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Abstract
This paper will examine how European intervention in Egypt from Napoleon's occupation in 1798 to the departure of the monarchy in 1952 changed the social landscape of the country. Through Napoleonic decrees, diplomatic pressure, influence on the Mohammad Ali dynasty, and the expansion of European missionary education in Egypt, European involvement in Egyptian affairs was essential in allowing Copts and other Christians to reverse centuries of second-class status and ascend to play outsized roles in the economic and political life of the country.

Keywords
Egypt, Copts, colonialism, Christians, Middle East, Islam, French, Humanities, Heather J. Sharkey, Sharkey, Heather J.

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No Longer Dhimmis:
How European Intervention in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries Empowered Copts in Egypt

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Résumé Exécutif

A la suite de la conquête Islamique de l'Egypte durant le 7ème siècle, les coptes - chrétiens indigènes d'Egypte - ont vécu sous la subjugation de la loi Islamique, qui les a considéré comme des citoyens de deuxième classe. Lorsque les gouvernements européens ont commencé à intervenir dans la politique de l'Empire ottoman, dont l'Egypte faisait partie, les coptes ont vu les pouvoirs européens comme des alliés potentiels qui pouvaient plaider en leur faveur avec le gouvernement ottoman en Egypte. Durant le 16ème siècle, plusieurs patriarches coptes ont engagé des négociations d'unification avec le Vatican afin de garantir la protection des coptes par l'Église Catholique. Même si ces négociations n'ont pas réussit, le fait que les patriarches coptes étaient prêts à céder leur autorité montre leur conviction que les chrétiens européens représentaient leur meilleure garantie de protection. Cette thèse sera confirmée durant les règnes de Mohammed Ali et ses descendants (1805-1952). Durant cette période, l'intervention européenne en Egypte a amélioré la condition sociale des coptes et leur a permis d'atteindre un haut pouvoir économique et politique.

L'expédition d'Egypte par Napoléon et son armée de 1798 à 1801 a eu le plus grand impact sur la position sociale des coptes en Egypte. Napoléon a renversé toutes les lois islamiques qui limitaient les droits des coptes et il a même nommé un copte, Jirjis al-Jawhari, intendant général d'Egypte. Une première dans l'histoire de l'Egypte où un copte avait une position de pouvoir sur une population musulmane. En plus, Napoléon a permis la création d'une légion de soldats coptes dans son armée qui l'a aidé à lutter contres les mameloukes. Pour un peuple qui n'avait pas le droit pendant plusieurs siècles de porter des armes ou de monter à cheval, la création d'une telle légion militaire sous le commandement d'un général copte était une amélioration impressionnante. Après le départ de l'armée française de l'Egypte, un soldat

ottoman d'origine albanaise, Mohammed Ali, a gouverné l'Egypte en 1805. Ali et ses descendants ont essayé de transformer l'Egypte en un pays moderne suivant le modèle européen. Pendant cette période, même après la défaite de Napoléon, l'influence européenne est restée très forte en Egypte, un développement qui a continué à améliorer la position sociale des coptes. Les coptes ont bénéficié de cette influence européenne de plusieurs manières:

- Les gouvernements européens ont mis une pression sur le gouvernement égyptien pour assurer les droits des chrétiens et pour protéger les institutions religieuses—surtout les missions européennes—en Egypte.
- Les missionnaires protestants et catholiques en Egypte ont créé un système d'éducation très puissant qui était plus accessible aux coptes qu'aux musulmans.
- L'Église Copte a vu les écoles catholiques et protestantes comme des concurrents et a pris l'initiative de créer son propre système scolaire.
- Les coptes avaient un avantage éducationnel comparé aux musulmans grâce aux nombreuses écoles missionnaires et coptes. Cet avantage, particulièrement leur connaissance de langues étrangères, leur a permis d'accumuler un énorme pouvoir économique et une influence culturelle. L'éducation des coptes a permis à leur élite une grande participation dans le mouvement nationaliste Egyptien et par la suite dans le gouvernement.
- Les Anglais, qui ont occupé l'Egypte entre 1882 et 1952 ont créé un climat libéral, protégeant les libertés de religion et de presse, ce qui a permis aux coptes de mieux participer dans le système politique de l'Egypte. Les Anglais se considéraient les gardiens des chrétiens d'Egypte et ils plaidaient en leur faveur devant le gouvernement égyptien contre toute discrimination religieuse.

Le sujet d'intervention européenne dans le Moyen Orient au profit des chrétiens est un sujet complexe et controversé mais il est clair que les chrétiens d'orient, les coptes inclus, ont bénéficié énormément de l'intervention européenne dans leurs pays.

Introduction

The Egyptian Revolution in 2011 captured the world's sympathy with images of a spontaneous student-led popular revolt against a 30-year old authoritarian regime. While the revolution succeeded in overthrowing Hosni Mubarak and undoing the ruling National Democratic Party, it also ushered in a year of heightened sectarian tensions against Egyptian Christians, with several church burnings in Cairo and Upper Egypt, a bloody military crackdown on a Coptic protest in Cairo, and other smaller incidents of deadly sectarian-motivated violence in rural villages in southern Egypt. In fact, by any standard of measurement, 2011 saw the most deaths from sectarian incidents in modern Egyptian history, beginning with the church bombing in Alexandria on New Year's Eve that claimed over 20 lives. The spate of violence was a jarring sign of the stark regression in modern Egyptian society, which had long prided itself on the relative harmony that existed between Christians and Muslims, who share a common culture and heritage and a deep attachment to their country.

Resurgent sectarianism and the January 2012 election of an Islamist supermajority in Egypt's new parliament have brought increasing international attention to issues facing Egypt's beleaguered Coptic Christian minority. The issue of foreign intervention has become particularly contentious. As western governments publicly raise concerns about the status of Christians in Egypt and expatriate Copts vocally demand action against to protect their coreligionists in Egypt, the Coptic Church and prominent Copts in Egypt go to great lengths to denounce any foreign interference in Egyptian affairs. Indeed, radical Islamists often raise the prospect of Copts calling on western governments to intervene in Egyptian affairs for protection as evidence of disloyalty on their part. However, a historical assessment of Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt shows that European countries, particularly France, played a prominent role in

empowering Christians in Egyptian society. Intervention usually manifested itself subtly in European educational influence or European complaints about specific government policies. Moreover, since most Coptic complaints in the era under examination were against governments of foreign, not Egyptian origin, one can hardly consider such complaints expressions of disloyalty to Egypt as a nation.

This thesis will focus on how European intervention affected all Copts—native Egyptian Christians—regardless of their sect. The main reason for this is that the lines between different Christian sects in Egypt—Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic—are often blurry as intermarriage between the sects is common and one can often find all three sects represented within the same family, which makes distinguishing between the sects difficult. Makram Ebeid, for example, remained Coptic Orthodox even though his father converted to Protestantism.[1] Furthermore, many ostensible converts to Protestantism or Catholicism continued to go to an Orthodox church for baptisms, weddings, and funerals.[2] S.H. Leeder describes the 1913 wedding in Assiut of Esther Fanous, scion of a prominent Coptic Protestant family, where both Protestant and Orthodox clergy officiated.[3] Orthodox Christians make up the vast majority of Copts, and most Egyptians, then and now, rarely differentiate between the three sects. Since all Copts generally faced a similar social environment, differentiating between the sects is a difficult undertaking that would not substantively add to the issue of European intervention in Egypt on behalf of Christians.

Napoleon entered Egypt in 1798 with the goal of spreading the liberal ideals of the French Revolution and quickly decided to overturn the *dhimmi* laws governing the treatment of

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[1] Mustafa Al-Fiqi, "Makram Ebeid." *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. Aziz S. Atiya, ed. NY: Macmillan, 1991. Accessed at Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia (http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce). Accessed on March 29, 2012.
[2] S.S. Hasan. *Christians versus Muslims in Modern Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. 72.
[3] S.H. Leeder. "Modern Sons of the Pharaohs." London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918, 121.

Jews and Christians under Islamic law. The *dhimmi* laws limited the rights of Copts and relegated them to second-class citizenship. Napoleon's decision was transformative for Christians and ushered in years of continuous progress, which culminated in a golden age of prosperity and political power for Copts in the first half of the 20th century—an age that was made possible by the actions of European diplomats and educators in Egypt. Throughout the 19th century, European powers were willing to use their diplomatic leverage with Egyptian rulers to advocate for the rights of Christians while European schools in Egypt, mostly run by Christian missionaries, empowered Christians economically by giving them easier access to advanced education and foreign language skills.

This thesis will begin with a brief historical background of the relationship between Egyptian Christians and Muslim rulers under the various Islamic periods and how European powers began affecting that relationship once Egypt became a part of the Ottoman Empire. Then, I will explore the impact Napoleon's invasion had on the status of Christians in Egypt, particularly his offer for protection to Copts, his promotion of a Copt, Jirjis al-Jawhari, to be Chief Steward of Egypt, and his extensive recruitment of Copts to serve in the French administration in Egypt and even in his military. Moving into the 19th century, I will cover the reign of Mohammad Ali and those of his successors, focusing on his promotion of Copts in the civil service and continued pressure from European governments for reforms in the legal treatment of Christians in Egypt and the rest of the Ottoman Empire, culminating in the Hamayouni Decree of 1856. In the latter part of the 19th century, Catholic and Protestant missionaries were expanding the presence of European schools in Egypt, which because of their Christian nature were much more accessible to Copts and gave them a tremendous advantage over their Muslim compatriots in securing professional employment and accumulating wealth.

The competition produced by these Catholic and Protestant missionaries in the 19th century also forced the Coptic Orthodox Church to begin building up its own educational infrastructure—further propelling Copts upward professionally. The liberalizing influence of European education on this new generation of highly educated Copts also ushered an internal reform movement within the Church, leading to the formation of a lay council called the Majlis al-Milli to supervise the governance of the church's material affairs.

By the time Britian occupied Egypt in 1882, there was a vibrant, liberal, and politically active Coptic upper class that began moving away from internal communal affairs to play important roles in wider Egyptian politics. The thesis will end by focusing on a few prominent, European-educated Coptic politicians in early 20th century Egypt who symbolized the "golden age" of Coptic power and achievement in modern Egypt, which lasted until the 1952 Free Officers coup. Boutros Ghali Pasha is the most prominent Coptic politician in Egyptian history, serving as foreign minister for decades before becoming the first Coptic prime minister of Egypt in 1908. After World War I, Coptic politicians departed from Ghali's Anglophile stance and became actively involved in Saad Zaghloul's independence movement through his Wafd party. Most major Coptic political figures in Egypt joined the Wafd Party, which soon became the dominant political party in Egypt and a vehicle for Copts to achieve full representation in the Egyptian government. The major Coptic figures in the party include Wissa Wassef and Makram Ebeid, who both completed their university education in France. The latter would go on to serve as Secretary-General of the Wafd party and Finance Minister of Egypt under the Mustafa al-Nahhas administration. The Wafd's political rivals tried to paint the Wafd as a tool of Coptic interests because of the overrepresentation of Copts in its leadership. Eventually, the charge would resonate with the Egyptian public, and when, in 1942, Makram Ebeid was passed up for

another ministerial promotion because the Wafd was worried about its appearance as a "Coptic" party, Ebeid and several other leading Copts decided to leave. Ebeid's departure from the Wafd, which was soon followed by the 1952 coup that ended Egypt's experiment with liberal democracy and led to the emigration of Egypt's European communities, was the end of real political power for the Copts in Egypt.

Historical Background

Christianity arrived in Egypt with the apostle Mark, who wrote his gospel in Alexandria in the first century A.D., and quickly became the dominant religion in the country until the invasion of Egypt by Muslim tribes from the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century. From the invasion onward, Egypt became an integral part of a wider Islamic caliphate that encompassed the entirety of the Middle East and North Africa. While Egypt remained predominantly Christian for several centuries after the initial invasion, a combination of strong social pressure to convert to Islam and discriminatory government policies (such as the *jizya* tax on non-Muslims and restrictions on church construction) led to a steady flow of converts from Christianity to Islam. By the end of the 10th century A.D., Coptic had been reduced to a mostly liturgical language, which many historians view as a sign that Christians no longer constituted a majority of the Egyptian population.[4]

The treatment of Christians and other religious minorities in Egypt during the years of Muslim rule in the Middle Ages varied significantly from ruler to ruler, and particularly from dynasty to dynasty. For example, the Fatimids were generally considered to have been more tolerant of religious minorities than the Mamelukes who succeeded them in ruling Egypt in the 13th century. The Mamelukes, who were Sunni Muslim soldiers originally from the Caucausus,

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[4] Edward Wakin. *A Lonely Minority: The Modern Story of Egypt's Copts.* Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.com, Inc., 2000. 8.

were so oppressive towards Egypt's religious minorities that, by some estimates, the Coptic population of Egypt decreased by 50% to 66% between the 14th and 17th centuries, a period that encompasses most of the Mameluke era and the beginning of Ottoman rule.[5] The Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517 officially ended Mameluke rule, though the mamelukes and their descendants still exercised authority in Egypt as *beys*, and reduced Egypt from its position as the center of an Islamic empire to a mere province. In terms of the treatment of religious minorities, Ottoman rule was certainly an improvement over Mameluke rule; however, government-sanctioned discrimination persisted in the Ottoman era, with the severity of the enforcement of discriminatory *dhimmi* laws varying from one sultan to the next. Under Ottoman rule, Christians could not build new churches or repair old ones, Christians had no right to bear arms, Christians had to show deference to Muslims and were not allowed to ride horses or wear flamboyant clothes, non-Muslims were often physically segregated from Muslims and prohibited from entering certain public spaces, the jizya tax on Christians continued to be enforced and sometimes special extra taxes were levied, and certain Muslim sheikhs would fan anti-Christian and anti-Jewish sentiment that resulted in random acts of mob violence.[6]

Looking Towards Europe

Egypt and Europe had been intimately connected through commercial and human links since ancient times, and particularly during the eras of Ptolemaic and Roman rule in Egypt. While trade links continued under Fatimid and Mameluke rule, these links intensified during Ottoman rule, as traders took advantage of the "pax ottomana" that linked together both sides of the Mediterranean. These renewed links between Egypt and Europe also invited the

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[5] Febe Armanious. *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. 16.
[6] Armanious, 16-18.

establishment of deeper political relationships between Egypt and the major European powers—particularly the French and the Austro-Hungarians. Clearly, the Coptic Church viewed European Christians as potential protectors of vulnerable Egyptian Christians, who hitherto had been totally dependent on the generosity of Muslim overlords for their security. In the 16th century, in the decades immediately following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, the Coptic Church entered into serious discussions with the Roman Catholic Church for unification of the two churches. Patriarch Ghubriyal VII was the first to seriously consider discussions of unification with representatives of the Catholic church in 1561, though he ultimately decided against it in order to assure local authorities of his loyalty to Egypt and because of his hesitation to concede certain Coptic beliefs about the divine nature of Jesus Christ.[7] Negotiations were resurrected by Yu'annis XIV in the 1580s, and he was on the verge of agreeing to a full unification when he was poisoned by opponents of unification in 1585.[8] Yu'annis' successor Ghubriyal VIII again came extremely close to a unification agreement, going so far as to address the Catholic vicar as "head of the priests of the world" and referring to both churches as "a single fold and a single faith."[9] However, the unification was not finalized by the end of Ghubriyal's reign in 1601, and his successor Murqus V ended negotiations for unification, much to the chagrin of pro-union Coptic elites in Damietta who unsuccessfully tried to unseat him.

After negotiations with Ghubriyal ended, the Catholic Church adjusted its activity in Egypt from a focus on unification with the Coptic Church to an expansion of missionary activities and an effort to convert Copts to Catholicism. Despite the ultimate failure of unification negotiations, the churches were extremely close to unification, and the seriousness of the negotiations is a testament to how much the Coptic Church valued the possibility of

[7] Armanious, 44.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Armanious, 121.

