historians regarding the impact of the French occupation in Egyptian history. Economic, demographic and literary research concluded that Egypt was neither stagnating nor isolated. By showing that Egypt prior to the French occupation was not in "decline," historians challenged conclusions from both the orientalist period and the nationalist period that posited the French occupation as a critical moment for Egyptian modernity.

### Continuity between the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Century

Revisionist historians were aware that previous historians had posited the existence of a sharp rupture between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This dichotomy had separated the "decline" of the eighteenth century from the "modernity" of the nineteenth. The works of historians in the revisionist period challenged this assumed dichotomy by demonstrating continuity through the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Most notably, historians showed that trends previously considered characteristic of the nineteenth century were part of the eighteenth century as well. One example is Daniel Crecelius' *The Roots of Modern Egypt: a study of the regimes of 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab, 1760-1775*. As evident in the title, Crecelius argued that a state began to emerge in eighteenth-century Egypt, despite a certain amount of political instability.[55] His focus was on the Qazdaghli amirs, Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey, who, he argues, were able to establish control over the military, financial and bureaucratic institutions. Crecelius's work argued that foreign policy and contact with Europe prior to the French occupation minimized the impact that the French occupation had on Egypt's progression into modernity. He concluded:

> Napoleon did not dramatically "open" an isolated Egypt to the West, nor was Muhammad 'Ali Pasha the originator of the policies responsible for Egypt's transformation. In retrospect, the dramatic turning point in the contacts between the two civilizations had occurred in the period 1760-

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[55] Daniel Crecelius, *The Roots of Modern Egypt : A Study of the Regimes of 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and Muḥammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab, 1760-1775* (Minneapolis : Bibliotheca Islamica, 1981)

1775, that is, in the period of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab.[56]

This focus on political and institutional history shifted the "watershed" from the French occupation to the late eighteenth century changes in Ottoman Egypt.

Other work focused on economic continuity between the eighteenth and nineteenth century. For example, Kenneth Cuno's work, *The Pasha's Peasants: Land Tenure, Society and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740-1858,* focused on the socio-economic conditions developing in Egypt. Using court records, land tax registers and fatwas (legal opinions issued by jurists), Cuno explained that rural Egypt was integrated into a market economy long before 1800. Cuno argued against the idea that Muḥammad 'Alī created an "export-oriented economy" and maintained that Egypt was a regular exporter of agricultural produce in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century.[57] In his view, Muḥammad 'Alī actually suppressed capitalistic behavior by imposing state control over land tenure. Cuno's study not only challenged the barrier erected between the eighteenth and nineteenth century, it also challenged the conventional view of Muḥammad 'Alī as a proto-nationalist modernizer. He argued that the perception of socially transformative land reform was promoted by those who wanted to portray Muḥammad 'Alī 's successors as enlightened progressives, and legitimize the dynasty. He concluded:

> My view differs significantly from the conventional one, which emphasizes discontinuity. It in the French expedition and the rise of Muḥammad 'Alī are believed to have brought Egypt into contact with the West, thereby inaugurating an era of progressive change out of which a modern nation emerged.[58]

Rather, Cuno suggested that by "adopting a long-term perspective" of Egyptian history, one would see a greater degree of continuity.

More recently, at a two-day conference at UCLA's Von Grunebaum Near East Center in 1997 that focused on the French occupation, the theme of continuity was very

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[56] Ibid, 181.

[57] Kenneth Cuno, *The Pasha's Peasants: Land Tenure, Society and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740-1858,* (Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1992) 199.

[58] Ibid, 198.

much alive.[59] her presentation at this conference, Nelly Hanna focused on continuity between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century.  Her paper was titled "Ottoman Egypt and the French Expedition: Some Long Term Trends". Hanna began by saying:

> The year of the French expedition to Egypt, 1798, has often been seen as a dividing line between two periods in the history of Egypt, ushering in new forms and models in the economy and political structures of the country. But as important as this event was, many of the fundamental historical changes we observe in the nineteenth century were part of a long-term process developing at various speeds, and with more or less intensity at different times, which predated the French expedition and which continued to develop after it.[60]

For one, Hanna pointed out that there is continuity in the way power was constructed between the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. She gave the example of tax extortion against the people of Egypt from the Mamluks (prior to the French), the French and then Muḥammad ʿAlī . Other degrees of continuity were the methods and techniques in the army that were implemented by the Mamluks and later Muḥammad ʿAlī  and the construction of legitimacy through an alliance with the *ulama*, undertaken by Ali Bey, Napoleon, and Muḥammad ʿAlī . Lastly, she argued that economic continuity is seen when Egypt began integrating into the European capitalist economy prior to the French and continued after. Hanna concluded: "The French expedition was one more stage in the long-standing relationship between France and Egypt."[61]

Challenging the barrier erected between the eighteenth and nineteenth century by previous scholars and emphasizing continuity during this time gave further impetus to the argument made by scholars of the revisionist period that the French occupation should not be the dividing line or the focal point for understanding the history of Egypt. Rather, the history of modern Egypt should be viewed in a larger context, considering events that came before and after.

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[59] Pat Twair, Samir Twair, "Bicentennial of Napoleon's "Expedition" to Egypt Inspires Conference" *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 2 (Sep 30, 1997) 89. The conference papers were later published in a book, Irene Bierman edt., *Napoleon in Egypt* (2003).

[60] Nelly Hanna "Ottoman Egypt and the French Expedition: Some Long-Term Trends." in *Napoleon in Egypt*  (2003), 5.

[61] Ibid, 11

### *Minimizing the Impact of the French Occupation*

By nature of the methodology, many of the works in the revisionist period, such as social and economic histories, shifted the lens away from individuals or single events to a larger space of analytical focus. Thus, the French occupation was no longer the focal point for analysis. However, approaching the bicentennial commemoration of the French occupation in 1998, more historians of the revisionist period revisited the French occupation as a unit of analysis and challenged its direct impact on Egyptian politics, economics and society. These historians minimized the impact of Napoleon and his troops by challenging ideas that had been credited to the French.

In analyzing the French occupation, some historians challenged how previous nationalist historians had used the French occupation as narrative of resistance. For example, in an article published in 1999, Ramadan al-Khuli argued that positing the French occupation as the beginning of a resistance movement against foreign occupation follows the same thinking that change was brought on only by contact with the Western world.[62] By looking at the popular resistance in the Nile Delta, Khuli addressed the question whether the French occupation had the effect of accelerating, or conversely inhibiting the process of resistance and rebellion. He argued that resistance and rebellion existed in society well before the "Other", and resistance patterns differed from one later to another in this society. In focusing on the presence of resistance prior to the French, al-Khuli minimizes the impact of the French occupation on national resistance.

Other historians focused on ideas of the French during the occupation and the impact of these ideas on Egyptian society. In an article titled "L'expédition d'Égypte et le débat sur la modernité", Marsot argued that modernization is not an exogenous development and therefore the French occupation had little impact on modernizing Egypt.[63] In arguing against an exogenous of modernity, she points out that new ideas

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[62] Ramadan al-Khuli, "La résistance populaire à l'occupation française en Basse-Égypte (1798-1801)," *Égypte/Monde arabe*, Second Series, L'expédition de Bonaparte vue d'Égypte (1999), accessed January 3, 2013, http://ema.revues.org/index770.html.

