

Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire

Geoffrey Roper

Who was Fāris?

Fāris al-Shidyāq, later Aḥmad Fāris Efendi, was a Lebanese Arab writer, journalist, and intellectual, who became a leading figure in the Arab and Muslim Renaissance (*Nahḍa*) of the nineteenth century.¹ He was born into a Maronite family in Lebanon in the first decade of the nineteenth century.² Following a family tradition, he was employed as a scribe there in his youth, and he acquired early a taste for books, literature, and calligraphy, which persisted throughout his life. In 1826 he entered the service of Protestant missionaries, who sent him to Malta. There he was employed by the English Church Missionary Society (CMS) to assist in translating and editing religious and educational books for its Arabic press.³ This employment was interrupted by a period from 1828 to 1835 in Egypt, where he worked for a while on the newly established Egyptian gazette, *Al-Waqā'ī al-Misriya*—the first newspaper in the Arab world. He also spent some time studying, and copying, Arabic literature with Muslim scholars in Cairo. After his return to Malta, he continued to prepare Arabic texts for the press and also helped to design a new Arabic typeface. He finally left Malta in 1848 and spent most of the next ten years in Europe—mainly in Britain, where he prepared and saw through the press a new Arabic translation of the Bible, and in 1851 became a British citizen.⁴ He also spent some time in France in the mid-1850s and published his famous autobiographical and literary work *Al-Sāq 'alā 'l-sāq* in Paris in 1855. In 1857 he went to Tunis in an unsuccessful bid to become the first director of a new state press and newspaper there. At this stage he became a Muslim, and in 1860 went to Istanbul to work at the Sultan's press. The following year he started an Arabic newspaper there, *Al-Jawā'ib*. This gained a wide circulation in the Arab world and beyond, and brought him great fame as a writer and journalist. In 1870 he established in Istanbul the Jawā'ib Press (*Maṭba'at al-Jawā'ib*), which, besides continuing the newspaper until its closure in

1884, also published a long series of Arabic (and some Turkish) books. These included many classical Arabic literary texts—poetry and *belles-lettres*—as well as Fāris’s own later philological works and literary polemics, the writings of his friends and patrons, and some semi-official Ottoman publications.⁵ He died in 1887, having established a reputation as one of the foremost Arabic writers of the nineteenth century and as a pioneer of what came to be known as the *Naḥḍa*—the Arab Renaissance.

As can be inferred from this summary of his life and career, Fāris was deeply concerned with literature and books. Not only was he himself a writer, editor, and publisher, but he was also an avid reader of Arabic literature, as well as books in English and French, which he came to know well. He was always surrounded by books and built up a large collection of his own; he used to worry about what would happen to them after his death.⁶ He had grown up in a household where his father had formed a good private library, and he always remained convinced of the value and importance of such collections in every home.⁷ These parental books, and many of those which he later acquired, were of course manuscripts: printing had come late to the Arab and Muslim world, and did not become the normal method of book production until the second half of the nineteenth century. Fāris himself was a scribe and calligrapher, and copied for his own use many of the texts which he owned.⁸ There were limits, however, to the extent to which he could satisfy his literary appetites in these ways. Early in his career he regretted the difficulty which he experienced in acquiring copies of works of classical Arabic literature, especially the *dīwāns* (collected poems) of the great Arabic poets,⁹ and all through his life he was frustrated by the difficulty of access to texts and to the culture and information contained in them. One way of increasing access was to promote the printing and publishing of them, and Fāris became an enthusiastic advocate and practitioner of this.¹⁰ But he was well aware that the preservation and revival of Arab culture also depended on gathering texts together and making them available to readers who could not otherwise acquire them—in other words, on the development of good libraries. Wherever he went, it was his declared policy to visit such libraries as were available, especially if they were likely to contain Arabic books or manuscripts. In his famous literary autobiography he singled out libraries, along with printing and educational establishments, as places to head for when visiting any country.¹¹ His assiduous work in the libraries of Europe and Turkey enabled him to study, appreciate, copy, and later edit great works of the Arabic literary heritage, many of which had not yet been published and had lapsed into obscurity in their homeland.¹²

What follows is an attempt to sketch his progress through the great (and not-so-great) libraries to which he found his way in the course of

his wanderings and to consider what he may have found and experienced in them.

Lebanon and Egypt

As already mentioned, Fāris's first experience of books and libraries was in his own father's house. Later he worked in the private library of the Amīr Haydar Shihāb, where he helped to compile the latter's composite history of Lebanon and neighboring countries, using manuscripts of earlier works.¹³ In general, however, the literary culture of Lebanon at that time was at a low level,¹⁴ and there were no public libraries or great scholarly collections to which he could have had recourse.

