

## On *Zionism or The Zionist Question* by Muḥammad Rūḥī al-Khālīdī (1864-1913): Exploring the Context of a Pioneering Work

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### Introduction

Every critical evaluation that reviews written contributions by Arab intellectuals in the late Ottoman period is certainly vital; nevertheless, one has to engage in this endeavor cautiously. Not unlike other traditions from the past, the Arabic scholarly legacy during the early 1900s is elusive, multi-layered, and does not just give itself up to “rediscovery.”<sup>1</sup> Revisiting any work composed in Arabic in the first decade of the twentieth century should proceed systematically through a process of textual analysis, with the sociocultural milieu of the era firmly kept in mind.

While being “practically an X-RAY of Rūḥī’s thinking, as an Ottoman Arab statesman just before World War I,”<sup>2</sup> *Zionism or The Zionist Question* by the Jerusalemite politician and writer Muḥammad Rūḥī al-Khālīdī (1864–1913) stands as yet another illustration of this necessary undertake.

*Zionism* lies in the depths of a multilayered cultural system governed by its own dynamics, including the ensemble of the underlying abstract structures and

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1 See Jens Hanssen and Max Weiss (eds.), “Introduction: Language, Mind, Freedom and Time: The Modern Arab Intellectual Tradition in Four Words”, *Arabic Thought beyond the Liberal Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Nahda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 1–38.

2 “Ḥiwār ma‘ Walīd al-Khālīdī ‘an kitāb ‘al-Siyūnizm ay al-mas‘ala al-ṣahyūniyya: *Awwal dirāsa ‘ilmiyya bi-l-‘arabiyya ‘an al-ṣahyūniyya*,” (A Dialogue with Walid al-Khalidi on *Zionism or the Zionist Question: The First Academic Study on Zionism in Arabic*) *Majallat al-Dirāsāt al-Filistīniyya* 127 (2021), p. 178.

relations woven across texts that emerged from this system. It is through those *a priori* shared structures and relations that Rūḥī and other writers of the same era “spoke” to their readers. Synchronous written works are implicitly tied to an intricate network of writing techniques, formats, tone, style, cultural sensitivity, shared views on history, and eventually the traditions of writing or thinking. Thus, any attempt to read *Zionism*, if not coupled with the multifaceted endeavor to reestablish the cultural system in which it developed, will almost inevitably lead to inaccurate deductions.<sup>3</sup>

In the following article, and with a keen sense to its cultural moment, an attempt will be made to reread *Zionism* in conjunction with the other works of Rūḥī, and also in contrast to other works of his contemporaries on the same topic, particularly the treatise titled *al-Ṣahyūniyya* (*Zionism*) (1911)<sup>4</sup> by Najib al-Khūrī Naṣṣār (1867–1948).

At a time when periodicals and newspapers were the main site of cultural contributions, authored books were only a rare production, especially on the Palestinian literary scene.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the discussion progresses herein with a recognition that composing a book, any book, on Zionism in the opening years of the prior century was exceptional. *Zionism*, regarded as the most exhaustive treatment of this topic at the time of its composition, establishes its own identity amongst a plethora of articles that addressed Zionism published in diverse periodicals across Turkey, the Levant, Egypt, and Palestine. For who other than Rūḥī took part in this pioneering endeavor?

Al-Ziriklī lists *Du‘āt al-fikra al-ṣahyūniyya* (*The Advocates of the Concept of Zionism*) by the Lebanese Muḥammad al-Maḥmaṣānī (1888–1915), PhD in law and a founding member of *al-Jam‘iyya al-‘arabiyya al-fatāt* (*The Young Arab*

3 I am indebted in this paragraph to ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Kiliṭū, *al-Adab wa-l-gharāba: Dirāsāt bunyawīyya fī l-adab al-‘arabī* (*Literature and Strangeness: Structural Studies in Arabic Literature*), 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Casablanca: Dār Tūbqāl, 2006), pp. 50–51.

4 Najib Naṣṣār, *al-Ṣahyūniyya: Mulakḥkhas tārikhihā, ghāyatuhā, wa imtidāduhā ḥattā sanat 1905 wa-ba‘d muṭāla‘ātina fihā* (*Zionism: Its Abridged History, Aim, and Reach until 1905 and some Personal Notes on it*) (Haifa: Maṭba‘at al-Karmil, 1911). I thank Mrs. Samar Miqati, Associate University Librarian for Archives and Special Collections at AUB University Libraries for providing access to an original copy of *al-Ṣahyūniyya* (1911 edition) herein cited.

5 On the meagre book production in pre–1948 Palestine see Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900–1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), pp. 65–69.

Society). Unfortunately, the book which must have been a rare early contribution to the subject, appears to be missing today.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, Rūḥī's *Zionism* had very recently come into the spotlight with the release of its long-awaited first edition marked with the introduction of Walid Khalidi.<sup>7</sup>

This analysis will situate *Zionism* against the heated discussions of Zionism in 1911 in the Ottoman chamber of Deputies (*Majlis-i Mab'ūthān*), where Rūḥī gave a lengthy speech on the matter. Researchers up until the present have treated Rūḥī's speech and *Zionism* as two distinct contributions under the umbrella of his "anti-Zionist actions". The evidence suggests, however, that they are probably more connected than previously assumed. Before embarking on the detailed textual and historical examination of this posthumous work, a brief summary of Rūḥī's extensive compendium of writings will be presented first.

### The Historical Paradigm

Rūḥī was a prolific author.<sup>8</sup> His renowned *Tārīkh 'ilm al-adab 'ind al-ifranj wa-l-'arab wa-Fiktūr Hūkū* (History of the Science of Literature among Europeans and Arabs and Victor Hugo) (1904) is an exemplary piece of the Arab *Nahḍa* or Awakening literature.<sup>9</sup> The same holds true for his *al-Muqaddima fi al-mas'ala al-sharqiyya* (Introduction to the Eastern Question),<sup>10</sup> *Asbāb al-inqilāb*

6 See al-Ziriklī, *Qāmūs al-a'lām* (Dictionary of Prominent Figures), 15<sup>th</sup> ed. (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 2002), 7/98.

7 Muḥammad Rūḥī al-Khālīdī, *al-Siyūnizm ay al-mas'ala al-ṣahyūniyya: Awwal dirāsa 'ilmīyya bi-l-'arabiyya 'an al-ṣahyūniyya* (Zionism or the Zionist Question: The First Academic Study on Zionism in Arabic), ed. Walid Khalidi (Beirut and Jerusalem: IPS and Khalidi Library, 2020).

8 For a detailed sketch of his biography and works see Muḥammad Rūḥī al-Khālīdī, *Muḥammad Rūḥī al-Khālīdī al-Maqdisī (1864–1913): Kutubuhu wa-maqālātuhu wa-muntakhabāt min makhtūṭātibi* (Muḥammad Rūḥī al-Khālīdī al-Maqdisī (1864–1913): Books, Articles, and Selected Manuscripts), ed. Mariam Saeed El-Ali (Beirut and Jerusalem: IPS and Khalidi Library, 2021), pp. 3–72.