European protection. That multiple Coptic patriarchs were prepared to acknowledge the primacy of the papal authority in Rome after over one thousand years of separation shows that the Coptic Church was not satisfied with being dependent on Egyptian Muslims for security and felt that affiliation with European Catholics would serve as a reliable source of foreign protection for Christians in Egypt. That the Roman Catholic Church was also willing to spend nearly eighty years involved in such intense negotiations also shows that there was a deep interest on the part of European authorities to get involved in the affairs and protection of Egyptian Christians. The themes of European concern for the rights and security of Christians in Egypt and the perception of European Christians as potential safeguards of minority rights by Copts in Egypt consistently resurfaced in modern Egyptian history even after the end of unification discussions.

Beginnings of a Missionary Presence

The failure of unification talks led to an invigorated effort by the Catholic Church to establish a missionary presence in Egypt. The Catholic missionary presence in the Levant, particularly Syria and Lebanon, had already been established and had begun experiencing significant success in converting the native Orthodox Christians to Catholicism by the 17th century. For example, nearly three quarters of Aleppo's Orthodox Christians were converted to Catholicism.[10] The Franciscan order already active in the Middle East had opened a hospice in Cairo in the 16th century, with the consent of the Coptic Church, in what was the first permanent presence of Catholic missionaries in Egypt. In 1622, the Church in Rome developed the "Congregation of the Propaganda Fide" which created a specific program for Middle East

[10] Armanious, 119.

missions to convert the native Christians to Catholicism[11]. The Congregation of the Propaganda Fide would usher in an expansion of the Catholic missionary presence in Egypt. The Capuchins opened a mission in Cairo in 1630 and the Reformed Franciscan order entered Egypt on a larger scale in 1687 by opening missions in Cairo, Fayyum, Rosetta, and Damietta.[12] By the turn of the 18th century, the Franciscans had expended into Upper Egypt and the Sudan, and the Jesuits had also entered Egypt by opening a center in Cairo.[13] The Coptic Church was initially receptive to the presence of Catholic missions as it viewed the missions as too small and too foreign to pose a real threat to the dominance of the Coptic Orthodox Church among Egyptian Christians. The Coptic Church allowed the missionaries to learn Arabic and Coptic at Coptic monasteries and even to preach in Coptic churches.[14]

In addition to the tacit support of the Coptic Church, the missionaries also had the backing of European governments, who actively intervened to assure the protection of Catholic missionaries in the Ottoman Empire. The Catholic Church received edicts from the Ottoman sultan in both 1665 and 1690 assuring that missionaries in Ottoman lands had permission to preach freely to native Christians and would be assured the protection of local Ottoman authorities. The edicts were secured by the ambassadors of Austria-Hungary and France, respectively, in Istanbul.[15] In 1699, the Austria-Hungarian Empire became the protector of the worldwide activities of the Franciscan mission. Because most Coptic Catholics in Egypt were converted to Catholicism by Franciscan missionaries, the government of Austria-Hungary viewed itself as the protector of the entire Coptic Catholic community. While the Ottoman

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[11] Armanious, 121, because of Islamic laws against apostasy, which is a capital offense, the missionaries were expressly forbidden from proselytizing among Muslims, and their security was contingent on their interactions being limited to native Christians.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Armanious, 122.
[14] Armanious, 121.
[15] Armanious, 119.

government in Egypt would not allow Austria-Hungary to extend citizenship to the Coptic Catholics, which would result in their being designated "foreign persons," the Egyptian government did agree to give the Austro-Hungarian government the right to extend protection to Coptic Catholics and have the Austro-Hungarian consul in Egypt lobby on their behalf, an agreement which would last until World War 1.[16]

The first Catholic missions in Egypt found it incredibly difficult to convert the Copts, particularly as the Coptic Church began to show its hostility to the missions as they grew in size and scope. Eventually, however, the missionaries began to learn the local language and fine-tuned their conversion practices to specifically target Coptic priests, who were known for their lack of education even within the Coptic community, with the expectation that their congregations would follow. This strategy began showing limited success, and by 1750, there were over one thousand Coptic Catholics in Egypt, a number that would grow more throughout the 19th century.[17] The Catholic community in Egypt was further bolstered by a massive influx of Syrian Catholics into Egypt fleeing persecution by Orthodox Syrian Christians in the early 18th century.[18] The Syrian Catholics in Egypt found success working as merchants in Egypt's port cities and even worked into positions of financial administration that had previously been reserved for Copts and Jews. The Syrian Catholic merchants derived their success from their ability to tap into extensive networks of Syrian Catholic traders who dispersed all over the Mediterranean to flee the persecution of their Orthodox Christian compatriots. Furthermore, the French government gave Syrian Catholics *berats*, which were documents giving them the status of "agents" of the French government and allowing them to pay lower tariffs than other native

[16] Carter, 8.
[17] Armanious, 122.
[18] Armanious, 21.

merchants.[19] The *berats* were the products of capitulation agreements between the Ottoman Empire and certain European powers, allowing them to extend their influence in commercial matters within the Ottoman Empire. The biased distribution of the *berats* – France almost exclusively gave these titles to Syrian Catholics—is further evidence of the willingness of European governments to intervene in Egyptian and Ottoman affairs on behalf of local Christian populations—who were all too happy to receive the support and protection of powerful European governments.

Napoleon and the Copts

The 18th century was a tumultuous century for the Coptic Church as it had to protect its flock from an increasing rate of conversions to the Catholic Church while at the same time serving as the main interlocutor with the Muslim Ottoman rulers in defending the interests and security of Christians in Egypt and assuring local authorities of the loyalty of the Christian population. That said, the 18th century was also a period where several Coptic *archons*, or lay leaders, rose to highly influential advisory roles in the Ottoman government, particularly in positions related to the country's finances and tax collection. In this context, the lack of affiliation with foreign European powers distinguished Copts from other religious minorities in Egypt and gave them the appearance of "incorruptible confidants to Egypt's local elites."[20] Copts also tended to have higher literacy rates than their Muslim counterparts, and the perception of Copts as skilled mathematicians and businessmen complemented their presumed loyalty to the Egyptian regime to make them valuable assets as advisors and *mubashers* to Muslim leaders in the 18th century. While the success of the archons allowed them to accumulate vast personal

[19] Armanious, 21.
[20] Armanious, 31.

fortunes—the Jawhari brothers, who handled the finances and properties of Ibrahim Bey, owned over 167 properties in Cairo by the end of the century[21]—and lobby on behalf of Coptic interests to Egypt's higher leaders, the Coptic Church was still in a difficult position of negotiating a space for survival between Islamic rule and the threat of Catholic missionaries who were increasingly succeeding in converting reform-minded Copts. In light of this difficult balance, the historian Otto Meinardus said that "when Napoleon Bonaparte and his [soldiers] disembarked in Alexandria on July 1, 1798, the Coptic Church had reached its lowest ebb."[22]

Napoleon's arrival in Egypt marked a significant turning point for the position of Copts in Egyptian society. In addition to viewing Egypt as a prized military asset, Napoleon was also culturally interested in Egypt and accompanying him on the *Expedition d'Egypte* were dozens of prominent scientists and anthropologists who were deeply interested in ancient Egyptian history and also viewed the Copts with interest as a unique Christian group with deep ties to ancient Egypt. On July 30, 1798, within one month of his arrival in Egypt, Napoleon not only kept Jirjis Al-Jawhari in charge of Egypt's finances, but he named Al-Jawhari General Steward for all of Egypt, in charge not only of the government's finances but all of Egypt's tax collection as well.[23] This was an incredible elevation of the status of Copts in Egypt. Because Napoleon's military unseated the *beys* who had previously ruled Egypt (and whom Jirjis Al-Jawhari and his brother had served as *mubasher* and adviser), Jirjis Al-Jawhari became the highest-ranked Egyptian official in the government of Egypt and reported directly to General Kléber and the French

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[21] Armanious, 31. Ibrahim Al-Jawhari was the successor of another Copt, Rizqallah al-Badawi, who was the personal confidant to Ali Bey al-Kabir. Ibrahim was the *mubasher* for both Ibrahim and Murad Bey and his brother Jirjiswould succeed him after his death and go on to serve for Napoleon. In addition to accumulating a vast fortune, the Jawhari brothers achieved sainthood in the Coptic church through their generous contributions to renovating Coptic churches and aiding the community.

[22] Otto Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, p. 66, quoted in Armanious, Note 10 to pages 5-6, p. 156.

[23] Napoleon Bonaparte. "2895 – Ordre," *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er; publiée par l'ordre de Napoléon III,* Vol. IV, p. 282.

administration in Egypt. For the first time since the Arab invasion, a Copt had served beyond an advisory role to an executive function in the Egyptian government—in this case, the highest executive office in the country. While Copts, because of their relatively high levels of education, had always served in the rural tax collection administration in Ottoman times, the tax collection administration in Egypt under the French occupation was almost entirely Coptic. Jirjis Al-Jawhari, who was also responsible for negotiating between the French occupiers and local Muslim authority figures, used his newfound position of power to obtain substantial increases in the rights of Copts from Napoleon, who overturned almost all the *dhimmi* status laws imposed on Copts in Ottoman Egypt in this letter addressed to Al-Jawhari on December 7, 1798.[24]

> *J'ai reçu, Citoyen, la lettre que m'a écrite la nation copte. Je me ferai toujours un plaisir de la protéger. Désormais elle ne sera plus avilie, et, lorsque les circonstances le permettront, ce que je prévois ne pas être éloigné, je lui accorderai le droit d'exercer son culte publiquement , comme il est d'usage en Europe, en suivant chacun sa croyance. Je punirai sévèrement les villages qui, dans les différentes révoltes, ont assassiné des Coptes. Dès aujourd'hui vous pourrez leur annoncer que je leur permets de porter des armes, de monter sur des mules ou des chevaux, de porter des turbans et de s'habiller à la manière qui peut leur convenir.*
>
> *Mais, si tous les jours sont marquès de ma part par des bienfaits, si j'ai à restituer à la nation copte une dignité et des droits inséparables de l'homme, qu'elle avait perdus, j'ai le droit, sans doute, d'exiger des individus qui la composent beaucoup de zèle et de fidélité au service de la République.*

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[24] Napoleon Bonaparte. "3717 – A L'Intendant General De L'Egypte," *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er; publiée par l'ordre de Napoléon III,* Vol. V, p. 184. My rough translation: (I received, citizen, the letter written to me by the Coptic nation. It will always be a pleasure to protect them. From now on, they will no longer be degraded, and, once the circumstances permit it, which I do not expect to take long, I will give them the right to practice their religion openly, as is normal in Europe, with everyone pursuing his own beliefs. I will severely punish the villages that, in the different revolts, murdered the Copts. From today on, you may announce to the Copts that I will allow them to bear arms, ride mules or horses, wear turbans and dress themselves in whatever manner they prefer.

However, if these days are marked on my part by benefits to the Copts, if I restore to the Coptic nation its dignity and the inseparable human rights that it had lost, I have the right, undoubtedly, to expect from the Copts a lot of zeal and loyalty in service to the French Republic.

I cannot deny that I have reason to complain about the lack of zeal that several Copts have shown. How is it that, if everyday the main sheikhs show me the treasures of the Mamelukes, those that served as their principal agents [Copts] do not show me anything?

I do justice to your patriarch, whose virtues and intentions are known to me. I do justice to your zeal and those of your coreligionists, and I hope that in the future, I will have nothing but praise for the entire Coptic nation.)

Je ne peux pas vous dissimuler que j'ai eu effectivement à me plaindre du peu de zèle que plusieurs ont montré. Comment, en effet, lorsque tous les jours des principaux cheiks me découvrent les trésors des Mameluks, ceux qui étaient leurs principaux agents ne me font-ils rien découvrir?

Je rends justice à votre patriarche, dont les vertus et l'intention me sont connues. Je rends justice à votre zèle et à celui de vos collaborateurs, et j'espère que, dans la suite, je n'aurai qu'à me louer de toute la nation copte.

In this letter, which was a response to a request by Al-Jawhari on behalf of the Coptic community to protect the Copts, Napoleon used the language of the French revolution to assure the Copts that he would protect them and "severely punish" the villages that had inflicted massacres on Copts during battles between the French and Ottomans. Napoleon also removed many of the limitations imposed on Copts by the *dhimmi* laws, granting Christians the right to carry arms, ride horses, and wear any clothes they could.[25] Napoleon vowed to restore to the Copts their "indispensable human rights" and their dignity, though he made clear that he expected the Copts to serve the French republic with loyalty and zeal in return. Napoleon also expressed his disappointment that Copts, who were the principal agents of the beys, were not as forthcoming in sharing information with Napoleon about the material possessions of the Islamic rulers in Egypt. Napoleon even ended his letter with a statement of respect to the patriarch of the Coptic Church, of whose virtues and intentions he says he was aware. After hundreds of years of second-class citizenship in their own country under the confines of *dhimmi* laws, Copts finally regained certain basic rights that elevated them to equal citizenship with Muslims[26] because of the graciousness of the French emperor Napoleon, perhaps confirming the belief among many

[25] Under *dhimmi* laws in Egypt, Copts were limited to only blue or black dress and could not wear clothing considered ornate or flamboyant.

[26] Some might say they were even better off than their Muslim compatriots during the French occupation because they dominated the local French administration in Egypt.

Copts that their only hope for true security and equality in their native land was under the jurisdiction of their European coreligionists.

Napoleon's decision to lift the ban on Copts' ability to bear arms also proved to be beneficial to his French army. In addition to Jirjis Al-Jawhari, there were several high-ranking Copts in the French military administration in Egypt, but perhaps none was as influential as Mu'allim Ya'qub, who became the first non-French general in Napoleon's army.[27] Mu'allim Ya'qub was the son of Mu'allim Hanna, a prominent Copt in the Upper Egyptian town of Mallawi. Ya'qub was thus given access to a privileged education and rose to a position of prominence by becoming the general steward for Sulayman Bey, the governor of the Upper Egyptian province of Assiut.[28] Ya'qub, who married a Syrian Catholic, took advantage of his prominent family background and his connections to the Syrian Catholic community to develop a prominent trading business with European agents in Egypt.

In August 1798, Jirjis al-Jawhari tapped Ya'qub to accompany Napoleon's deputy, General Desaix, on an expedition to Upper Egypt to pursue the retreating Mameluke beys and their soldiers.[29] Ya'qub distinguished himself on the battlefield—a sharp turn of fortune for a Copt who just a few years earlier was not allowed to even bear arms or ride a horse under Islamic law—and was even granted a sword of honor by General Desaix.[30] After a successful expedition, Ya'qub was charged by Desaix in January of 1799 with organizing the postal service in Upper Egypt, and then with handling tax collection in the province for the French administration. In 1800, Ya'qub used his wealth and privilege to donate land in Cairo to build a new Coptic patriarchate. The construction of a new Coptic cathedral is further evidence that

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[27] Coller, 21.
[28] Anouar Louca. *L'Autre Egypte: de Bonaparte à Taha Hussein*. Le Caire: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2006. 17-18.
[29] Louca, 20.
[30] Louca, 21

Napoleon overturned the *dhimmi* laws suppressing the Copts, since under Islamic rule the Copts had been denied the right to build or even remodel churches. In April 1800, Mameluke forces had infiltrated Cairo and incited the local Muslim population to launch a sustained attack on the Coptic quarter—presumably out of anger at the newfound place of privilege the Copts had carved for themselves by cooperating with the French. While some rich Copts fled to the Ottoman quarters to bribe the Turks for protection, Klèber, who was the highest-ranking French general in Egypt at the time, issued an order on April 17 mandating the Copts to stay in their quarter, and that Ya'qub, whom he titled "l'aga de la nation cophte," be in charge with executing the order and defending the Coptic quarter.[31]

Ya'qub recruited fit Coptic men originally from Upper Egypt to form a new military unit under the command of his nephew, Gabriel Sidarous, and to be trained by French military officers. Ya'qub managed to create a legitimate fighting force out of rural peasants, a feat that impressed the historian Nicolas Turk, who said that the Coptic soldiers, "devinrent semblables à des Français meme plus endurants et plus agiles.[32]" Ya'qub's army of soldiers defending the Coptic quarter had become a full-fledged Coptic legion that reinforced the depleting French army in their battles against the Turks. While, there had been Syrian soldiers who had joined the French campaign in the Levant, and there was even a Greek Legion also forming in late 1800, the Coptic Legion was the most significant non-French force in Napoleon's army because it was the largest—numbering over 1,000 men who fought for the French.[33] As Ian Coller explains, such a sizable force of armed Copts under the leadership of a Coptic general, "represented a

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[31] Louca, 35

[32] Louca, 36. My translation: (became similar to the French but even stronger and more agile.)

