MAHĀMID AL-FARANSĪS WA-WAṢF BĀRĪS
BY YAʿQUB ŞANŪC.

A Guide of Paris for tourists coming from Orient

The object of my analysis is a small book published in Paris between 1890 and 1891 by the publishing house Lefebvre.¹ From the four title-pages we see that it was printed under two titles, one of them in French: La France et Paris. Géographie, histoire, colonies, gouvernement, armée, marine, produits, commerce, industrie et guide de Paris en six jours (France and Paris. Geography, history, colonies, government, army, navy, products, commerce, industry, and guide of Paris in six days) (plate 1); the other one in Arabic: Mahāmīd al-Faransīs wa-waṣf Bārīs (Good qualities of the French and description of Paris).² Also the paternity of the book appears double, since two names of authors are written in those title-pages. One of them is clearly European: M.E. Felumb, the second is Arab: Cheikh Abou Naddara.³ This second author is declared to be the Directeur et rédacteur en chef du journal patriotique Egyptien «L'Abou Naddara» et de la revue illustrée «Ațtawadod» (Director and editor-in-chief of the Egyptian patriotic newspaper «Abou Naddara» and of the illustrated magazine «Ațtawadod»)⁴ and he is said to be the author of the Arabic text, as well as the owner of the copyright: Texte arabe et propriété littéraire du Cheikh Abou Naddara (Arabic text and copyright of Cheikh Abou Naddara).⁵ In the third title-page (in Arabic letters), there is also written that the book was composed by him, on ideas and notes by E. Felumb: Taʿlīf al-duktür Filūm al-Nūrviği, bi-qalam Abī Nazzāra (Composed by dr. Felumb the

¹ National Library of Paris, among the rare volumes with limits of consultation.
² The titles of the first two title-pages are written in French, in Latin letters, the third and the fourth only in Arabic.
³ First and second title pages.
⁴ First title-page.
⁵ Second title-page.
Norwegian, written by the pen of Abū Nazzāra) (plate 2). From the titles of the book and from the explanations given in the first pages of it, we learn that it was a small guide of France and Paris, destined to Arab readers. Actually, most of the 46 pages forming the text are in Arabic, in hand-made characters, while only a couple of pages are in French.

The name of its Arab author, Abū Nazzāra, was the pen-name commonly used by the Egyptian Jewish writer Yaʿqūb Ṣanūʿ (1839-1912), who, at the time of the publication of the volume, had been living in Paris for several years. He belonged to a good Jewish family, which enjoyed a position of privilege in the Egyptian society, as we can learn from some comments of scholars, of that period and later. It is well known that he was forced to leave Egypt in 1876 and that he went into voluntary exile in Paris, where he remained until his death, earning his daily bread as a journalist and as a teacher of foreign languages, and taking active part in the cultural life of the country, which he considered as his adoptive homeland.

During his stay in France, he never stopped writing both in Arabic and in French and he taught both languages, together with some others like Italian and English. In particular, he asserted to be able to teach Arabic with a personal intensive method, often advertised in his published works, as one can see reading his book Soubaits d'Orient, born in the same period of Maḥāmid al-Paransis, where he wrote that with his new methods, based on 35 years of experience in teaching, he was able to make people understand and speak Arabic in thirty lessons; and in the same book he declared that he was at disposal of the French and foreign press, ready to receive journalists at home, as well as those asking him for lessons, translations, conferences, in English, Italian and Arabic.

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6 Ibidem.
7 In addition to his own autobiography, Ma vie en vers et mon théâtre en prose, see about him: Landau, Abu-Naddara, and Idem, «Abū Naddāra»; Nağm, al-Masrahiyah; Gendzier, The Practical; Louca, Voyageurs; Somekh, Lost Voices; Moreh, Yaʿqūb Ṣanūʿ; Badawi, Early Arabic Drama, pp. 31-42; Sadgrove, The Egyptian Theatre, pp. 89-116; Dorigo, Autobiographical.
9 In France he continued also the editing and printing of his famous satirical newspapers, rich of cartoons and sketches in colloquial Egyptian. See: Tārāzī, Tārīh al-sībāḥ.
10 Abou Naddara, Soubaits d'Orient, first cover-page.
11 Ibidem, p. 1. A similar advertisement can be found in his journal Abū Nazzāra, Paris, 28 févr. 1888, quoted by Louca, Voyageurs, p. 156.
(By kind permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris)