[63] Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, "L'expédition d'Égypte et le débat sur la modernité," *Égypte/Monde arabe*, Second Series, L'expédition de Bonaparte vue d'Égypte, accessed on January 5, 2013, http://ema.revues.org/index716.html.

imposed on a population will never be accepted. For example, she suggested, when someone is forced to learn a language without understanding the benefits it could bring, it can often be rejected. Marsot argued the development of modernization was an indigenous development that took time. Thus the short duration of the French occupation had little to no impact on the modernization of the nineteenth century.

Marsot also focused on how specific Western ideas undertaken by the French and then proceeding rulers negatively affected certain sectors of Egyptian society, specifically women. In her work *Women and Men in Late Eighteenth-Century Egypt* she argued that modernization efforts undertaken in the nineteenth century beginning with Muḥammad 'Alī actually led to a decline in women's status.[64] Using archival sources, Marsot focused on deeds pertaining to the exchange of property by women in the eighteenth century, and showed that women actively participated in the economic life in Egypt. Speaking about women prior to the nineteenth century, Marsot concludes:

> Muslim women possessed legal existence in the outside world as property owners, a right which European women forfeited when they married and property passed into the legal keeping of their spouses. Yet in the nineteenth century Egyptian women became as trivialized as their sisters in Europe precisely because of changes in government, the creation of new institutions, and the development of a centralized state that controlled, dominated and directed the means of production, thereby mobilizing the resources of the state.[65]

Marsot's argument is relevant to the discussion of the French occupation because it posits the contact and influence of the West as a negative impact on Egyptian society. That is, with the "inventions from Europe" came a decline in the status for women.[66] She stated: "The nineteenth century, following the French occupation of Egypt in 1798, brought an autocratic centralized government which… resulted in a changes in state systems...that affected nonelite males and women most of all."[67]

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[64] Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *Women and Men in the Late Eighteenth-Century Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995) 136, 147.

[65] Ibid, 149.

[66] Ibid, 146.

[67] Ibid, 68.

*Conclusion*

Works from historians of the revisionist period marked a significant departure from those of the orientalist and nationalist periods. Historians of the orientalist and nationalist periods often focused on political and military history and relied on a few mainly European sources. Historians of the revisionist period used new methodologies and approaches, such as methodological frameworks used by the Annales school and world systems theory, which shifted the focus from individuals or single events to a larger focus of analysis. Economic, social and cultural trends became subjects for revisionist historians to explore. Newly discovered archival material provided a good source for these histories to explore economic and social changes within Egyptian society. The historians of this period sought to challenge the previous assumptions of decline that posited the French occupation at the heart of modernity. By focusing on economic and social activity in the years prior to the French occupation, these historians argued that the occupation can no longer be seen as the awakening moment for Egypt. Historians of the revisionist period also sought to connect the eighteenth and nineteenth century by focusing on continuity during this time. Showing continuity similarly challenged the conclusion that the French occupation opened Egypt to the door of modernity that was seen in the nineteenth century. When the focus of study shifted back to the French occupation, as was the case during the bicentennial commemoration, historians of the revisionist period sought to minimize the impact of it on Egyptian policies, society and its economy. As one historian concluded "The French occupation was of too short a duration to leave any permanent traces in Egypt. It certainly did not transform Egypt economically, politically, or intellectually, although claims that it did so have frequently been made."[68]

The contributions from the historians of the revisionist period have undoubtedly advanced our knowledge and understanding of periods of time that were previously

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[68] Ibid, 20. This quote is strikingly similar to the Ghurbal's statement, who has been introduced in the nationalist period. While this conclusion seem similar, distinctions can be made. Ghurbal believed that a longer occupation would have had a greater influence and that the people of Egypt would have accepted it. Marsot argues that any foreign ideas impressed upon an occupied population will never be accepted. See Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, "L'expédition d'Égypte et le débat sur la modernité," *Égypte/Monde arabe.*

unknown. These historians have also allowed us to question previous assumptions that posited the French occupation as a critical time in Egyptian history. However, other historians would soon argue that many of these Marxian approaches were "too narrow in their insistence on the centrality of class as a category, too essentialist in their commitment to social-structural causation, and too teleological in their positing of large-scale and long-term historical trajectories". [69] They would also argue that these approaches ignored the meaning found in discourse and culture. Subsequent historians would come back to the French occupation as a departure for analysis and attempt to understand the complexities and meaning of the colonial relationship.

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[69] Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism,* (United Kindom: Cambridge University Press, 2010) Also see Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32 (1990).

**Chapter 4**
**Post-Colonialist Period:  A Complex Colonial Relationship**

This chapter will discuss the fourth and final historiographical period of the writings on the French occupation. I have titled this period post-colonialist, as many scholars' works reflect post-colonial approaches and theoretical frameworks.  It is difficult to distinguish when and where the revisionist period ends and the post-colonialist period begins primarily because both periods coexist today and often scholars produce works that may reflect elements of both periods.  However, unlike the revisionist period, these historians used the French occupation as a departure point for their analysis. One could argue that this was similar to the orientalist and nationalist period that also centered on the French occupation as a point of analysis but stark distinctions can be made.[1] Through the influence of post colonial theories, approaches and methods, these scholars challenged the imperial narrative of colonialism and pointed out the complexity of colonial relationships. The first part of this chapter will discuss characteristics of post-colonial theories, methods, and approaches and the theorists that influenced the works of historians categorized in this period. The second part of this paper will argue that the themes of the post-colonialist period were 1) a deconstruction of French discourse 2) the brutality and contradictions of the French occupation and 3) cultural complexities between the French and the Egyptians within the colonial relationship. Scholars of the post-colonialist challenged the narrative that posited the French occupation as glorious

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[1] See Julia Clancy-Smith, "Twentieth-Century Historians and Historiography of the Middle East: Women Gender and Empire," in *Middle East Historiographies: Narrating the Twentieth Century* ed Israel Gershoni et al., Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006) 70-100. Clancy states: "Colonial encounters -- political, economic, cultural, and ideological – now appear as multi-directional, if uneven exchanges between colonies and metropoles as well as among various colonial possessions worldwide. One major change is that historians now pose cultural questions about the most basic elements of imperialism. This has resulted in the realization that empire and nation-state were part of the same historical process and that this process was deeply gendered. Another consequence of the cultural approach to imperialism is that scholars now work on all three sides of the colonial equation – the colonizer, the colonized and hybrid arrangements continually secreted by *la situation coloniale* -- which has moved previously marginalized peoples and relationships to the foreground", 70.

moment for the people of Egypt and argued that the French occupation was one of many events of Western imperialism over the East.

