

دور الترجمة في مصر في القرن التاسع عشر
وصلة ذلك الدور بتسامي الحس القومي،
رفاعة رافع الطهطاوي نموذجا

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(ملخص)

يتناول البحث دور الترجمة في مصر في القرن التاسع عشر، وصلة ذلك الدور بتسامي الحس القومي آنذاك.

ويقدم البحث تحليلا لأراء أحد رواد الترجمة في منتصف ذلك القرن؛ ألا وهو رفاعة رافع الطهطاوي ومنهجه في الترجمة إلى العربية من خلال نظريات الترجمة الحديثة، التي تؤكد حضور المترجم بشخصه وآرائه في العمل المترجم؛ الأمر الذي يتنافى مع الاعتقاد السائد من قبل بشأن ما يُعرف بخفاء المترجم.

ويقيم البحث لذلك العلاقة بين نشاط الترجمة في القرن التاسع عشر وحركة الوعي القومي في مصر.

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life." Similarly, 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad held that all of a nation's traditions and customs, folklore and myths, literature, art, and language were only the concrete external manifestations of one perduring essence, which he termed "the national personality" [al-shakhsiyya al-qawmiyya]. Yusuf Hanna denned national personality in specifically Egyptian terms. The Egyptian national personality was "a distinct personality" [shakhsiyya bariza] that embodied "the totality of the distinctive characteristics and traits" of the Egyptian race and culture forged within the Nile Valley. (134)

In conclusion, the works produced by translators since the establishment of Al-*Alsun* during the reign of Muhammad Ali managed to reinforce a sense of Egyptian identity. Political circumstances of the time coincided with translation activities. From a limited target audience of government officials to a widening circle of readers, translation supported Muhammad Ali's ambitious goals, Ismail's modernization project as well as resistance by a united nation against colonialism.

Notes

1. For a critical discussion of Venuti's theory, see Muhammad Enani. Nazariyyat Al-Tarjama Al-Haditha, Longman, 2003.

from zero to tens of thousands in the course of twenty years indicates a virtual revolution in the consciousness of the literate strata. ... the way in which the literate strata became more closely linked to political trends in the capital, and exposed to the ideologies promulgated by particular editors and political clubs, made the practice of national politics possible. As a practical matter, as well, the press supplied activists nation-wide with timely and crucial information once they decided to oppose viceregal absolutism and European hegemony.

The newspapers made available new ways of thinking and political information even to the ordinary folk, through a network of functionally literate primary-school and seminary graduates. (124)

It was up to the next generation of translators to reach a wider audience. Translated material in the sciences and humanities found their way in new periodicals, notably al-Hilal and al-Muqtataf.

The notion of Egyptianess received reinforcement by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century as a means to unite the nation against the British occupation. Translation still played a major role in this regard, especially the translated works of Gustave Le Bon, a French sociologist, who was faithful to Hippolyte Taine's views on environmental determinism, by Ahmad Fathi Zaghloul. These views gave Egyptian writers an excellent opportunity in order to emphasize the singularity of the Egyptian heritage and nationhood. To quote Gershoni:

Egyptianist intellectuals of the post-1919 period relied extensively on Le Bon's conceptual scheme. Thus Niqula Yusuf argued that "nations, like individuals, have personalities within which are embodied their character traits, temperament, spiritual heritage, and modes of social

embryonic theory of an Egyptian national character that extended from the ancient Egyptians to his contemporaries: Pharaonic Egypt came in for repeated praise in his historical works, being characterized by phrases like "mother of the world" or "epitome for the rulers of great kingdoms." Tahtawi's modern concept of nationhood necessitated adopting a clear stand on controversial issues in his time. The sense of belonging to a nation in the modern nation-state framework produced criticism of religious intolerance practiced by rulers (49). Tahtawi was also a defender of the right of women to education. His work: Al-Murshid al-Amin fi Tarbiyat al-Banat wa al-Banin (1875) was a pioneering effort in this regard. He cites examples of educated women from the family of the Prophet Muhammad and argues for female education as a means for the improvement of both social and family life (Badran, 255).