Plate 2: Title-page of the Arabic edition of Mahāmid al-Faransiš wa-wasf Bāris (Good qualities of the French and description of Paris).
(By kind permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris)
His relationships with France, country that he sincerely admired, were so good that he often expressed his gratitude calling it al-dawla al-ḥabība (the beloved nation). In the meantime, his homesickness and nostalgia for Egypt made him to remain in contact with his compatriots and, even in place of exile, he never stopped expressing his political ideas of nationalism, through his literary works and speeches. For example, he never accepted that Egypt – owing to the ineptitude of its governors, the khedives Ismā‘īl, Ābās I, Tawfīq and Ābās II – had fallen into the hands of Great Britain, «perfidious Albion», as he called the British nation. Confirming this attitude of him against England, a further attack to that country and a hymn to France can be found in a small group of French verses, published in the above mentioned Soubais d’Orient: «Je te salue, ô de Molière/pays bénï par le Seigneur!/Pays de progrès, de lumière/de gloire, d’esprit et d’honneur! // C’est à toi, généreuse France,/que doit plus d’une nation/son réveil, son indépendance et sa civilisation. // Aucune n’est reconnaissante;/mais une nation le sera/lorsque ta main toute puissante/de joug anglais la sauvera!» (I am greeting you, country of Molière, blessed by God! It is to you, generous France, that more than one nation owes its revival, its independence, its civilization! No one is grateful, but one nation will be, when your powerful hand will save it from the English yoke!).

It is interesting to read what an intellectual of that period, Édouard Le Roy, wrote about him in his preface to the short story entitled Aboth Naddara à Stambul; in this preface, Le Roy underlines that Ābū Nazzāra was a strenuous defender of Egypt, to the service of which he had put all his energies and his good qualities. The scholar reminds, in the meanwhile, that Ṣanūʿ had always fought against corruption and plots, deriving from the English influence in the Middle East, and against the foreign policy of that government, that he defined as «unworthy of a civil nation»; moreover, later, Le Roy asserts that Ābū Nazzāra was forced to

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13 Abū Nazzāra, Maḥāmid, p. 45.
14 For his works in journalism, sec: Ṭarrāzī, Taḥriḥ al-Sīḥāf; Abduh, Abū Nazzāra.
16 Abou Naddara, Soubais, p. 15.
17 Ibidem, pp. 17-9. The poem was written by Ṣanūʿ with the occasion of a dinner organized by scholars of Molière and chaired by M. Monval; in these verses Ṣanūʿ called Molière «mon Maitre divin», p. 18.
go into exile just because he had denounced the secret English
projects, foreseeing the English invasion of Egypt. Le Roy writes
that Şanu attacked his enemy Great Britain by pen and pencil,
because he was a brilliant writer and an excellent caricaturist.
About the political ideas of this Egyptian Jewish writer, let us
remind his probable bond with the Italian and the Oriental Free-
masonry, his sure contacts with the Egyptian reformers Gamal
al-Din al-Afgani (1839-1897) and Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905)
- whom he met in Paris at the beginning of his exile - and his
spiritual participation in the so-called Urabi's revolt.
A later scholar, Anouar Louca, in his study Voyageurs et
ecrivains egyptiens en France au XIXe siecle, underlined the role of
Şanu in the intellectual and political life of that period and put
in particular evidence the fact that he devoted many personal con-
tinuous efforts to strengthen the relationships between East and
West: «En mème temps qu'il s'efforce de présenter son Orient et
son Égypte en France, Abou-Naddara offre aux Orientaux et aux
Egyptiens, dans ses périodiques, ses brochures et ses conférences,
une belle image de la France» (While making efforts to present
his Orientals and his Egyptians in France, Abu Nazzaara offers to
them, in his magazines, his pamphlets, his conferences, a pleasant
image of France). The work examined here, Mahamid al-Faransi
wa-wasf Barsi, is a perfect example of what could be called the
'double national belonging' of Abu Nazzaara, who, in accordance
with this spirit, composed this book and dedicated it to France,
in order to praise the country and its inhabitants and, above all,
to induce his Arab compatriots to visit it.
Behind the description of Paris, these motives are clear. In
fact, he described Paris and its wonderful beauties trying to at-
tract with all means his Arab public, and even when he praised
the French civilization, he wanted to induce Orientals to know
and appreciate it; moreover, he was convicted that deeper con-
tacts between French and Arabs would bring positive results for
a general peace, all over the world. This idea is confirmed by
some drawings, enriching the first three title-pages of the book
I am examining here. For instance, in the lower part of the
second and third pages, there is a picture showing a group of