9 "Tārīkh 'ilm al-adab", in Al-Khālīdī, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 1/211–560. An English translation by Tarif Khalidi is available on the Khalidi Library website, <https://www.khalidilibrary.org//public/files/server/1.3%20Ruhi%20Tarikh%20%60Ilm%20al-Adab%20Translation/index.html>

10 "Al-Muqaddima fi l-mas'ala al-sharqiyya", in Al-Khālīdī, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 1/133–209. English translation, <https://www.khalidilibrary.org//public/files/server/20%1.2Ruhi%20Muqaddima%20Translation/index.html>

*al-‘uthmānī wa-turkyā al-fatāt* (The Ottoman Revolution and the Young Turks) (1908),<sup>11</sup> and *al-Duyūn al-‘umūmiyya al-‘uthmāniyya* (The Ottoman Public Debt),<sup>12</sup> in which he considered some pressing political questions and events of his time. Likewise, his “Islamic” orientation is evident in *al-Kīmyā’ ‘ind al-‘arab* (Chemistry (Science of) Among the Arabs),<sup>13</sup> in addition to his lengthy articles entitled “al-‘Ālam al-islāmī” (The Muslim World) on the ethnical geography of the Islamic world that first appeared in *Tarāblus al-shām* newspaper in the 1890s.<sup>14</sup> Rūḥī also documented his exploits and described his voyage to Andalusia, Spain in *Riḥlat al-maqdisī ilā jazīrat al-andalus*, and his prolonged stays in the National Library of Paris in *Bārīs*,<sup>15</sup> along with a multitude of other writings. To this end, a full assessment of Rūḥī’s methodology and style throughout his overall production is obligatory to reach fair and definite conclusions pertaining to any one of his works.

In fact, one can assert that at the core of each of Rūḥī’s compilations, there exist a “historical” thread that tracks the topic in question from the earliest to later “contemporary” times. None of Rūḥī’s works escapes the historical paradigm that makes his writings relatively boring when viewed through our contemporary lenses, for what a modern reader might consider unnecessarily lengthy introductions, are *à la Rūḥī* structurally essential. Even his concept of “history” might seem too inclusive and requires redefinition for a present-day reader who tries to examine his exact perceptual framework. In *Tārīkh ‘ilm al-adab*, Rūḥī does not discuss Victor Hugo (1802–1885) and his works except after surveying the generational biographies (*ṭabaqāt*) of Arabic litterateurs from pre-Islamic times until the Andalusian era, then similarly the European literature (*adab al-ifranj*) from its origins forward. In *Asbāb al-inqilāb*, he reviews the history of the Islamic government (*khilāfa*) since its inception, then the Ottoman sultanate, before looking at contemporary events on the eve of the Young Turk Revolution (July 1908). Turning to *al-Kīmyā’*, for another brief demonstration of this paradigm, the book

11 “Asbāb al-inqilāb al-‘uthmānī”, in Al-Khālīdī, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 1/561–635. English translation,

<https://www.khalidilibrary.org//public/files/server/20%1.1Ruhi%20Inqilab%20Translation/index.html>

12 First published in Al-Khālīdī, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 2/1037–1068.

13 “Al-Kīmyā’ ‘ind al-‘arab”, in Al-Khālīdī, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 1/637–715.

14 Al-Khālīdī, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 2/729–891.

15 See Al-Khālīdī, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 2/971–1036; 1069–1083.

is a prolonged historical survey of the Arab and European, medieval then modern chemists, which concludes with a short chapter arguing for the priority of the Arabs in this field, and highlighting the academic debt of modern chemistry to their pioneering achievements.

*Zionism*, in its turn, adheres well to this paradigm, as it addresses: (1) the historical background of the Jews in Palestine (from ancient times), (2) the evolution of the (modern) Zionist movement, particularly through consecutive Zionist congresses (3) and (contemporary) Jewish institutions, organizations and settlements.<sup>16</sup> In its general structure, it is then analogous to other works of Rūḥī who was apparently following what one may call a scholastic approach. In one of his earliest pieces, and prior to lengthy descriptions of his visits to the National Library of Paris, Rūḥī states: “The scholars of this era are accustomed, when they examine any matter, to go back to its origins (...and) in line with this good practice, I had extracted some passages on the history of libraries and their conditions in ancient and medieval times” (*jarat ‘ādat al-‘ulamā’ fi hādhā al-‘aṣr idhā takallamū ‘an mas’ala istaqṣaw al-baḥṭh fihā wa-salsalūhu ilā al-nash’a al-‘ulā (...)* *fa-ittibā’an li-hādhīh al-‘āda al-ḥasana iqtataftu shay’an min tārikh dūr al-kutub wa-mā kānat ‘alayhi fi al-azmina al-mutaqaddima wa-l-mutawassita*).<sup>17</sup> This self-referential glimpse is particularly constructive in revealing his writing process: the phrase “I had extracted” (*iqtataftu*) denotes his direct borrowing from sources available to him, and proves that he only compiled, and did not produce from scratch this segment of the text. As Rūḥī embedded prolonged historical accounts into his writings, this should actually come as no surprise, for he is not expected to instigate facts on one or the other subject after all.

It is evident too that Rūḥī did not limit himself to this European outline (ancient, medieval, then modern), but developed his own method (*tariqa*) of historical explanation, as demonstrated in his books and many articles. For besides tracking the origins of a given subject (*ma’rifat ‘usūl al-masā’il*), he also placed them in the context of Islamic history (*rabṭuhā bi-l-tārikh al-islāmī*) when applicable.<sup>18</sup> As Rūḥī explains, simply “translating French articles” is just not enough at times and one must also “compare them with Arabic sources” (*idh lā yakfī fi mithl hādhā*

16 Rūḥī al-Khālidi, *al-Siyūnizm*, 6–54; 55–101, 102–149.

17 “Bārīs”, (Paris) in Al-Khālidi, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 2/1008.

18 “Al-Dāhūmī wa-tawābī’uhā”, (Dahomey and its Dependences) in Al-Khālidi, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 2/939.

*al-maqām tarjamat al-maqālāt al-faransiyya wa-innamā yanbaghī muqābalatuhā bi-l-tawārikh al-‘arabiyya*).<sup>19</sup> This is yet another self-referential hint that allows a more accurate evaluation of who he worked, especially as it relates to the blurred distinctions between “authoring” (in Arabic) and “translating” (from French), not untypical in *Nahḍawī* literature,<sup>20</sup> and to his original comparative exploration of Arabic primary sources.

Accordingly, *Zionism* is presented as a comprehensive “history” of the Jews, from antiquity until the foundation of the Zionist movement at the onset of the twentieth century, based on adapted translations and direct appropriations of segments from diverse primary and secondary sources.<sup>21</sup> It also illustrates Rūḥī’s attempt to link its subject to Islamic history in the subsection “the Jews after the Rise of Islam” (*al-Yahūd ba’d zuhūr al-islām*) which Rūḥī places after a general outline of the “history” of the Jews from the death of Solomon to their later diaspora.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Al-Ṣahyūniyya: Voicing a Collective Memo***

In a further general remark, one can discern in Rūḥī’s writing an “objective” un-rhetorical tone; conventional among the authors of *Nahḍa*, who wanted to detach themselves from the “old” and “unscientific” mode of their predecessors, traditionally associated with the Arabic language. To quote Albert Hourani (1915–1993), they ended up creating the “modern Arabic expository prose”, “a language true to its past in grammar and idiom, but made capable of expressing simply, precisely, and directly the concepts of modern thought.”<sup>23</sup>

Surprisingly enough, while this comparatively tranquil tone puts Rūḥī’s volume in line with other compilations swayed by the newly-emerging *Nahḍawī* “controlled” language at the time, this has resulted in recent allegations of dispassion and “coldness”. As the book does not blatantly demonstrate a sturdy offensive attitude, it left some to wonder how one can write objectively about a topic of such national importance.

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19 Al-Khālidi, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 2/939.

20 See “To Cite or not to Cite?” below.

21 See “The Sources of Zionism” below.

22 Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, pp. 46–50.

23 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 100.

Khaled Hroub was the first to express this criticism in the review he presented during a seminar the Institute for Palestine Studies held on March 04 2021, to launch *Zionism*, before he formulated it in a book months later.<sup>24</sup>

Besides the “detachment from his subject”, Hroub accuses Rūhī of plagiarizing the Lebanese<sup>25</sup> Najīb al-Khūrī Naṣṣār’s (1867–1948) Arabic adoption of some passages from *The Jewish Encyclopedia*<sup>26</sup> in *al-Ṣahyūniyya*. This accusation shall be addressed thoroughly later in this article, but the point to be made here is that Hroub’s evaluation of *Zionism* as a detached cold monograph is mostly driven by this relentless comparison of it with Naṣṣār’s *al-Ṣahyūniyya*; and not with other works of Rūhī, or of his *Nahḍawī* peers.