Therefore his first real chance to explore the Arab/Islamic literary heritage did not come until he settled in Egypt in 1828, when he was in his early twenties. There he frequented Muslim scholarly and literary circles in Cairo, studied philosophy and law with Muslim shaykhs,¹⁵ acquired or copied as many classical texts as he could find, and laid the basis of his reputation as a philologist and littérateur. But as a Christian it was unlikely that he would be granted access to the great mosque libraries of Cairo, and in any case many of these gradually had been dispersed over the years or were in a state of decay and disorganization.¹⁶ Nor were there as yet any public libraries to which he could turn. The first state library, the Khedivial Library (*Al-Kutubkhāna al-Khidīwiya*) did not open until 1836,¹⁷ just after he left Egypt, and its reincarnation as the national library (later *Dār al-Kutub*), acting as a central depository for books and manuscripts, did not take place until the 1870s.

So in Egypt too Fāris felt some degree of frustration at the difficulty which he experienced in finding the texts that he wanted.¹⁸ However he was by now beginning to be aware that outside the Arab world things might be different. He was a colleague of the celebrated Egyptian writer Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, who had lived in Paris and seen there the learned societies and their libraries; we know that Fāris read his book describing his impressions.¹⁹ His contacts with the missionaries, who were enthusiastic proponents of book culture,²⁰ probably also made him aware that books might be more widely available elsewhere. This was certainly not why he left the Arab world; but once he had done so, it gave him an added zest and impetus in his explorations of European cities, their institutions, and their cultural life.

Malta

The first country outside the Arab/Muslim world to which Fāris went was Malta, where he lived from 1826 to 1828 and again from 1835 to

1848. There he worked at the missionary press and later as a teacher of Arabic in schools and the university.²¹

In Valletta there was a public library which was rich in European printed books.²² This was Fāris's first experience of such a library, and he described it in his account of the island:

anyone who wants to read one of the books goes there and takes possession of it, and even takes it home. The number of volumes is 33,000, but none of any use in Arabic. There are also in the town a number of shops stocked with various sorts of books—complete, without lacunae or defects. It can be said that books in Europe, being inexpensive, undoubtedly make any among them who crave knowledge and self-instruction the most fortunate of people; for if they want to learn any branch of knowledge they have available there a master, and, because the books necessary for that branch of knowledge are readily available, they can find them with the least effort. Moreover they need not fear any lacunae in the book (as I mentioned above), nor corruption of the text, as all books are corrected.²³

Here we see a first impression of the relatively well-organized world of printed books and public libraries, where knowledge and literature were available to all who sought it.

Nevertheless the lack of Arabic books was an undoubted drawback for Fāris,²⁴ and he was obliged to rely on manuscripts which he had brought from Egypt for reading and reference materials.²⁵ But he knew that in Britain there were libraries with collections of Arabic manuscripts: he mentions them in a book of English-Arabic dialogues which he wrote with his British missionary colleague George Percy Badger (later a noted Orientalist).²⁶ This book is also full of admiring descriptions of British and European institutions, culture, and learning. So when Fāris was invited to travel to England to carry on his translation work there, he accepted gladly.

Cambridge

Fāris was brought to England in 1846 to translate the scriptures under the supervision of Samuel Lee, Professor of Hebrew (and formerly of Arabic) at Cambridge. He at first stayed with him in the small village of Barley, near Royston (where Lee was the parish priest), but soon became bored with life there and insisted on moving to Cambridge. After a brief return to Malta in 1847–48, he came back at the end of 1848 and stayed for another year or more.²⁷

His accounts of his time there concentrate more on the local women than on the library facilities, but he does mention the existence of an "Arabic library,"²⁸ and in his literary autobiography is an amusing story about one book that he had seen there. A wealthy student of Arabic, so he tells us, invited him home and got into a deep conversation with him about women and sex. The Englishman pointed out disapprovingly that some Arab authors had written about and in favor of homosexuality. Fāris acknowledged that this was so and mentioned that he had indeed recently read such a work in the Cambridge library; he scornfully noted that some uncomprehending librarian or former owner had written on it, in English, "Book on the rights of marriage."²⁹ I have not been able to identify any Arabic manuscript in Cambridge University Library dealing solely with this subject, but there are several which include it in wider surveys of sexual practices. None of them contains the inscription to which Fāris refers, but most of them were rebound later in the nineteenth century, and it may have been on an endpaper that was replaced.

This is all that Fāris himself recounts in his published writings about the Cambridge library (known at that time as the "Public Library," but now of course called Cambridge University Library). There are, however, a few meager but tantalizing pieces of evidence that his role there may have been more than just that of a reader. In order to provide some background and basis for further inquiry, it is necessary to consider very briefly the state of the library and its manuscript collections at that time.