Ibidem, p. 2.
See, for instance: de Baigneres, L'Egypte.
Vatikiotis, The History, pp. 134-7; see also: Sanmarco, «Le mouvement»,
pp. 304-5; Blumenkranz, Histoire des Juifs.
Louca, Voyageurs, p. 168.
men clasping one another’s hands; some of the men are wearing European clothes, others are dressed in an Arab style; in the centre of the group there is the statue of a woman, probably representing France; flags, sphinxes and other ornaments complete the pages; two verses are written on the uppermost part of these pages: ʿIdā tabāwat al-ṣuʿūb, ḥasāla al-safār fī l-qulūb (When people fraternize, serenity will be spread all over the world); 31 the French translation of these words can be found inside the two glasses of the spectacles drawn at the top of the same pages: «Si les peuples fraternisaient, la paix serait universelle». A breath of an international open-mindedness comes from these figures and shows Abū Nazzāra’s idealistic hopes for peace and love in the world; let us note that a very similar picture can be found on the cover of his monthly magazine al-Tawaddud, where some Arabs and some French are clasping one another’s hands, near the statue of the Republic. 24

A quick look at these drawings allows us to note their extraordinary similarity to those that Şanūṣ was used to draw for his satirical cartoons under the above mentioned pen-name of Abū Nazzāra. For instance, in the uppermost part of the title pages, one can see the drawing of a pair of glasses, the symbol he liked to adopt in his political newspapers, considering glasses as instruments allowing people to observe the world around them more clearly. 35

As above said, from the two introductory chapters placed at the beginning of the book – one written in French, 26 the second in Arabic 37 – one can perfectly realize that with this pamphlet Şanūṣ wanted to encourage Arab people to go on trip to France, in order to see with their eyes the places described in the book, but one reads that the Author desired also to achieve two important results: to improve their cultural level and to better their relationships with the French. Under these aspects, Mahāmīd al-Faranis wa-wasf Bārīs could be considered an attempt to create a cross-cultural dialogue between the Arab world and Europe. Şanūṣ’s conviction of the importance of travelling, not only in

31 Abū Nazzāra, Mahāmīd, second and third title-pages.
32 Louca, Voyageurs, p. 164.
33 A same pair of glasses marked his own portraits, because he normally was forced to use them owing to an ophthalmic disease he suffered from. See Gendzier, The Practical, pp. 58-61.
34 Abū Nazzāra, Mahāmīd, pp. 45-6.
order to visit new places, but also to meet the culture of «the others» is quite interesting for that time. It is not by chance that, in one of his famous newspapers *Rihlat Abī Nazzāra zarqā*, published after his arrival in Paris, he wrote that the world resembles a book, and one reads only the first page of it, if he never leaves his fatherland. 18

*The French preface*

In these pages, dated 15 December 1890, under the title of *Mahamed-oul-Faranciss oua ouasfoul Bariss* – which is simply the French transcription of the Arabic pronunciation of the title written in the Arabic cover-pages – the author boasts the friendship of France for Oriental people and confirms his personal gratitude to the country giving him hospitality. In order to inform the French people about the subject of the text he wrote in Arabic, he tries to summarise its contents and the reasons for his decision to write it. Perhaps, these pages in French were also a kind of justification of Şanû, for having produced in France a work in a language different from the national one. It is not by chance that he clearly underlines, at the end of the preface, that the book was «destiné à faire connaître la France en Orient» (destined to make France to be known in the East). 29