Hroub criticizes Rūhī for deleting the commentaries that Naṣṣār appended to the translated segments from *JE*, which “led to what can be described as the “cooling” of the book’s tone, and the attenuation of Naṣṣār’s original provocative discourse.”<sup>27</sup> Such an accusation, however, overlooks the essentially different nature of both texts, which dictates to each a particular discourse.

*Al-Ṣahyūniyya* was published as a series of articles on the pages of *al-Karmil* newspaper, owned and edited by Naṣṣār “from March to June 1911, before being published as a book”<sup>28</sup> only months later.<sup>29</sup> As stated in its introduction, *al-*

24 Khalid Hroub, *al-Naqd al-nā’im li-l-ṣahyūniyya wa-l-riwāya al-tawrātīyya fī kitāb Rūhī al-Khālīdī “al-Siyūnizm”* (The Soft Criticism of Zionism and the Biblical Narrative in Rūhī al-Khālīdī’s *Zionism*) (Amman: Al-Dar al-Ahliyya, 2021). For a most recent review in English see Abdul Qader Yassin, “Khaled Hroub, Soft Criticism of Zionism and the Biblical Narrative: In Rawhi Khalidi’s book on Zionism”, *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies* 21/1 (2022), pp. 118–120.

25 To call him Lebanese might be misleading, as although he was born and educated in Lebanon, he lived most of his adult life in Palestine where he worked, and was extremely engaged in its cause. He also died and was buried in Nazareth. Naṣṣār also bears the title of *shaykh al-ṣiḥāfa al-filistīniyya*.

26 Richard Gottheil, “Zionism”, in *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, eds. Isidore Singer and Cyrus Adler (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1906), 12/666–86, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/15268-zionism>.

27 Hroub, *al-Naqd al-nā’im*, p. 75.

28 Emanuel Beška, “Anti-Zionist Journalistic Works of Najīb al-Khūrī Naṣṣār in the Newspaper *al-Karmil* in 1914”, *Asian and African Studies*, 20/2 (2011), p. 168.

29 Khayriyya Qāsīmiyya, “Najīb Naṣṣār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmil (1901–1914): Aḥad ruwwād munāḥaḍat al-ṣahyūniyya”, (Najīb Naṣṣār in his *al-Karmil* newspaper (1901–1914): One of the Pioneering Anti-Zionists) *Shu’un Filistīniyya* 23 (July 1973), 103 states that the articles

Şahyūniyya was prompted by the loud deliberations in 1911 over Zionism in the Ottoman chamber of Deputies (*Majlis-i Mab'ūthān*). Naşşār particularly intended to refute the statement of Ḥaqqī Pasha (1862–1918) (*Şadr A'zam*, 1910–11) that “Zionism is only a narrative, and its activists are mere obsessed individuals” (*lay-sat al-şahyūniyya siwā riwāya wa-mā al-qā'imūn bihā illā afrād mutahawwisūn*).<sup>30</sup>

It all began during an otherwise ordinary session on 01 March<sup>31</sup> upon the discussion of the annual budget, when Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī Bey (1877–1942), deputy of Gümülcine and member of the Liberal Union, the most significant opposition party to The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), suspected an opportunistic connection between the Zionists “whose views are dangerous to the Ottoman Empire” and a public loan from France. The debate heated up from there, before Ḥaqqī Pasha made the aforementioned statement in his lengthy response to Ismā'īl Bey.<sup>32</sup>

The open conversation on Zionism under the dome of the Ottoman parliament, which “surpassed the frame of an incidental discussion engrafted over that of the law of finances”<sup>33</sup> sparked a chain of reactions from different parties, as ech-

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were collected on October 1911. However, an earlier date is more probable. The book is already noted as a new publication in *al-Nafā'is al-ʿaşriyya* 3.8 (August 1911), p. 376.

30 Naşşār, *al-Sahyūniyya*, 2. “Tout cela, c’est un joli roman... C’est quand même une fable...” in “Chambre des Députés,” *Stamboul*, (March 02 1911), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bd6t549501p>.

To highlight the *Mab'ūthān* discussion, and the treatment of Zionism in general, I will herein mainly refer to Ottoman newspapers and periodicals that appeared in French at the time, fully accessible through *Gallica*, along fewer ones in Arabic available on *Global Press Archive* (GPA). For a sample of accounts of the same discussion from the newspapers in Ottoman Turkish, see Khayriyya Qāsimiyya, *al-Nashāt al-sahyūnī fī l-sharq al-ʿarabī wa-şadāhu, 1908–1918* (The Zionist Activity in the Arab East and its Resonance, 1908-1918) (Beirut: Markaz al-Abḥāth, Munazzamat al-Taḥrīr, 1973), pp. 92–96. The full-length minutes of the *Mab'ūthān* sessions are now available online:

[https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/tutanak\\_sorgu.html](https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/tutanak_sorgu.html).

These are of the utmost importance, as official documents, and not only newspapers accounts of the discussions, and are definitely worth further investigation of researchers engaged in the field of Ottoman studies to highlight the treatment of any relevant topic.

31 *Stamboul* headed “Une Séance Caractéristique”. See *ibid*.

32 For another account on the session see “Chambre des Députés Séance de 16/1 Mars,” *La Turquie*, (March 02 1911), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k45296739>.

33 “La Politique Ottomane,” *Correspondance d'Orient* 60 (15 03 1911), p. 246, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5805754f>.



oed in the newspapers across Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine, which did not remain impartial to the quarrel. This issue in fact is explicit in the introduction of *al-Şahyūniyya* too, where Naşşār fires back at *Ṭanīn*, the Istanbul newspaper which accused those “who are warning against the Zionist threat on the Ottoman Nation” (*alladhīn yundhirūn bi-khatar al-şahyūniyya ‘alā al-waṭan al-‘uthmānī*)<sup>34</sup> of mistaken assessment and unjustified conclusions.

The selective translations of *JE* were thus cited as textual evidence from authoritative “Jewish sources” (*maşādir yahūdiyya*)<sup>35</sup> to prove the invalid underestimation of Zionism at the center of the Ottoman administration, and the commentaries Naşşār appended to them explicitly manifest this direct counter-argumentation. The words of Ḥaqqī Pasha are sometimes mentioned verbatim: “I am trembling from the use of the words ‘illusion’ and ‘fiction’ (to describe Zionism)” (*anā artajif min isti‘māl lafzatay wahm wa-khayāl*),<sup>36</sup> writes Naşşār.

Naşşār’s text was operating in the public sphere, echoing the great distress of the Ottoman Arabs, particularly those residing in Palestine, who while enduring increasingly bruising encounters with the growing Zionist movement and its activities, above all the confiscations of lands, were met by an apparent disregard of the Zionist reality on the part of their government (“*alladhīn yudīrūn daffat al-siyāsa fī al-āsītāna*”).<sup>37</sup> Indeed, while flipping through *al-Şahyūniyya*, a slim pamphlet which is in effect a fundamental introduction to Zionism (sold at one Ottoman *beshlek* per copy), one can feel the fervor of Naşşār’s commitment from the distance of a century, particularly in his closing comments under “What Do We Need?” (*Mādhā nahtāj*),<sup>38</sup> where he, addressing his readers directly, proposed collective tactics to face the Zionist challenge ahead.