The library was then in a state of transition.³⁰ A new building, adjacent to the medieval Old Schools which had housed the library since it was founded in the fifteenth century, was opened in 1844, and all the manuscripts were moved into it in October 1849, just when Fāris was working in Cambridge. This in turn gave rise to a plan to compile and publish catalogues of them. The collection included some important Arabic holdings, notably those acquired from the estate of the celebrated Dutch scholar Thomas Erpenius in the seventeenth century and the very important bequest of over three hundred well-chosen manuscripts from the famous Swiss traveler Jean-Louis Burckhardt (1784–1817) which arrived in 1819.³¹ These last did more than anything else to raise Cambridge University Library to the status of a major repository of Arabic texts, and it was these on which the first catalogue concentrated. It was compiled and written, in Latin, by Theodore Preston (Fellow of Trinity College and later Professor of Arabic) and published in 1853.³² His cataloguing, however, was both inaccurate and inadequate, and later in the century the famous scholar-librarian Henry Bradshaw felt obliged to reorder and reclassify many of them.³³ A copy of Preston's catalogue, with extensive annotations in his hand, is preserved in the library;³⁴ and

what is of great interest to us is a note in the margin of page nine, against manuscript no. 235, which Preston had failed to identify properly: "Labelled by Fāris 'Hadith.'" This indicates that not only had Fāris examined this manuscript but that he had also communicated the results of his perusal to the library. Whether Bradshaw meant that he had literally labeled the volume is not clear: the present binding and label date from later in the century. However, there are a number of other manuscripts with Arabic labels which may be in his hand.³⁵ There are also a number of codices with pencil inscriptions, probably written by Bradshaw or copied from his notes, to the effect that Fāris had marked them with a letter indicating their classification. Bradshaw worked on this collection in the mid-1860s, long after Fāris had left England, and the two men cannot have met or collaborated. Fāris must therefore have classified the manuscripts and left notes of his classifications which Bradshaw was later able to use. A search of the archives of the library has not so far yielded any record of him being employed in this way, nor indeed of his presence there at all,³⁶ and we can therefore only speculate about the terms on which he may have carried out the work. The mystery is deepened by the fact that his time in Cambridge (1846–1851) coincided with the period when we might suppose that Preston was himself working on the Burckhardt manuscripts, to prepare his 1853 catalogue. If they worked together, it is surprising that Fāris did not prevent some of the errors and false or inadequate attributions that appear in the catalogue. He did meet Preston and wrote approvingly of his translation of the *Maqāmāt of Al-Harīrī*, without mentioning his work on the manuscripts.³⁷ This and many other unsolved problems concerning Fāris's life and work must await further research.

Oxford

During and after his time in Cambridge, Fāris made several trips to other parts of Britain. He was naturally glad of the opportunity to visit Oxford and see the celebrated Bodleian Library. He tells us in his travel book:

When I visited Oxford I wanted to see the library, so I asked the door-keeper of the college for the master of Arabic (*shaykh al-'Arabiya*) to guide me to it . . . eventually after lengthy negotiation and inquiry I found my way to the Shaykh's house and confronted him and asked him please to do me the honour of showing me the library. He agreed to do so and we went together. The first book he opened was in Kufic script.

To his astonishment, however, this “master of Arabic” proceeded to misread the Arabic text before him, rendering the word “illā” as “Allāh.”³⁸ This “shaykh” must have been Stephen Reay, who was Professor of Arabic at that time, and also held the post of Senior Sub-Librarian in the Bodleian Library.³⁹ He was said to have been a kind and gentle man, and no doubt took pleasure in welcoming Fāris and showing him some of the Bodleian’s Arabic treasures. He was also very shortsighted and was apt to lose his spectacles: perhaps this, rather than his lack of knowledge of the Kufic script, gave rise to the embarrassment gleefully recounted by Fāris.

Bodley’s librarian at this time was Dr. Bulkeley Bandinel, and it is to be hoped that Fāris did not encounter him in the course of his visit, since he was by all accounts of a far from welcoming disposition and did not hide his contempt for “dirty foreigners.”⁴⁰ He had in his care, however, an important and historic collection of about 1,500 Arabic manuscripts, considerably superior to that in Cambridge, as indeed was the collection of printed books “in various languages”—a fact noted by Fāris in his travel book.⁴¹

Penrith and Edinburgh

Fāris’s itinerary took him beyond the ancient university towns of southern England: from 1849 to 1852 he visited, among other places, Bristol, Bath, Cheltenham, Liverpool, and Manchester. If he inspected their libraries, he does not mention them in his account of his travels; in any case at that time they contained little if anything in Arabic. In the winter of 1851–52, he also spent several months in Penrith, in the northern English county of Cumberland, in the house of his friend John Nicholson, who had a significant private collection of Arabic manuscripts.⁴²

But he was fully aware that Britain consisted of more than just England, and he also made a point of visiting Wales and Scotland. In 1852 he was in Edinburgh, which had, as he reported, an ancient university and a library of 80,000 printed books as well as many manuscripts.⁴³ These did include a number of Arabic items that had been acquired since 1690, although the main Islamic collections for which Edinburgh University Library is now celebrated did not arrive until 1876 and later.⁴⁴ But Fāris does not mention them, so it seems doubtful whether he had a chance to examine them.