### Post- Colonial Theory and Theorists

Post-colonialism is often defined as a temporal concept, meaning the time after colonization had ceased, but more specifically it developed from the increasing questions about colonialism discourses, power structures and social hierarchies. In Alan Lawson's words, post-colonialism was a "politically motivated historical-analytical movement [which] engages with, resists and seeks to dismantle the effects of colonialism in the material, historical, cultural-political and pedagogical, discursive, and textual domains".[2] The post-colonial agenda aimed "to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal relations of power based on binary opposition such as 'us and them', 'first world and third world', 'white and black' and 'coloniser and colonised'."[3] While post-colonialism has been described as a "diffuse and nebulous term", its intellectual aims, as described recently by Robert Young, has been to investigate the extent to which European history and culture was part of the practice and aftermath of colonization and to identify the causes and epistemological effects of continuing international deprivation and exploitation. [4] While the term "post-colonialism" can encompass a vast array of interdisciplinary fields and subjects, the focus will be on two domains produced by post-colonialism thought and theories and evident in the works of scholars writing on the French occupation. These two domains are colonial discourse and colonial encounters.

While many of the theories of post-colonialism developed in the 1980s, the roots of post-colonial theoretical movement can be traced back to powerful literary critiques of colonial powers after World War II. Works from authors such as Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, brought to light the brutalities of colonization, emphasizing the mental and

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[2] Alan Lawson, "Comparative Studies and Post-colonial 'Settler' Cultures", *Australian-Canadian Studies*,10 (1994). 156.

[3] See Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics, (London: Routledge, 1996) 3.

[4] See Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), viii, 3. Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 69.

physical effects on colonized subjects.[5]  However, many have argued that it was the work of Edward Said that propelled the critique of Western study of the Orient, had significant and far reaching intellectual impacts and was the literary foundation for post-colonial theory.[6] Said set out to define the discourse of Europeans who studied the Orient, criticize how it presented the Orient, and show how this representation reified colonialism. Orientalism was "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the 'the Orient' and 'the Occident".[7] This resulted in a binary opposition between the East and the West, and the West looking at the East as the "Other". Said believed Orientalism was "a Western style for dominating, reconstructing, and having authority over the Orient".[8]  Said's work served as a "collective notion

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[5] Césaire was part of a larger movement, often referred to as "Negritude", which was developed by francophone black intellectuals, writers and politicians in France in the 1930s who fought against French hegemony and domination; Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme*, (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955). Fanon, who was mentored and taught by Césaire on the island of Martinque, also emphasized the brutality and inequality of colonial domination in Algeria1955.  Fanon's work, *The Wretched of the Earth* published in1961, exposed the physical and mental violence of colonialism. Born in Fort-de France, Martinique in 1925, Fanon grew up thinking of himself as French, was educated in French schools and served in the French military in World War II. However, Fanon soon became disillusioned by the racism and the caste systems in the French army, whereby whites were positioned at the top and blacks at the bottom, first to go into battle. He denounced the Manichaean divisions of the colonial system and the "negro" as inferior or classified as the "other". Fanon's condemnation of colonialism called for it to be overthrown by way of violence, giving way to anti-colonial revolutions. See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Skin* (New York, Grove Press, 1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth,* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963). Also see Albert Memmi and  Mouloud Feraoun for similar works. Albert Memmi, *La Statue de sel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), first published in 1955; Memmi, *Portrait du colonise précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (Paris: Editions Buchet/Chastel, 1957); Mouloud Feraoun, *Journal, 1955-1962* (Paris: Editions du seuil, 1962).

[6] Michael Sprinker ed, Edward Said: A Critical Reader (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, USA : Blackwell, 1992). Aijaz Ahmad characterized the impact as "electrifying" and Roger Owen called the book a "bombshell". Aijaz Ahmad, "*Orientalism* and After: Ambivalence and Metropolitan Location in the work of Edward Said," in *Theory:Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992); Roger Owen, "The Mysterious Orient," *Monthly Review* 31 (1979) 58-63. Also see Lockman, *Contenting Visions,* Chapter 6, "Said's *Orientalism:* a book and its aftermath."

[7] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York : Vintage Books, 1994) 2.

[8] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior on in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures." Said's work not only exposed the discourse of colonial expansion, but highlighted the doctrine of Western superiority that persists today.[9]

Said's work was influential in the discourse of colonial thought that emphasized a critique of Western study of the Orient, but it also re-invigorated an already developing mode of thought known as poststructuralism. Developed in the 1960s and 1970s by French philosophers and critical theorists, such as Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida, poststructuralism was a movement of literary criticism and philosophy that rejected "scientific objectivity" and argued that meaning of "truth" or "reality" are always shifting and unstable. By drawing from Michael Foucault's theories of power and knowledge, Said re-conceptualized colonial conquest not merely as a material phenomenon but rather as an epistemological system. According to some, Said's use of Foucault's approach was charting new intellectual terrain.[10] This work contributed to the rise of poststructuralism in American academia and spurred a number of new works on post-colonialism theory, such as the works of Gyatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Steeped in psychoanalysis and

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[9] Critics said that Said's concept of Orientalist discourse was vast and generalized, missing the differences between different types of Orientalist discourse. See John Rodenbeck "Edward Said and Edward William Lane," in *Travellers in Egypt*, edts Paul Starkey and Janet Starkey, (London; Tauris 1998) and Robert Irwin "Edward Said's Shadowy Legacy", TLS: The Times Literary Supplement (May, 2008) accessed online at http://www.campus-watch.org/article/id/5079. As explained by Hiddleston the "text of Orientalism tends to subsume its intricate examples into an all-consuming , homogenizing framework at the expense of potential subtleties and dislocations within individual instances of Orientalist discourse", Jane Hiddleston, *Understanding Postcolonialism,* (UK: Anthenaeum Press, 2009) 90. Another issue that was brought up with Said's text was the lack of space given to the subaltern. While Said criticized Orientalist discourse, he silenced the voice of the subjugated native and as Ahmad argued, the colonized country's elite. See Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London; New York: Verso 1992) 172.

[10] As Lockman explains, Said's *Orientalism* was a discourse in the same way Foucault used that term, a "specific form of knowledge with its own object of study ('the Orient'), premises, rules, conventions and claims to truth" and form of knowledge that was produced by power relations. Lockman, *Contending Visions,* 187.

semiotics, post-colonialist theorists aimed to scrutinize the language of the colonizer, deconstruct representative texts, and expose discursive ideas underneath the narratives.[11] Often referred to as post-colonialist "purists", these theorists stayed away from historical analysis, unconcerned with contributing to the understanding of the nature of colonialism in a historical context.[12]

Said, Spivak, and Bhabha's work have been part of a larger paradigm shift, known as the "linguistic turn." The linguistic turn drew heavily on poststructuralism, but encompassed a number of scholars from a broad range of disciplines and fields. The linguistic turn was focused on language as a way of analyzing ontological concepts and cultural phenomena. Concepts such as "reality" and "truth" were rejected but rather these concepts were taken to be socio-linguistic constructs. By drawing on poststructuralism, which rejected a "real" essence by which representation was derived, the linguistic turn abandoned key theories and methods of Marxist thought that posited material factors as the driving foundation for historical change. It also rejected fixed or innate collective or individual identity, deeming them essentialist. One of the first works in Middle East history that introduced poststructuralism was Timothy Mitchell's 1988 book *Colonising Egypt*. [13] Drawing from Foucault, Mitchell used the term "colonizing" as process of an emerging regime through power and knowledge that was manifested in new practices, discourses, institutions and conceptions of political authority. Mitchell also drew from Derrida's theories on deconstruction of texts, to highlight an opposition between "reality" and its representation.[14]

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[11] See Dane Kennedy "Imperial history and post-colonial theory," The *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24:3, (1996).