The trends toward modernization and an Egyptian homeland flourished in the reign of Ismail. The Egyptian narrative of progress in relation to the west exceeded the boundaries of the government departments and reached a wider public. Juan Cole refers to a private press that was launched in the seventies of the nineteenth century focusing on political matters translated from European sources and gaining a wide circulation (123). Her research reveals the notable achievement enhancing nation-building in the time of Ismail:

No matter how tentative, this result is quite extraordinary. In 1860 Egypt had no Arabic-language newspaper, the official gazette having ceased publication for budgetary reasons. Even when it started up again in 1863, the government broadsheet probably had a small circulation. For the regular consumers of newspapers to have risen

refers to the priority of using corresponding items derived from the Arabic lexicon, and only when failing that, transliteration or near transliteration is adopted (53). A significant example is his transferring "La Charte" [The Charter] into "al-sharta" (194). It is interesting to note that certain terms transliterated by Tahtawi are still in current use though slightly modified: "al-kunsirwatwar" and "akadima" for "conservatoire" and "academie" (263).

Iman Al-Sa'id Jalal provides examples for Tahtawi's turing away from using transliterated loanwords such as "al-jurnal", "al-'liktrista", and "tiyatr" to introduce "al-warqat al-yawmiya", "khasit al-kahruba" and "mal'ba", thus paving the ground for the subsequent "sahifa", "kahruba" and "masrah" (19).

Tahtawi's domesticating efforts also extends to the urban culture he was exposed to during his residence in France: "Alexandria is both a sample and a model of Marseilles" (131), Paris has "rows of trees run[ning] through and surround[ing] the city. The same can be seen through Shubra road, in Abu Za'bal and Jihadabad" (172). Titles of ministers are shown to correspond: "The Minister of Home Affairs is comparable to the Katkhuda in Egypt, whereas the Minister of Finance is similar to the Khazindar, the Minister of Trade to the Nazir al-tijarat" (192). Significantly, Tahtawi even attempts to build bridges between the Arabic and French literary tradition in the field of war poetry: "And, as with the Arabs, their war chants are mixed in with love poetry. I have indeed encountered many of their sayings, which are similar to the words used by an Arab poet addressing his loved one" (256).

According to Israel Gershoni, Tahtawi is to be credited with a view that brought together "the entire civilized history of Egypt as a continuum and to formulate an

These early efforts undertaken by Tahtawi and the translators of Al-*Alsun* were meant to be of service to government needs. No attempt was made reach a wide reading public (Shayal 11, 225). Books translated during the reign of Muhammad Ali were restricted to government officials and a limited number of academics who graduated from Al-*Alsun*. The benefits drawn from such cross-cultural encounters produced more far-reaching effects through Tahtawi's attention to the press. (Shayal 140) On his return from Paris, Tahtawi was appointed editor in chief of the official Egyptian gazette: al-Waqa'i' al-Misriya that started as an official governmental circular written in Turkish and was translated into poor Arabic. He changed the editorial policy of the gazette giving priority to Arabic over Turkish and including scholarly reports drawn from the Arabic heritage. It was later on when Rifa'a started Rawdat al-Madaris that he reached a wider public and introduced in it some of his brilliant students who graduated from Al-*Alsun*: Saleh Majdi, Abdalla Abou al-Se'oud, Abdalla Fikri, Uthman Jalal and others. (Al-^cAttiya)

The new spirit aroused by such intensive work left its mark on Tahtawi's thought and original writings. In his speech on the occasion of the graduation of the first class of Al-*Alsun*, he addresses the audience as follows: The graduating class marks the achievement of a promise made and earnestly fulfilled. It is not secret that the establishment of Al-*Alsun* was motivated by benefiting our motherland whose love is a sign of good faith, as well as reducing our foreign stay in European countries. (Abdalla Abu Al Su'ud, quoted in Al-Mawsu'a Al-Shamila).

Giving priority to the use of Arabic was apparent in Tahtawi's attempted translation of technical terms. However, this policy was far from being inflexible. Al-Shayal

Tahtawi's translations of books on geography and the habits and customs of nations produced a view of the successful nation-state led by its rulers through ambitious reform plans to the paths of modernity. Lisa Pollard refers to Tahtawi's efforts in this regard:

The translation and production of such texts by civil servants in Egypt for other civil servants and for the consumption of a reading public placed Mohammad `Ali and his projects in the company of other rulers whose greatness, personality, and very character were made manifest in their reform projects. ... The history of the formation of the modern nation-state was thus characterized as a kind of ethnography in which progress was known and charted along the variables of habits and customs, especially those of rulers. This ethnography qua history is well illustrated by al-Tahtawi's 1833 translation of Frenchman Georges-Bernard Depping's *Aperçu historique sur les moeurs et coutumes des nations*, which was a staple text in the Egyptian public school system for the next century. (26)

Tahtawi's translation of Malte-Brun's *Geographie Universelle* also played a role in fashioning a new vision of nationhood. Pollard writes,

Translation established a relationship among the politics of socioeconomic reform, the knowledge through which reform was undertaken, and the intimate activities of the people who would be subjected to it. Official knowledge about the "modern" world created clear connections among the men who worked in the state's employ, the "national character" that resulted from their behavior, and their place in the universal system of nations. (30)

Greece and its legends. Afterwards, Monseieur Chevalier introduced me to a book entitled 'The Niceties of History' (*Les Agréments de l'Histoire*) which comprises stories, tales and anecdotes. Then I read a book called 'The Morals of Nations, and their Habits' another entitled 'The History of the Reason of Greatness and Decline of the Roman Empire' and the book of the journey to Greece by young Anacharsis. I also read a book by Ségur on general history, a biography of Napoleon, a book on historiography and genealogy, one entitled 'Panorama of the World', i.e. the mirror of the world , and a travelogue on the Ottoman state, and another one set in Algeria. (289-290)

It was Tahtawi's interest in French literature and political philosophy that provided him with the backbone for his modernist views on the state and nationhood. He goes on to recount his readings: Racine, Voltaire and Rousseau's works. (292) He particularly refers to Montesquieu's 'The Spirit of the Laws' which in his opinion "can best be compared to a balance between the legal and political schools; it is based on commending the good and censuring the bad in accordance with reason" (293). An interesting parallel between Montesquieu and Ibn Khaldun reveals Tahtawi's conscious efforts to relate his new readings to his own Arab and Islamic heritage: "Among the French, Montesquieu is nicknamed the European Ibn Khaldun, whrereas the latter is known as the Eastern Montesquieu or the Montesquieu of Islam" (293). However, he still holds a conservative view in relation to revolutionary ideas:

Such forces were even more conspicuous in translations in the field of the humanities, particularly in history and geography. Again, Lisa Pollard offers an insight into the effects of such translated works on the small circle of Egyptians who read them:

But it is texts on the social sciences, particularly history and geography, that are of interest here, for it is precisely within those translations that one finds "modernity" depicted and illustrated through elaborate, "scientific" discussions of the manners and customs found in the world's many "nations." Geography and history were not new to Egypt, and the translation of texts about them does not represent the introduction of "science" to the Egyptians. Translations of history and geography exposed Egyptians to a very specific, positivist teleology of historical and national development. In that teleology, the habits and customs of rulers and ruled alike were assumed to have produced a particular kind of "modernity." (25)

Rifa'a's efforts started early on during his stay in Paris. His readings and translations were diverse and covered aspects of modernity that developed in France under the influence of the age of reason. To quote Tahtawi:

When we still lived together at the house of the Effendis we started studying the 'Lives of Greek Philosophers', a book which we read from beginning to end. Afterwards, we went on to a work that offered an abridgement of general history and included details on the life of people in ancient Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Greece, Persia, Rome, India, etc. At the end of it, there was a short treatment on the science of mythology (*mithulujiya*), by which is meant the science of prehistoric

studies, was the centre of a conflict between traditional forms of knowledge and the new sciences translated into Arabic by leading Azharites, especially by the founder of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Rifa'a al-Tahtawi. Al-Azhar remained primarily a bastion of traditional knowledge based on religious thought (Shayal 225-226).

At this point, it is noteworthy to refer to the rationale behind such activities as it was very closely related to an emerging Egyptian identity. 'Ali Mubarak Pasha records Tahtawi's intentions expressed in his appeal to Muhammad 'Ali: benefiting the motherland and dispensing with non-natives are given priority. (Al-Mawsu'a Al-Shamila. "'Ali Mubarak". Islamport.com/b/aammah/104. June 12, 2008).