London

Inevitably, however, of all the places which he saw in Britain, it was the metropolis which most attracted and fascinated Fāris. He spent a

little time there from 1846 to 1850, while in transit to and from Barley and Cambridge,⁴⁵ and between 1851 and 1857 he lived there for much of the time, alternating with periods in Paris.⁴⁶ One of its chief attractions was the British Museum, “a place in which are both remarkable curiosities and everyday things.” He mentions, among other things, mineral rocks, gemstones, meteorites, stuffed animals and birds, pictures, foreign clothes, elephants’ tusks, birds’ eggs, and an extinct tortoise from India worth over £1,000. Of more direct interest to him were some of the coins, including dinars of the ‘Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd with Kufic legends. “This Museum,” he adds, “is one of the free sights of London . . . two armed policemen are at the door.”⁴⁷

But naturally the part of the museum which most attracted him was the library (which of course is now the British Library). It contained, he reported,

more than 460,000 books, or if reckoned according to volumes, more than 700,000. This quantity is equal that of Berlin and Vienna, but less than that of Paris and Munich. These books are placed on shelves occupying a distance of 15 miles. The total includes the libraries which the English kings had endowed to the place . . . the greatest section is the part endowed by King George IV, to the amount of £130,000: it contains an old Bible printed in Münster in 1455,⁴⁸ the Fables of Luqmān the Wise⁴⁹ printed in Milan in 1480, the first printed edition of the poems of Homer (Florence 1488), and the poems of Virgil (Venice 1501). There are also valuable cupboards containing a quarter of a million books. The public enter this Library by permission of the Superintendent, for reading and consultation . . . the number of readers in one year amounts to 70,000. The number of manuscripts is 30,000.

Some of this information was evidently taken by Fāris from a published source in English, for he goes on to complain that, although 317 books in Syriac are mentioned, “the author did not mention the number of Arabic books, in accordance with the customary indifference of his countrymen to our language.” It was these, of course, that Fāris most wanted to see, but

when I went to this place to read, it was not possible for me, on the whole, to identify the titles of the Arabic books, because most of them were written in Latin letters and it is well known that Arabic names do not appear correctly in them.⁵⁰

However, he must have overcome this obstacle at least in part, for “among the important books which I saw were *Adab al-kātib* by Ibn Qutayba, *Al-Nawābiḡh* by Al-Zamakhsharī, *Maḡh al-shay’ wa-dhammuhu* by Jāhiz and the *Dīwān* of Abū Tammām.” Since these texts are important works of classical Arabic literature, it seems that Fāris wanted to follow his practice of earlier years in Cairo and make his own copies of them. But he discovered that “the reader is not permitted to copy a book in its entirety, only to copy passages from it.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, his time in the British Museum Library undoubtedly acted as a stimulus to the subsequent development of his career as an editor and publisher of Arabic literary texts⁵² and gave him a new perspective on the role of national libraries in the renewal of scholarship and literary culture.

Paris

In the period 1851 to 1857, Fāris alternated between London and Paris.⁵³ In his travel book he devoted a substantial section to the French capital, just as he did with London. He reports that there were numerous libraries there, the largest and greatest of which was the “public library,” by which he meant, of course, the Bibliothèque Nationale. According to him, this contained a million printed books and 80,000 manuscripts, as well as maps, prints, medals, etc. He does not mention Arabic manuscripts, which is surprising, as the Bibliothèque Nationale already had a very important collection of them.⁵⁴ This probably indicates that he did not go there to read them himself.

He also mentions the substantial collections in other libraries, especially those belonging to government departments and learned societies. Altogether, he reckoned, such libraries contained over a million printed books and 10,000 manuscripts in the French capital alone. This, he considered, “suffices to show this generation’s desire for knowledge.”⁵⁵

Among the learned societies was the Société Asiatique. Fāris associated with a number of the Orientalists who were members of that body, and he gives a somewhat unflattering account of them in his literary autobiography.⁵⁶ But they welcomed him among them, and he probably got an opportunity to see their library and the significant collection of Arabic books and manuscripts which it contained.⁵⁷

Tunis

In 1857 Fāris left western Europe for good and accepted an invitation to Tunis from the famous Tunisian reformer and statesman Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnisī.⁵⁸ He had twice before visited the place and was glad to return.

He was now back on Arab soil, and far as libraries were concerned, back in the traditional environment he had known in Cairo. The principal library of Tunis was in the Great Mosque of Zaytūna. It had recently been greatly enlarged with a rich collection of Arabic manuscripts from the Bardo Palace library, and a catalogue had been made by order of the Bey, but in other respects it was still organized on the traditional pattern and was firmly under the control of the Shaykh al-Islām and the imams.⁵⁹ Whether Fāris visited it we do not know; but while he was in Tunis he finally embraced Islam and adopted the name of Aḥmad Fāris, so his non-Muslim background was no longer an impediment to his use of mosque collections.