[12] This Foucauldian (or poststructuralist) approach has often been described as "dense" or impenetrable, and criticized by some historians, see Ibid. For example Roger Owen rejected this Foucauldian approach: "If we cannot make any connection between such studies [of the Middle East] and the reality they are supposed to describe, there is no way of showing how they have changed as a result of changing Middle Eastern (and not just European) circumstances. Nor is it possible to suggest how they might be improved in the future." See Owen, "Mysterious Orient."

[13] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[14] Ibid, 144-150.

Aspects of the linguistic turn can be seen in the writings on the French occupation in the post-colonial period, largely through the study of colonial discourse and representation. That is, how Westerners perceived the non-West and in turn themselves. The study of colonial discourse has been defined by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman as "the variety of textual forms in which the West produced and codified knowledge about non-metropolitan areas and cultures, especially those under colonial control."[15] Many of the works of the post-colonial period focused on deconstructing discourse and ideology of the French, drawing from textual forms, such as the classic colonial literature, travel journals and memoirs.[16] For example, in Stuart Harten's article "Rediscovering Ancient Egypt: Bonaparte's Expedition and the Colonial Ideology of the French Revolution," he sought to examine general expansionist practices and revolutionary ideologies of the French in the context of the French occupation. In Juan Cole's "Mad Sufis and Civic Courtesans: The French Republican Construction of Eighteenth-Century Egypt," he used memoirs of officers and civilians to explore French representations of themselves and of the Egyptians. In Anne Godlewska "Map, Text and Image: The Mentality of Enlightened Conquerors," she examined the colonial text, *Description de l'Egypt* and argued that it reflected the participants' conception of themselves. These works exemplified the growing focus on "text" and "discourse" and the study of representation.

The study of representation and discourse was only part of the focus of post-colonialist scholars. Another focus was on the colonial encounters that sought to examine how colonial discourse, institutions and practices were produced or shaped by the interaction with the native population, and how the native population was shaped by colonial discourse. Lockman stated:

> Just as one could not really make sense of the elaboration of the notion of the West without taking proper account of the ways in which the notion had been profoundly shaped by the interactions which those who would come to see as Westerners had with those who would come to be defined as non-Westerners, so

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[15] Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 5.

[16] For example Jason Thompson edt, *Egyptian Encounters: Cairo Papers in Social Science* 23, no.3 (Fall 2000).

the relationship between colonized and colonizer had to be seen as always complex, contradictory and reciprocal.[17]

In general, the discussion of colonial relationships in post-colonial theory has varied and evolved. Take for example the early writings of Albert Memmi (1965).[18] In describing colonial relationships, Memmi draws a sharp, immovable line between the two cultures. Within the colony, the colonizer's culture is dominant and the cultural identity of the colonized is muted, unable to participate in history.[19] Once the contaminating influence of another culture is removed, the colonized can return to the pure form of culture of the pre-colonial period.[20] This definition of culture does not evolve or participate with its surroundings and is depicted as a sharply bifurcated struggle between the colonizer and the colonized. Since then, other post-colonial theorists have challenged Memmi's thoughts on culture. One example is the post-colonial theories of Bhabha and concepts of cultural hybridity and third space. Bhabha described culture in less fixed and rigid ways than Memmi. Using the concept of hybridity, Bhabha believed that new forms of cultural meaning and production are formed between the colonizer and the colonized. The complexities of colonial encounters and the formation of culture has been the focus of some post-colonial scholars. For example Lisa Pollard's work titled *Nurturing the Nation*: *The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt, 1805-1923* sought to illustrate the complex ways in which ideas circulated in a society under foreign occupation.[21] In Elliot Colla's article "Non, non! Si, Si : Commemorating the French Occupation of Egypt", he  drew from Bhabha's theory of third space to explore colonial encounters between the French soldiers and Egyptians. [22] In Juan Cole's work *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* he narrates the colonial occupation,

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[17] Lockman, *Contending Visions,* 207.

[18] Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965).

[19] Ibid, 91.

[20] Ibid, 99.

[21] Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt, 1805-1923* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005)11.

[22] Elliot Colla, "Non, non! Si, Si: Commemorating the French Occupation of Egypt (1798-1801)," *MLN* 118:4 (Sep 2003).

highlighting the complex interactions between ideology, discourse, and culture of the French and Egyptians.[23]

The differences between the post-colonialists and the revisionist periods can be seen in a few ways, beginning with the central subject of their analyses. The revisionist period analyzed the Egyptian state and society in a larger context, and did not focus on the French occupation while the post-colonialist returned to the French occupation as a unit of analysis. Both periods aimed to challenge previously held assumptions but in different ways. Revisionist scholars challenged previous assumptions that posited the French occupation at the heart of modernity. Post-colonialist scholars challenged assumptions that posited the French occupation as a glorious moment for the people of Egypt. While the revisionist period focused on social and economic works, post-colonialist focused on ideology, discourse and meaning of representation through the exploration of textual domains. The remainder of this chapter will focus on scholars' works on the French occupation that fit within the post-colonialist period. Drawing from post-colonial approaches and domains, the works of scholars on the French occupation during this post-colonialist period reflected the following themes: 1) a deconstruction of French discourse; 2) the brutality and contradictions of the French occupation and 3) cultural complexities between the French and the Egyptians within the colonial relationship.

### *Deconstruction of Colonial Discourse*

As mentioned above, the domain of colonial discourse was of interest to post-colonialist scholars. One of the first works that analyzed French discourse was from the founder of post-colonial theory, Edward Said. In a section titled "Projects" in his book *Orientalism,* Said argues that Napoleon's desire to invade Egypt came from the textual domain. For example, throughout his youth Napoleon was steeped in writings of the glories of Alexander in Egypt, and later proposed himself as the new Alexander for re-conquering Egypt. Also, Napoleon believed that he knew about Egypt through the writings of past and recent Europeans. Said stated that Napoleon "saw the Orient only as it had been encoded first by classical texts and then by Orientalist experts, whose vision, based on classical texts, seemed a useful substitute for any actual encounter with the real

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[23] Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Orient."[24] Said argued that all of the books read by Napoleon presented the Orient as a "fierce lion" ready to be encountered, and therefore made the "project" of occupying Egypt conceivable. At the same time, the Orient was silent in these texts and "available to Europe for the realization of projects".[25] For Said, this textual discourse was the epitome of Orientalism and the French occupation was a pivotal moment in the history of Orientalism, not for modernity.