The chapter begins with a long digression about the concise nature of Arabic, in comparison of which European languages – says Şanû – need at least four or five lines to say what could be expressed in Arabic with only one line. He defines Arabs « avere de mots » (persons of few words), but he admits that they abound in words when they create the titles of their books. 30 Şanû himself explains that he considers this digression necessary to help European readers to understand that the small number of pages written in Arabic does not mean that the subject they treat is short and simple: on the contrary, they contain all the rich and numerous information that are announced in this foreword, without any exaggeration. 31

In this short French introduction Şanû declares that the idea of writing a guide of Paris in Arabic did not come from

18 *Rihlat Abī Nazzāra*.
29 Abû Nazzâra, *Mahāmid*, p. 46
30 *Ibidem*.
31 *Ibidem*. 

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himself but from his friend Felumb. He explains that he was a Norwegian scholar, who had settled in Paris before twenty years with his family and who warmly admired France, for which he had spent money and efforts in order to study its history and its art. Felumb – explains Şanūc – had written several literary articles and news items about the great Exposition Universelle in 1889, contributing to its success. In the following year Felumb proposed to his Arab friend Abū Naẓāra to write a pamphlet addressed to Oriental people, to make them know and appreciate France and Paris and, above all, to make them desire to visit the country, as Şanūc himself writes:

Il nous a donné ses notes en nous priant de les développer et d’en composer un petit ouvrage qui puisse faire connaître aux orientaux ce beau pays de France, sa géographie, son histoire, sa puissance navale et militaire, ses produits, son commerce, son industrie, et qui, en les engageant de visiter Paris, leur permette de le faire en six jours.

(He gave us his notes, asking us to develop them and to compose with them a small work, which could make the Orientals know this wonderful country, France, its geography, its history, its naval and military power, its products, its commerce, its industries; and which, by engaging them to visit Paris, allows them to do this visit in six days).\textsuperscript{12}

The idea of a very short visit was certainly good and new and showed an open-minded author, who took in consideration the probable lack of time of his readers/travellers, due to the hurry of modern times. Şanūc says that he accepted the proposal and in a short time started to compose the requested book. The costs of printing were covered by Felumb himself.\textsuperscript{13} Şanūc explains also that, in the intention of Felumb, hundreds of copies of the work were to be sent in all the African and Asian countries, where Arabic was spoken; the most influent people received it free of charge and, after having read it, handed it to friends and relatives. This was the habit in all the Oriental countries, where printed books were yet rare – he says.\textsuperscript{14}

According to Şanūc, his guide book had to be instructive and concise, but also pleasant; so, as Louca underlines,\textsuperscript{15} he

\textsuperscript{12} Ibidem, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{15} Louca, Voyageurs, p. 168.
did his best to write in literary Arabic and imagined a lot of
enrichments, like drawings, verses and songs, to be added to the
geographic and artistic details necessary for the description of the
places. He himself clearly explains that he wanted to appeal to
the Arab readers:

Nous avons fait un guide de Paris en y mêlant des vers et des
chansons afin de le rendre plus attrayant aux Orientaux, qui aiment
tant la poésie.

(We wrote a guide of Paris mixing verses and songs in it, in order
to make it more charming for Oriental people, who love poetry so
much). 56

On that basis, he concludes the chapter with a hope of suc-
cess:

Ce volume sera donc, nous l’espérons, apprécié par les lecteurs
arabes, car il réunira pour eux tous les genres d’attrait.

(This volume, in our hopes, will be appreciated by Arab readers
because it will combine for them all the kinds of attractions). 57

Finally, he adds that he thought to put the book under the
patronage of M. Etienne, State Under-Secretary for Colonies, owing
to the fact that the work was destined to circulate above all in
those countries. Then, in the last part of this French introduc-
tion, he gives some further place to thank and praise the French
authorities, and he offers a picture of M. Carnot, President of
the French Republic, accompanied by captions both in Arabic
and in French. Some verses in honour of the above mentioned
Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, M. Etienne, conclude the
preface, as a further confirmation of the love of Şanûc for
occasional poetry. As a court poet, in other works of him he
shows his tendency for composing verses in praise of authorities;
one can see an interesting example of this attitude of Şanûc in
the above mentioned Souhaits d’Orient, where, among the poems
devoted to France, there is a nice group of verses in six different
languages, offered by the Author to M. Carnot, on the opening
day of the Universal Exhibition of 1889.