Translations covered works in the sciences and the humanities. As Muhammad 'Ali was keen on building a military force for Egypt, translation of works in the military sciences and other ancillary fields of specialization such as the medical sciences received primary importance. Though scientific in nature, these disciplines were instrumental in constructing the modern image of a newly constituted Egyptian identity. According to Lisa Pollard, Muhammad 'Ali

certainly unleashed forces that were far beyond his intentions. The translated texts on medicine and the sciences of industry and engineering would make a fascinating study in their own right, as they reveal the many ways in which the internal machinery of modernity was designed and constructed, and provide an excellent insight into the ways in which new relationships between the state and the physical bodies of its citizens were being established. (24)

This theory which sheds light on the practice of translators in contemporary times, may also be instrumental in understanding the birth of the modern translation movement in Egypt at the turn of the nineteenth century and, except for a short setback, its development into the early years of the twentieth century. The encounter with the west created a sharp conflict among Egyptians: on the one hand, there was a feeling of hostility and rejection directed against the colonizing west represented by a short-lived French invasion and later in the century a long term British occupation; and on the other hand a growing sense of nationhood that was partly constructed upon a major translation movement started by Muhamad Ali and resumed after a setback in the reign of his successors, Abbas I and Said, by Khedive Ismail. Translation was adopted among other methods, to introduce a new narrative that contributed to the emergence of Egyptian nationhood.

The early translation movement owes much to the exposure Egypt had of western culture and civilization, a by-product of the French invasion in early nineteenth century. During the reign of Muhamad Ali, we witness a steady trend towards empowering Egyptians to take responsibilities of translation after a short period of depending on Syrian and foreign translators. (Shayal 74, 93). Ali's ambitions to found an Egyptian empire independent of the Ottoman Caliphate coincided with an ambitious modernizing project that included, among other plans, sending Egyptian young men to France on scholarships to bridge the gap that existed then in the fields of science and technology between Egypt and the west. It also included the establishment of Al-*Alsun*, a school for training translators and providing foreign language teachers, and the Translation Department to provide translation services to the state. Interestingly enough Al-Azhar, Egypt's prestigious university in Islamic

It was Evan-Zohar's literary theories that triggered a trend in translation studies that took into account an "entire network of correlated systems- literary and extraliterary- within society, and developed an approach called polysystem theory to attempt to explain the function of *all* kinds of writing within a given culture" (See Gentzler, 114). Though he limited his research to literature, yet the polysystem approach allows researchers in the field of translation studies to consider factors such as "patronage, social conditions, economics, and institutional manipulation" in relation to the choice and function of translated texts. (119). Lawrence Venuti in his book The Translator's Invisibility contests the assumption that translators are neutral agents, rather they tend, in the context of a national culture, to domesticate their work producing a construct that fits into a construct of their national identity¹.

This trend that brings cultural issues in focus has been recently elaborated in Mona Baker's book: Translation and Conflict. Baker proposes a theory of narrativity that provides an infrastructure for the translation and interpreting processes. Narrativity is not understood in a literary or linguistic sense. Rather, Baker draws upon its use in social and communication theory where "narrative tends on the whole to be treated as *the* principal and inescapable mode by which we experience the world" (9). She claims that "we now live and function in a climate of conflict that cuts across national boundaries, and constantly forces itself on our consciousness. In this conflict-ridden and globalized world, translation is central to the ability of all parties to legitimize their version of event, especially in view of the fact that political and other types of conflict today are played out in the international arena and can no longer be resolved by appealing to local constituencies alone" (1).

An Analysis of the Role Played by Translation in Constructing Modern Egyptian Nationhood in the Light of Contemporary Translation Studies

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Translation has always been an essential component in the evolution of civilizations as it provides a nation with both links to previous knowledge accumulated by earlier human endeavours and impetus for original composition in various fields of learning. The Renaissance as well as the early Abbasid period are notable examples of the powerful impact translation had on the shaping of culture and the establishment of a new civilization. The process of translation in itself may be looked upon as a cross-cultural activity as it involves mediation between two or more cultures.

The burgeoning field of translation studies witnessed a move from a linguistic to a cultural perspective. Anuradha Dingwaney broadens the significance of Franz Fanon's remark: "to speak a language, is to take on a world, a culture" and proposes the following:

in seeking to transport words (and sentences and texts) from one language to another, the translator cannot merely search for equivalent words in the "target" language to render the meaning of the "source" Rather the translator must attend to the context "a world, a culture" from which these words arise and which they, necessarily, evoke and express (3).



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