[33] Coller, 40.

radical alteration to the traditional social balance in Egypt"[34]—an alteration that would not have been possible without the French occupation of Egypt.

When the French were eventually forced to capitulate to the British-Ottoman alliance in late 1801, the soldiers of the Coptic legion—as with all Egyptian collaborators with the French—faced a difficult decision. The capitulation agreement guaranteed the security of former French collaborators, and some prominent Copts, such as Jirjis al-Jawhari decided to stay and retained positions of high rank in the new Ottoman administration. Though the Ottoman captain Hussein Pasha personally asked him to stay in Egypt, Ya'qub did not trust the Turks and decided to move to France with the remainder of the French administration. While he could not convince all the soldiers in the Coptic legion to come with him, he managed to bring a substantive number along on the *Pallas,* the last frigate scheduled to leave Alexandria harbor for Marseille. According to General Beillard, the Egyptians leaving on the *Pallas* consisted of 438 Coptic males, 221 Melkites, and 93 Muslims, as well as the women and children that accompanied them.[35] Unfortunately, Ya'qub died of dysentery within a week of the *Pallas*' departure from Alexandria, allegedly due to a poisoned cup of coffee given to him by Hussein Pacha just before his departure.[36] With his death, the Egyptian émigrés on the *Pallas* lost their leader—the only thing binding them altogether—and, most acutely, Ya'qub's project for an independent Egypt. While many Copts chose to return to Egypt after landing in Marseilles, the Coptic legion remained under the leadership of Gabriel Sidarous and went on to fight in many of Napoleon's battles, including Waterloo.[37] A small Egyptian community, predominantly Melkite, remained in

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Coller 42.
[36] Louca, 24.
[37] Coller, 58-59. Ironically, though most of these soldiers were Coptic or Melkite Christians, Napoleon had them wear green turbans with crescents on them in order to intimidate their European enemies.

Marseilles in relative poverty, though a few Egyptians, such as the Coptic professor Elias Bocthor, managed to find some success in Paris leveraging their knowledge of Egypt.

Ya'qub's true reasons for emigration, however, would only be made public years after his death, with the discovery of documents from the English captain of the *Pallas* alluding to Ya'qub's aspirations for an independent Egypt. Apparently, Ya'qub and his deputies had developed a plan for re-invading Egypt and liberating it from Turkish control, and his main reason for going to France was to secure French and British support for his project of an independent Egypt. According to the captain of the *Pallas*, Joseph Edmonds, "[Ya'qub] declared (in his mind) any Government was preferable to that of the Turkish, that he had joined the French from a patriotic wish of ameliorating the hardships of his countrymen, …that he has yet hopes through the European Governments to do his country good and conceived his going to France would conduce to that effect."[38]

Unfortunately, Ya'qub's untimely death put an end to his aspirations for a European-backed effort to liberate Egypt. However, it is telling that the first formal Egyptian conception of a plot for Egyptian independence came from a Copt who many had derided as a collaborator with the French. Clearly, Ya'qub's leadership in the French administration was not intended to further French colonial rule over Egypt, but rather to finally end hundreds of years of Turkish-Mameluke rule that had been difficult for all Egyptians, and in particular Copts like Ya'qub. Ya'qub was siding with the French against another of Egypt's foreign rulers, not against Egypt itself, and his ultimate aim was to established Egyptian self-rule, a desire that would motivate many prominent Egyptian political figures, quite a few Copts among them, in the 19th and 20th centuries. Furthermore, it was only through exposure to French culture and the ideals of the French Revolution, that Ya'qub was able to develop an argument for Egyptian independence that

[38] Louca, 24

would appeal to the sensibilities of European powers, mostly by referencing the Egyptian roots of civilization, the need for a new sense of Egyptian citizenship, and the practical benefits to Europe of an independent Egypt.[39] Despite the premature end to the French occupation of Egypt, European influence in the country would continue to grow throughout the 19th century, developing new generations of Egyptian leaders influenced by European liberal ideals and anxious to create an independent state with full citizenship for both Copts and Muslims.

The Egypt of the Khedives

Mohammad Ali Pasha

After the French vacated Egypt in 1801 in accordance with British demands, Egypt fell into a state of conflict between Ottoman soldiers sent to reinforce claims over Egypt and local Mamelukes, who had experienced some degree of autonomy in ruling Egypt even under ostensible Ottoman rule. Mohammad Ali, a Janissary officer of Albanian extraction, commanded his armies to victory over the Mamelukes. Mohammad Ali, who would be the first Ottoman governor, or "Pasha," in Egypt, went on to consolidate his control of the country and lead Egypt autonomously as an entity distinct from the rest of the Ottoman Empire. Mohammad Ali and his successors defined their reigns by trying to turn Egypt into a modern state following the model of western European countries, particularly France. Even though Mohammad Ali's turn to power was predicated on the French abandonment of its imperial designs in Egypt, the epoch of the Mohammad Ali dynasty (1801-1952) would be defined by a sharp increase in the presence of Europeans in Egypt and their influence on all levels of society. The number of Europeans in Egypt increased drastically over the 19th century, without even taking into consideration the thousands of Egyptians educated in European-run schools and the many

[39] Coller, 43-45.

Levantine and Armenian immigrants to Egypt who adopted European cultural and social practices. While at the beginning of Mohammad Ali's reign a French traveler claimed there were only three "Europeans" in all of Alexandria, by 1863, the French consulate in Cairo calculated that the permanent French population in Egypt numbered over 11,000 people.[40]

An integral part of Mohammad Ali's vision to turn Egypt into a modern European state was to modernize the Egyptian government by basing his selection of high-level government officials solely on qualifications, regardless on their religious affiliation. During his reign, many Copts, Greeks, and Armenians attained high-level positions of authority in the Egyptian government, particularly in the finance ministry. While Mohammad Ali dismissed Jirjis al-Jawhari from his position as General Steward of Egypt for unclear reasons, he tapped another Copt, Mu'allim Ghali, to replace him. Ghali formalized the country's tax collection system by commissioning a survey of all of the country's land and then dividing the arable land into taxable segments.[41] Another of Ghali's legacies was his conversion to Catholicism. Evoking the unification attempts between the Catholic and Coptic churches in the 16th and 17th centuries, the French ambassador allegedly asked Mohammad Ali to force the Coptic Orthodox Church into a union with Rome. Ghali advised Mohammad Ali that there was no way the Coptic patriarch would accept such compulsion and instead suggested that the best way to encourage the spread of Catholicism in Egypt was to convert to Catholicism himself, which he did.[42] Ghali was later incarcerated, allegedly for misappropriating funds, and was killed in 1822 by Ibrahim Pasha,

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[40]The French traveler is probably referring only to western Europeans in this characterization, since there were probably small numbers of Greeks in Alexandria at the time. Samir Saul, "Les relations économiques franco-égyptiennes du XIXe au XXe siècle: une interprétation." *La France & L'Egypte à l'Epoque des Vice-rois: 1805-1882.* Eds. Daniel Panzac and André Raymond. Le Caire: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2002. 15-16.

[41]Mounir Shoucri, "Ghali." *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. Aziz S. Atiya, ed. NY: Macmillan, 1991. Accessed at Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia (http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce). Accessed on February 12, 2012.

[42] Ibid.

Mohammad Ali's oldest son.[43] Despite the tragic ending to his life and service, Mu'allim Ghali still stands as a symbol of Coptic power and influence during the reign of Mohammad Ali, and there were many other Copts who continued to serve in the highest levels of the Egyptian government under the Mohammad Ali dynasty.

Copts had dominated tax collection in Egypt for at least a century prior to Mohammad Ali's rule, thus most land surveyors, tax collectors, and scribes were Coptic.[44] Copts had been well suited to fulfill the role of tax collectors in Egypt because they long had their own arcane system of accounting and measurements that only they could understand.[45] Because of the disorganization of the finance department and the lack of a regular budget, only the Copts who had been in the administration knew the real amount of revenues and expenses into the Treasury, thus creating a governmental dependence on Copts in the finance bureaucracy and ensuring that there would always be high-level positions for Copts to fill in the khedivial government. This dependence also allowed some Copts to take advantage of their necessity to gain from corruption by misallocating funds or receiving bribes to underreport the holdings of wealthy landowners, enabling them to accumulate significant wealth of their own.[46]

Mohammad Ali's meritocracy, a product of European inspiration, was a boon for Copts and paved the way for the emergence of a landed Coptic aristocracy that would play an integral role in both communal and national politics later in the century. Most of the prominent and

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Hasan, 33. Unlike their Muslim compatriots, Copts had developed a system of measuring land holdings that was incredibly useful to the foreign powers ruling Egypt in Islamic times for tax collection purposes. This, coupled with their competence in mathematics, is how the Copts came to dominate the field of tax collection and finance in Egypt, and why land surveyors were an important element of the Egyptian tax collection authority.

[45] A detailed history of Coptic accounting can be found in Mounir Megally's article: "History of Coptic Accounts and Accounting," *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. Aziz S. Atiya, ed. NY: Macmillan, 1991. Accessed at Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia (http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce). Accessed on February 29, 2012.

[46] Hasan, 34.

wealthy Coptic families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries could trace the origins of their wealth to prestigious and profitable advisory positions in the Egyptian government in the 19th century that gave Copts sizable incomes, through both salaries and corruption, to purchase agricultural land and other assets.

Legal Reforms Under the Khedives

As explained in part one of this thesis, the social status of the Copts in Egypt improved dramatically under the French occupation after Napoleon decided to lift all the *dhimmi* laws restricting the freedoms of Copts. Unfortunately for Copts, this provoked some backlash among Muslim quarters, and their legal status reverted back to the dhimmi laws after the French left Egypt. One expression of the Muslim backlash at the newfound legal emancipation of Christians under the French occupation comes from the Arab historian Al-Jabarti, who, in his description of the French occupation, said, "Another development was the elevation of the lowliest Copts, Syrian and Greek Christians, and Jews. They rode horses and adorned themselves with swords because of their service to the French; they strutted around haughtily, openly expressed obscenities, and derided the Muslims."[47]

Under the rule of Mohammad Ali and the other khedives, Copts slowly began to regain the rights they had been granted by Napoleon, as Mohammad Ali and his descendants sought to impress Europeans and elevate Egypt to the status of a European state. In 1817, Mohammad Ali allowed for church bells to be rung, new churches to be built, and old churches to be repaired.[48] By the end of his reign, Mohammad Ali had also ended the restrictions on clothing for Copts. The *jizya* tax was officially abolished in Egypt in December 1855 under the reign of Sa'id Pasha

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[47] Al-Jabarti, *History of Egypt* 3.69, quoted in Hamilton, p. 276. Alastair Hamilton. *The Copts and the West, 1439-1822: The European Discovery of the Egyptian Church.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.

[48] Hamilton, 276.

(1854-1863), Mohammad Ali's youngest son, a few months before the European powers would force the Ottomans to abolish the tax throughout the empire as part of the Hamayouni Decree ending the Crimean War in February 1856. One month later, Sa'id Pasha would begin the conscription of Christians into the military, which was ambiguously received by Christians.[49] Many Copts in Assiut, particularly the wealthier ones, were opposed to the conscription of their sons. There are different viewpoints on how Patriarch Kyrollos (Cyril) IV felt about conscription. Some sources posit that he was worried about the exposure Christian conscripts would have to conversion pressures from their Muslim superiors, though other sources differ and recount that Patriarch Kyrollos IV personally requested form Sa'id Pasha that Copts be promoted to the officer corps.[50]

Under Sa'id Pasha's rule, the Ottoman millet system was also still relevant, as Copts were governed by their Patriarch in certain matters of personal status. For example, Kyrollos IV objected to the division of inheritance according to Islamic law, arguing that according to Christian doctrine, a women's inheritance should be equal to that of a man's. Kyrollos also established a minimum age for marriage of 14, a concept that did not exist according to Islamic law.[51] Clearly, the Coptic Orthodox Church still maintained some jurisdiction over its citizens during the reign of the khedives and could govern themselves with alternatives to Sharia law. Outside of personal status matters, under Sa'id Pasha's rule, Copts were allowed to be members of the regional judicial councils that adjudicated legal cases. In December 1857, Sa'id Pasha

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[49] Muhammad Afifi, "The State and the Church in Nineteenth-Century Egypt." *Die Welt Des Islam*, New Series, 39.iii, State, Law and Society in Nineteen-Century Egypt (Nov. 1999), 281.
[50] Afifi, 282.
[51] Ibid., 281.

issued an order explicitly demanding total equality between litigants regardless of religion, affirming that all citizens had the exact same rights.[52]

The Copts would see even more legal advances under the reign of Khedive Isma'il (1863-1879), who was heavily influenced by Europe and extremely motivated to see Egypt resemble a European state. Of all the khedives, Coptic sources portray Ismail the most positively, particularly because he donated money to the Coptic Church.[53] In 1863, at the debut of his reign, Isma'il altered conversion policies to mandate that any Copt had to seek the approval of a Coptic priest before converting to Islam in order to prove that they were not under any compulsion. Only after the priest verified the aspiring convert's declaration would the conversion become official.[54] Conversion had always been an extremely sensitive subject for Copts, particularly when evidence arose of forced conversions to Islam, so this added layer of bureaucracy that served as an obstacle to conversions was quite a concession to Copts. In 1866 Khedive Isma'il established the Consultative Council to supervise the Khedive's expenditures and tax policies, giving Egyptians a newfound degree of self-governance over the affairs of the state. Copts from some of the prominent landowning families that made their fortunes from the civil service in the first half of the 19th century featured on this Council.[55] Copts were now occupying high-level executive posts in Egypt's government, going beyond serving as functionaries and scribes in the finance administration to positions of real power that they had attained during the French occupation.

The Copts and Russia

[52] Ibid., 283.
[53] Ibid., 277.
[54] Ibid., 283.
[55] Hasan, 34.

Over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Ottoman Empire fought several wars with Russia. With the exception of the Crimean War, where western European states allied with the Ottomans, Russia won these wars, allowing it to extend its territory deeper into the Caucasus. More importantly, these victories enabled Russia to claim a right of protection over the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, much like the French had with the Catholics. Because Egypt was governed autonomously under Mohammad Ali, this right of protection did not automatically extend to Orthodox Christians in Egypt, who comprised one of the largest Christian minorities in the Middle East. The Russians thus directly approached the Coptic Patriarch Boutros al-Jawali during the reign of Mohammad Ali asking him to place the Coptic Church under Russian protection. Patriarch Boutros VII rejected the Russians' offer, claiming that the Coptic Orthodox Church was under the sole protection of God, who, unlike the czar, was immortal.[56] Whether Boutros made this decision out of confidence in the security of Coptic interests under Mohammad Ali's rule or a fierce sense of patriotism, his decision gained him considerable prestige in the eyes of Egypt's ruler. Mohammad Ali is said to have been delighted by Boutros' refusal of Russian protection, going so far as to say to Boutros: "Truly, today you have raised your standing and the standing of your country, so let you have the position of Mohammad Ali in Egypt, and let there be a carriage like his carriage outfitted for you to ride."[57]

Despite Boutros' rejection of Russian protection, the 19th century saw the Coptic Orthodox Church move much closer to the other Orthodox churches, particularly fellow Oriental Orthodox churches like the Armenians, Ethiopians, and Syrians. In fact, when the Copts in Egypt were divided over who should succeed Boutros VII after his death in 1852, the Egyptian government decided to give the Armenian metropolitan in Egypt temporary jurisdiction over

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[56] Afifi, 286.
[57] Ibid.

Coptic affairs until he could mediate a solution between the two Coptic factions.[58] Kyrollos IV, who ended up succeeding Boutros VII, was intent on seeking unity with the other Orthodox churches and became very close with the heads of the Greek and Armenian Orthodox churches. Kyrollos' project of unity among the Orthodox churches was undertaken with the intention of placing the Copts under Russian protection[59], a sharp departure from Boutros VII's rejection of the idea. Allegedly, Kyrollos' design to seek Russian protection infuriated Sa'id Pasha to the point where he ordered Kyrollos' poisoning.[60] Because of Kyrollos' poisoning, future patriarchs would shy away from projects of Orthodox unity or the seeking of Russian protection from the fear of achieving the same fate as Kyrollos. Just as the Coptic patriarchs did with the Catholic Church in the 16th century, Kyrollos IV found it useful to Copts to use the prospect of Christian unity to find a foreign protector for the Copts among the European powers. Though the situation for Copts under the khedives was relatively benign, a current of thought within the Coptic community was still more comfortable seeking European guarantees of protection than relying on the generosity of Muslim rulers, however open-minded they may have been.