Istanbul

Having converted to Islam, Fāris was now eligible to assume an influential position in Ottoman circles, which he had long desired.⁶⁰ The opportunity was not long in coming. By 1861 he was in Istanbul as chief corrector at the Imperial Press (Al-Maṭba‘a al-Sulṭāniyya), and the following year he started his famous newspaper *Al-Jawā‘ib*, which also gave its name to a book printing and publishing establishment. This remained Fāris’s main concern for his remaining years, which were spent almost entirely in Istanbul.

The Ottoman capital should have been a veritable paradise for a bibliophile like Fāris. It contained, then as now, the richest collections of Islamic manuscripts to be found anywhere in the world, in all fields of literature and knowledge, and in Arabic as much as in Turkish and Persian.⁶¹ Fāris indeed made great use of these riches. He devoted much of his energy to editing classical Arabic literary texts for publication at his press, and for this purpose carefully sought out the best manuscripts he could find in the libraries.⁶² In the course of his detailed researches into the text of Firūzābādī’s *Qāmūs*, for example, he compared a number of copies, including one in magnificent gilt calligraphy in the Köprülü Library.⁶³ In one of his newspaper articles, he describes visits to the Bayezit and Ayasofya libraries to read manuscripts of Arabic dictionaries, and in another he systematically enumerates the most important libraries of the city and the numbers of manuscripts which they contained.⁶⁴

But satisfaction and complacency were not among Fāris’s characteristics, and he could not forbear to point out some of the difficulties which he experienced in using these great libraries and the unsatisfactory way they were run. He had three principal criticisms. First, the opening times were so restricted⁶⁵ that it was scarcely possible to spend enough time continuously reading and copying the manuscripts to be able to make full use of them. This was because the custodians were for much of the

time absent. But, explained Fāris, they were obliged to be, “because of the paucity of their salaries—not more than 40 piastres, and in some cases only 30”—which had not been increased since the libraries were originally founded.

So the librarians have an excuse for their failure to remain at their posts, since it is unjust to expect people to give up all the hours of the day in order to earn an amount insufficient to buy a single loaf of bread . . . all governments have realised the difference between past and present times with regard to the high expenses and increase of demands in this day and age, so they have increased the salaries of their employees according to what is due to them. In Istanbul, however, matters are based for the most part on custom, not on the necessities of the time.

So he appealed to the authorities to increase the librarians' salaries, so that they could stay in their libraries and “when a student wants to read or copy a book he can do so with ease.”⁶⁶ Here we see his concern for social justice, his desire for modernization and progress, and his concern for the accessibility of the literary heritage—themes which pervade his writings—all combine in a heartfelt plea for change.

Fāris's second complaint was that important manuscripts were dispersed in many different mosques and madrasas throughout the city and surrounding areas. This meant that much time and energy was wasted in traveling between them. He therefore suggested that they should be brought together in a central location: he proposed the Nuruosmaniye, because of its central location and its more spacious and lighter reading room. He furthermore suggested that it should employ four librarians at 500 piastres a month, on the condition that they should stay there from morning to evening.⁶⁷ What Fāris was suggesting here was nothing less than the nucleus of a national library, or at least the beginnings of a national repository for manuscripts. In this he was, as in so many other things, somewhat ahead of his time. He was not the first to realize that the libraries “were not organised for efficient use.”⁶⁸ Indeed, although many new ones had been founded over the previous two centuries,⁶⁹ the patterns of organization and operation of them had hardly changed. Several outside observers, as well as Fāris, described the restrictions and difficulties which they encountered.⁷⁰ Not until 1882, however, was the Bayezit Library adopted as a state public library, but it did not at that time become a major repository of manuscripts from other mosques. As late as 1909 a report by Ahmed Zeki Bey still complained of disorganization, loss of books, and poor cataloguing in the traditional libraries in which most of the literary heritage was still kept.⁷¹ Only after the

establishment of the Republic did things begin to change, and today many of the most important collections have been brought together not, as Fāris suggested, in the Nuruosmaniye, but in the great library of the Süleymaniye, which is now the world's greatest repository of Islamic manuscripts.⁷²

The third and in some ways the most serious complaint made by Fāris was that some manuscripts were in a ruinous state, with pages stuck together and the ink offsetting; this, he thought, was because they were too seldom used and too little exposed to the sunlight—rather the opposite of some problems identified by modern conservationists. He was particularly upset that those most affected were his beloved Arabic linguistic and literary texts, which, he observed, were seldom read by the people of Istanbul, unlike works of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and logic (*mantiq*). He recommended that the keepers should regularly attend to these books, open them and air them. “In general,” he declared, “care in preserving these volumes is an indispensable necessity, it is greatly to be desired that the benefits of reading them should become widespread, and that will only be accomplished by changing the system at present in use.”⁷³ He was also concerned at the total disappearance of some rare texts—ones from Arab Spain, for instance—and campaigned for copies to be made until such time as they could be published.⁷⁴ Here again Fāris, drawing partly, no doubt, on his observations in other European libraries, was anticipating the concerns of later generations of librarians and readers. By doing so in the pages of his well-known and widely read newspaper, he almost certainly first brought these problems, and the importance of libraries generally, to the attention of a new reading and opinion-forming class in the Ottoman Empire.