### ***Zionism: A Planned Scholastic Book***

Back to *Mab‘ūthān*. The discussion of the budget continued in the session of 06 March, and while the shadow of the Zionist question was still there, it was again marginalized by no other than Carasso Effendi (1862–1934), then Jewish

34 Naşşār, *al-Sahyūniyya*, p. 3.

35 Naşşār, *al-Sahyūniyya*, p. 2.

36 Naşşār, *al-Sahyūniyya*, p. 59.

37 Naşşār, *al-Sahyūniyya*, p. 2.

38 Naşşār, *al-Sahyūniyya*, pp. 62–64.

deputy of Salonika whose statements Rūhī objected to, stressing that “the Zionist question is of great importance and cannot be neglected.”<sup>39</sup>

In fact, when consulting the different accounts of the parliament sessions as documented in the press, one gets the impression that Zionism within the walls of *Mab‘ūthān* was rather an outlandish topic that just broke up the monotonous flow of talking heads, and which was almost a welcome distraction from “business as usual” in 1911. “Applauses”, “ironies”, “laughs” (and grumpy shouts asking the attendees not to laugh!), noises (and requests to listen), voices calling for self-discipline (“Soyons polis”!) are some of the given details to describe the scene. As per Ḥaqqī Pasha, “the Jews in here (in the Ottoman Empire) and even those of Europe have (in their turn) laughed at the dreams of this group (the Zionists).”<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps it was this overall trifling treatment of the subject complemented by the skeptical approach of the Ottoman government epitomized in the pleading of Ḥaqqī Pasha, that led Rūhī and two of his Arab colleagues, the Jerusalemite Sa‘īd al-Ḥusaynī (1878–1945) and the Syrian Shūkrī al-‘Asalī (1868–1916) to prepare their case and deliver comprehensive speeches on Zionism in the later session of 16 May. They might have hoped to shift the discussion in a more serious direction. In this vein, the speeches of this trio, along with Naṣṣār’s articles in *al-Karmil* were all aligned with the same objective.<sup>41</sup>

Rūhī’s speech was long and academic which actually made him boring to many listeners,<sup>42</sup> where he:

- (1) Quoted the Torah on the Jewish yearnings to recapture Palestine.
- (2) Distinguished between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.
- (3) Expounded the history of the Jewish emigration to the Ottoman Empire.

39 “La Chambre des Députés Séance de 21/6 Mars,” *La Turquie*, (March 07 1911), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4529677z>.

40 “Les Israélites d’ici et même ceux d’Europe ont ri des rêves de ce groupe” in “La Chambre des Députés,” *Stamboul*, (March 02 1911).

41 For an Arabic translation of al-‘Asalī’s speech see *Al-Mufid*’s front page under “Shūkrī al-‘Asalī: Kḥiṭāb muḥim fī majlis al-umma ‘an al-ṣahyūniyyīn” (Shūkrī al-‘Asalī: An Important Speech on the Zionists in the Chamber of Deputies) in *Al-Mufid*, (May 31 1911), <https://gpa.eastview.com/crl/mena/newspapers/amuf01.1.1-19110531>

42 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1997), p. 82.

- (4) Presented the theory of Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786).
- (5) Explained the Herzl's plan, mainly as a counter-thesis to Mendelssohn's, dating it to after the persecution of the Jewish population in Russia.
- (6) Pointed to the committees founded in Europe and the bank in England that supported this plan.
- (7) Argued that in 1880, 9000 Jewish emigrants from Russia had landed in Palestine and that emigration had been ongoing since then.
- (8) Described the existing and prosperous Jewish settlements in Palestine and Syria, and pointed to land purchases, the demographic change in the district of Jerusalem, and to the gymnastic associations that were founded with the ultimate objective of preparing inhabitants "militarily".
- (9) Stated that Zionists "now" have their autonomous administration, post offices, and stamps with images of Herzl and Nordau (1849–1923). (On their self-establishment, the president of the parliament commented, "they did very well")<sup>43</sup>
- (10) Concluded with a demand that the government clarify what measures it was taking to oppose the Zionist threat, mainly in Palestine.<sup>44</sup>

One can readily see the skeleton of *Zionism* in those pronouncements, and a swift reading of its brief introduction will affirm this correspondence.<sup>45</sup> It is evident that Rūḥī was concerned about the Zionist question long before his return to Jerusalem in 1908, for his "notebooks are full of notes, tables, and other data on the Zionist movement, while he had several scrapbooks full of press clippings on the same subject. Both he and his uncle (Yūsuf Ḍiyā' Pasha (1842–1906)), moreover, owned numerous works on Zionism, Jewish history, the history of anti-Semitism, and related matters."<sup>46</sup>

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43 "Ils ont très bien fait" in "Nouvelles Diverses, Constantinople," *L'Univers Israélite*, 66/41 (23 juin 1911), p. 470,

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k62677035>.

44 "La Chambre des Députés," *La Turquie*, (May 17, 1911).

45 "Muqaddimat Muḥammad Rūḥī al-Khālīdī," (Introduction by Muḥammad Rūḥī al-Khālīdī) *Zionism*, pp. 1–6.

46 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, p. 82.

Despite this, it appears that the actual drafting of *Zionism*, at least in its final extant version, was most likely a later achievement, not yet begun during Rūḥī's stay in Bordeaux. With an almost expanded version of the *Mab'ūthān* speech, Rūḥī might have aimed at reaching a wider audience beyond the walls of the parliament where he and his Arab colleagues had not found many sympathetic ears.

It seems probable that just as Naṣṣār was considering publishing a collection of his articles in a pamphlet, taking his anti-Zionist ardor to the next level, so too was Rūḥī in planning and writing *Zionism* sourcing from his parliament speech. However, while Naṣṣār hurried to publish his collected articles without any changes expect for a new title,<sup>47</sup> Rūḥī sensibly took his time to expand his speech, as he attempted to produce a nuanced text and comprehensively sketch a "history" of Zionism in which he relied on numerous secondary sources, including the *JE* segments.<sup>48</sup>

In this regard, and in an eulogistic article in *al-Ahrām* on 09 August 1913 only three days after Rūḥī's death, the Lebanese Ibrāhīm Salīm Najjār who had met Rūḥī in Istanbul towards the end of his life, provides us with valuable information from Rūḥī's mouth. According to Najjār, *Zionism* was a book manuscript "on the history of the Zionist organization of which he (Rūḥī) was one of its bitterest enemies as a political organization", and which he was planning to possibly publish in Egypt. Rūḥī, Najjār continues, used what free time he had, amid his governmental obligations to, work on its manuscript, which he had finished, while he was still working on another book manuscript on linguistics one year before his sudden death.<sup>49</sup>

The book's calm academic tone is therefore a self-contained feature, an authentic expression of its author, and not a consequence of having superseded Naṣṣār's commentary. As shown above, those comments had a specific textual function, and do not make sense if removed from their immediate journalistic context. Why would Rūḥī assimilate Naṣṣār's voice into his book in the first place?

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47 As it appears on its front cover. In the inside page another title, probably the older, reads: *Al-Ṣahyūniyya: Tārikhuhā, gharāḍuhā, ahammiyatuhā, mulakkhāsan 'an al-insayklūbīdyā al-yahūdīyya* (Zionism: Its History, Aim, and Importance Abridged from *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*).

48 See "The Sources of Zionism" below.

49 Ibrāhīm Najjār, "Rūḥī Bik al-Khālīdī mab'ūth al-quds al-sābiq: Ḥayātuhu, siyāsātuhu, akhlāquhu", (Rūḥī Bey al-Khālīdī the Ex-Deputy of Jerusalem: Life, Politics, and Morals) *al-Ahrām*, (August 09 1911).

In fact, the deletion of the above-cited commentaries only proves that plagiarism, suspected by Hroub in light of Rūḥī's adoption of the *JE* material without explicit citation, was definitely not his intention. Moreover, for a writer so absorbed in the "science" of history, and convinced that its subject is nothing but "the true facts with no flattery or exaggeration" (*al-waqā'i' al-ṣaḥīḥa bi-lā iṭrā' wa-lā ghuluww*),<sup>50</sup> one would expect an impersonal style to match the aspired "historical" spirit, whatever the subject.