French Educational Influence

In his attempt to mold Egypt into a European state, Mohammad Ali sought the advice of French advisors, as he viewed France as the model state for Egypt to replicate. French influence was most pronounced in education, both through Mohammad Ali's student missions to France and the role of the French in developing a modern education system in Egypt. Mohammad Ali recruited French advisors who had served for Napoleon to help build a state-run education

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[58] Ibid., 279.
[59] Samir Seikaly. "Coptic Communal Reform: 1860-1914." *Middle Eastern Studies*, 6.iii (Oct. 1970), 250.
[60] Ibid.

system in Egypt, a concept that had been spearheaded in France. Starting in 1811, Mohammad Ali began to build colleges in various disciplines—The School of Engineering, Military School, School of Medicine, and School of Foreign Languages—that were administered by the Department of War and were all directed by European headmasters.[61] These schools were intended to build a local elite to serve as government officials and army officers. Because of this, Christians, and most Egyptian Muslims, were forbidden from studying at these schools as attendance was mostly reserved for those of Turkish and Circassian origin who dominated Egypt in the early 19th century. [62] Mohammad Ali also began sending promising students to study in Europe, particularly in France. The first large mission of Egyptian students to France was initiated in 1826 and consisted of 40 students, all members of the Turkish elite in Egypt, and one Egyptian sheikh, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, who was added to the delegation at the last minute to supervise the students.[63]

Though Copts were also excluded from Mohammad Ali's student missions, just as they were from his advanced educational institutions, they still benefited from the impact that European education had on local Muslim elites. Europeanized Muslims began to adopt modern French notions of democracy, equality, and cultural progress. Copts would never have been able to become so influential in the Egyptian economy and politics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries without the liberalization of local Muslims. Only because Egyptian Muslims began respecting the skills and assets of local Christian and Jewish populations, could these populations achieve positions of power. In many ways, the progression and liberalization of Muslim Egyptian thought was just as integral to the advancement of Copts in Egypt, and the widespread

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[61] Raouf Abbas. "French Impact on the Egyptian Educational System under Muhammad Aly and Ismail." *La France & L'Egypte à l'Epoque des Vice-rois: 1805-1882.* Eds. Daniel Panzac and André Raymond. Le Caire: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2002. 93.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Coller, 168.

social acceptance of their relative economic clout, as the reforms that gave Copts more educational opportunities. For example, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi was extremely influenced by the modern civilization he witnessed in France and everything he learned from his French colleagues. He returned to Egypt imbued with French democratic ideals and was an instrumental intellectual guide of the *nahda*, or Arab Renaissance, of the 19th century. Tahtawi introduced the concept of the *watan*, or homeland, to Arab intellectual thought[64], thereby initiating the notion that the homeland—in this case, Egypt—could precede religion in importance. The elevation of the homeland was especially important to Egypt's Copts, whose deep roots in Egypt were acknowledged by their Muslim compatriots, and who benefited from a strain of thought that placed the nation at the center of society, regardless of religious affiliation. This strain of thought would have taken much longer to take hold in Egypt were it not for the profound influence that French education had on Egyptian Muslim thinkers like Tahtawi.

The influence of France on the development of the education system in Egypt was also made obvious by the creation of a General Council of School Reorganization in 1836, which was charged with organizing the Egyptian education system and which proposed the creation of primary and secondary schools to prepare students for the military-run higher education institutions.[65] The council had seven French members, three French-educated Armenians, and two Egyptians, one of whom was Rifa'a al-Tahtawi.[66] Clearly, the French heavily influenced the development of the Egyptian government education system.

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[64] Abbas, 96.
[65] Ibid., 94.
[66] Ibid.

The Egyptian student missions to France were so successful that in 1844, a permanent Egyptian Military School in Paris was created.[67] The school was supervised by the French Ministry of War and hosted students from the new higher education institutions in Cairo that were directed by Europeans. The students were meant to undergo extensive military training and academic preparation at the Egyptian Military School before matriculating to advanced French education institutions such as the Military School of Metz or the *École Polytechnique* in Paris. The students were housed in the dormitories of *L'Ecole Egyptien* in Paris, along with the other Egyptian students on academic missions in Paris. Though the school was short-lived—it was closed by Abbas Pasha in 1849 only to reopen for a few years in 1869—its existence solidified the dependence that the Egyptian military had on French educational institutions to educate Egypt's Muslim elites and prepare them for service in the government bureaucracy or the officer corps.

In addition to French influence on the creation of Egypt's government-run schools, which were intended primarily for Turkish and Circassian elites, the 19th century also witnessed an expansion of the French Catholic missionary presence in Egypt. These missionaries built schools all over Egypt, which, because of the religious nature of the education, tended to appeal to local Christians more than Muslims. These schools taught all instruction in French and attracted both local Egyptian elites and Levantine and Armenian students. Though the student body was predominantly Christian—which was advantageous to Copts as they gained foreign language skills that were valuable assets in careers in business or politics—some Muslims also attended, helping to expand the class of Europeanized Muslims that enabled the liberal age in Egypt to

[67] Abbas, 98.

take hold in the late 19th century.[68] The most prominent of the French secondary schools in Egypt was the College de la Sainte Famille in Cairo, which was founded by the Jesuits in 1879, and graduated many prominent names in Egyptian society[69]. More French schools would continue to be built into the 20th century, including the College Saint Marc in Alexandria, which was built in 1926 and was then the largest secondary school in the Middle East[70]. The French government actively aided the construction of French-language schools by Catholic orders; the French consul in Egypt assisted the orders in procuring land and permits for schools all over Egypt.[71] These schools would help graduate a cosmopolitan, French-speaking Egyptian elite that comprised Copts, Jews, Levantines, Armenians, and liberal Egyptian Muslims. The Christian nature of the schools made them more appealing to Copts, and the prevalence of Catholic and Protestant missionary schools allowed Copts to fulfill their educational aspirations despite being denied entry into the military-run government schools in Cairo.

The Church Mission Society and Coptic Reforms

The Protestant missionary experience in Egypt began in 1825 with the first mission dispatched to Egypt by the English-based Church Missionary Society (CMS)[72], an Anglican

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[68] Many historians refer to the first part of the 20th century, particularly after independence was granted in 1922 as Egypt's liberal age. This was a period marked by fairly regular and free elections, a parliamentary democracy, a vibrant free press, free market economic policies, and a cosmopolitan Egyptian society marked by very little sectarian strife. I would posit that the liberal age had its roots in the British mandate in 1882, which liberalized society to allow for a free press with many different publications, allowed for public dissent, and set the stage for the mass migration of people from across the Mediterranean to Egypt, which created a cosmopolitan society marked by religious pluralism. Selma Botman. "The Liberal Age, 1923–1952." *Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century.* Ed. M. W. Daly. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Cambridge Histories Online. Cambridge University Press. 05 April 2012

[69] Hamilton, 279.

[70] "Construction du College," College Saint Marc website, www.saint-marc.ws, Accessed on 2/19/12.

[71] Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008. 32.

[72] Paul Sedra. "John Lieder and his Mission in Egypt: The Evangelical Ethos at Work Among Nineteenth-Century Copts." *The Journal of Religious History*, 28.iii (October 2004). 223.

missionary group very present in the Middle East. The group's expansion into Egypt was encouraged by William Jowett, its literary representative for the Middle East, who viewed Egypt as a natural gateway to spread the missionary message throughout Asia and Africa. The decision to move into Egypt was made easier by the 1824 decree by the Ottoman Sultan prohibiting the import of biblical scriptures into the Empire, rendering the group's missionary activity in Syria impossible.[73] Because Egypt was then ruled autonomously by Mohammad Ali, who had instituted a climate of religious tolerance in the country, missionaries in Egypt encountered no such hostility from the local government. The original purpose of the CMS mission into Egypt was not to convert the Copts to Anglicanism but rather to improve the state of the Coptic Church.

Britons in the 19th-century had a strong fascination with the Coptic Church because of its rich Christian heritage, Egypt's role as a place of refuge for Jesus, its long history under Muslim domination, and its legacy as an apostolic church.[74] There also could have been a sense of similarity between the Coptic Orthodox and Anglican churches since both churches had phases of contention with the Roman Catholic Church and were churches with a strong autonomous, national identity.[75] Instead of conversion, Jowett argued that the missionaries should aim to resurrect and improve the state of the Coptic Church. Many Western visitors to Egypt had viewed Copts as morally corrupt because of their alleged disposition to lying, their servility to Muslim overlords, their corruption, and their perceived fondness for alcohol, especially *arak*.[76] Moreover, Coptic priests at the time were generally looked down upon even by most Copts, as they usually had lower-class origins, were illiterate, and demanded payment for the performance

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Sedra, 226.
[75] Sharkey, 34.
[76] Armanious, 33. Sedra, 227. Cromer, 433.

of their most basic duties.[77] As Paul Sedra explains, "Jowett advocated, rather, the resurrection of the glories and grandeur of the primitive Church…[which] demanded the imposition of 'order' upon the 'fallen' Coptic Church."[78] The key to the CMS strategy of improving the state of the Coptic Church was to enable Copts to read and understand the Scriptures properly.[79] This strategy necessitated the introduction of modern methods of schooling to the Copts, and the education of Copts became the central focus of the CMS mission in Egypt for the entirety of its duration.

The first CMS school in Egypt was a boys' school in Cairo founded in May 1828 by CMS missionary William Krusé. The school instructed students in both Arabic and English and while the focus of the curriculum was undoubtedly on the Scriptures, students also received lessons in mathematics, geography, history, grammar, science, and even drawing.[80] Even more impressive was the creation of a girls' school in Cairo in February 1829 by Krusé's wife that soon attracted more students than the boys' school.[81] The mission's most ambitious education effort, however, was The Coptic Institution, a school dedicated solely to educating Copts wishing to become priests. The school was spearheaded by John Lieder, the head of the CMS mission in Egypt, and was submitted to the Coptic Patriarch (Boutros II) for approval in 1840 and finally established three years later.[82] The school aimed to ameliorate the rampant illiteracy among Coptic priests by educating them in Arabic, Coptic, English, the Scriptures, and the sciences. Though the Coptic

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[77] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform", 248.
[78] Sedra, 227.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Sedra, 230.
[81] Ibid., 231.
[82] Ibid., 233.

Institution would only last five years,[83] the CMS focus on expanding educational opportunities for Copts would usher in a new era of Coptic educational reformation, particularly under the leadership of Patriarch Kyrollos IV, who served from 1854 to 1861. Kyrollos was a bishop during the experiment with the Coptic Institutution, so it is very likely that he had been exposed to John Lieder and the Coptic Missionary Society. The influence of Protestant ideas on Kyrollos is clearly demonstrated by his iconoclastic beliefs, which were one of the key hallmarks of Protestantism. Kyrollos removed and destroyed all the icons in the Coptic Cathedral, a stark departure from centuries of an iconographic Orthodox tradition in the Coptic Church and clear evidence of Protestant influence.[84] Kyrollos, who became known in Coptic circles as "Abu al-Islah," or the "Father of Reform,"[85] was most known for his push to reform and expand Coptic education.

Kyrollos' most noteworthy educational achievement was the foundation of the secular Great Coptic School in Cairo in 1855. The school, though focused on educating Copts, was open to students of all faiths, who received free books and stationery. Students at the school learned Arabic, Coptic, English, Turkish, French, and Italian, as well as calligraphy, history, geography, and mathematics.[86] The school was particularly noteworthy for educating the sons of Coptic elites who would go on to lead a lay movement for reform within the Church in the late 19th century.[87] Interestingly, in order to print enough books to keep the school functioning, Kyrollos imported the first privately owned printing press into Egypt.[88] Beyond the Great Coptic School,

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[83] The school was troubled both by the tendency of many students to leave the priesthood and pursue more prestigious professions after receiving an education and by the suspicion many Coptic clergy viewed the Protestant-run school even if it was approved by the Pope. Seikaly, "Coptic Reform" 247.
[84] Sedra, 236.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 237.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 250.

Kyrollos also built two girls' schools in Cairo and schools in Mansoura and Bush[89], and he even mandated formal instruction in theology and Coptic for the Church's many deacons.[90] Access to education for Coptic girls, at both Coptic and missionary schools, contributed to the educational advantage Copts had over their Muslim compatriots, for whom girls' education was unheard of. Having an educated women in a household raising children had a positive impact on the educational attainment of future generations of Copts, and the benefits of this would be felt by Copts through the 20th century.[91]

American Presbyterian Missions and Church Reform

Though Kyrollos' successor, Demetrius II (1862-1870) would not continue Kyrollos' reforms and neglected Coptic education, the expansion of American missionary activity in the 1860s and onwards eventually prompted further reform in the Coptic Church. When John Lieder died in 1865 after 40 years of continuous work in Egypt, the Church Missionary Society's presence in Egypt ended with him and would only return after the beginning of a British mandate in 1882 with a mandate focusing on the conversion of Egyptian Muslims.[92] The gap in Egyptian Protestantism left by the dissolution of the Church Missionary Society would be filled by American Presbyterian missionaries, who first came to Egypt in 1854.[93] Like the British that preceded them, the Americans were also motivated by a desire to reform the Coptic Orthodox Church and viewed the ability to read and understand the Scripture as essential to the spiritual reformation of Copts. As a result, the Americans also prioritized education and built numerous

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[89] Sedra, 237

[90] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 249.

[91] In my conversations with him, Mahfouz Doss cites the higher rate of education among Coptic women, which led to having educated mothers in many Coptic homes, as a significant factor in explaining why Copts had higher levels of educational attainment in the first half of the 20th century compared to Muslims.

[92] Sharkey, 20.