Building on Said's work, Henry Laurens analyzed the ideology behind the French occupation in his work *Les origines intellectuelles de l'expédition d'Egypte : l'orientalisme islamisant en France (1698-1798)* published in 1987**.** Similar to Said, Laurens focused on the intellectual climate and Islamic Orientalism in eighteenth-century France. Enlightenment thought, Laurens explains, produced a romanticized view of the East, one that saw the East as wretched and backwards, but also saw it as "richness of an imagined authenticity, nostalgia for a world that no longer existed in Europe".[26] In Laurens view, the French occupation was "the culmination of a century of reflection on the nature of Muslim society and on the ramification of the geo-political changes." [27] While the British were on a despotic conquest in India, the French would do things differently and "liberate" Eastern people. Egypt would be its testing ground. This "liberation" was based on erroneous principles for analyzing Eastern societies that believed these societies would see the French as liberators and revolt against their despotic or repressive regimes. According to Laurens, this view was reinforced by their of rebel movements against autonomous provincial powers, such as the Wahhabi expansion in central Arabia and Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar in Acre. This meant that the removal of the Mamluks would be welcomed and the possibility of war between the French in Egypt and the Ottoman Porte would incite an Egyptian revolt to against the Ottomans for the liberty of the people.[28] Of course this was not the case, for the local

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[24] Said, *Orientalism*, (1994) 80.

[25] Ibid, 94.

[26] John Tolan, Gilles Veinstein and Henry Laurens, *Europe and the Islamic World: A History*, transl by Jane Marie Todd (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013) 267.

[27] Ibid, 272.

[28] Ibid, 271.

population saw the occupation as a foreign domination of Christian origin, not a liberating mission.  While Laurens concluded that the French occupation was a time of destruction and misfortune, he believed it was part of a larger time when the geo-politics of Islam changed.[29] Similar to Said, the discussion was not about modernity and the impact the French occupation had on the socio-economic changes of the nineteenth century. Rather, the discussion centered on Orientalist discourse and ideology of the French occupation, arguing that imperial domination in Egypt began in 1798.

More recently, in his article "Rediscovering Ancient Egypt, Stuart Harten criticized Said and Laurens for viewing the French occupation in a narrow context defined by Orientalism and believed it should be examined in a larger context of French expansionist practices and ideologies. Thus, Harten analyzed the French occupation within the context of the strategic and cultural policies of the French government, or the Directory. In regards to strategic policies, Harten explained that the French occupation was one of many expansionist ambitions of the Directory in the nineteenth century.[30] The Directory also had an ambitious cultural policy designed to change the revolution's reputation of destroying the arts and the sciences under Jacobin ideology and to become the liberators of artistic heritage. This meant that plundering of art treasures to bring back to the Louvre in Paris was seen as duty. Egypt was not the only place that the French Directory felt they should be custodians of the treasures, but Belgium, Holland and Italy as well. Harten concludes that the French occupation was only one part of the Directory's ambitious strategic and cultural plans. He states: "The French have taken possession of Egyptian civilization as part of the universal patrimony of reason".[31]

In Cole's article titled "Mad Sufis and Civic Courtesans" and his recently published book *Napoleon's Egypt*, he used memoirs of officers and civilians who lived through the invasion to focus on the French perception of Egypt. Drawing from post-

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[29] Ibid, 272.

[30] Stuart Harten, "Rediscovering Ancient Egypt: Bonaparte's Expedition and the Colonial Ideology of the French Revolution," in Beirman, *Napoleon in Egypt* (2003). Harten explains that beginning in 1975 and 1803 Napoleon had his eyes on the following countries: Belgium, Holland, Corsica, Switzerland, the Rhineland, the Ionian Islands, Italy Ireland, Australia and the Pacific, Louisiana, Haiti, Madagascar and the Mascarene Islands.

[31] Ibid, 44.

colonial theory that analyzes the construction of representation, Cole began by highlighting the physical depictions produced by both French and Egyptian writers in their construction of the Other.[32] He argued that the French perception was shaped by the Revolution and the ideology of the early Republic in the 1790s. He believed that the French saw Egypt as a stage to what was happening in France. For example, the Mamluks represented the Old Regime, an unelected force that caused terror and exploited the local population. The French Republic of Egypt created by Napoleon represented the Republic of France under the Directory. The celebrations and festivals were undertaken by the French in Egypt to commemorate the French Revolutionary victories and celebrate the ideal of liberty. [33] It is not Cole's intention to draw a conclusion on the impacts of the French occupation, but rather to "shed some light on the cultural presuppositions and struggles involved in the representation of Egyptians by the Directory-era Frenchman. For Cole, the French occupation was a form of imperialism that deployed Liberal rhetoric and discourse for the extraction of resources and a geopolitical advantage.

Absent from the above-mentioned works is the discussion of modernity and the role the French occupation played in advancing modernity in Egypt. Rather, the discussion centered on French self-representation of how they saw themselves and in turn Egyptians. For Said, Laurens, Harten and Cole, the focus was on the cultural-political ideology of the colonizer and the deconstruction of that domain. By shedding light on French discourse, these scholars argued that the French occupation was part of a larger view of cultural superiority and dominance of the West over the East.

***Brutality and Contradictions of Colonial Occupation***

Other works of the post-colonial period sought to reconstruct the narrative of the occupation by incorporating the subaltern voice, both Egyptian and French. For historians of the orientalist and nationalist periods, the French occupation was mostly portrayed as a positive event for Egypt, one that brought Egypt into the era of modernization or brought

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[32] Juan Cole "Mad Sufis and Civic Courtesans: The French Republican Construction of Eighteenth-Century Egypt" in Beirman, *Napoleon in Egypt* (2003) 47-62. Cole highlights the texts of the French officer Joesph-Marie Moiret and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabarti which exemplifies the relative ignorance of one culture by the other, 49-51.

[33] Ibid 60.

about revolutionary unity. In creating a narrative of the French occupation, these authors often minimized, brushed over, or completely ignored the atrocities of the French occupation, choosing to only focus on the impact the occupation had on Egyptian modernization. Historians of the revisionist period questioned the impact of the French occupation for Egypt through their focus on social and economic research.  However, it was the post-colonial period that sought to question the narrative of a population grateful for their so called liberty, reason, and progress.  Post-colonialist scholars sought to reconstruct a narrative that incorporated the voice of the colonized Egyptian and expose brutality, contradictions and hypocrisy of the occupation. Like the revisionist period, the supposed positive impacts of colonialism were undermined.