Nevertheless, this did not mean that Rūḥī was neutral, and its text's historical tone should not be understood as indicating a weaker attachment to the Palestinian "reality." As admittedly expressed by Hroub himself, Rūḥī's anti-Zionist stance is "evident."<sup>51</sup> Illuminating here is Fayṣal Darrāj's description of *Zionism* as a "study of the naked facts", (*dirāsāt al-ḥaqā'iq al-'āriya*)<sup>52</sup> yet "a manifestation of a deep national commitment expressed by a sophisticated knowledge of some modern philosophies" (*muḥaṣṣila li-iltizām waṭanī ḥārr tarjamathu thaqāfa 'amīqa bi-maqūlāt ḥadītha*).<sup>53</sup> Thus, Rūḥī's measured style should not be seen as proof of his "disengagement" from the anti-Zionist struggle. Following his second election to *Mab'ūthān*, a Jewish newspaper called Rūḥī an "anti-Semitic" winner, noting that he had overcome the fierce efforts of the Jewish movement to win him over.<sup>54</sup> Presumably, although a false accusation for the deputy of Jerusalem who had opened his aforementioned parliamentary speech by stating "I am anti-Zionist but not anti-Semitic,"<sup>55</sup> this labeling tells a story that is more grounded in reality than Hroub's estimation with only the "cold" text of *Zionism* in hand.

### To Cite or Not to Cite?

Delving into *Zionism* again, the accusation of plagiarizing Naṣṣār's book, decidedly central in Hroub's critique, deserves a closer examination, for if Rūḥī was compiling what he extracted from other sources, shouldn't he have footnoted these sources?

50 "Tārīkh 'ilm al-adab", Al-Khālidi, *Muḥammad Rūḥī*, 1/371.

51 Hroub, *al-Naqd al-nā'im*, p. 70.

52 Fayṣal Darrāj, "Rūḥī al-Khālidi wa-l-mas'ala al-ṣaḥyūniyya: Al-qadar al-filistīnī wa-istibdād al-quwwa", (Rūḥī al-Khālidi and the Zionist Question: The Palestinian Destiny and the Tyranny of Power) *al-Karmil*, 55–56 (April 1998), p. 348.

53 Darrāj, "Rūḥī al-Khālidi", p. 332.

54 As quoted in Qāsimiyya, *al-Nashāt al-ṣaḥyūnī*, p. 117, note 104.

55 "La Chambre des Députés," *La Turquie*, (May 17 1911).

It is significant that after making this charge,<sup>56</sup> Hroub backs off slightly by stating that it is “unfair” to conclude accordingly that *Zionism* does not include footnotes. He then goes on to list some examples of explicit citations, which are, as Hroub puts it “at least a partial retour from Rūḥī’s part to his original methodology of writing.”<sup>57</sup> This gives readers the impression that Rūḥī cites sources much more often in his other compilations; however, this is not the case. An overview of Rūḥī’s large literary output shows that by any measure his other works do not include more footnotes than appear in *Zionism*. This said, it is simplistic to assume that Rūḥī’s methodology manifests itself through the “occasional” presence of footnotes amid their dominant absence, as if Rūḥī was wavering between two modes of writing, undecided between the academic and nonacademic style.

Actually, the real inquiry should not be limited to whether footnotes are present or absent. What one should be investigating instead is the underlying cause, if any, that drove Rūḥī to cite or not to cite his sources. Other preliminary questions are also compelling: How normative was footnoting in *Nahḍawī* compilations? In what fashion was it practiced? Were there other source citation methods in use at the time? How should we understand all this given our present-day understanding and practice of in-text or off-text citation?

Blinding the sources (*al-ta’miya ‘alā al-maṣādir*) was in fact the norm and not the exception in Arabic compilations of various formats, including articles, books, and even encyclopedias of that time, and footnoting per se was only in its infancy. The focus was very much oriented to the “Arabized” material, and transmission (*al-naql*), i.e. translation from European languages, was indeed highly esteemed in the ultimate “service of knowledge” (*khidmatan li-l-‘ilm*).<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, despite the fact that “much of what they published was translated or adapted from the French or English;”<sup>59</sup> the translation procedure was not always transparent to the readers. Translating was evidently an essential part of writing to the extent that it was almost impossible sometimes to distinguish between the two intertwined acts of writing and translating, and to compile (*ta’lif*) encompassed it all. Any conclusions about how exactly writing/translating was operating, and how uniform the *littérateurs* were in engaging their compilation tools are hard to infer. In this tenta-

56 Hroub, *al-Naqd al-nā’im*, pp. 19–32.

57 Hroub, *al-Naqd al-nā’im*, p. 33.

58 “Al-Naql wa-l-naqala”, (Transmission and Transmitters) *al-Muqtabas*, 12 (1 December 1906), p. 624.

59 Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab People* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), p. 304.

tive context, one can anticipate how far-fetched it is to discuss actual footnoting, when the producers of knowledge were themselves still experimenting with their norms and styles of “writing”, not yet established or definitely set.

For example, reading through the pages of *al-Mas'ala al-sharqiyya* by the Egyptian Muṣṭafā Kāmil (1874–1908), leader of the National Party and founder of *al-Liwā'* newspaper in 1900, who had a modern education in Egypt then in France, a reader of today might be astonished by the complete absence of any footnoting in this long historical composition of 350 pages, even though the text is imbued with lengthy historical narrations that were clearly adopted from non-Arabic sources, and were not by any means strictly “authored” by Kāmil. Nevertheless, the monograph as a whole is attributed to him, and upon consulting the referential *Arabic Thought* by Hourani for example, one reads: “Kamil wrote a long history of the eastern question in which the connexion between the policies of the Powers and the internal movements of the (Ottoman) empire was made clear...”<sup>60</sup>

Turning to Rūhī's *al-Muqaddima fi l-mas'ala al-sharqiyya*, a much-abridged historical survey on the same topic, its 102 footnotes<sup>61</sup> cannot be ignored. Their presence suggests a more academic format; despite the fact that the majority of them are not actual referential footnotes but only include dates or names as they appear in the original French. Additionally, one should note Rūhī's introduction to this book, where he offers the readers an account of his initial encounter with the subject, both through books (*Üss-i Inkilāb* (1877–78)) and in university classes that he attended in the Sorbonne, taught by prominent professors Vandal (1853–1910), Sorel (1842–1906), and Rambaud (1842–1905) who discussed it in their publications.<sup>62</sup> Similar “academic” contextualization of a given monograph was not normative at the time.

### **Rūhī's Citation Technique**

#### ***Arabic Primary Sources***

When Rūhī renders Arabic primary sources he cites them explicitly, though in a somewhat rudimentary way. He seems to be following a “practice” that emerges with unflinching regularity across myriad *Nahḍawī* compilations: the explicit and deliberate mention/citing of Arabic primary sources and the names of prominent

<sup>60</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 203.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Khālidi, *Muḥammad Rūhī*, 1/205–09.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Khālidi, *Muḥammad Rūhī*, 1/135–37.