[93] Ibid.

schools in Egypt focused on educating Copts.[94] However, unlike the Britons of the CMS who were fascinated by Coptic history and had a relatively amiable relationship with the Coptic Church, the American Presbyterians were keen to convert Copts and felt that conversion was the best way to energize the Coptic Church into a modernization. The Presbyterians were also much more present in Upper Egyptian towns, where the Coptic population was the highest and where many elite Coptic families were based. By 1863, American missionaries were running a girls' school in Alexandria and a boys' school and a girls' school in Cairo, and in 1865 they established a center in Assiut that had a school for boys and girls.[95] Over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, American missionaries would establish more schools in Upper Egyptian towns like Luxor, opening thirty-five schools by 1878[96]. Many of these schools, and the American school in Assiut in particular, would go on to educate many prominent Copts. The Presbyterian missions in Egypt also began converting some Copts, reaching 600 Egyptian members by 1875 and receiving official government recognition as a sect from Khedive Tawfik in 1878.[97] Like the Britons of the Church Missionary Society, the educational activity undertaken by the Americans also spurred a reactionary Coptic Orthodox reformation. As Samir Seikaly summarizes, "The American mission, although unsuccessful in detaching considerable numbers from the Church, nevertheless affected the general body of Copts through its educational activity, awakening in them a spirit of inquiry and keeping alive the impulse to reform."[98]

An internal Coptic reformation would return after the death of the extremely anti-reform and anti-Protestant Demetrius II in 1870. At the time, a group of prominent Copts, led by the

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[94] Ibid., 27.
[95] Sharkey, 36.
[96] Hasan, 71.
[97] Sharkey, 42.
[98] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 250.

prominent government official Boutros Ghali, formed a society to push for communal reform, including better supervision of the Church's holdings and affairs and increased church assistance to the poor.[99] Boutros Ghali, who was born in Beni Suef[100], was actually not a descendant of Mu'allim Ghali but got his name from the traditional Egyptian practice of following the son's first name with his father's first name. His father, Ghali Nayruz, was the steward for the estate of Prince Mustafa Fadil, and Ghali himself was actually educated in the Great Coptic School founded by Kyrollos IV, where he acquired language skills and where he eventually taught for several years.[101] Though the clergy did not respond positively to the demands of Ghali and his group of reformers, the reformers were not intimidated. Boutros Ghali then authored a petition to Khedive Isma'il to confirm the foundation of a lay council, called the Maglis al-Milli, to assist the clergy in supervising church affairs and in continuing the reformation of the Coptic Orthodox Church.[102] On February 15, 1874, Isma'il issued a Khedivial decree ordaining the Council, which had twelve elected members and twelve substitute members.[103] According to S.S. Hasan, the impetus for lay supervision in the Coptic Church was the example of democratically-run American Presbyterian churches in Egypt.[104] A few months later, disagreement over who was to succeed Demetrius II finally came to an end, and Kyrollos V became Patriarch. Departing from the anti-reform policies of his predecessor, Kyrollos V confirmed the Maglis al-Milli and worked with them to establish a Coptic girls' school that same year.[105] The next year, Kyrollos V

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[99] Ibid. 251.
[100] Doris Behrens-Abuseif. "Boutros Ghali." *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. Aziz S. Atiya, ed. NY: Macmillan, 1991. Accessed at Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia (http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce). Accessed on February 22, 2012.
[101] Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr. "The Butrus Ghali Family." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*. Vol. 30 (1993), 184.
[102] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 251.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Hasan, 72.
[105] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 252.

approved the Council's proposal for a Theological College, intended to combat the widespread opinion among upper-class Copts that priests were illiterate and ignorant of Church history and theology. The Theological College was the first attempt at formal religious training for Coptic priests and monks since John Lieder's Coptic Institute in 1848. The students at the Theological College were instructed in church history, liturgy and dogma, Coptic, and Arabic.[106] The clergy were opposed to the practices of the Lay Council and tried to convince the Patriarch that their influence was impeding his authority. Eventually, when the Council tried to assert its right to deal with all the Church's financial and civil matters, the Patriarch became opposed to the Council and its Theological College.[107] The Council eventually stopped meeting, and thus the first stage of the Coptic *nahda*, or Renaissance, was over. A few years later, however, in 1881, Boutros Ghali and his group of Coptic leaders, formed a new society, called the Coptic Charitable Society, with the sole purpose of ameliorating the miserable conditions of impoverished Copts, whom they felt the Church neglected.[108] Again, the theme of Coptic reform as a response to missionary activity resurfaces as some historians like Mine Ener posit that the Coptic Charitable Society was formed as a response to Catholic and Protestant social work among poor Copts in Upper Egypt and the cities.[109]

The actions of the Copts behind the *maglis al-milli* and the Coptic Charitable Society demonstrate that by the late 19th century, a well-educated and Westernized Coptic lay leadership, signified by Boutros Ghali, had emerged that wished to apply the education they had received at both Coptic and missionary schools to the amelioration and modernization of their Church. These Copts had been direct beneficiaries of both the incursion of missionary activity in Egypt

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[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Cited in Sharkey, 45.

and the first wave of Coptic reform undertaken by Kyrollos IV, and they wished to see these reforms continue so that the Coptic Church would more closely meet the spiritual, educational, and financial needs of its adherents in an increasingly modern and Westernized Egypt. While they were certainly influenced by Protestant and Catholic ideas, these elites devoted their energies to improving and reforming their own Church instead of converting. The effect the American and British missionaries had in sparking a Coptic reformation affirmed the original intentions of the first Protestant missionaries to push for a modernization of the ancient Coptic Orthodox Church.

The 'Urabi Revolt and British Occupation

The resolve of Coptic reformers to liberalize the governance of their Church was strengthened in the wake of the British occupation in 1882, whose impact on Coptic-Muslim relations in modern Egypt was quite profound. The expansion of British and French government influence on Egyptian affairs began during the reign of Khedive Isma'il, who racked up tremendous debts to European creditors in his attempt to reconstruct Cairo as a model European city and to build the Suez Canal as a testament to Egyptian modernity. In 1876, Isma'il was forced into bankruptcy and the British and French governments inserted themselves into his government as representatives of European creditors to ensure the proper payment of debts.[110] By 1879, the Europeans had successfully forced out Isma'il and replaced him with his son, Khedive Tawfik. Though both the British and French played a role in Egyptian government at the time, the British were much more deeply invested in Egypt, which explains why the British were much more willing to militarily intervene in Egypt to safeguard their interests. In 1880,

[110]Donald Malcolm Reid. "The 'Urabi revolution and the British conquest, 1879–1882." *Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century*. Ed. M. W. Daly. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Cambridge Histories Online. Cambridge University Press. 10 March 2012 DOI:10.1017/CHOL9780521472111.010. 219.

Britain accounted for a majority of Egypt's debt, 80% of Egypt's exports, 44% of Egyptian imports, 80% of Suez Canal traffic, and around half of the shares in the Suez Canal.[111]

The crushing burden of servicing European debt on the Egyptian treasury—even after interest on the debt was lowered from 6% to 4% in 1880 the debt payments comprised 50% of the government annual revenue[112]—necessitated tax increases that infuriated native Egyptians. Furthermore, Egyptians felt excluded from positions of power in their country as the Khedive's government was almost exclusively made up of officials of Turko-Circassian origins. Furthermore, the British and French involvement in Egyptian government brought more Europeans into the government bureaucracy. In 1882, Europeans comprised 2% of all Egyptian government officials and drew 16% of the total Egyptian government payroll.[113] The preponderance of Europeans in government necessitated the hiring of Syrian Christians—at the expense of native Egyptians, particularly Copts—to serve as interpreters and scribes in the Egyptian government. These various issues engendered resentment among Egyptians at the Turkish elite, the British and French interventionists, profiteering foreigners whether European or Levantine, and Khedive Tawfiq, who was autocratic and unsympathetic to Egyptians. The resentment culminated in a show of force by Egyptian army colonels led by the officer Ahmed 'Urabi who, on September 9, 1881, brought their soldiers to Abdeen palace to demand a new government and the election of a consultative council. Though Khedive Tawfiq had no choice but to comply, the revolution did not end there as tensions continued to mount and a new government struggled to take hold.

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[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 221.
[113] Ibid., 220

On June 11, 1882, a streetfight in Alexandria between an Egyptian and a Maltese escalated into a full-scale riot that left fifty Europeans and two hundred and fifty Egyptians dead. As thousands of Europeans fled the Egyptian interior and Tawfiq fled to British protection in Alexandria, sporadic violence continued and on July 11, the British fleet in Alexandria began bombarding the city in preparation for an invasion.[114] 'Urabi, who remained the minister of war in a compromise cabinet formed after the Alexandria riots, had brought his forces to hold their ground at Kafr al-Dawwar, a midway point between Alexandria and Cairo. On the morning of September 13, the British, who had brought in reinforcements through Port Said, surprised 'Urabi and his forces and decimated them in battle.[115] 'Urabi was forced to surrender and the British solidified their control over Egypt, beginning a 70-year military occupation of the country and an exercise of authority over the country's governance through the British consul-general in Cairo.

The position of the Copts in regards to the 'Urabi revolt remains a point of contention. Two Copts, including Boutros Ghali, served in the 1881-1882 council that was formed in the wake of 'Urabi's September 1881 march on Abdeen Palace.[116] Most Copts were also very sympathetic to the nationalist slogan of "Egypt for the Egyptians" that had been used by many of Tawfiq's opponents prior to the 'Urabi revolt.[117] Furthermore, Copts were just as agitated as Egyptian Muslims at the Turko-Circassian dominance of high-level Egyptian posts, and many Copts felt threatened by the Syrian Christians who, under European encouragement, were beginning to fulfill bureaucratic roles traditionally reserved for Copts. That said, the 'Urabi revolt took on unabashedly Islamic and Arab tendencies, and 'Urabi was not shy to use Islamic

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[114] Ibid., 232.
[115] Ibid., 236.
[116] Ibid., 235.
[117] Interestingly, the slogan was coined by an Egyptian Jew, Ya'qub Sanu, who published *Abu nadara al-zaqara,* a satirical anti-regime newspaper from Paris. Reid, 223.

rhetoric to rally the masses behind him. Furthermore, unlike most other Egyptian publications, which had very nationalist titles, the main 'Urabi newspapers (*al-Ta'if*, *al-Hijaz*, and *Fustat*) had Arab-Islamic titles.[118] Also, during the 1881-1882 unrest around the 'Urabi revolt, Coptic landowners in Upper Egypt had problems with their fellahin, sometimes resulting in violence.[119] Regardless of the reality of Coptic opinion regarding the 'Urabi revolt, British media and government sources repeatedly raised the prospect that should 'Urabi take control of Egypt, the Copts would be subject to possible extermination.[120] The British cited this potential ethnic cleansing as a justification for their invasion of Egypt and expected to receive more gratitude from Copts for saving them from impending disaster. Even after 1882, Lord Cromer continued to cite potential threats against Copts as a rationale to his superiors for extending and entrenching the British occupation of Egypt.[121] The Coptic view of the British occupation was always somewhat divided into two camps: Copts who supported the British occupation and viewed it as an essential safeguard and those Copts who thought that they would be better off in an independent Egypt. Over the course of the occupation, the camp that comprised the majority of Copts would vary depending on the circumstances of the time.

Continuation of Coptic Reform

The beginning of the British occupation of Egypt—and the relative climate of freedom it permitted, particularly in the press--further emboldened Coptic reformers to continue their efforts as they felt the British, as western Christians, would be sympathetic to Coptic interests. In particular, they felt the British would be more inclined to side with liberal, European-influenced

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[118] Ibid., 230.
[119] Ibid., 235.
[120] Samir Seikaly. "Prime Minister and Assassin: Boutros Ghali and Wardani." *Middle Eastern Studies,* 13.i (Jan. 1977). 112.
[121] Carter, 66.

Coptic reformers in their conflicts with the traditional clergy, who typified the stubbornness and closed-mindedness of the East that the British so detested. In 1883, the Anglican Church, which obviously exercised some influence over the British occupiers in Egypt, formed the Association for the Furtherance of Christianity in Egypt, which encouraged the Coptic reformers. The purpose of the organization was to "further the cause of Christianity in Egypt by assisting the Coptic Church in the attainment of a higher spiritual life, especially through a better system of education for its members."[122]

Members of the association met with the reformers and the Patriarch Kyrollos V to emphasize the necessity of reform. The new reform movement began on February 6, 1883 when Boutros Ghali made a speech demanding the government to order the resumption of meetings of the lay council (*maglis al-milli)*.[123] The reformers focused their demands on the need to better manage Church funds and endowments (*waqfs)*, provide more support to impoverished Copts, construct more schools for the general Coptic population, and to mandate a more thorough theological education for clergy. On May 14, 1883, Khedive Tawfik issued a decree sanctioning the creation of a new lay council in the Coptic Church.[124] Patriarch Kyrollos V, however, felt that the reformers did not respect his authority and so refused to attend any meetings of the lay council, thereby delegitimizing it until its termination in 1884.[125] Though the second wave of reform, initiated on the coattails of the British occupation, was short-lived, the appetite for change among elite lay Copts continued to grow, and in 1891 reformers were once again lobbying the Patriarch to give them some supervision over church affairs.

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[122] Quoted in Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 253.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] ibid.

In 1891, reformers came together to demand that the Patriarch hold elections for a new lay council, and this time, when Kyrollos V refused, they went ahead and held their own elections for the council over his objections. The same years, Coptic reformers also created an organization called the *Jam'iyyat al-tawfiq*, an organization intended to help poor and orphaned Copts by building schools and hospitals.[126] The organization published reports documenting the decay of Coptic schools because of a lack of funding from the Church, demanding that the clergy receive salaries to end clerical corruption, and advocating for increased lay involvement in church affairs. These reports were widely read by lay Copts and expanded popular support for reform beyond the previous circle of elite Copts.

The newfound enthusiasm of the reformers antagonized Kyrollos V, and he asked Khedive Tawfik to abolish the council. The Khedive, old and not wishing to antagonize either the Patriarch or the reformers, gave Boutros Ghali, the highest ranking Copt in government at the time, the responsibility for finding a solution to this crisis.[127] When Boutros Ghali could not come up with a solution that pleased both the clergy and the reformers, they decided to hold another round of elections for the Council and were able to obtain a Khedivial decree ratifying the election results on July 17, 1892.[128] After the Patriarch still refused to accept the legitimacy of the Council, the reformers asked the Khedive to relieve the Patriarch of his authority over the Church's secular affairs and appoint a bishop as vicar to assume the authority of the Patriarch. The Khedive consented to this request, and Kyrollos V responded in the tradition of many Coptic patriarchs before him—by appealing to European governments, particularly the French and British, to intervene on his behalf. The French and British were quite sympathetic to the

[126] Ibid., 254.
[127] Ibid., 255.
[128] Ibid., 256.

reformers, since they were mostly European-educated elites and represented the more westernized, "enlightened" trends of the Coptic community, and so neither government agreed to intervene on the Patriarch's behalf. However, the Russians, ever keen to exert their authority in the Middle East, threatened the Egyptian government that the czar would exercise his authority as the protector of the Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire to intervene on behalf of the Patriarch, though the threat was to no avail.[129]

Tensions within the Coptic community rose as a power squabble emerged between Kyrollos V and Athanasius, the bishop who was chosen to serve as Patriarchal Vicar and president of the Council. Tensions reached a climax when the Council requested that Kyrollos V be banished—a request that was granted by Khedivial decree on September 1, 1892.[130] The banishment provoked much division within the Coptic community, and Athanasius felt obliged to resign his position on January 24, 1893 and to ask the government to allow for Kyrollos' return.[131] Over the course of these events, Abbas II became the new khedive and the government of Mustafa Fahmi, a liberal Anglophile who was sympathetic to the interests of the similarly Anglophile Coptic reformers, was replaced by a new government led by Riad Pasha, a more conservative Muslim who was less inclined to support the British. For reasons that continue to be debated, Riad Pasha was much more sympathetic to the position of Kyrollos V, and he promptly published a decree allowing Kyrollos V to return to Cairo to claim the papacy. According to Lord Cromer, Riad Pasha sided with the Patriarch because "the staid Moslem [Riad Pasha] was shocked at rebellion against legitimate hierarchical authority" and "the Moslem, conscious of his own defects, was alarmed at the appearance of a new rival in the shape of a Coptic

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[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., 258.
[131] Ibid., 259.

progressionist."[132] Lord Cromer was quite disappointed at this development as he was sympathetic to the Coptic reformers' cause (he called Kyrollos V "the incarnation of the most stupid and obtuse form of conservatism"[133]), but he was confident of the prospects for Coptic reform, saying " [though] the anti-reformers appear to have triumphed…the triumph is assuredly but temporary."[134]

Lord Cromer would be proven correct. While Kyrollos' victory may have derailed the trajectory of reform, the reformers were still persistent. Of the twelve elected members of the Council, seven were beys and one, Boutros Ghali, was a pasha, so the reformists had a great degree of social influence within Egypt and a strong educational background.[135] The reform movement spawned by these gentlemen would have a considerable impact in the Coptic Church. Not only was a lay council an essential part of Church affairs in the first half of the 20th century, but the emphasis on expanding educational opportunities for Copts and properly managing church endowments would eventually be embraced by the clergy. Even Kyrollos V began accepting the need for reform. Upon resuming the Patriarchate in 1893, Kyrollos announced the construction of new Coptic schools and theological institutions.[136] This prioritization of education within the Coptic community, always a key demand of the reformers, was the vehicle that propelled Copts to the heights of Egyptian society in the early 20th century.

Expansion of Education

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[132] Evelyn Baring. "Extract from *Situation in Egypt: Lord Cromer's Account." Minorities in the Middle East: Christian Minorities 1838-1967, Maronite and Coptic Christian Communities*. Ed. B. Destani. Archive Editions: 2007. 436.
[133] Ibid., 435.
[134] Ibid., 436.
[135] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 262.
[136] Ibid., 263.

As explained earlier, the push for expanded educational opportunities for Copts had originated in the mid-19th century and was modeled after the educational activities of Protestant and Catholics missionaries all over Egypt. After the reformers reiterated the need for more education for lower-class Copts in the 1880s and 1890s, the Church began taking seriously the need for more schools. By 1907, there were forty-six Coptic schools in the country. There were over 20,000 Coptic students in both religious and government schools, of which over a quarter were girls.[137] The expansion in Coptic education also coincided (and was partially motivated by) an expansion in educational institutions managed by European Catholic orders, American Protestant missionaries, and even European governments. Because of the religious nature of many of these institutions, Copts were much more likely than Muslims to enroll their children in these schools, particularly in Upper Egypt.

