

- and early 20th is examined. Pages 34-37 are dedicated to Taha Husayn's personality.
18. Cf. Mihailidis Evg., "Selides ek tis Aravikis filologias. Sliman al-Boustani (1856-1925)" (Pages of the Arabic literature. Sliman al-Boustani (1856-1925), *O Faros*, No 6. (116), Alexandria, June 30, 1925, 115-116.
 19. Cf. Aristotelis, *Ilm al-akhlaq ila Nicomachos*, trans. Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, Dar al-Kutub a-Misriyah, Cairo 1924.
 20. Cf. Mihailidis Evg., "I pnevmatiki en egipto epistimoniki araviki kinisis. Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid" (The intellectual scientific Arabic movement in Egypt. Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid), *Ekklisiastilos Faros*, vol. 27, Alexandria 1928, 134-136.
 21. See Gutas Dimitri, *Greek thought, Arabic culture*, Routledge, London 1998.
 22. See Hussein Taha [Husayn Taha], *The future of culture in Egypt*, (1938), trans. Sidney Glazer, The Palm Press, Cairo 1998.
 23. The Greek-Roman past becomes field of competition between the western colonialist ideology and the emerging Egyptian nationalism, as Donald Reid supports with arguments in a relevant study. Cf. Reid Donald M., "Cromer and the classics: imperialism, nationalism, and the greco-Romain past in modern Egypt," *Middle East Studies*, 32 (1), January 1996, 1-29. On the historical role of the university of Cairo within the cultural life of Egypt, see as above *Cairo University and the making of modern Egypt*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990.
 24. Cf. Kontogiannis Giorgos, "I pnevmatiki epikinonia Ellados kai Egyptou (endiaferousa sinomilia me ton Taha Husayn)" (The intellectual communication of Greece and Egypt (an interesting discussion with the Taha Husayn), *Panaigyptia*, vol. 4, Alexandria of January 22, 1938, 8.

Notes

1. See Ismael Y. Tareq & El-Sa'id Rifa'at, *The communist movement in Egypt, 1920-1988*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse 1990.
2. Cf. Mihailidis Evgenios, *O egyptiotis ellinismos kai to mellon tou (The Hellenism of Greeks of Egypt and its future)*, Grammata, Alexandria 1927, 24.
3. Also Anthony Gorman believes that Mihailidis is: "one of the central intellectuals of the Egyptian Greek community." See Gorman Anthony, *Historians, state and politics in twentieth century Egypt: Contesting the nation*, Routledge Curzon, London 2003, 188.
4. For a more extensive reference to Evg. Mihailidis' writings, cf.: Maragkoulis Manolis, "Evgenios Mihailidis, o thisavrofilakas tou aigyptioti ellinismou" (Evgenios Mihailidis, the treasurer of the Hellenism of the Greeks of Egypt), *Exopolis*, issue 6-7, Alexandroupoli, Winter 1996-1997, 139-147. For a detailed examination of his work during the interwar period see as above, "*Kairos na syxronisthomen*": *I Aigyptos apo ti skopia tis aigyptiotikis dianoisisis tou mesopolemou*" ("Time to modernise": Egypt from the viewpoint of the Greek community in Egypt intellect of interwar), unpublished thesis, Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Cyprus, Nicosia 2006.
5. Cf. Mihailidis Evgenios, "I pnevmatiki en Egypto epistimoniki araviki kinissis. O Doctor Taha Husayn kai to ergo tou" (The intellectual scientific Arabic movement in Egypt. Doctor Taha Husayn and his work), *Ekklisiastikos Faros*, tomos 26, Alexandria 1927, 115-118.
6. As above, 115.
7. As above, 116.
8. As above.
9. As above.
10. As above, 116.
11. As above, 117.
12. As above, 117
13. As above, 118.
14. Cf. Mihailidis Evgenios, "Taha Husayn kai i 'Antigone' iss tin aravikin," ("Taha Husayn and 'Antigone' in Arabic") *Panaigyptia*, issue 22, Alexandria, June 4 1931, 9-10.
15. As above, 9.
16. As above.
17. See Khemiri Tahir & Prof. Dr. G. Kampffmeyer, *Leaders in contemporary Arabic literature: a book of reference*, Part I, Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Islamkunde, Berlin - Dahlen, 1930, where the action of a constellation of Arabic-speaking scholars and scientists of Egypt of the later 19th century

oppositions.