A last explanation, put as a footnote at the end of this French
introduction, according to the intentions of the Author, would

56 Abû Nazzāra, Mahāmid, p. 45.
57 Ibidem.
58 Ibidem.
help those who do not know Arabic to understand the structure of the book and its inner organisation: «Ce volume commence à l’arabe, c’est-à-dire de droite à gauche» (This volume begins in accordance with the Arabic writing, that is from right to left) 39
It seems a kind of advice to French readers not to be astonished if the pages are numbered in a strange way!

al-Muqaddima 40

The high literary Arabic style adopted by Sanū c in this foreword, and in most of the Arabic text, was certainly the same style used by good writers at the end of the 19th century: as above said, in fact, even if the various chapters contain historical, topographic, artistic and social information about France and Paris, they are often enriched by quotations, metaphors, and elegant sentences, not exactly what one could have expected from a tourist guide.

The Author opens with a praise to God:

Praise to You, my God, You who makes tongues speak, You who makes fantasies of thoughts flow in their courses, You who makes manifest what hearts conceal! Grant me force of spirit and flow of language, so that I am able to explain to French people what I have in my heart and what I love! As you supplied me with what I said to the Orientals, and as you softened for me the hearts of the French, so that they printed my speeches, which I hope will be the principal motive to increase love, friendship and fraternity between them and the Orientals. Please attract towards me the hearts of the Orientals, so that they listen to all my words, with which I intend only to do something that is a duty for me, on behalf of human beings! 41

It is clear, reading these words of the Muqaddima, that the Author intends to magnify his own work, underlining its international importance as an instrument of contact between East and West, and, above all, as a product wanted and supported by God.

As regards the general contents of this chapter, his gratitude for the generosity of France is expressed once again, through praises and thanks. In fact, about the country he says:

I arrived there and I was received with generosity and granted with a friendly face; I lived in her places with security and trust; I began to go and come, being among her sons like one of them. [...] I composed these pages only to consummate the love that I

39 Ibidem.
40 Ibidem, pp. 5-7.
41 Ibidem, p. 6.
had in my heart for her. [...] I did not say that with these pages of mine I shall increase her fame, because she is too great to be in the need of my praise towards her, being rich of glory.  

Finally, he concludes this *Muqaddima* with a dedication: «Fa-
kaḍālīka ubah ḥāḍā ilaybā ʿalā sabīl al-ṣukr allādī istawḡaba ʿalayya
nahwahā» (Consequently, to her I dedicate this work, for the
gratitude that I owe to her!).  

*al-Duḥūl fi l-mawḍūʿ*  

It is a very short third introduction, before dealing with the main subject of the book. Here Şanūzī underlines, once again, that the value of his guide is assured by the fact that it was written with the help of God. In fact, he says: «Istahartu l-Mawlā
fi taʿlīf šaʿr yakūnu nāṣī l-wa-muṣīfī wa-dālībī» (I asked God for His advice to be able to compose something useful, condensed and leading). The result was a work which he defines *dalīl sahl*
an easy guide, created to meet the requirements of Arab visitors in France. About the necessity of using it, coming to Paris from abroad, he insists reminding that, among the great number of persons thronging to Paris – some searching commercial opportunities, some thinking that a sightseeing tour of the town would give them pleasure, others aiming a deeper knowledge of the flowering of modern French science – each visitor, even well prepared, needs a *dalīl*, leading him in his visit, because – he says: «al-ʿgarib ʿa-mā, wa-law baṣīr» (A stranger is blind, even if he has good sight).  

Short later, before ending these few paragraphs, the Author introduces the subject of the great Universal Exhibition (al-Maʿrīd
al-ʿāmm), which was held in Paris in 1889. He says that he wants to inform those who did not attend this great event, and that, in the mean time, he intends to help those who saw it, by reminding them its magnificence, so that, from their souvenir, they can feel a new pleasure and improve their knowledge about sciences, arts, industries in modern times.
Dalil Bāris 

After a part of the book devoted to the history of France, magnifying its greatness and power, here Şanūc introduces his Arab readers into the main subject, that is the description of Paris in a sort of guide for Arab tourists.