Notes

1. Biographical information is taken mainly from Alwan, “Aḥmad Fāris ash-Shidyāq,” and Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, with corrections based on Roper, *Arabic Printing in Malta*.

2. Probably in 1805 or 1806, but there is conflicting evidence concerning the exact year.

3. For a full account of this press, its output, and Fāris's role there, see Roper, *Arabic Printing in Malta*.

4. Public Record Office, Home Office Papers—Naturalisation, 1278A, 26.9.1851. I am indebted to the late Albert Hourani for this information.

5. See Alwan, “History and Publications,” 6.

6. Hasan, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 34.

7. *Ibid.*, 35; Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Sāqālā' 'l-sāq fī mā huwa 'l-Fāriyāq aw ayyām wa-shuhūr wa-āwām fī ājam al-'Arab wa-'l-'Ajām*, 22; Schidiak, *Aḥmad Fāris as-Sidyāq*, 55 and 192–3.

8. E.g., a copy of Zawzani's commentary on the Mu'allaqāt written by him in 1833 (with a note that it was still in his possession in 1852), which is now in the

Brotherton Library of Leeds University. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts*, 28. See also Roper, "Fāris al-Shidyāq."

9. Shidyāq, *Muqaddima Dīwān Aḥmad Fāris Efendi*, 4.
10. See Roper, "Fāris al-Shidyāq."
11. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Sāq*, 515.
12. Hārūn, "Al-Shidyāq," 80; Alwan, "Aḥmad Fāris ash-Shidyāq," 70 and 148–9.
13. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Sāq*, 34; Hourani, "Historians of Lebanon," 232; Roper, "Fāris al-Shidyāq," 210.
14. Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 18.
15. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Sāq*, 332.
16. Lane, *Account of Manners and Customs*, 209; Heyworth-Dunn, *Introduction to History of Education*, 16.
17. *Ibid.*, 206. It was in any case at this stage probably no more than a technical library attached to the school of translators.
18. Shidyāq, *Muqaddima*, 4; Roper, "Fāris al-Shidyāq," 212.
19. Tahtawi, *Rihlat*, 1834 (the passage on French libraries is on pages 189–90 of Louca's 1988 translation). Fāris cites it in his own travelogue (Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla al-mawsūma bi-'l-Wāsita ilā mārifat Mālita wa-Kashf al-Mukhabba' 'an funūn Awrabbā*, 235). See also Roper, "National Awareness," 182.
20. Roper, *Arabic Printing in Malta*, 107 and 123–4.
21. For his career in Malta see Roper, *Arabic Printing in Malta*; Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 38–63.
22. An interesting description of this library (now the National Library) was given a few years earlier by Shidyāq's colleague G. P. Badger (*Description of Malta*, 183–5). See also Slane, "Lettre," 318.
23. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 22–3.
24. In fact the Valletta library did contain one or two Arabic manuscripts. See Slane, "Lettre," 318; Agius, *Study of Arabic*, 33–4.
25. He had with him the famous dictionary *Al-Qāmūs* of Firuzabadi, his own transcript of parts of the natural history encyclopædia *Hayat al-Hayawan* of Damiri, and several others, which he later took with him to England. See Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Sāq*, 513; Roper, "Fāris al-Shidyāq," 211; Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 53 and 64.
26. Badger and Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Muhāwara*, 98.
27. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Sāq*, 542, and *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 130, 207–8, and 227; Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 55–6 and 63–5.
28. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 130.
29. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Sāq*, 549.
30. Relevant details of the library's history are drawn mainly from Mc-Kitterick, *Cambridge University Library*, 542.
31. See Dalby, "A Dictionary of Oriental Collections," 259–260, and references there cited.
32. See Preston, *Catalogus bibliothecae*, in the list at the end.
33. Archives of Cambridge University Library: Printed report, 20.5.1863, appended to the minutes of the Syndics, Vol. II, 256a; quoted in Prothero, *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*, 103. Bradshaw had "picked up enough Arabic in the early months of 1862 to be able to handle the manuscripts in his charge" (McKitterick, *Cambridge University Library*, 728).
34. Adv.b.77.15.
35. The style of writing appears similar to that in Fāris's autograph manuscripts; but the necessary constraints of writing a label for the spine of a book impose some distortions which prevent certain identification.