In Egypt the discussion often started with the definition of the episode of the French in Egypt's history. Was it an expedition? Was it an invasion?  Or as phrased in Arabic: *al-matba' aw al-madfa'*? - the printing press or the cannon? The term "expedition", which was used since the beginning of the French occupation and is still used today, could imply a scientific discovery and a cultural exchange of the episode. Invasion often implies a direct or violent confrontation to colonial forces. At a conference at UCLA in 1997 Juan Cole stated: "For 200 years, it's been termed 'Napoleon's Expedition' to Egypt. That's long enough. It was an invasion."[34]

In an article titled "Si tu le sais, alors c'est une catastrophe…  La commémoration : pourquoi, pour qui?", Laila Enan questioned the traditional narrative of the French occupation and its cause for commemoration. She began with these provocative questions:

> Pourquoi les Français veulent-ils changer le nom de la célèbre station londonienne Waterloo? Et si les Égyptiens leur demandaient de changer le nom des rues d'Aboukir, des Pyramides, et autres défaites égyptiennes ? Et si on leur demandait pourquoi ils n'ont pas fêté le centenaire de 1870, ou le cinquantenaire de 1940 ?  "Hénaurme" aurait répondu le bon Flaubert… pour ne pas dire plus. Alors, peut-on demander aux Égyptiens pourquoi ils refusent de commémorer le bicentenaire de 1798 de triste mémoire ? Peut-on même oser pareille question?[35]

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[34] Pat and Samir Twair, "Bicentennial of Napoleon's "Expedition" to Egypt Inspires Conference,"  in *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (Sep 3, 1997), 89.

[35] Laila Enan, "Si tu le sais, alors c'est une catastrophe…  La commémoration : pourquoi, pour qui?" *Égypte/Monde arabe*, Second Series, L'expédition de Bonaparte vue d'Égypte, accessed on January 10,

Enan examined how the French occupation was presented in Egyptian history books, contrasting that with the journals of specific French soldiers during the occupation. She explained that Egyptian history books into the 1940s presented the French occupation as a mutual cooperation between the Frenchmen and the population, and no hint of resistance or revolts were mentioned.[36] She then compared these images with the images of disaster, brutality, racism and chauvinism that French journals presented on the occupation. Enan regretfully conceded that despite evidence that the French occupation was a disaster, the commemoration continued. Enan's article exemplifies the post-colonialist focus on the imperial domination of the French occupation and the brutality of colonization, and challenges the narrative of an overjoyed population often found in the works of the orientalist and revisionist periods.

Another example of a challenge to the imperial narrative can be found in Cole's book. In *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East,* Cole provided an excellent case in point in his acknowledgements. He states:

> One of my central questions is how the French and the Egyptian constructed and remembered one another. This book is not, however, about a "clash of civilizations", but has as its premise that the Greater Mediterranean has been a single civilization for a very long time. Clashes are produced by struggles over power, not by cultures, which are themselves often shaped and altered by mutual interaction and conflict.[37]

Drawing from memoirs, letters, as well as the more traditional sources such as military correspondence, Cole re-constructed the French occupation in Egypt by emphasizing the struggles of the French in the Egyptian Delta region, the context of Egyptian resistance to the occupation, and the interplay of French revolutionary ideas with the Egyptian way of life. In a chapter titled "The Constant Triumph of Reason", Cole highlighted specific acts that were undertaken by the French in the name of reason, but in actuality only benefited their own agenda. For example, the Egyptian Institute, modeled on the French institute

2013, http://ema.revues.org/index710.html. She proceeds to answer these questions by stating that Egyptians are partly to blame because they imported and generated these ideas.

[36] History books used in French schools in Egypt in the twentieth century highlight Napoleon's occupation as much more than a military campaign: as the very basis of a "modern state" and transformation. Egyptians resistant to French "creative fervor" were labeled as indolent and unable to assimilate. See Charles H. Pouthas, *Histoire de l'Égypte depuis la conquête ottomane*, (Paris: Hachette, 1948), 49, 53, 54.

[37] Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) ix.

was depicted as a way of instilling liberty in Egypt by granting equality of rights to all of its citizens. In reality, the Egyptian Institute was focused on the needs of the French army, production of bread, beer, gunpowder, and less on equality.[38] Cole also focused on the brutality of the French occupation throughout his work. For example, he detailed the torching of homes and killing of the inhabitants of a local village outside of Wardan, after an army store keeper and a servant were burned by Bedouins in the area.[39] Cole points out the irony of their acts of terror and their ideas of Enlightenment. Cole concludes: "These officers saw no contradiction between the demands of force and the enjoyment of liberty. After all, their political achievement had come about through revolution, which is to say violence."[40] By exposing the brutality, hypocrisy and contradictions of the French occupation, these scholars challenged the narrative that that posited the French as the savior for the people of Egypt.

### Cultural Complexity between the French and the Egyptians

Drawing from post-colonialist theorists, such as Bhabha, some scholars of the post-colonial period have focused on the complexity of colonialism and cultural exchange between the colonizer and the colonized. Cole states: "A binary opposition of Western hegemony and Middle Eastern resistance cannot capture the full complexity of these relationships. Successful imperialists are by definition dominant, but the discourse of the conquered subject is not without its own cultural power."[41] Cole continues,

> How to make sense of Bonaparte's defense of the Prophet Muhammad from Voltaire, or Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Sharqawi's approval of the French introduction of governing councils in the Egyptian provinces? The contradictory details of the memoirs…suggest that in order to understand colonialism we must appreciate the mutual appropriation of cultural forms by colonized and colonizer.[42]

Drawing from recent post-colonial theory, Elliot Colla explores the same questions. In an article titled, "Non, non! Si, Si!: Commemorating the French Occupation of Egypt (1798-1801)," Colla describes two types of colonial exchanges or relationships between

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[38] Ibid, 147.

[39] Ibid, 62.

[40] Ibid, 172.

[41] Ibid, (2008) 248. Cole cites Homi Bhabha, Location of Culture (2004).

[42] Ibid, 248.

the French and Egyptians, "binary conflict" and "ambiguous exchange".[43] The term "binary conflict" is used to describe dominating relationships between the colonizers and the colonized that include direct conflicts and collective resistance or non-confrontation and non-resistance with moral condemnation. For example the writings of Vivant Denon, a prominent French scholar who accompanied the French Army to Egypt, depict the conflict in terms of complete moral separation and legitimacy of French military force over Egyptian; "French righteousness vs. Egyptian ignorance, rectitude vs. impunity, the order of French enlightenment vs. the confusion of Muslim irrationality." [44]

The second term, "ambiguous exchanges," describes intimate moments between the colonizer and the colonized, in which "slightest glimmers of cultural exchange" appear to be taking place amongst the "binary conflicts" of war.[45] Colla used the war narratives of Denon, who accompanied General Desaiz during the southern campaigns against Murad Bey, as an example of an ambiguous exchange. Mixed in Denon's war narratives is a scene depicting his exposure to local culture and a moment when moral separation between the Frenchman and the Egyptians seem to fade. Following the battle in Girga, French soldiers bivouacked outside of the town. Local story tellers were brought into the camp and tales from *Arabian Nights* are told. Denon appeared to set aside his political identification for a moment to allow himself to engage in the cultural exchange and draw a comparison with his own culture. Another example given by Colla was Hassan Al-Attar's interaction with French scholars. The prominent 19th century intellectual, then a student at Al-Azhar, detailed his encounters and fascination with the Frenchmen, despite his initial reluctance and fear of the French. The French scholars shared their language, technology and academic books with Al-Attar, who was thoroughly intrigued.[46] As Colla endeavored to highlight and compare "ambiguous exchanges" on both sides, French and Egyptian, he argues that Egyptians had encounters

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[43] Colla highlights "ambiguous exchanges" on both the French side as well as the Egyptians. He argues that examining these accounts from both sides in the same context, one is able to fully understand the complexity of cultural interaction.  Elliot Colla, "Non, non! Si, Si".