Italian schools in Egypt, for example, could be classified into two categories: schools in Cairo and Alexandria that were generally geared toward expatriates and some wealthy Egyptians and the schools in Upper Egypt that were run as missions with religious objectives. In 1927, Italian schools in Upper Egypt had about 800 students, both boys and girls, who were almost exclusively Copts.[138] The Italian schools in Upper Egypt were generally geared towards lower-middle class Copts, as wealthier Copts preferred to send their children to better-equipped Coptic and American schools. One such American school, the American College of Assiut, which was run by American Evangelical missionaries, was one of the best educational institutions in Egypt. Assiut had a high concentration of Christians, around 1/3 of the province's population, and these Christians were disproportionately well represented among the province's landowning elite. The American College in Assiut had a majority-Christian student population, both Orthodox and

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[137] Ibid., 267.

[138] Marta Petricoli. "Italian Schools in Egypt." *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 24.ii.* (Nov. 1997), 181.

Protestant, and graduated many prominent Egyptian Copts, including Makram Ebeid, a future nationalist political leader. The school was the jewel of an American missionary education system in Egypt that, by 1920, consisted of 181 schools education over 15,000 students.[139] While American schools in Egypt tended to have an explicit Christian mission and were significantly more attended by Copts as opposed to Muslims, the French system in Egypt was less religiously oriented and thus had a more diverse student body. French schools in Egypt had over 30,000 students by 1922[140], which included high numbers of students from the country's expatriate communities (Italians, Levantines, Armenians, and Greeks), Jews, and local Muslim and Christian students from the upper-middle and upper classes. Heather Sharkey explains that the French schools in Cairo and Alexandria, which were a majority of such schools in Egypt, "represented Franco-Catholic cultural outposts in Egypt and pursued educational missions that were only incidentally related to the mission of making Copts into Uniates."[141]

In addition to foreign schools, there were three prestigious government-run schools in Egypt that were modeled after the English public school system and had almost exclusively European administrators. These schools were the Khidiwiyya and Tawfiqiyya schools in Cairo and Ra's al-Tin school in Alexandria. While all three schools were originally established prior to the beginning of the British occupation in 1882, they were all given particular attention by the British administrators in Egypt, and became the incubators of Egypt's elite. By some estimates, as many as three-fourths of ministers in Egypt from the 1920s to 1952 graduated from one of these schools, including four prime ministers.[142] While the schools were very popular among

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139 "An American College on the Nile." *The New York Times*. May 21, 1922. Accessed at www.nytimes.com on March 22, 2012.

140 Petricoli, 181.

141 Sharkey, 32.

142 Donald M. Reid, "Turn-of-the-Century Egyptian School Days." *Comparative Education Review,* 27.iii. (Oct. 1983), 375.

local Muslim elites, Copts were overrepresented in the student body as well. On average, Copts made up about 22% of the graduates of these government secondary schools between 1898 and 1912, a figure that is more than double their share of the general Egyptian population.[143] Even at the college level, Copts were overrepresented at colleges in Egypt, from foreign-run schools like the American University in Cairo or Victoria College in Alexandria to government-run institutions. For example, the French Law School in Cairo graduating class of 1906 had fourteen Copts out of a class of thirty students.[144] Many wealthy Coptic families also sent their children to complete their university education in Britain and France, which helped further develop the language skills of wealthier Copts, eventually setting them up for prominent political careers (as was the case with foreign-educated politicians Makram Ebeid, Wasif Ghali, and Wissa Wassef). The disproportionately strong educational background of the Coptic community, whether in Coptic, foreign, or government schools, helped propel the community forward both culturally and economically.

Coptic Cultural Life

By the end of the 19th century, Coptic cultural life was rich and fully developed. Two prominent Egyptian dailies were directed towards Copts, though both paid attention to issues of wider national concern, attracting some Muslim readers and having Muslims on staff. The first Coptic daily, *Al Watan* (The Homeland), was founded in 1878 and consistently backed the clergy against reformers in matters of communal reform—for which it received a consistent papal subsidy.[145] *Al Watan* supported the British occupation of Egypt well into the 1920s and

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[143] Ibid., 387.
[144] Malak Badrawi, *Political Violence in Egypt: 1910-1924.* Richmond: Curzon P, 2000. 60.
[145] Carter, 46.

advocated for Coptic rights, gearing its writing to an older, more traditional, Anglophile audience. The more prominent Coptic daily of the time, *Misr*, was founded in 1895 by a wealthy Asyuti reformer who wanted to counterbalance the pro-clerical views of *Al-Watan*.[146] *Misr* was also initially very pro-British and a vocal defender of Coptic interests against perceived attacks in the Muslim press. By 1918, however, the paper followed the lead of several prominent Coptic politicians like Makram Ebeid and Wissa Wassef and became vehemently anti-British and pro-Wafd, eventually becoming an organ of the Wafd party (a move which considerably boosted the paper's circulation and prominence).[147] In addition to the two Coptic dailies, Coptic cultural life included many magazines and journals, including one, *al-Jins al-latif*, that targeted females, indicating there was a substantial population of literate, educated Coptic women in Egypt at the time.[148] In 1905, Coptic elites in Cairo also established the Ramses Club, an exclusive club for upper class Copts to stimulate cultural appreciation and coordinate the involvement of elite Copts in Egyptian political life. The vibrant cultural life of Copts in Egypt in the 1890s through the 1930s is also indicative of the considerable financial wealth that Copts had accumulated during the time period.

The Expansion of Coptic Wealth

As mentioned earlier, an impressive Coptic aristocracy began emerging in the latter half of the 19th century made up of Copts with privileged government positions as scribes, accountants, and advisers who used their positions and salaries to amass significant landholdings in Upper Egypt. By the early 20th century Coptic wealth had only expanded, as these families not

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146 Ibid., 44.
147 Ibid.
148 Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 268.

only began buying more land but also began acquiring other lucrative assets such as factories and buildings in the major cities. The expanded educational opportunities for Copts also provided a way for Copts outside the limited number of elite landowning families to begin building their own wealth through prominent government positions and extensive involvement in the banking and financial sectors in Egypt. A 1907 census of Egypt documented that Copts paid 16% of all land taxes in Egypt though they numbered only 7% of the population counted.[149] Samir Seikaly estimates that once the other capital assets of Copts were added to the equation, the Copts held 25% of the total wealth of Egypt.[150] Seikaly also cites the 1918 government census as a reference to estimate that 100,000 Coptic landowners owned around 1.4 million feddans (acres) of cultivable land in Egypt[151]—an extremely large figure, and one that excludes the direct holdings of the Coptic Orthodox Church, which were estimated to be 15,000 feddans.[152] In addition to immense land holdings, Seikaly estimates that Copts, through roles as bankers and financiers, were involved in 60% of Egyptian commerce at the time[153] and four prominent Copts were among the original shareholders of Banque Misr in 1919.[154] Copts were also disproportionately involved in government work, even beyond their traditional dominance in the finance ministry. Adel Beshai, a prominent economist, cites figures from the 1920s and 1930s that show that

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[149] Though many observers think that the census intentionally undercounted the number of Copts in Egypt and their share of the population. Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 268.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid., 268. This is on the higher end of the estimates. Another anonymous source places the land holdings of the Copts as a result of the 1907 government census to be around 535,000 feddans, though historian Ramzi Tadrus corroborates the 1.4 million feddan figure. Either figure is significant.

[152] Ibid., 261.

[153] Ibid., 268.

[154] Adel Beshai. "The Place and the Present Role of the Copts in the Egyptian Economy." *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East*. Ed. Andrea Pacini. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 192.

Copts made up 30% of the workforce in the Ministry of Public Works, 44% in the Ministry of Finance, and 48% in the Ministry of Railways and Postal Services.[155]

The legal equality, relative security, and economic opportunities offered by the British mandate allowed for a cultural and economic boom for Copts in Egypt, which explains why Copts tend to refer to the period after 1882 as the "golden age of Coptic history."[156] Education for Copts, itself facilitated by European and American missionaries and educators, was a key reason for this revival and is an illustration of how essential western involvement in Egypt was in the empowerment of Copts in Egyptian society. The American missionary J.R. Alexander summarized this effect in 1925, writing that "The Evangelical community, directly and indirectly, has made the Coptic community, next to itself, the best educated and most enlightened part of the population."[157] This viewpoint was certainly shared by many in the Coptic community, who were proud of their community's achievements in the Egypt of the British mandate and who felt that they were in many ways the most enlightened and successful segment of the population.

The accumulation of wealth was an important objective for the Coptic community because, in the words of historian Samir Seikaly, "History had taught [the Copts] that wealth alone could, and did, save from the cruelties of oppressors."[158] In the self-image of the Copts, their success could be traced directly to the success and genius of their ancestors the ancient Egyptians. Through the accomplishments of the ancient Egyptians, the influence of ancient Egypt on Greco-Roman thought, and the historic contributions of the Copts to the development of Christianity, the Copts felt a sense of ownership over western civilization. This accomplished

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[155] Beshai, 193.
[156] Seikaly, "Coptic reform," 267.
[157] Quoted in Sharkey, 46.
[158] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 268.

legacy gave many Copts a sense of responsibility to bring Egypt back to the forefront of international civilization, to spread western culture in Egypt, and, in short, to "[lead] Egypt to progress and advancement."[159] To fulfill this responsibility to Egypt, elite Copts began shifting their focus away from personal and communal affairs into a greater participation in national politics.

Boutros Ghali Pasha

The most famous Coptic politician in Egypt in the beginning of the 20th century was surely Boutros Ghali Pasha, who was an influential lay figure within the Coptic community and one of the leading proponents of communal reform throughout the last quarter of the 19th century, as described earlier in the thesis. Ghali began his career by working as a clerk and interpreter in the mixed courts of Egypt, as the foreign language skills he had attained through studying at the Great Coptic School were essential to communicating with Europeans in the courts. As he rose through the ranks of clerks in the justice ministry, Ghali won the confidence of the Europeans for whom he translated and eventually became head clerk in the Justice Ministry in 1873.[160] In 1876, Ghali was named Egyptian commissioner of the Public Debt Commission and then was appointed deputy minister of justice in 1879.[161]

Ghali obtained his first cabinet position, that of Finance Minister, in 1893, and then served as Foreign Minister from 1894 through his own premiership. Ghali's most prominent role came when he presided over the 1906 Dinshaway Affair- the trial of Egyptian peasants who attacked British soldiers after the soldiers shot a local woman during a hunting trip. Despite

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[159] Ibid., 270.
[160] Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr. "The Butrus Ghali Family." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt,* 30 (1993). 184.
[161] Ibid.

substantial public sympathy for the villagers, Ghali approved draconian sentences for the peasants on trial. Though this move hurt his public image, it strengthened his already close relationship with Khedive Abbas, (1892-1914) since a sympathetic sentence for the villagers would have angered the British authorities in Egypt and possibly led them to depose Abbas in favor of another family member.[162] Thus, when Mustafa Fahmi resigned as prime minister in November 1908, it was not surprising that Abbas proposed his trusted friend and experienced government official Boutros Ghali Pasha to take Fahmi's place as prime minister. While the Coptic and local British papers were ecstatic about Ghali's appointment, the opinion in the Muslim dailies was more divided. *Al-Jarida* praised Ghali's experience, statesmanship, and extensive capabilities but most Muslim dailies objected to his appointment on the grounds of his staunch support for the British. Only *Al-Dustour* openly cited his Christianity as grounds to oppose his appointment, claiming it implied that there was no Muslim capable of governing the predominantly Muslim country.[163]

There was barely time for the controversy to settle before Ghali's tenure was abruptly ended when he was assassinated leaving the ministry building on February 20, 1910. The lone assassin was Ibrahim al-Wardani, a young Muslim student who had studied in Switzerland. Wardani denied any sectarian motives for the attack, saying instead that he assassinated Ghali because he viewed him as a traitor for the British, both for his ruling in the Denshawy incident and for his supposed support for a plan to extend the British concession over the Suez Canal. Wardani was a founding member of a society called *Misr*, a group of Egyptian students in Europe—both Copts and Muslims—that advocated for an independent, democratic Egypt and

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[162] ibid.

[163] Seikaly, "Prime Minister and Assassin," 117.

was loosely affiliated with the Watani party in Egypt.[164] Even though Wardani's intentions were not motivated by sectarianism, the public reaction to his act took on violent sectarian undertones. Large segments of the Egyptian population and many Muslim dailies treated Wardani as a hero. Some chanted in the streets "*Ya mit sabah al-full 'ala al-Wardani illi qatal Boutros al-Nasrani.*" ("A hundred sweet mornings to Wardani who killed Boutros the Nazarene.")[165] Copts were understandably furious that the most powerful Copt in recent Egyptian history had been assassinated, and the incident only reinforced Coptic support for the British occupation. Coptic newspapers that referred to Wardani as a "wicked murderer" were cautioned by the Ministry of Interior for fear of aggravating tensions.[166] Sectarianism even reached the grand mufti of Egypt, who issued a fatwa claiming that the death penalty would not be appropriate for Wardani according to Islamic law because his victim was a non-Muslim, revolver wounds were outside the scope of Mohammed's definition of murder, and the punishment was not brought on by a member of the victim's family.[167] Wardani was referred to trial and although the public favored his pardon and the mufti issued a fatwa considering the death penalty unjustified, Wardani was sentenced to death and was hanged on June 28, 1910.[168]

Copts were still, however, extremely agitated by the assassination and its aftermath and asked the British for permission to hold a conference to discuss Coptic demands, which was granted to them. Though many prominent Cairene Copts, such as Wissa Wassef and Wasif Boutros Ghali (the son of Boutros Ghali Pasha) opposed the conference for fear of inciting further sectarian tensions, the conference, held in March 1911, was well-attended by many

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164 Badrawi, 24.
165 Nazarene is a derogatory term for Christians in Arabic. Badrawi, 32.
166 Ibid, 32.
167 "A Sensation." *Evening Post LXXIX.119*. 23 May 1910, 7. Accessed at paperspast.natlib.gov.nz. Accessed on April 15, 2012.
168 Ibid, 41.

prominent Coptic political figures, both Protestant and Orthodox, particularly from the major Upper Egyptian families. Among the over 1,000 delegates to the conference were Tawfiq Dus, Fakhri Abdel Nour, Murqus Hanna, Sinut Hanna, and George Khayyat.[169] The organizers of the conference went to great lengths to underplay sectarian overtones, starting the conference with the national anthem, proudly displaying the Egyptian flag, and banning any comments of an overtly religious nature. The conference's discussions centered around four explicit concerns: that Sunday be a national holiday for Christians, that government posts be allocated by merit alone without any religious restrictions, that there be proportional representation for Copts in parliament, and that village schools in Egypt be equally open to Muslims, Christians, and Jews.[170] The conference in Asyut prompted a reaction from some prominent Muslim figures in Egypt who decided to host a rival "Egyptian Conference" in Heliopolis in April that considered the Asyut conference and its demands to be sectarian. The Organising Committee of the Heliopolis Conference accused the Copts of trying to form "a separate nation for themselves" and to "concentrate all power in Coptic hands…by relying on the fact that the occupying power is Christian."[171] The congress also entertained a motion calling for an investigation into the excessive number of Copts in the civil service and in government schools.[172] Overall, however, the conference concluded with a call for national unity, and the tensions that flared immediately after the assassination of Ghali slowly began to dissipate.

Nevertheless, there was a general aura of suspicion surrounding the motives of Copts in attaining political power, particularly regarding their perceived loyalty to the British and their

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[169] Carter, 13.
[170] Samira Bahr. "Coptic Congress of Asyut." *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. Aziz S. Atiya, ed. NY: Macmillan, 1991. Accessed at Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia (http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce). Accessed on March 27, 2012.
[171] Carter, 15.
[172] Ibid.

suspected desire to assure their dominance in Egyptian government positions. These suspicions made it difficult for pro-British Copts to pursue national political aims, despite the fact that British occupation was still supported by the majority of Copts, including some established families and the major Coptic publications. The emerging nationalist movement and the acknowledged need for national unity in presenting the case for an independent Egypt created an opening for nationalist Coptic politicians. These nationalist Copts, including the scions of the most prominent Coptic families in Egypt, would fill the void in Coptic political life left by Ghali's assassination through their involvement in the movement for Egyptian independence.