36. I should like to record my thanks to the deputy keeper of the University Archives, Dr. Elisabeth Leedham-Green, for her assistance and guidance in carrying out this preliminary search.

37. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 125 and 208. The translation of the *Maqāmāt* was published in London in 1850. Preston also introduced to Cambridge the art of frying bananas, which he had learned in Damascus, according to his friend the administrator and diarist Joseph Romilly—CUL Ms.Add.6825, 79.

38. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 127–8.

39. Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library*, 30.

40. *Ibid.*, 27.

41. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 130.

42. *Ibid.*, 209; Arberry, “Fresh Light,” 165–7. These manuscripts are now in Cambridge University Library, having been donated by his grandson, the Orientalist R. A. Nicholson.

43. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 220.

44. Simpson, “Special Collections,” 150–1; Roper and Bleaney, “United Kingdom,” 461.

45. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 207 and 227; Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 55 and 64.

46. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 227; Arberry, “Fresh Light,” 167–8; Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 70–7.

47. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 336–7.

48. Here Fāris is undoubtedly referring to the Gutenberg forty-two-line Bible, which was of course printed in Mainz.

49. The Fables of Aesop, whom the Arabs identify with the legendary Luqman.

50. Rather surprisingly, Fāris evidently did not refer to the recently published catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts by William Cureton, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in Museo Britannico asservantur*, Pars secunda, *Codices Arabicos* amplexens (London 1846), which does give the authors and titles in Arabic script as well as in Latin.

51. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 337–8.

52. See Roper, “Fāris al-Shidyāq.”

53. Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 70–7.

54. Berthier and Richard, “France,” 275–7, and sources there cited.

55. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Rihla*, 224–45.

56. Shidyāq, *Kitāb al-Sāq*, 652–3. A special appendix to the book also gives a detailed list of errors made by them in editing Arabic texts.

57. Berthier and Richard, “France,” 275 and 282.

58. Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 78; Roper, “National Awareness,” 184.

59. Rousseau, “Bibliothèque Publique,” 226–8.

60. Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 74.

61. See Bilgin, “Turkey,” 324–66. On the general development of Istanbul libraries, see Çakın, “Turkish Libraries,” and Erünsal, “Ottoman Libraries.”

62. Alwan, “Aḥmad Fāris ash-Shidyāq,” 72.

63. Shidyāq, *Al-Jāsūs*, 93–4.

64. Shidyāq, *Kanz al-raghā'ib*, vol. I, 186–7, and vol. V, 184–5.

65. Some, he complained, were also shut for several months a year, but “the people of Istanbul seldom frequent these libraries, so their closure does not much matter to them: what is important is the closing time of the cafés.” *Ibid.*, I: 187.

66. *Ibid.*, I: 154–5.

67. *Ibid.*, I: 155; also 187.

68. Findley, “Knowledge and Education,” 133.

69. Erünsal, "Ottoman Libraries," 69–70.
70. Slane, "Lettre," 320–1; Jahn, "Bericht an S.Exc.," 126–30.
71. Çakın, "Turkish Libraries," 73–4.
72. Bilgin, "Turkey," 347–59.
73. Shidyāq, *Kanz al-rahā'ib*, I: 155.
74. Sulh, *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*, 130, citing an article in *Al-Jawā'ib*.

Works Cited

- Agius, D. *The Study of Arabic in Malta 1632 to 1915*. Louvain, 1990.
- Alwan, M. B. "Aḥmad Fāris ash-Shidyāq and the West." Ph.D. diss., University of Indiana, 1970.
- . "The History and Publications of Al-Jawā'ib Press." *MELA Notes* 11 (1977): 4–7.
- Arberry, A. J. "Fresh Light on Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq." *Islamic Culture* 26, 1 (1952): 155–68.
- Badger, G. P. *Description of Malta and Gozo*. Malta, 1838.
- Badger, G. P., and Fāris al-Shidyāq. *Kitāb al-Muhāwara al-unsīya fi 'l-lughatayn al-inkilīziya wa-'l-Arabīya. Arabic and English grammatical exercises and familiar dialogues*. Malta, 1840.
- Berthier, A., and F. Richard. "France." In *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, vol. 1, edited by Geoffrey Roper. London, 1992.
- Bilgin, O. "Turkey." *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, vol. 3, edited by Geoffrey Roper. London, 1994.
- Çakın, İrfan. "Turkish Libraries: Historical Context." *International Library Review* 16 (1984): 71–7.
- Craster, E. *History of the Bodleian Library*. Oxford, 1952.
- Dalby, A. "A Dictionary of Oriental Collections in Cambridge University Library." *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 9 (1988): 248–80.
- Erünsal, İsmail E. "Ottoman Libraries: A Brief Survey of Their Development and System of Lending." *Libri* 34 (1984): 65–76.
- Findley, C. V. "Knowledge and Education in the Modern Middle East: A Comparative View." In *The Modern Economic History of the Middle East in Its World Context*, edited by G. Sabagh. Cambridge, 1989.
- Hārūn, Jūrj. "Al-Shidyāq rā'id al-ḥurriyāt fi fikrinā 'l-ḥadīth." *Hiwār* 6 (1963): 79–87.
- Hasan, Muhammad Abd al-Ghanī. *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq*. Cairo, 1966.
- Heyworth-Dunne, J. *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt*. London, 1938.
- Hourani, A. H. "Historians of Lebanon." In *Historians of the Middle East*, edited by B. Lewis and P. M. Holt. London, 1962.
- Jahn, G. "Bericht an S.Exc., den Minister der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medizinangelegenheiten Herrn Dr. Falk, über die Resultate einer mit Ministerialunterstützung zu wissenschaftlichen Zwecken unternommenen Reise nach Konstantinopel." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 30 (1876): 125–31.
- Lane, E. W. *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 5th ed. London, 1860.
- Macdonald, J. *Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, III: Arabic MSS 101–150*. Leeds: Department of Semitic Languages and Literatures, 1959.