Beginning the chapter the Author underlines that kings, ministers, intellectuals, bankers and all the most important people who visited Paris at least once, agree with the assessment that it is the greatest and the most profitable city of the world: «Ilna Bāris hiya a’zam mudun al-dunyā wa-asfayadubā». Then, he clarifies that those who had the opportunity of spending some days in Paris during the Universal Exhibition of 1889 are particularly lucky and will never forget the pleasure of their visit, even if they are well acquainted with other very famous international places. Once again, the Exhibition plays an essential role in this book by Şanūc.

Each day of visit is described separately, following a chronological order; the title of each part is Furğat al-zā’ir fi l-yawm al-awwal,... fi l-yawm al-tānī,... fi l-yawm al-tālīt,... (Visit of the tourist in the first day,... the second day,... the third day...), and so on. Let us note that the term furğa implies the double meaning of «state of happiness after suffering; pleasure; delight», besides that of «onlooking, watching, viewing», perfectly in accordance with the spirit of Şanūc and his personal feelings towards Paris.

The description of the town is minutely detailed, although the visit is organized in only six days; squares, avenues, theatres, monuments, all are quoted in his Dalil, often introduced by enthusiastic words of appreciation. In this narrative, which is essentially documentary, the fantastic element is offered by the comments of the Author, who gives a shape to the itinerary through his comments and advises. For example, at the beginning of the first day of visit, when Şanūc describes the great boulevards of Paris, he writes that: «Lā maṭīl labā fi maddā’in al-dunyā» (They are unrivalled among the cities of the world). And he adds: «Hiya al-ān a’zam mawqi’c Bāris» (They are today

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48 Ibidem, pp. 16-40.
50 Ibidem, p. 16.
51 Ibidem, p. 16.
52 Wehr, A Dictionary.
the most important sites of Paris), meaning that the visitor must see them, because their beauty can’t be imagined by those who have not yet visited them; actually, the Author explains that, crossing them for the first time by night, the astonishment of the visitor is relevant: «Wa-l-mārr minhā laylan li-kafrat mā fībā min al-ğāz wa-al-nūr al-kahbābī, yaznnuhā muzayyana li-qudūm malik ay taʿzīm ʿid» (Those who cross them by night think that they are prepared for the arrival of a king or for the celebration of a feast, owing to the great number of gas and electric lights which are there).  

Then, among the great boulevards, he names Boulevard des Capucines, and the Grand Hotel (Līqrān Ğút l-Musāfīr Ḥāna), reminding that it is one of the most important hotels in Paris, where – he writes – princes and important persons love to stay, because it is very comfortable and offers very good cuisine: «Hiyā fi ġāyat al-intīzām fi maskanīhā wa-maʔkalībā» (It is extremely accurate, for stay and eating). Later, Boulevard des Italiens and Montmartre. In Boulevard Saint Denis, he mentions the presence of a splendid arch: «bāb ʿādim al-miṭāl» (an arch that has no equal), only equivalent to another one in Boulevard Saint Martin. After this arch, when he leads his visitors in Place de la République, he defines it «sāba ʿażīma» (a very imposing square) and he says that in its centre the statue of France, holding a flower, is surrounded by wonderful statues of lions and men.

In the second day, the Author leads his tourists to see the great theatre of L'Opéra, which is accurately described. Then he names Rue de la Paix, Place Vendôme, les Tuileries, le Carrousel. About the museum of Louvre he devotes many lines to illustrate the magnificence of its masterpieces. Later he praises the two churches of Nôtre-Dame-de-Lorette and of La Trinité. Finally, he names the Opéra again and the theatre of Folies Bergères. This last place gives him the opportunity of making an amusing comment, about its dangers for the spirit of people; in fact he advises his tourist to be careful there, and not to be attracted by the «girls of pleasure» who act in the theatre. He says: «Innamā yanbāqī laḥ an yatabarrasa ʿalā nafsīh (...) min al-bawā wa-banātīb» (He has to be careful and look after himself, against pleasure and its