Arab predecessors. This echoes a broader cultural concern, namely that Arab writers of the time did not miss a chance to proclaim that they were conscious and proud of the classical Arabic Islamic heritage. They intended to stress that Arabs of the East had contributed to the construction of the modern civilization flourishing in the West. Illustrating this affinity, while the editors of the renowned *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif* “acknowledged a debt to European works,”<sup>63</sup> they hinted at an initial debt to medieval Arab scholars which both Europeans and modern Arab should admit: “So they (Europeans) have the advantage of primacy over us, just as Yāqūt al-Ḥamwī (d. 626/1229), Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) (...) and many other prominent Arab scholars have the same advantage over them and over us” (*fālahum 'alaynā fadl al-asbaqiyya kamā anna li-Yāqūt al-Ḥamwī wa-Ibn Khallikān... wa-kathīrīn ghayrihim min 'ulamā' al-'arab al-a'lām fadlan 'alayhim wa-'alaynā fī hādihā al-bāb*).<sup>64</sup>

In similar citations, Rūḥī generally includes only the name of the author (e.g. Ibn Khaldūn) and title of the work (e.g. *al-Muqaddima*), with no indication to page numbers or publication details. It is important to note here that he also often uses in-text citation on a large scale, by simply adding the name of the author and the title before quoting his text, such as “Mas'ūdī stated in Meadows of Gold” (*qala al-Mas'ūdī fī Murūj al-dhahab*). Given how basic the footnotes are, those in-text references serve as quasi-footnotes in this context. Thus, it is not enough to simply scan the pages and count the annotations in the margins to make a judgment about Rūḥī's citation technique. It should be noted however that his renderings in these cases, whether the citations are footnoted or incorporated into the text, are very exact when compared with the original texts. This is shown repeatedly throughout his works, where tens of primary sources are quoted.

### Secondary Sources

Yet, when it comes to secondary sources, be it Arabic, French, or Ottoman Turkish, the case is more complicated, for although Rūḥī cites these in many footnotes, he on the other hand paraphrases and even copies verbatim without

63 Marilyn Booth, *Classes of Ladies: Writing Feminist History through Biography in Fin-de-siecle Egypt* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 156.

64 Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif (Encyclopédie arabe)* (Beirut: n. p., 1876), 1/3. *Early Arabic Printed Books-BL: Literature, Grammar, Language, Catalogues and Periodicals*, [tinyurl.gale.com/tinyurl/D4RYk7](https://tinyurl.gale.com/tinyurl/D4RYk7). Accessed 24 Apr. 2023  
Gale Document Number: GALE|FRYBID542815457



specifying the quoted sources in numerous instances. As traced in the latest critical edition of his works for example, some of his blinded sources are in “al-‘Ālam al-islāmī” (The Muslim World) *L’Islam dans l’Afrique Occidentale* (1899) by A. Le Chatelier; *La Linguistique* (1877) by A. Hovelacque in his “*Ilm al-alsina*”<sup>65</sup> (The Linguistics); and *Essai sur l’histoire financière de la Turquie* (1903) by A. Du Velay in his “*al-Duyūn al-‘umūmiyya al-‘uthmāniyya*”. However, was this just haphazard?

Commenting on a certain Sayf al-dīn al-Yamanī’s estimate of the number of Muslims in Sumatra, Rūḥī notes that al-Yamanī must be trusted on this subject, given his expertise. However, he goes on to say that he wishes that the latter had cited his source or explained his method of calculation, for if he had done so, he would have strengthened his argument, as per the rule of Western academics (“*law dhakara lanā ma’khadhabu aw kayfiyyat istinbāṭihi la-kānat al-ḥujja ablagh kamā hiya qā’idat ‘ulamā’ al-diyār al-gharbiyya*”).<sup>66</sup> One can infer from this brief note a practiced understanding of the usage of explicit citation. Citation or an explanation of the argumentation process would make the point more credible. A writer would thus sound more convincing if he employed this or that tactic. From this perspective, Rūḥī’s use of explicit citation in his own writings seems more systematic, as if he explicitly cited his sources yet only selectively, and whenever he found it suitable to reinforce his argument. Citation in this case is only a tool, inspired by Western academic practice (still evolving in its turn at the time), and to be employed when appropriate. Thus, when his sources are not explicitly mentioned, it might be that Rūḥī regarded it as unnecessary to burden his readers by identifying them. This of course deviates from the present-day practice of citing every consulted source. Thus, no matter how unfamiliar this practice might look in modern eyes; Rūḥī’s citation practice seems not to have adversely affected his standing as an author when viewed in the framework of *Nahḍa* of the last century.

In fact, it should be observed that evaluating Rūḥī’s text requires us to ask the following necessary but unasked question: “Who were the interlocutors of Rūḥī?” Researchers are generally absorbed with the writer of a text, the text itself, and the relationship between the two, leaving the presumed readers behind, despite the fact that the latter also have a role to play in the construction of the text. One should not disregard the fact that when Rūḥī designed his text, he maintained

65 “*Ilm al-alsina*”, (Linguistics) in al-Bustānī, *Dā’irat al-ma’ārif*, 2/1099–142.

66 “*Risāla fī sur’at intishār al-dīn al-muḥammadi*”, (A Treatise on the Speed of Spread of the Mohammedan Religion) in al-Bustānī, *Dā’irat al-ma’ārif*, 1/114.

certain standards that reflect the expectations of his contemporary targeted interlocutors in the first place.

One can in fact argue that at the heart of the *Nahḍawī* system is the privileged position of the writer as a “trusted” (by the readers) source of knowledge, and citation was simply not what concerned these readers. It is no exaggeration to state that the *Nahḍa* was indeed “personified by the male *adīb(s)*,”<sup>67</sup> who were distinguished not only by their acquaintance with one or more European language, but with their mastery of formal classical Arabic. The production of knowledge was thus very restricted, and this situation was explicitly enunciated. Writers enjoyed being the living channels through which knowledge, articulated in books, periodicals, and newspapers came to the Arab audience.

Additionally, the only explicit mention of *JE* in *Zionism* seems to confirm this tactical technique of citation. As he concludes section 22 titled “al-Mu’tamar al-ṣahyūnī al-awwal fī filisṭīn”<sup>68</sup> Rūḥī remarks: “The Jewish Encyclopedia compiled by some prominent Jewish scholars and published in English in America in 1905 states: ‘It is not known that the organization was perfected or that either it or its committees ever held further meetings’”<sup>69</sup> (*qālat al-insiklubīdya al-yahūdiyya allatī allafahā nukhba min ‘ulamā’ al-yahūd waḥnasharūhā fī amīrkā bi-l-llugha al-inklīziyya sanat 1905...*).

“*Al-insiklubīdya al-yahūdiyya*” is in fact a phrase Naṣṣār repeats throughout his *al-Ṣahyūniyya* whenever he introduces segments from the encyclopedia, and this conforms to his initial revelation to the readers that he was revealing the content of this encyclopedia in particular, as he emphasized in his introduction. Rūḥī on the other hand never included it in his *Zionism* except in this one place, where he added the abridged description “*allatī allafahā nukhba min ‘ulamā’ al-yahūd...*” This decision to refer to the *JE* seems thus to highlight the importance of the text in this particular case as assumed by Rūḥī, who obviously sought to catch the eyes of his readers in this instance. The presumed importance lies, one can argue, in the “skeptical” tone associated with the description of the nascent Zionist activities in Palestine (“It is not known that the organization was perfected...”),

67 Ibrahim Mahfouz Abdou & Refqa Abu-Remaileh, “A Literary Nahda Interrupted: Pre-Nakba Palestinian Literature as Adab Maqalat”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 51.3 (2022), p. 38.

68 Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, pp. 93–95.

69 <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/15268-zionism#anchor37>.

which reverberates with Rūḥī's attempt to come to terms with the abstract assessment that, against all the odds, the Zionist scheme shall not be completed in his homeland.<sup>70</sup>

### **The Sources of *Zionism***

This is not to say that reviewing *Zionism* to identify every original source that Rūḥī cited is a useless critical exercise. On the contrary, such undertaking that brings us closer to Rūḥī "at work", is illuminating as it reveals the sources which shaped his convictions and overall appreciation of the subject. This step is also essential in establishing a final textual edition of Rūḥī's monograph.

*Zionism* should be treated as a "raw" text and the desirable identification of the cited/adopted segments and then tracing them back to their original source is not an unattainable task. Possessed as we are today of digitization techniques, much of the pertained material is today available in OCR format, and made accessible through databases. This will certainly pave the way to the fairest and most objective treatment of the text.