- McKitterick, D. *Cambridge University Library: a History. The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Cambridge, 1986.
- Preston, T. *Catalogus bibliothecae Burckhardtianae cum appendice librorum Orientalium in Bibliotheca Academiae Cantabrigiensis asservatorum*. Cambridge, 1853.
- Prothero, G. W. *A Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*. London, 1888.
- Roper, Geoffrey J. *Arabic Printing in Malta 1825–1845: Its History and Its Place in the Development of Print Culture in the Arab Middle East*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Durham, 1988.
- . “Fāris al-Shidyāq (d. 1887) and the Transition from Scribal to Print Culture in the Middle East.” In *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, edited by G. N. Atiyeh. Albany, N.Y., 1995.
- . “National Awareness, Civic Rights and the Role of the Printing Press in the 19th Century: The Careers and Opinions of Fāris al-Shidyāq, His Colleagues and Patrons.” In *Democracy in the Middle East. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies. 1992*. St. Andrews: University of St. Andrews [for the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies], 1992.
- Roper, Geoffrey J., and C. H. Bleaney. “United Kingdom.” In *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, vol. 3, edited by Geoffrey Roper. London, 1994.
- Rousseau, A. “Bibliothèque Publique de Tunis.” *Revue Africaine* 6 (1862): 222–30.
- Schidiak, Bichara Zein. *Aḥmad Fāris aš-Šidyāq—l’homme & l’oeuvre: l’éducateur*. Thesis, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris III), 1975.
- Shidyāq, Aḥmad Fāris al-. *Al-Jāsūs ‘alā ‘l-Qāmūs*. Istanbul, 1299 [1881].
- . *Kanz al-raghā’ib fi muntakhabāt al-Jawā’ib*. Istanbul, 1288–1299 [1871–1881].
- . *Kitāb al-Rihla al-mawsūma bi-‘l-Wāsita ilā ma’rifat Mālīta wa-Kashf al-Mukhabba’ ‘an funūn Awrabbā*. Tunis, 1280 [1863–64], reissued 1283 [1867].
- . *Kitāb al-Sāq ‘alā ‘l-sāq fī mā huwa ‘l-Fāriyāq aw ayyām wa-shuhūr wa-‘awām fī ‘ajam al-‘Arab wa-‘l-Ajām*. Paris, 1855. New edition, with detailed synopsis by Nasīb Wuhayba al-Khāzin, Beirut, 1966. French translation by R. R. Khawam, *La jambe sur la jambe: roman*, Paris, 1991.
- . *Muqaddima Dīwān Aḥmad Fāris Efendi*. Istanbul [ca.1884].
- Simpson, M. C. T. “The Special Collections.” In *Edinburgh University Library 1580–1980: A Collection of Historical Essays*, edited by J. R. Guild and A. Law. Edinburgh, 1982.
- Slane, W. M. de. “Lettre adressée d’Alger à M. Reinaud.” In *Nouvelles Annales des Voyages* (1847), i, 316–25.
- Sulh, Imad al-. *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq: āthāruhu wa-‘asruhu*. 2nd ed. Beirut, 1407 [1987].
- Ṭahtāwī, Rifā’a Rāfi’ al-. *Rihlat . . . al-Ṭahtāwī ilā diyār Farānsā al-musammā bi-Takhlīs al-ibriz ilā talkhīs Bārīz aw al-Dīwān al-nafīs bi-īwān Bārīs*. Bulaq, 1250 [1834]. French translation by Anouar Louca, *L’Or de Paris: relation de voyage, 1826–1831*, Paris, 1988.