53 Abū Nazzāra, Mahāmid, p. 17.
54 Ibidem.
55 Ibidem.
56 Ibidem.
57 Ibidem.
girls), underlining that these girls play in the theatre only with the aim of attracting and possessing the hearts of people. 98

With this same style Şanūc goes on in his description of the wonderful beauties of Paris, sometimes stopping on a subject or a place, sometimes only naming squares, churches, monuments, according to his tastes and his opinions. Normally, places or monuments are described with their French names, with a simple transcription of the sounds in Arabic letters. For instance, when he speaks about the above mentioned Grands Boulevards, he transcribes the term in Arabic as Liğān Būliwār; later, Place de la République is written in Arabic as Blās dilā Ribūblīk; Boulevard des Italiens as Būliwār Dīzūlīlīyān; Montmartre as Mūnmārt; Saint-Denis as Sāndīn, and so on.

Only in the middle of the book, where Şanūc shows a whole page with the pictures of eleven main monuments of Paris – like a kind of visible summary of the visit – he uses the double languages, Arabic and French, in his captions (plate 3). 99 About

Plate 3: Pictures of eleven main monuments of Paris in double languages, Arabic and French, in the captions.
(By kind permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris)

98 Ibidem, p. 25.
this choice, he later declares that his readers, acquainted with
the names of the most famous sites of Paris, both in French
and in Arabic, could look for a desired site in the drawings,
imagine it by their imagination and then reach it without doubt
or hesitancy.\textsuperscript{60}

\textit{al-M\textsuperscript{a}rid}\textsuperscript{61}

This short chapter is wholly devoted to the Exhibition of 1889,
event which – as above underlined – was one of the most rel-
evant ways exercised by Şanî\textsuperscript{60} to induce his Arab readers to go
on a trip to Paris.

The Author begins with some general considerations on
progress (\textit{taqaddum}) and civilization (\textit{tamaddun}), which have
reached relevant positions in modern times in contrast with in-
dolence (\textit{takāsul}) and ignorance (\textit{gābl}), diffused in the past; then
he leads his Arab readers to think about the importance of the
processes of today technical and artistic improvements, and de-
clares his great admiration for the modern civilization, with its
development of arts, strengthening of industries, production of
refinements, new jobs and grant of honours to people involved
in progress.

The goals achieved by modernity – he also asserts – were
perfectly shown in the Universal Exhibition of 1889 in Paris,
dedicated to experimentation (\textit{intihān}) and prosperity (\textit{sā\textsuperscript{a}dā}).\textsuperscript{62}
It was something unforgettable and unequalled in history, with
respect of any other national or international exhibitions – he
declares – and its importance for human beings was very high,
because it stimulated visitors to use their brains and their hu-
nan intelligence.\textsuperscript{61} In few lines, the Author repeats several times
the words «progress» (\textit{al-taqaddum}), «mind, intelligence» (\textit{al-\textsuperscript{c}aqīl}),
«geniality» (\textit{al-qāriḥa}), «invention» (\textit{al-muḥtara})).\textsuperscript{64}

Concluding this chapter, he writes: «\textit{Wa-min al-ma\textsuperscript{c}lūm anna}
\textit{li-kull insān wa-kull šay\textsuperscript{3} qādīh wa-mādīh, allā bādā al-ma\textsuperscript{a}rid lam}
yaqdad fi waṣfib wa-nizāmīh aḥad» (It is well known that every-
body and everything has a slanderer and a lauder; nevertheless,

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibidem}, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibidem}, pp. 40-1.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibidem}, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibidem}.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Ibidem}, pp. 40-1.
about this Exhibition no one has ever blamed its shape or its organization).  