As luck would have it, and unusually in this particular text, Rūḥī himself had set down a list of sources at the beginning of one manuscript of his book, which constitutes a starting point to identify his academic borrowings. The list provides a varied bouquet of French, Arabic, and Turkish compilations, *JE* among them, which appear to have been Rūḥī's key sources, and the backbone of *Zionism*. The manuscript I am referring to is handwritten by the author and preserved in the Khalidi library, Jerusalem under "KHD\_Rwhi kh\_25/5," and is originally paginated 1–68. However, as it features an abridged and incomplete fragment of Rūḥī's work, Walid Khalidi had not considered it in his edition of *Zionism*.<sup>71</sup> At the beginning of the manuscript, and just before the table of contents ("*fbhrst*") page, we read a numbered list of sources that runs as follows:

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70 Expertly formulated by Walid Khalidi in Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, pp. LXIII-LXVIII.

71 See Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, pp. XXVI-XXVII.

1 <i>Al-Kitāb al-muqaddas</i> (The Bible, The Old and New Testaments)	<i>tarjamatuhu bi-l-‘arabiyya wa-l-turkiyya ṭab‘ bayrūt wa-l-āsītāna</i> (Arabic and Turkish translations, Beirut and Istanbul editions)
2 <i>Jrand ansīqlubidī</i> ( <i>La Grande Encyclopédie</i> ) <sup>72</sup>	<i>wa-hiya dā‘irat al-ma‘ārif al-faransāwiyya al-kabīra māddat “sionisme” wa-ghayruhā min al-mawād</i> (the French encyclopedia, “zionism” and other entries)
3 <i>Lārūs ilustrih</i> ( <i>Larousse Illustré</i> )	<i>wa huwa qāmūs Larus al-maṭbū‘ bi-l-faransāwī</i> ( <i>Larousse dictionary</i> , published in French)
4 <i>Al-Ansiklubidiya al-yahūdiyya</i> [JE]	<i>bi-l-inklīziyya naqala ‘anhā ṣāhib “al-Karmil” (Najīb Naṣṣār) fī jarīdatihi al-‘arabiyya</i> (in English, quoted by the owner of <i>al-Karmil</i> in his Arabic newspaper)
5 <i>Mukhtaṣar tāriḫ al-‘umam al-qadīma al-sharqiyya</i> ( <i>Petite Histoire Ancienne des peuples de l’Orient</i> ) <sup>73</sup>	<i>ta’lif fān din birgh</i> (by Van Den Berg)
6 <i>Tāriḫ Rūsya</i> ( <i>Histoire de la Russie</i> ) <sup>74</sup>	<i>bi-l-faransāwiyya li-rāmbū</i> (in French, by Alfred Rambaud)
7 <i>Rūsya</i> <sup>75</sup>	<i>ta’lif liryū bulyu wa-mā talaqqaynāhu ‘anhū fī madrasat al-‘ulūm al-siyāsiyya</i> (by Leroy-Beaulieu (1842–1912), along what I had received from him (university lectures notes) in the school of political studies)
8 <i>Millat Isra’iliyya</i> ( <i>Millet-i İsrāīliyye</i> (Istanbul 1305))	<i>li-Abū al-ḍiyā kitābkhāne Abū al-ḍiyā bi-l-turkiyya</i> (by Abū al-ḍiyā Tawfiq (1848–1913), in Turkish)

72 *La Grande Encyclopédie* (Paris: H. Lamirault (puis) Société anonyme de “La Grande encyclopédie”, 1885–1902), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k246360>.

73 For full reference, see Al-Khālīdī, *Zionism*, p. 12, footnote 6.

74 Alfred Rambaud, *Histoire de la Russie* (Paris: Hachette, 1878), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k65675z>.

75 Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *La Russie et la Crise Russe* (Rouen: Société normande de Géographie, 1907).

9 <i>Qāmūs al-a'lām</i> <sup>76</sup> (in Ottoman Turkish)	<i>li-Sāmī afandi</i> (Frashiri (1850–1904))
10 <i>Al-Talmūd aṣluhu wa-tasalsuluḥu wa-ādābuhu</i> <sup>77</sup>	<i>tarjamahu ‘an al-‘ibrāniyya al-duktūr Sham‘ūn Yusūf Mūyāl</i>
11 <i>Anīwir</i> (annuaire) <i>jam‘iyyat al-’īka</i> (ICA association)	

Table 1. Sources Listed by Rūḥī in KHD\_Rwhi kh\_25/5, 2v.

This list of secondary sources, along with other off-listed sources cited throughout his text, is a valuable aspect of his book and is worth a full exploration, for it alerts us to the multidimensional acquisition of information that governed Rūḥī’s writing.

The detailed investigation of Rūḥī’s appropriation of these sources is well beyond the scope of this article, but the listing of the *JE* among Rūḥī’s sources (no. 4), which attests to his most controversial borrowing so far, illustrates the vitality of such an effort. Undoubtedly, Rūḥī had not anticipated how valuable this short note might be in illuminating our present understanding of his adoption of Naṣṣār’s translation. The phrase “*naqala ‘anhā ṣāhib al-Karmil fī jarīdatihi al-‘arabiyya*” demonstrates that he clearly did not “copy Naṣṣār’s book” as Hroub titles his *al-Naqd*’s second chapter, but aided himself with the sequence of articles that appeared in *al-Karmil* at the time, before they were later collected in the pamphlet-to-be. This phrase allows us to “see” Rūḥī in context, deriving knowledge and creating a new work, while adapting valuable “raw” material that Naṣṣār generously disseminated in the cultural public sphere. Naṣṣār was in effect Rūḥī’s trusted and only channel to access the *JE* material. *Al-Naqd al-nā‘im*’s discourse polishes off this rather constructive essence of his borrowing, as it detains Rūḥī’s text in the “citation problematization” thus drastically affecting the valuation of appropriating Naṣṣār’s translation in the eyes of today’s reader.

<sup>76</sup> Sami Effendi Frashiri, *Qāmūs al-a'lām* (Dictionary of Prominent Figures), 6 vols (Istanbul: Mihran, 1306).

<sup>77</sup> For full reference see Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, p. 20, footnote 11.

### Whose Views?

Only months after Rūḥī's death, Jurjī Zaydān began to publish in *al-Hilāl* a series of seven articles titled *Filistīn: Tārikhubā wa-āthāruhā wa-sā'ir aḥwālihā al-iqtisādiyya wa-l-ijtimā'iyya wa-l-'ilmiyya* (Palestine: its History, Monuments, and Economic, Social, and Educational Conditions). The articles, which were published between October 1913 until May 1914, were based on a field trip he had made to Palestine earlier that year (*min riḥla li-ṣāḥib al-Hilāl hādihā al-'ām*). They are particularly revealing about the creation of general knowledge on Palestine at the time. "Facts" on its history and late Ottoman circumstances are articulated in a didactic tone in a text that contains not a single footnote, echoing an essentially *Nahḍawī* cultural practice.

Zaydān's presentation of this abridged history of Palestine is yet another proof that the discussion over Rūḥī's *Zionism* needs to be put in the context of the wider religio-historical discourse prevailing at the time. It serves to contest Hroub's pivotal allegation that Rūḥī, as he "copied" Naṣṣār in *Zionism*, "unconsciously" produced a text which conforms to the Biblico-Zionist narrative. Virtually, none of the elements that mark the proposed narrative in Rūḥī's text is disputed by Zaydān. On the contrary, he introduces them "objectively" as general facts that don't require discussion.