A similar process for the establishment of a department of Modern Greek studies in the university of Cairo seems to be in progress in 1930s by members of its faculty. Head of the initiative is the then dean of the Philosophical Faculty "a fervent philhellene," as Taha Husayn is called by George Kontoyiannis in an interview published in *Panaigyptia* on January 22, 1938. ⁽²⁴⁾ The Egyptian academic professor associates the fate of the Greek department with the corresponding one of the Arabic department in the University of Athens. Unfortunately both attempts, despite their protagonists' wish, were not successful. The issue, however, was to come back in topicality in early 1950s, on the occasion of the awarding of an honorary Doctor's degree to Taha Husayn by the Philosophical Faculty of the university of Athens, reflecting at the same time the expectations of the intellect of *paroikia* during that crucial period when the future of the Hellenism of Egypt hung in a balance.

The reheating of the above demand is taking place during the last decade of the 20th century through the untiring, albeit futile this time as well, efforts of the dear departed Kostis Moskof, who at that time worked as Cultural Attache of the Greek Embassy in Cairo.

Nevertheless, despite the long history of the twofold demand, whose necessity was expressed and undertaken by significant personalities of two sides, the delayed suspension of its fulfillment impedes the occasionally declared intentions for a deeper and without interveners inter-acquaintance. At the same time, it reveals the structural pathology of our scientific communities to invent and apply innovative and different from those of central Europe theoretical tools. Thus, even today, we resort out of necessity to borrowing concepts and theoretical forms that are produced in Western Europe and U.S.A., whose origin is frequently 'studded' with Orientalist and colonial discourse. Simultaneously, even the modern post-colonial theory focuses on the main opposition between the colonial – anti-colonial writings suppressing the heterogeneous stances that the foreign minorities of the "petit blancs" shape, due to the irresolute and intermediate place they possess in the colonial space.

of *paroikia*, which, among other things, was consolidated on the faith that the traces from the presence of the Hellenistic and Byzantine world were wiped out of the country of Nile due to the invasion and the predominance of the Arabic-Islamic element.

The Greek of Egypt Arabist certainly does not rely on references to a remote textual past, but he takes the initiative to promote the demand for inter-acquaintance of the more recent cultural production of the two people, as he realises, to his sorrow, that the proper scientific institution that will undertake the duty for the systematisation of this particular field of study does not exist. Invoking not only the vicinity of Greece with Egypt and the other Arabic-speaking regions, but stressing mainly the dynamic presence of Greek *paroikia* in the country, which is considered to act as a pioneer in the configuration of its modern character, stigmatises the fact that the Modern Greek state has exhibited unjustifiable indifference towards the sector of Arabic studies. Thus, in 1933 he submits a thirty-six page well-documented *Ypomnima pros tas sygklitous Athinon kai Thessalonikis peri idryseos en aftois edras aravikis glossas kai filologias* (Memorandum to the senates of Athens and Thessaloniki on founding there a chair of Arabic language and literature) driven by the fact that the above universities are planning to establish departments of English and French literature.

The text of *Memorandum* is structured on the basis of four thematic units, which include: a) the analysis of the concept Arabist and the determination of his cognitive object, b) the historical diachronic record of the study of the Arabic world from various European countries, c) the presentation of the work of the Greek diaspora of the Middle-East who embark upon issues of Arabic interest and d) the conclusion together with the phrasing of the demand.