Finally, the Author quotes a short poem in praise of the event, composed of seven hemistiches ending with the rhyme «-lā»; here an Egyptian poet – not well identified – expresses his sorrow for the quickness with which the time of pleasure passed: «Ayyāmuh ka-l-barq lam ētān inqādat/Wa-ra'aytu ayyām al-surūr qalā'īlā» (Its days passed as a lightning in a flash/And I considered insufficient the days of the joy!).  

al-Hātimah 

It consists of about twenty lines, with the addition of two artistic elements: a picture showing the Exhibition site of 1889, in Champ de Mars, with the Tour Eiffel in the middle (plate 4); and the

Plate 4: A picture showing the Exhibition site of 1889, with the Tour Eiffel in the middle. (By permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris)

61 Ibidem, p. 41.
67 The quotation is the following: «Wa-qāla fib M.D. [?] Ė. al-sā'īr al-misrī al-lāhīb...» (The sensible [?] Egyptian poet M. D. Ė. [?] said of it....)
68 Second hemistichic.
69 Abū Naẓẓāra, Maḥāmid, pp. 41-3
already mentioned short poem praising M. Etienne, a further occasion for Şanūc to gain the benevolence of French authorities. The starting words are a kind of final summary of the volume and a consideration of the fact that the Author was able to keep his double promises: to remind his readers of the good qualities and the great history of French people, and to guide Arab tourists to visit Paris in six days.

The main part is once again devoted to the Exhibition. Şanūc writes that, even finished, visitors can visit the place and enjoy the sight of what is remaining of it. Time and place are mixed here, when he writes about the Expo:

Who has not seen it ought to go to its place, called Champ de Mars. It is true that he will not see it, because it was demolished, when there was no longer need to maintain its structures, after the departure of visitors and exhibitors. But its traces remained. So, from the little he can deduce the beauties of the whole and from the existing he can imagine the missing. 70

Among these traces, the visitor can see the Burg İfil (the Eiffel Tower). As above said, the Author shows the tower in his last picture, where the most famous monument of Paris appears in all its height and integrity. 71 Once again, Şanūc firmly intends to use the fame and the splendour of the Expo of the previous year to induce new Arab tourists to visit the spot, at least to admire the traces remaining after this great event, above all the great Eiffel Tower. The written description of it, in this last chapter of the guide, is done with enthusiastic words, and it seems to be written just with the aim of striking the imagination of Arab readers. In fact, he says:

Its height is 300 metres. It is one of the most exceptional things constructed for the Exhibition, indeed it is one of the most imposing marvels of the Earth! Still today and in the future, God willing, people can go there. Some go up it, in the daytime to the top floor, the fourth; and at night to the first, where there is a café chantant, large enough to contain 400 people. We entered it several times and, after immersing ourselves into that melodious music or into the sight of the crowd, we completely forgot that we were in the air, at a height of 70 metres from the ground, while Paris itself was a whole of exhibitions, without any borders! 72

70 Ibidem, p. 43.
71 Ibidem, p. 42.
72 Ibidem, p. 43.
It is not by chance that Şanūṣ used this pamphlet Mahāmid al-Faransis in the opening days of the Universal Exhibition of 1890, speaking in the great hall that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Colonies put at his disposal in the Section of Colonies. 7) One can imagine that the Exhibition of 1889 had been so great an event for the Author to make him feel as a duty its celebration, even after its ending, and to participate to the opening works of the Exhibition of the following year. Once again, he addressed himself to an Arab public, formed by those who were on the spot but also by those who might have been induced to go on a trip to Paris later, for the occasion of the Exhibition. Surely, his particular attention was given to the second ones, with the aim of encouraging them to leave their Oriental countries and go to Paris, in order to visit the wonderful sites he had been describing for them, in Arabic, in his Dalil.

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7) Louca, Voyageurs, p. 169.


ABSTRACT
The Egyptian Jewish Ya'qūb Şanūc wrote Mabāmid al-Farānsīs wa-wasf Bāris during his exile in Paris (1872-1911) at the behest of his friend, M. Felumb, a Norwegian journalist who had been living in Paris for a long time. This small book, written after the Universal Exhibition in 1889 in the form of a clear guide for a six-day stay in less than fifty pages, was intended to introduce «Oriental» people to the geography, history and arts of France and to attract Arab visitors to Paris. The text, in literary Arabic, is enriched by illustrations of the most important monuments of Paris, all accompanied by explanations in Arabic. This book can be considered an attempt at creating a cross-cultural dialogue between Europe and the Arab World. Its structure, language and content could offer an idea of what may be deemed an early example of a new kind of Arabic travel literature at the end of the 19th century.

KEYWORDS