[44] Ibid, 1058.

[45] Ibid, 1068.

[46] Ibid, 1064. Colla uses Al-Attar's work in Al-Siyuti's, Maqamat, (Bulaq:1858) 91-96.

and intimate moments with the French, despite the brutality of the conflict and occupation.

The focus of colonial encounters is part of a more recent trend in post-colonialist studies that attempts to dismember essentialist and binary views of culture and colonialism. However, the questions posed by Cole and the analysis offered by Colla end up leaving the reader with more questions. What were the impacts of these exchanges? Perhaps more insightful to the overall understanding of the French occupation and the impacts of two cultures in one space, can be found in such works as Ramadan al-Khuli's article, **"Pour le meilleur et pour le pire."** This piece attempts to give a picture of legal practice at the time of the French occupation and trace how two legal cultures collided, compromised and shifted.[47] Khuli states that registered Egyptian Muslim marriages in the courts went drastically down during the French occupation. He argues that this is because the taxes levied on marriages by the French rulers were believed by Egyptians to be heretical and contrary to the *sunna.* Also, a general distrust of the French government's control of the judicial system resulted in the population retreating to more private forms of marriage, such as customary (*'urfi)* marriages, which were later registered after the French left. Lastly, Khuli points out that the number of divorces registered in the court significantly increased during the occupation (2-8 per year prior and after the occupation, and 20-25 during the occupation). Court records indicate several reasons given for the increase in divorces. First, husbands left without providing support (*nafaqa*) and women were unable to get a loan in order to provide for themselves, providing grounds for divorce. Additionally, lack of sex and fear of falling into debauchery were also provided as reasons. While Khuli's overall analysis falls short of further understanding the colonial relationship, his overall approach to the French occupation is one with that questions how cultures collide, mix and function together under the colonized rule.

*Conclusion*

The post-colonialist period was influenced by the approaches, theoretical frameworks and methodologies of post-colonial struggles. Beginning with Said, post-colonialism focused on representation, specifically how the West viewed the East. Through mainly literary

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[47] Ramadan al-Khuli, "Pour le meilleur et pour le pire,"*Égypte/Monde arabe*, second series, L'expédition de Bonaparte vue d'Égypte, Accessed on January 4, 2013,  http://ema.revues.org/index754.html.

fields, scholars used Said's work to further post-colonial theory that focused on the nexus of power and knowledge. While many of the works produced by these "purist" theorists were obscure, historians began incorporating theoretical ideas into their analysis. Historians of the post-colonialist period focused on the colonial discourse, colonial encounters and the voice of the subaltern.

Similar to the revisionist period, post-colonialist scholars rejected the previous narratives of the French occupation that claimed France brought salvation to Egypt. However the differences between the revisionist and the post-colonialist period were in their methods and approaches and their conclusions of the importance of the French occupation. Revisionist historians focused on social and economic works to challenge assumption of the orientalist and nationalist periods, and concluded that the French occupation made little to no impact on the modernization of Egypt. Post-colonialist historians focused on discourse and power relations to challenge the imperial narrative of colonialism and concluded that the French occupation was important in Egyptian history, but not because it brought modernization. Rather, it was an event that exemplified imperial interests and domination on the Arab world.

While the works of post-colonialist scholars have indeed furthered our understanding of the complexities of colonial relationships, caused us to be aware of the pitfalls of essentialism, and allowed for emphasis to be placed on textual meaning, some argue that the post-colonial period has had wider political implications.[48] For one, the challenging of essentialism in post-colonialist theory brought up the discussion of how to study Islam and Muslim societies and had scholars grappling to explain the role that Islam played today. However, this discussion sometimes reverted back to the essentialist views. For example, the Syrian philosopher Sadiq Jalal Al-'Azm warned that some in the Arab world had succumbed what he called "Orientalism in Reverse", accepting the dichotomy of West/East but believing that the East was in fact superior to the ways of the

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[48] See Lockman, *Contending Visions*, Chapter 6 titled "Said's Orientalism: a book and its aftermath".

Western world.**49** One could reference the Islamist movement today that have rejected anything imported by the West, such as democracy, and believe that Islam was the only way to fix societal, political and cultural problems. Outside of the Arab world, similar returns to essentialism were seen. While some scholars, mentioned above, continued to challenge previous assumptions of Islam, others scholars, such as Bernard Lewis, reverted to the previously held essentialist view of Islam as an unchanging, monolithic civilization. **50** Lewis' view was picked up by the American government, and was one factor that resulted in a widening gap between academic institutions and the state and America's fight on terrorism**.**[51]

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[49] Sadiq Jalal al-ʿAzm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse," *Khamsin* 8 (1981):5-26.

[50] Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly,* September 1990. As Lockman explains, Bernard Lewis had always held onto those beliefs. However, it was this view that influenced the American government on foreign policy. This resulted in a divide between academia and the state, and is one of the explanations given by Lockman on the creation of think tanks.

[51] Lockman, *Contending Visions*, 242-253.

*Final Conclusions*

Since the invasion in 1798, the French occupation in Egypt has been viewed by many historians in different ways, for many different reasons. Even in the past decades it has still been a point of debate. This was nowhere more evident than at the bicentennial commemoration of the French occupation in 1998, when cultural and academic institutions began planning events that centered on the subject.[1] The bicentennial commemoration undoubtedly spurred a debate in both France and Egypt and shed light on complexities of celebrating such an event and the nature of colonialism. Cultural institutions in both France and Egypt labeled the bicentennial year as the "the Franco-Egyptian year" and the commemoration of the relationship as "shared horizons".[2] As events were planned and participants prepared, a debate in Egypt's press broke out.[3] Was it appropriate for Egypt to celebrate the occupation of the French? The introduction of journal *Egypte monde arabe* in 1999 highlights the debate:

> Fallait-il commémorer l'expédition d'Égypte ? Français et Égyptiens pouvaient-il s'associer dans le souvenir d'un épisode qui les opposa? Telles sont les inévitables questions laissées en suspens par les polémiques ayant accompagné les manifestations de l'année franco-égyptienne, célébrée à Paris et au Caire en 1998.[4]

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[1] In 1997 a two-day international conference focusing on Napoleon's "expedition" was held by UCLA's Von Grunebaum Near East Center where more than ten historians participated in the conference. In 1998, the official year of the bicentennial commemoration, there would be many more events centering on the French occupation to include academic conferences, book publication and gala exhibitions. One of the largest conferences was put on by historian Andre Raymond and Daniel Panzac and held at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Aix-en-Provence. In 1999, the journal *Egypte monde arabe* dedicated an entire issue to the French occupation, to which Egyptian historians contributed. For a list of events and publications see Ghislaine Alleaume, "Agenda : Les manifestations commémoratives," *Égypte/Monde arabe*, Second Series, access on 10 Jan 2013, http://ema.revues.org/index773.html and Elliot Colla, "Non, non! Si, si" (2003), 1044.