Zaydān states that "the Israelites (*al-isrā'īliyyun*) came to Palestine in the thirteenth century B.C.,"<sup>78</sup> where they founded successive kingdoms, and among their famous kings were David and Solomon in the eleventh century. "Their capital city was *Urshalim* or *al-Quds* or *Bayt al-maqdis*;"<sup>79</sup> a city "surrounded by mountains whose names children repeat (today) in schools because of their recurrent mention in the Torah."<sup>80</sup> A masterpiece of Israelite architecture was Solomon's Temple (*Haykal Sulaymān*);<sup>81</sup> and after centuries of settlement in Palestine, they were conquered by the Romans, before the rise of Islam in the seventh century.<sup>82</sup> Muslims then reclaimed the Temple, and built in its place (*fi wasatīhi*) a great dome that was known as the Dome of the Rock (*Qibat al-Sakhra*), and they built on another spot of the Temple a mosque they

78 Jurjī Zaydān, "Filistīn", *al-Hilāl*, 22/1 (01 October 1913), p. 43.

79 Zaydān, "Filistīn", *al-Hilāl*, 22/1 (01 October 1913), p. 45.

80 Zaydān, "Filistīn", *al-Hilāl*, 22/2 (1 November 1913), p. 124.

81 Zaydān, "Filistīn", *al-Hilāl*, 22/1 (01 October 1913), p. 45.

82 Zaydān, "Filistīn", *al-Hilāl*, 22/1 (01 October 1913), p. 46.

named *Al-Masjid al-Aqṣā*.<sup>83</sup> Zaydān also affirms that “*al-ḥaram al-sharīf*” is located on the same site of the former-Temple.<sup>84</sup> He also projects this historical “continuity” on other monumental buildings: “*Masjid al-Khalīl*”, Zaydān declares, was originally built by the Israelites, became a church, and was later transformed into a mosque.<sup>85</sup> More pointedly, he asserts that the Jews are the most ancient of the existing Palestinians communities, and accordingly splits them into two groups: the nationals (*al-waṭaniyyun*) who stayed in their country after the Babylonian captivity, and the strangers (*al-ghurabāʾ*) who returned in more modern times.<sup>86</sup>

These few examples confirm that what Hroub identifies today as “the biblical narrative” was endorsed a century earlier as an orthodox “historical account”, and Zaydān is just as, if not more guilty than his friend Rūḥī of adhering to such “history.”

What one reads in *Zionism* are hence not some biblico-Zionist views expounded in *JE*, incorporated in Naṣṣār’s translation, and then blindly adopted in Rūḥī’s text, as suggested by Hroub.<sup>87</sup> In fact, it is quite inexplicable how Hroub reached such a conclusion, as the biblical components he cites from *Zionism* feature mostly in its first segment, before any integration of *JE* segments.<sup>88</sup>

More fundamentally, adhering to this historical discourse does not automatically mean that Rūḥī (nor Zaydān) was an advocate of the ‘aspiration to return’. In his interview with *Ha-Tsevi*, a Jerusalemite Jewish newspaper published in late Ottoman Palestine by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922), Rūḥī boldly stated to his Jewish interlocutor “We did not conquer this land from you. We conquered it from the Byzantines, who ruled it then. We do not owe anything to the Jews. The Jews were not here when we conquered the country.”<sup>89</sup>

83 Zaydān, “Filistīn”, *al-Hilāl*, 22/1 (01 October 1913), p. 47.

84 Zaydān, “Filistīn”, *al-Hilāl*, 22/3 (01 December 1913), p. 179.

85 Zaydān, “Filistīn”, *al-Hilāl*, 22/4 (01 January 1914), p. 267–68.

86 Zaydān, “Filistīn”, *al-Hilāl*, 22/5 (01 February 1914), p. 347.

87 Hroub, *al-Naqd al-nāʾim*, p. 37.

88 Hroub cites *Zionism* p. 1, 21, 20, 25, 29.

89 As quoted in Emanuel Beška, “The Anti-Zionist Attitudes and Activities of Rūḥī al-Khālidi”, *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honour of Ján Pauliny*, eds. Zuzana Gazakova and Jaroslav Drobny (Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2016), p. 184. The fully-length interview is available in Hebrew through The National Library of Israel, The National Library Newspaper Collection, <https://www.nli.org.il/he/newspapers/hzv/01/02/11/1909/>.

### Final Remarks

In a concluding note, one can tell, more evidently now, that the spark of originality in *Zionism* almost a century ago is hardly detected in the historical particulars it advances on the subject. The history of the Jews, the biblical roots of Zionism, the recognized reasons that allowed the Zionist movement to prosper, the leadership of Herzl, the Zionist conferences, the Zionist activities in Palestine, and the pressures of the Zionist lobby on the Ottoman central government, were all essential events raised in the compendium of periodicals and newspapers in varying degrees of detail. However, *Zionism* is still the most comprehensive treatment of the topic in one book.

*Zionism* establishes its importance today via the absorbing quasi-biographical specifics, insights, and anecdotes scattered throughout its text. These are a splendid documentation of the late Ottoman milieu provided by a politician who stood at the intersection of many identities. More importantly, and just as they are still not fully utilized for historical reconstruction, they hold in them Rūḥī's "last" assessment of Zionism in its clearest light.

Rūḥī, for many years deeply rooted in French culture, had mainly consulted French sources to extract his "facts" on Zionism. Critical theoretical assessments of the nascent movement in these sources, not exclusively written by Jews or Zionism proponents, would have contributed to his skeptical assessment of the actual realization of the Zionist state in Palestine. To this, one can add the opposition of some radical Jewish groups to the Zionist plan, and the letters sent to the Ottoman authorities from around the Empire by Rabbis who were keen to distance themselves from the Zionist project.

Yet, as an "insider" in the Ottoman government, and as an Arab-Palestinian fully aware of the social, economic, and demographic situation on the ground, it seems that many cruel "realities" had shaken his comfortable convictions. His declining "optimism" reveals itself for example in:

- (1) His open scepticism regarding any effectiveness of the "Red Slip" regulation to prevent Jewish settlement in Palestine.<sup>90</sup>
- (2) His description of the extravagant salons of pro-Zionist Jewish newspapers in Istanbul frequented by Ottoman politicians and the significant effect this made on them.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, p. 86.

<sup>91</sup> Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, p. 108.



- (3) His report on the efforts the Zionists exerted “in the last years” to change the anti-Zionist approach of *L’Alliance Israélite* association.<sup>92</sup>
- (4) His bold exposition of the “Mafia” of land confiscation in the district of Jerusalem.<sup>93</sup>

Having listed the growing number of schools run by l’Alliance, Rūḥī notes: “and God knows what end these schools will become in the future” (*wa-Allah a’lam bi-mā taṣīr ilayhi ba’d dhālik*)<sup>94</sup> Here, readers can recognize that Rūḥī senses an upcoming trouble, which he could only hint at with this open-ended comment. In fact, *Zionism* does not close with a conclusion. After he ends his meticulous description of the Jewish colonies, Rūḥī finishes his book by a last section on the tenth Zionist conference.<sup>95</sup>

Nonetheless, while he anticipated the ominous future, Rūḥī did not survive to experience it. Destiny was soon to overwhelm him in Istanbul after a typhoid attack at the age of 49 on August 06 1913. As though his death had brought a momentous lull in the “quarrel” over Zionism, *Ṭanīn* and *al-Karmil* met at imploring God’s mercy on him in the obituaries in both newspapers. *Ṭanīn* headed “irtihāl-i mu’sif”,<sup>96</sup> while *al-Karmil* lamented over “a great nationalist, a noble mind, and a renowned historian” (*waṭaniyyan ‘aẓīman wa-‘āliman fāḍilan wa-tārikhiyyan mashhūran*).<sup>97</sup>

92 Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, p. 122.

93 Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, p. 126, 140, 159–60.

94 Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, p. 118.

95 Al-Khālidi, *Zionism*, p. 149–52.

96 *Ṭanīn*, (August 08 1913).

97 “Rūḥī al-Khālidi,” *al-Karmil*, (August 12 1913),

<https://gpa.eastview.com/crl/mena/newspapers/akac19130812-01.1.2>