Copts and the Formation of the Wafd

World War One brought a period of economic depression to Egypt that furthered anti-British sentiment among all Egyptian, Muslims or Christians. This, coupled with a perception among some Copts that the British had favored Syrians and Armenians for high-level government positions at the expense of Copts, contributed to a re-evaluation of support for the British among many Copts.[173] Even Lord Cromer acknowledged that Coptic support for the British was weak because the Copts had expected that the British, as Christian powers, would have favored them, and that they felt slighted by the lack of British support.[174] While discussions about creating a strong movement for independence began in 1917, Copts did not partake in the discussions until late 1918, when Sinut Hanna, a Copt from a wealthy Beni Sueif family, joined the Wafdist camp led by the prominent nationalist parliamentarian Saad Zaghloul.[175]

The Western education and connection to Europe among Copts became a useful asset for the Wafdists, and most of the Copts who joined were sought for their foreign language skills and

[173] Carter, 60.
[174] Baring, 432.
[175] Carter, 60.

ability to advocate for Egyptian independence in European circles. The next Copt to join the Wafd was George Khayyat, scion of a wealthy Coptic Protestant family in Asyut who was educated in American schools and served as the American Consul in Asyut.[176] Wafdist leaders felt that Khayyat was in a unique position to influence American opinion to endorse Egyptian independence. Ironically, Wasif Boutros Ghali, whose father was perceived by many Egyptians to be quite supportive of the British occupation, was the next Copt to join the Wafd. Wasif Ghali was a Francophile who had attended French Jesuit schools in Egypt, completed his law school education in France, and lived in Paris for many years as a professor of Arabic literature at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Sociales.[177] Ghali had written many nationalist articles for the French press in Egypt and would serve as the de facto representative of the Wafd to France, charged with securing French support for Egyptian independence. Wissa Wassef was the next prominent Copt to join the Wafd. Wassef, who had been the first Copt to join Mustafa Kamel's Watani party in 1906, had completed his secondary and post-secondary education in France, and was also found to be extremely useful in communicating the Wafdist position to the French.[178] Due to the foreign language skills of the Wafdist Copts, it is unsurprising that all of them (Ghali, Wassef, Hanna, and Khayyat) traveled with Saad Zaghloul to advocate for Egyptian independence at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, making the delegation there majority Coptic. [179]

Back in Cairo, the Wafdist Central Committee had recruited many new Coptic members. The most prominent among them was Makram Ebeid, the scion of a prominent Coptic family (he

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[176] Ibid.

[177] Goldschmidt, 187.

[178] Cérés Wissa Wassef. "Wissa Wassef." *The Coptic Encyclopedia*. Aziz S. Atiya, ed. NY: Macmillan, 1991. Accessed at Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia (http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce). Accessed on March 29, 2012.

[179] Carter, 63.

was a descendant of Jirjis al-Jahwari) who had been educated at the American College in Asyut and then studied law at Oxford University and Egyptology in France.[180] Makram Ebeid had some nationalist tendencies—he retained his membership in the Coptic Orthodox Church even after his father converted to Protestantism and dropped his given first name "William" in an attempt to seem less Westernized to the Egyptian public. The Wafd had long targeted Ebeid as a valuable addition to their leadership because of his ability to communicate and connect with the British.

After a wave of Coptic politicians joined the Wafd, support for Egyptian independence became widespread among Copts. While *Al-Watan* and a few prominent politicians like Marqus Simaika still supported the British occupation, *Misr* had changed its tune and began adamantly supporting the Wafd and staunchly opposing the British presence in Egypt. Furthermore, Copts became active participants in provincial Wafdist committees all over Egypt—even making up a majority of the committee in Asyut.[181] The active involvement of both Muslims and Copts in the fight for independence created a spirit of brotherhood and harmony between the two groups that had never been seen before, and that would last well into the 1920s. Coptic priests and Muslim sheikhs would jointly lead independence rallies, and the Wafd's cross-and-crescent symbol featured prominently in all the rallies, becoming a beloved symbol of national unity. The Mufti of Egypt visited the Patriarch for Eastern and other prominent feats, and the Patriarch reciprocated the visits. Famously, Father Murqus Sergius, a firebrand Coptic priest who vocally supported Egyptian independence, led a rally to al-Azhar and was even allowed to speak from the pulpit—a tremendous sign of the harmony and trust that existed between the two communities at the time as they united against the British occupation.

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[180] Apparently, the dean of the New College at Oxford claimed that Makram had been the youngest student admitted there since William Pitt. During his studies in France, Ebeid also fell under the influence of French socialism and secularism. Mustafa Al-Fiqi, "Makram Ebeid."
[181] Carter, 62.

Youssef Wahba Pasha

Unsurprisingly, the British were not too pleased about the massive popularity of the Wafd among both Copts and Muslims. One British observer at the time viewed Coptic support for the Wafd as "another instance of the desertion of a natural ally in our time of need."[182] When Mohammed Sa'id resigned from his post as prime minister in November 1919 under British pressure following a string of sniper attacks on British soldiers in Cairo, the British saw an opportunity to weaken the Wafd through the nomination of the next prime minister.[183] In an attempt to weaken Coptic support for independence and drive a wedge between Muslims and Christians, the British decided to push for the appointment of a Copt, the finance minister Youssef Wahba, to be the next prime minister. Copts were immediately concerned that Wahba's acceptance of the premiership would end the harmony that existed between Copts and Muslims and incite sectarian tensions. Over 2,000 concerned Copts assembled at the Cathedral of Saint Mark where prominent Coptic politicians vocalized their disapproval of Wahba's selection and stressed the importance of national unity.[184] Prominent Muslim politicians like Abd al-Rahman Fahmi, Secretary-General of the Wafd, also assured Copts that Wahba's acceptance of the post would not harm Coptic-Muslim relations as the Muslims who agreed to form a cabinet with him were just as guilty of treason. The Deputy Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church even sent a telegram to Wahba asking him not to accept the post on behalf of the over 2,000 Copts who

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[182] Quoted in Carter, 61.
[183] Badrawi, 144.
[184] Ibid.

attended the meeting at Saint Mark's Cathedral.[185] When Wahba went ahead and formed a Cabinet on November 21, he had very little support among Copts.

A few weeks later, on December 15, 1919, an assassination attempt was made on Wahba's life when a young Coptic medical student named 'Iryan Yusuf Sa'd threw a bomb at his carriage. Sa'd was reportedly a member of the Black Hand, a secret society tenuously linked to the Wafd party, and he had volunteered to carry out the act in order to avoid the sectarian tensions that would have inevitably flared had a Muslim assassinated another Coptic prime minister.[186] Sa'd was apparently pleased that Wahba had escaped unharmed from the event, claiming that his intention was only to scare Wahba in order to encourage a resignation.[187] Prime Minister Wahba refused to submit to the act of terror and stayed on as prime minister until a series of assassination attempts on his cabinet members in early 1920 prompted him to finally resign on May 19, 1920. The Wafd had little time to be pleased with the success of their policy of intimidation, as divisions within the nationalist camp soon began to surface over whether negotiations with the British should be led by Prime Minister Adli Pasha or Sa'ad Zaghloul.[188]

In the spring of 1921, the division in the nationalist camp came to a head when most members of the Wafd, bothered by Zaghloul's insistence that he lead negotiations with the British, decided to desert him and support Adli instead. The only original members of the Wafd to remain loyal to Zaghloul were three Copts—Hanna, Ghali, and Wassef—and the Wafd post-division became even more visibly Coptic than it had been before.[189] When Adli's negotiations with the British collapsed in November 1921, prompting his resignation, the Wafd again became

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185 Ibid., 145.
186 Carter, 69.
187 Badrawi, 147.
188 Carter, 64.
189 Ibid.

the leading advocates for an independent Egypt. The British responded by exiling Zaghloul and two of his Coptic colleagues, Ebeid and Hanna, a move which only prompted more of the members that had joined Adli's faction to return to the Wafd.[190]

Negotiating Independence and Writing the Constitution

After the exile of the Wafdist leaders, the British realized that they had no other credible Egyptian interlocutors with whom to negotiation Egyptian independence. Seeing the writing on the wall and recognizing that public opinion in Egypt was firmly behind independence, the British unilaterally granted independence to Egypt in February 1922. The fight for independence, however, was not over, as negotiations between the British, the monarchy, and Egyptian nationalists would continue for the following twenty years in order to finalize the details of the treaty of independence. No issue regarding independence was as contentious and controversial as the third reserved point in the 1922 independence treaty offered by the British to Egypt, which gave Britain the right to intervene in Egyptian affairs in order to protect minorities[191] At the time, leading Copts, including even the traditional *al-Watan* newspaper, adamantly condemned the reserved point, arguing that accepting such conditions would be tantamount to considering Copts a foreign community within Egypt. While staunch opposition forced the British to drop this reserved point, the British still insisted that a clause holding the Egyptian government responsible for the protection and equal treatment of minorities in Egypt be included in the final treaty. Leading Copts, including Makram Ebeid and Wasif Boutros Ghali, opposed any mention of minorities whatsoever in the independence treaty as they opposed making any distinction

[190] Ibid.
[191] Carter, 72.

between Copts and Muslims and feared that clauses affirming minority rights would create a perception that Copts were affiliated with foreign interests and sought foreign protections.[192]

The independence treaty would go through several iterations until a new treaty was signed in 1936 that omitted any reference to minorities. After the new treaty was signed, the British decided to advocate for minority rights by pressuring the Egyptian government to voluntarily make a statement regarding minority rights as part of its application for admission to the League of Nations—though this, too, was opposed by Ebeid and the Wafd.[193] Negotiations on revising the treaty of independence would continue through the 1940s, though none succeeded and the 1936 treaty held until the 1952 revolution that definitively ended both the monarchy and the British presence in Egypt.

Issues of minority rights were also an important factor in the drafting of Egypt's Constitution in April 1922 following the British proclamation of an independent Egypt. The Constitution Committee included three Copts and sought a constitution modeled after the Belgian constitution, as Belgium was a modern European country that had managed to avoid major sectarian problems despite being home to different ethnic groups.[194] None of the Christian members of the Constitutional Committee opposed the provision making Islam the religion of state, as the climate of Muslim-Christian harmony following the 1919 Revolution had persisted and few prominent Copts felt that the enshrinement of Islam as a state religion would ever have any negative effects on religious minorities in Egypt. Furthermore, Coptic leaders were probably well aware that Islam had been intrinsically linked with the Egyptian state since the Arab invasion in the 7th century, and they realized that arguing over the place of Islam in Egypt would

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[192] Ibid.
[193] Carter, 74.
[194] Hasan, 38.

not be in their best interest and could incite sectarian tensions. Some Coptic thinkers even made statements endorsing the provision making Islam the religion of state, such as Makram Ebeid's famous statement that he was a Muslim by country and a Christian by religion.[195] In any case, concerns about any discrimination resulting from having a state religion were solved by the inclusion of constitutional safeguards of civil and political equality for all Egyptians in Articles 1, 12, and 13 of the constitution.[196]

More debate in the committee centered around a proposal by the Coptic politician Tewfik Doss Pacha to have guaranteed proportional representation for minorities in Egypt's constitution, with Doss suggesting that 20% of seats in Parliament be reserved for minorities.[197] Tewfik Doss was unique among prominent Coptic politicians at the time because he was not a member of the Wafd, but rather a member of the Liberal Constitutionalist Party, which tended to have more Muslim members and be more closely affiliated with the monarchy. His proposal, however, did have the support of Youssef Qattawi Pasha, a prominent Egyptian Jew who was also on the Constitutional Committee, and Bishop Yuanis, a representative of the Coptic Orthodox Church.[198] Saad Zaghloul opposed this measure because he believed that Parliament should not be divided along ethnic or religious lines, and all Wafdist Copts supported this view. The Wafdist Copts wished to avoid any consideration of Copts as minorities, or somehow different from the rest of Egyptian society, and they felt that a representative quota was unnecessary because enough Copts would get elected to Parliament anyway. While *al-Watan* and the Patriarchate supported Doss's position, *Misr* and the Coptic Wafdists enthusiastically denounced the provision, decrying the provisions' implication that there would be any legal separation

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[195] Ibid., 39.
[196] Ibid., 38.
[197] Though critics would point out that this ratio was higher than the true proportion of religious minorities in Egyptian society. Carter, 141.
[198] Hasan, 39.

between Muslims and non-Muslims. In the view of the Wafdist Copts, there was no such thing as a Christian minority in Egypt as there was no difference between the identity of a Muslim and of a Copt—they were all simply Egyptian.[199] With the secular forces of Egyptian politics uniting against the provision, Doss's proposal was turned down in a fifteen to seven vote. The constitutional debate was soon over, with a modern Egyptian constitution setting the stage for an era of free parliamentary elections and civil and political equality for all Egyptians.

Copts in a Liberal Egypt

The Wafd soon shifted its attention to cementing political power in the coming democratic elections. Coptic participation in the Wafd following Egyptian independence was higher than ever. The 1923 Wafd executive committee, charged with preparing for the party's electoral campaigns, consisted of six Copts out of fourteen total members.[200] The Wafd carried the first free parliamentary elections in Egypt in 1924 by a wide margin—a victory which vindicated the Wafdist Copts who had opposed a parliamentary quota for minorities since the sixteen Copts elected to Parliament comprised around 7.5% of the seats in Parliament, which was somewhat higher than the Coptic share of the population in the 1917 census, which was less than 7%.[201] Saad Zaghloul, who was the newly elected prime minister, dispensed with the tradition of naming only one Copt to the cabinet by giving two cabinet positions to Copts—Wasif Boutros Ghali as foreign minister and Murqus Hanna as minister of public works.[202] The trend of nominating two Copts to the cabinet would be repeated under most subsequent Wafdist

[199] Carter, 139.
[200] Hasan, 39.
[201] Hasan, 40. Though as expressed earlier in the thesis, these census figures were disputed by many Copts who felt they undercounted the true size of the community.
[202] Carter, 220.

governments, while other parties tended to nominate only one Coptic minister whenever they gained control of government.