[2] See Colla, "Non, non! Si, Si", 1044.

[3] The news editorial title "Franco-Egyptian Bicentennial Culture-fest" in *The Gulf Today* (May 26, 1998) gives an idea of the debate going on in the Egyptian media. Online at http://www.egy.com/problematica/98-05-26.php

[4] *Égypte/Monde arabe*, second series, accessed on 3 March 2013, http://ema.revues.org/index689.html.

The same question was raised by some French intellectuals.[5] Understanding that the commemoration was a sensitive subject, some events side-stepped the issues.[6] While the controversy was on the nature of colonialism, it highlighted the varying views held by scholars still today on the impact of the French occupation and demonstrated that conclusions from the orientalist and nationalist periods still remained.

The orientalist period was predominately made up of European historians but did include a few Egyptians such as Ṭaḥṭāwī and Ali Mubarak. These historians subscribed to Enlightenment thought and put emphasis on scientific discovery. While they saw Ancient Egypt as a glorious and magnificent time, they believed Egypt under the Ottoman Empire was in decline and in need of immediate European rescue. Additionally they felt a sense of cultural superiority, which manifested itself by representing Egyptians as backward and uncivilized. For these historians, the French occupation was a watershed event, one that brought Egypt into modernity.

The nationalist period was predominately made up of Egyptian historians who shared similar ideas from Orientalist period but was influenced by the feelings of nationalism developing in Egypt. Like the orientalists, these nationalist historians defined progress in European terms using Europe as a model and viewed the Ottoman Empire as a time of decline and stagnation. However, these historians emphasized their connection with their Arab past, vs. their Pharaonic past, to create a national identity. In creation of their national identity, focus shifted from the French occupation to the dynasty of Muḥammad 'Alī , who they saw as the founder of modern Egypt. However, the French occupation introduced the ideas that Muḥammad 'Alī would later take up, and thus was a

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[5]The French editor of *CEDEJ* in Cairo asked, "Fallait-il commémorer l'expédition d'Egypte? Et pouvait-on le faire ensemble? Français et Egyptiens pouvaient-ils s'associer dans le souvenir d'un épisode qui les opposa? Telles sont les inévitables questions laissées en suspens par les manifestations de l'année franco-égyptienne célébrée conjointement, mais bien inégalement, a Paris et au Caire en 1998?"

[6] For example, the conference put on by Raymond and Panzac was titled **"La France & l'Égypte : à l'époque des vice-rois 1805-1882"** and the French occupation was never mentioned. However, in Ghazaleh's opinion: **"Boycotts and hard feelings were simmering just beneath the surface. No one, then, wanted to exacerbate already raw sensitivities; no one wanted the celebration -- commemoration? – to sour". See Pascale Ghazaleh, "When is a door not a door?" *Al-Ahram Weekly On-Line*, 30 July-5 Aug 1998.

critical point in Egyptian history. For some historians of this period, the French occupation served as a starting point for resistance of foreign occupation, which would later inspire the Urabi revolt and the 1952 revolution. Either way, the historians of the nationalist period saw the French occupation as an important event in the coming of modernity in Egypt.

While one might categorize these two periods in chronological order (orientalist 1798-1900s and nationalist 1880s-1950s), works produced with similar methodology and conclusions can be seen after the 1950s.  For example in 1968 historian David Kimchee wrote an article that referred to the period between 1517 (the Ottoman invasion of Egypt) and 1798 (Napoleon's occupation) as the "Dark Ages of the country's history". According to Kimchee, the political institutions of Egypt were in disarray when Napoleon came onto the scene in 1798. Napoleon started a great "social revolution" to be continued by Muhammad Ali.  Kimchee argues that Muhammad Ali was successful only because of the French encounter and the passiveness of the Egyptian people.[7] Other historians, such as H.A.R. Gibb, made observations that jibed with Kimchee's conclusions in the 1950s and 1960s.[8] According to historian Vatikiotis Panayiotis, who produced work in the 1980s:

> The brief occupation left a permanent mark upon the country. Not only were the Egyptians impressed by the military prowess and genius of Bonaparte, who so easily defeated the feared Mamluks, but the ideas inspired by the French Revolution which he had brought with him--whether in the form of the Institute or the Cairo council-- were to influence Egyptians for the next hundred and fifty years and to form the basis of their cultural renaissance and national development. The science and technology of post-Enlightenment Europe shook Egyptians from their slumber and traditional rigidity, and infused in the mind of the alert among them just the right amount of gnawing uncertainty about their condition and *state of indolent ignorance.*[9]

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[7] David Kimchee, "The Political Superstructure of Egypt in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Middle East Journal* 22:4 (1968) 448-462.

[8] See H A R Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic society and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950) and .P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire,* (Royal Asiatic Society, 1966).

[9] Panayiotis .J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Egypt*, 2nd edt. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980) 46. Also see Mahmoud Hussein, "The Eagle and the Sphinx: Bonaparte in Egypt," *The UNESCO courier* (June 1989) 27-8.

Echoing the orientalist and nationalist periods it was Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the French occupation that allowed Egypt to emerge from dysfunction and ignorance into modern nationhood. Similar conclusions have recently been made by Egyptian historians. For example ʿImād Abū Ghāzī, Yūnān Labīb Rizq, and ʿĀṣim Dasūqī argue that the Ottoman Egypt was completely stagnate until Enlightenment ideas, introduced by the French, brought Egypt into modernity.[10]

The revisionist period consisted of a group of historians that were influenced by new social and economic theories in the twentieth century. These historians sought to challenge previous assumptions and conclusions made by the orientalist and nationalist periods. For one, these historians challenged Ottoman decline and argued that Egypt was not in a state of stagnation but was rather developing socially and economically. Their research and works aimed to connect the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century, showing that there was continuity. By pointing out ideas and changes prior to the French occupation, these historians challenged that the French occupation was responsible for modernity in Egypt. Much of their work stayed clear of using the French occupation as a point of departure for analysis. The historians of the revisionist period saw the French occupation as having little to no impact on modernity in Egypt.

The post-colonialism period approached the French occupation similar to the orientalist and the nationalist period, only in the sense that they focused on the episode itself as a source of analysis. However, these scholars were influenced by post-colonial theories and the ever increasing emphasis that focused on discourse and culture and the meaning behind texts. Some of these works focused on the French Enlightenment discourse and revolutionary ideas, pointing out the irony and the contradictions. Other works focused on the brutality of colonialism. Still some focused on the cultural exchange between the colonized and the colonizer. For the post colonialist scholar, the French occupation was an important point for Egyptian history, but not for the reasons of modernity. Rather, the French occupation was the beginning of an imperial domination.

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[10] Al-Khuli and ʿIsa, "Un bilan controversé" (1999).

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