Coptic representation in Parliament and government was intrinsically linked to the electoral success of the Wafd party. Only the Wafd had the popular support and electoral strength to get Copts elected in overwhelmingly Muslim districts. The elections of 1929, 1936, and 1942—all of which saw overwhelming Wafdist victories—brought over twenty Copts to the lower house of Parliament, giving them about a 9% share of the seats in Parliament.[203] Copts fared even better in the Senate, where 40% of the seats were appointed and membership was limited to the wealthy. From 1931, when they made up 15% of the Senate, to 1946, Copts comprised over 10% of the Senate, though over 57% of Coptic Senators were appointed rather than elected.[204] Hasan attributes the success of Christian politicians during this era to "an entire generation of upper-class politicians, educated abroad or at the French Law School in Egypt, who were imbued with the European ideal of a separation of state and church," reiterating the importance of European influence on Coptic empowerment in liberal Egypt.[205]

Despite the success of the Wafd at placing Copts in positions of political power, the Muslim-Christian harmony created by the 1919 revolution did not last long in a climate of electoral competition, particularly after Makram Ebeid became Secretary-General of the Wafd following Zaghloul's death in 1927. The main rival to the Wafd was the Liberal Constitutionalist party, led by secular elite Muslims with close ties to the monarchy. Through its publications, *el-Siyasa* and *el-Kashkul*, the Liberal Constitutionalist party frequently used sectarianism as a political tactic by claiming that the Wafd was dominated by Copts and was being used as a tool

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[203] Carter, 143.
[204] Ibid, 146.
[205] Hasan, 40.

in a Coptic conspiracy to control Egypt.[206] Though the portrayal of the Wafd as a Coptic party pursuing Coptic interests had been used a ploy by the Liberal Constitutionalists as early as 1923, the propaganda gained a specific target after Ebeid acceded to a leadership role in the party second only to that of Mustafa El-Nahhas, who was portrayed as subservient to Ebeid by the rival press.[207] Wissa Wassef's election to president of the lower chamber of Parliament in 1930 was cited by the Wafd as a public repudiation of the Liberals'sectarian attacks; however, sectarian attacks persisted through the 1930s, often taking on anti-Semitic memes as Arabs in Palestine began revolting against Jewish immigration and the British occupation. *El-Siyasa* even went so far as to suggest that Wafdist Copts were following the lead of Zionist Jews in Palestine and sought the establishment of a separate Coptic homeland in Egypt.[208] The Liberals were supported by the Palace, which sought to frame the 1938 elections as a competition between the Coptic-dominated Wafd and the pious and popular King Farouk, leading to a significant electoral defeat for the Wafd that year.[209]

The level of anti-Coptic propaganda during electoral campaigns eventually alarmed the British authorities in Egypt, despite contraventions on British intervention on behalf of minorities in the treaty of independence. The British ambassador in Egypt intervened to express concern about anti-Coptic propaganda in the elections of 1938, 1943, and 1949.[210] British intervention surfaced in other areas as well, as the British, under pressure from their own Anglican missionaries in Egypt, even contemplated forcing the Egyptian government to provide

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[206] Hasan, 49.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Carter, 264. An excellent summary of the sectarian overtones of political campaigns during this era in Egyptian history can be found in the following chapters of *Copts in Egyptian Politics*: "The Copts and Party Politics," "The Copts and the State," and "Ethnicity and Religion in the Struggle for Power."
[210] Carter, 75

religious instruction to Christian students in government schools in 1933.[211] The British in Egypt seem to have had some appetite for intervening on behalf of the Copts despite the near-universal opposition to any clause affirming minority protections in Egypt's independence treaties. Sir Percy Loraine, the High Commissioner for Egypt at the time, responded to the concerns of an Anglican bishop traveling in Egypt in 1932 by saying "I am always prepared to intervene in the interests of the Coptic Church as a whole."[212]

While Wafd leaders, whether Muslim or Christian, responded to these attacks by reiterating the importance of national unity, Coptic patience was beginning to wear thin. Throughout the 1930s, *Misr* was publishing articles criticizing discrimination against Copts in universities and government ministries, though only when the Wafd was not in power.[213] Makram Ebeid's 1942 defection from the Wafd following a personal dispute with Mustafa El-Nahhas about ministerial assignments also amplified Coptic fears. The Wafd went to great lengths to retain Coptic support, adding three Copts to its executive committee and publicly stating that the feud between Nahhas and Ebeid was not sectarian and that the party was as committed as ever to Saad Zaghloul's principles of equality.[214] Ebeid's formation of *el-Kotla el-Wafdiyya*, which was backed by the monarchy in an effort to undermine the Wafd, still managed to successfully divide the political allegiances of Copts and thus led to a sharp decline in Coptic representation in parliament, though the Wafd retained Kamel Sidqi as Finance Minister.[215]

The 1940s also saw an extraordinary rise in the popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood, which engaged in populist rhetoric against Copts and foreigners and again reiterated claims that

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[211] Carter, 74.
[212] Letter from Sir Percy Loraine dated May 5th, 1932. *Minorities in the Middle East: Christian Minorities 1838-1967, Maronite and Coptic Christian Communities*. Ed. B. Destani. Archive Editions: 2007. 526.
[213] Carter, 217.
[214] Carter, 178.
[215] Ibid.

the Copts were disproportionately powerful in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood's rhetoric amplified sectarian tensions and sparked several incidents of sectarian-motivated violence, notably attacks on churches in Zagazig and Cairo in 1946 and 1947.[216] The decline in Coptic political influence and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood disconcerted Copts, many of whom felt that their security was best maintained through an extended British presence in Egypt. *Misr*, once a champion of Egyptian independence in the 1920s, became vocally pro-British in 1946, insisting that any revision to the treaty with the British contain a clause affirming the protection of minority rights and criticizing Makram Ebeid for facilitating a withdrawal of British troops from Egypt.[217] As early as 1935, Fr. Sergius, the priest who once preached against the British occupation in Al-Azhar, publicly claimed that Copts would be better served if the British stayed in Egypt.[218] The rising tide of anti-Zionist opinion in Egypt also made Copts uncomfortable, as many Muslim Brotherhood members openly accused the Copts of sympathizing with the Jews in Palestine.[219]

The "golden age"[220] of Coptic wealth and political power would end definitively in 1952—a year that began with a mob attack on a Coptic church and school in Suez that killed three Copts suspected of being British spies.[221] When the Free Officers deposed King Farouk on July 26, 1952, Egypt's experiment with liberal democracy was put to a harsh end. Authoritarian military rulers in Egypt would suppress any form of political expression, effectively ending participation in national politics for all Egyptians and stifling the vibrant Coptic press. Nasser's

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[216] Ibid., 275.
[217] Hasan, 53.
[218] Carter, 74.
[219] Carter, 109.
[220] Seikaly, "Coptic Reform," 257. Many Copts refer to the period of Egyptian history following the British occupation and up to the Free Officer's revolt as a "golden age" due to the relative lack of sectarian violence, the widespread political and financial success of Copts, and the liberal political and cultural environment in Egypt.
[221] Ibid, 277.

subsequent nationalization and land reform policies disproportionately affected Copts, as they made up a disproportionate share of the country's landowning elite.[222] These policies not only affected the financial status of Copts in Egypt but also reduced Coptic influence on Egyptian society since most of the major Coptic political figures in Egypt had belonged to the elite Coptic landowning families. While Nasser's secularism and opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood comforted Copts who had feared the rise of Islamism, his Arabism marginalized Copts who felt a much deeper attachment to Taha Hussein's Pharaonist ideals of pre-Arab Egyptian nationalism than any affinity with a wider Arab identity, which would always be linked in some way to Islam. Egyptian culture and society during Nasser's reign remained predominantly secular and westernized, and relations between Copts and Muslims were quite harmonious, both united by a secular nationalism and a sustained war effort that included all Egyptians. After Nasser's reign, however, Egyptian society would become increasingly radicalized due to a variety of external and internal socio-economic factors. Ironically, the independent Egypt that had long been a dream of Copts from Mu'allim Ya'qub to Makram Ebeid would be more detrimental to the community and its status in Egyptian society than the previous one hundred and fifty years under a royal dynasty of foreign extraction.

Conclusion

The history of European intervention in Egypt on behalf of Copts is a long one, stretching back to the 16th century, when Coptic Patriarchs entered into negotiations with Catholic authorities regarding unification with Rome. Clearly, Coptic authorities at the time felt more

[222] Hasan, 103.

confident in having their protection assured by foreign Christian powers than relying on the charity of the Egyptian state, which at the time was an Ottoman province. The willingness of European powers, whether France or Austria-Hungary or Russia, to exert itself into Ottoman affairs by claiming protection over Ottoman religious minorities shows that there was a desire on the part of European governments to use their political capital on behalf of their coreligionists in the Middle East. The most direct and blatant evidence of the benefits to Copts of European intervention in Egypt was Napoleon's decision to overturn all the Ottoman *dhimmi* laws limiting Coptic rights when he began his occupation of Egypt in 1798. Napoleon even appointed a Copt, Jirjis al-Jawhari, to a position of executive power in Egypt. It would be difficult to overstate just how much of an impact Napoleon's decisions had on the status of Christians in Egypt. In less than a year, Copts had gone from being forbidden to dress as they please, bear arms, or even worship publicly, to governing Egypt, raising an army, building a new cathedral, and living with all the basic rights and opportunities assured by the tenets of the French revolution. Even though Napoleon's reign was short-lived, the subsequent rule of the Mohammad Ali dynasty only helped propel the Copts further in Egyptian society.

The Mohammad Ali dynasty was marked by religious tolerance and relative equality for most religious minorities in Egypt. Mohammad Ali continued the mameluke practice of hiring Copts as financial advisers and scribes due to their accounting system and higher literacy rates. As Mohammad Ali and his successors expanded the Egyptian state to build a modern nation on the European model, they expanded the bureaucracy of government as well, creating a need for even more Copts to fill government positions that gave them a degree of influence and wealth. This wealth was then reinvested in land acquisitions, particularly in Upper Egypt, to build a sizable class of Coptic elites. Even though Mohammad Ali was a Muslim of Albanian extraction,

many of the gains experienced by Copts over the 19th century could be attributed, at least indirectly, to European intervention or the prospect of it. Mohammad Ali and his successors, particularly Khedive Isma'il, were keen to portray Egypt as a modern nation to Europe, and thus were incentivized to not only afford Copts the rights expected by the Europeans, but to also promote Copts to positions of power. Thus, by 1857, when Sa'id Pasha officially proclaimed the legal equality of all citizens, all the *dhimmi* restrictions on Coptic rights had effectively been lifted. The friendliness of the Mohammad Ali dynasty to European interest also saw an expansion in missionary activity by Catholic missionaries, generally French, and Protestant missionaries from America and Britain.

These missionaries opened schools all over Egypt that, due to the religious nature of the curriculum, attracted more Copts than Muslims and thus contributed to solidifying the educational advantage that Copts had over their Muslim compatriots. The expansion of missionary activity among Copts in Egypt placed increased pressure on the Coptic Church to reform, manage its significant endowments more properly, and invest more in the education of Copts. Patriarch Kyrollos IV opened the Great Coptic School in Cairo in 1855, and even built schools for girls and a theological college. Throughout the last quarter of the 19th century, wealthy (and often European-educated) Coptic laypeople pursued a reform movement within the Church that succeeded in getting the Patriarchate to invest more resources in Coptic education. By the beginning of the 20th century, Coptic students had many well-equipped Coptic schools all over Egypt to choose from and were still overrepresented in both government schools and the European missionary schools.

This educational advantage enjoyed by Copts was a direct result of European missionary intervention in Egypt, and this advantage led to an accumulation of financial wealth for many

Copts that gave them disproportionate influence in the Egyptian economy. The early 20th century saw the Copts parlay this financial influence into political involvement, beginning with the illustrious career of Boutros Ghali Pasha, the first Coptic Prime Minister, into the domination of Parliament by the pro-independence Wafd party during the liberal democratic period in Egypt from 1922 to World War II. The Wafd, as its critics would never shy away from expressing, was dominated by Coptic members, most of whom had initially been recruited because their foreign language skills—honed at foreign missionary schools in Egypt and then universities in France and Britain—were useful in promoting the cause of Egyptian independence to European powers. The Wafd was the vehicle through which Copts attained proportionate representation in Parliament, two ministerial positions in most cabinets of the time, and other prominent positions in Egyptian government. European intervention was also a major factor in the ability of Copts to advance in politics through the Wafd. The presence of European schools in Egypt not only gave a disproportionate number of Copts foreign language skills that were valued in political and diplomatic posts, but it also created an imprint of western culture in Egypt that affected both Muslims and Copts and encouraged those who had the means to complete their university education in Europe.

The absorption of European cultural values, particularly secularism, by Egyptian Muslim students studying in Europe or at European schools in Egypt was essential in enabling Copts to succeed. Most prominent Egyptian Muslim political figures of the time, notably Sa'ad Zaghloul and Mostafa El-Nahhas, firmly believed in equality for all Egyptians and made efforts to include the Copts in Egyptian politics as much as possible. Furthermore, the most popular trend of Egyptian nationalism of the time was a blend of Pharaonism and Mediterraneanism promoted by certain Muslim scholars like Taha Hussein, which traced Egypt's glories to its pre-Islamic

civilization and connections with Europe—a philosophy that resonated well with Copts and enforced a healthy Egyptian nationalism that was not predicated on Islam. Finally, many political gains made by Copts came as a result of brave anti-British positions taken by some of the prominent Wafdist Copts in 1919 that endeared them to the Egyptian masses and ushered in a few years of Christian-Muslim harmony in Egypt. The role of the British as a foreign enemy to unite against was essential to creating this harmony. Thus, the British occupation of Egypt was indirectly responsible for the popularity enjoyed by Wafdist Copts—popularity that translated into electoral success and then political power. That the age of the British Occupation is considered by many Copts to be a Coptic "golden age" demonstrates the positive impact European intervention had on Copts.

Clearly, European intervention and influence in Egypt, at least indirectly, empowered Copts economically and politically in the 19th and early 20th centuries. While some critics may argue that Coptic appeals to foreign intervention were signs of disloyalty, an examination of the history will reveal that this is not true. Firstly, most European support for Christians in Egypt was implicit or indirect, taking the form of educational opportunities and subtle pressures, and Copts very rarely called outright for European governments to intervene on their behalf. More often than not, European intervention in Egypt on behalf of Christians was unsolicited. One notable exception to this rule came during Napoleon's occupation, when Copts took advantage of a rare opportunity to liberate themselves from several centuries of living as second-class citizens under Islamic rule. Even then, Copts merely preferred equality under a benign French occupation to subjugation under an oppressive Ottoman occupation.

Furthermore, there was never a uniform position among Copts regarding interaction with foreign powers. Just as Copts in the early 20th century were divided between those who

supported the Wafd and those who supported the British Occupation, today some Copts support seeking international pressure on the Egyptian government to address Coptic grievances while other Copts oppose it.[223] In today's globalized world, local issues can quickly capture the world's attention and religious and political freedoms are viewed as increasingly essential. Thus, it is unsurprising that Copts, like Kurds, Syrian Christians, Arab Shi'ites, and other marginalized minorities, should find their concerns spotlighted by sympathetic activists and government officials in the West. In any case, Copts have always professed a deep attachment to a national conception of Egypt, from Mu'allim Ya'qub's first plans for an independent Egypt to Makram Ebeid's fierce resistance to British control in Egypt, often with the aid and support of Muslim allies. Taha Hussein's Pharaonism, an ideology borne out of his education in France that views Egyptians as having a unique ethnic identity strongly tied to the rest of the Mediterranean, has always been widely embraced by Copts and demands a deep reverence for Egypt and its history.[224]

Because European influence in Egypt had been so beneficial to Copts historically, there is a deep appreciation for western culture and diplomatic power among many Copts and other Eastern Christians who benefited from similar acts of European intervention and influence. Even today, the United States and European powers, particularly France, acknowledge a historical role in protecting Eastern Christian communities in the Middle East, Copts included. French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé reiterated the commitment of the French government to protecting Eastern Christians in a column in *La Croix*, a French Catholic magazine, on February 28, 2012. Juppé said,

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[223] For an interesting, albeit a bit dated, examination of various opinions surrounding Coptic lobbying efforts in the United States, I would suggest the following work: Paul S. Rowe. "Four Guys and a Fax Machine? Diasporas, New Information Technologies, and the Internationalization of Religion in Egypt." *Journal of Church and State*, 43.i. (Winter 2001), 81-92.
[224] Carter, 95-102.

> "Depuis des siècles, la France est investie d'une mission particulière à l'égard des chrétiens d'Orient. Elle ne s'y dérobera pas…. Notre vision est claire : il ne peut y avoir de révolution démocratique authentique sans protection des personnes appartenant aux minorités. Les chrétiens d'Orient ont vocation à rester dans leur région.. .En Egypte, les coptes occupent une place particulière, enracinés dans la longue histoire du pays… Si des interrogations persistent sur l'avenir, je veux dire aux chrétiens d'Orient…que la France ne les abandonnera pas… Le message que je souhaitais leur adresser est simple: la France a été, et est restera à vos côtés."[225]

As Copts enter a period of unstable democratic transition and probable Islamist rule, these strong words from a friend, rooted in centuries of supportive history, will certainly be appreciated.

[225] Translation: "For centuries, France has had a special mission with respect to Eastern Christians. It will not shy from it… Our vision is clear: There can be no true democratic revolution without the protection of minorities. Eastern Christians are destined to remain in their region…in Egypt, the Copts also occupy a special place rooted in the long history of their country…If questions about their future remain, I want to tell Eastern Christians that France will not abandon them… The message I want to send them is simple: France was and will remain by your side." Alain Juppé, "Les chrétiens d'orient et les printemps arabes - Tribune d'Alain Juppé publiée dans La Croix (28 février 2012)." France Diplomatie—Presse et média. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/le-ministere/le-ministre-d-etat-et-les/alain-juppe/presse-et-media-20656/article/les-chretiens-d-orient-et-les. Accessed on April 1, 2012.

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