Mihailidis hopes that will be listened to and that his proposal for the establishment of a department of Arabic literature in one of the two existing then Greek tertiary education institutions will be realised. The strategy behind his undertaking is to produce a Modern Greek Arabic bibliography, which, although it will be 'fed' to a large extent by the archives of European Orientalism, drawing from its rich and heterogeneous reservoir theoretical tools, research methods and cognitive fields, its ideological orientation, however, will be dictated by the Modern Greek – metropolitan and of the diaspora – political and cultural particularities and peculiarities; in brief, of a world located geographically and culturally on the verge of West and East and this is why it may function as a bridge of inter-understanding and as a factor of dialectic composition of

which Taha Husayn plays the leading role, lay the basis for a systematic study of the ancient Greek culture presenting their own interpretations about its content. They shape, thus, a modern Egyptian and more generally an Arabic response, set in motion processes and forms of resumption and reinterpretation with those periods of the past, during which the historical conjuncture of circumstances brought the Egyptian culture into various contacts with the Greek-Roman cultural web.

The undertaking of the Egyptian intellectual community is related, to a great degree, to the fact that in novel times the Arabic world is found under a nexus of depended also unequal relations with the Western European culture, which on its part consumes for its own reasons, studies, interprets and also 'ideologises' its ancient Greek and Latin origins seeking to incorporate them organically in his own context. The representatives of the Egyptian secular intellect, on their part, wish to prove both to Europeans and to their own local society that, with the revival of the study of ancient Greek literature, they contribute equally with Europeans to the establishment of a modern Euro-Mediterranean cultural scene, where they aspire to impress the particular features of the Egyptian culture that bloomed in the south-eastern coasts of the Mediterranean. In this framework they stress that the look of Egypt is cast mainly to the Mediterranean basin, the cradle of the European culture, rather than to the black Africa or the Arabic peninsula.⁽²²⁾ Simultaneously, the aim of the study of the ancient is thought to function creatively in order to articulate the new, in other words, to invent innovative forms of thought and art that will enrich the content of the Egyptian national identity with the view to proclaiming an independent and self-governed state.⁽²³⁾

Mihailidis, from his own viewpoint, wishes to appropriate this scholar Egyptian stratum, communicating aspects of his activities to the Greek intellect of Egypt, with the expectation of founding a concrete field of dialogue, a solid vaulting horse where the common ancient Greek heritage will be supported. The promotion of a reciprocally acceptable past validates, mainly, the fable of continuity of the *paroikia* allotting to it useful certificates for the "legality of its origin", while, at the same time, it helps to suppress Islamic, Arabic and Ottoman components of the Egyptian historical course. Their network is considered to extract Egypt from the ancient Greek sublayer, given that their publicity on the one hand instigates fresh, for the interwar period, Modern Greek memories from the long Ottoman servitude, and, on the other hand, it provokes the official ideology

Greek text,"⁽¹⁶⁾ as the translations in Latin, German, Italian, and French are considered by himself to be unreliable.

The insertion of certain titles of Taha Husayn's work in French and Arabic, for example the doctoral study of *Etude analytique et critique de la Philosophie sociale d'Ibn Khaldoun*, Paris 1917, and of the first two volumes of *al-Ayyam's* three-volume autobiography (1929), combined with the cross-reference – with the remark that is cited for those interested – to the study by Tahir Khemiri and Dr. G. Kampffmeyer entitled *Leaders in contemporary Arabic Literature* published in 1930,⁽¹⁷⁾ shows that Mihailidis observes with undiminished interest not only the development of Taha Husayn's activities but also the timely bibliography in foreign languages for the people who play a leading role in the cultural scene of Egypt.

As already mentioned, one of the basic starting points and objectives of the Greek of Egypt 'conductor' of the *nahdah* movement, who chooses to present some of its distinguished representatives, is the emergence of a field of common interest, namely the study of the ancient Greek literature. He believes that networks of dialogue can be developed over this domain of knowledge that will contribute to reinforcing bonds of friendship and esteem among them. Of course, these intentions certainly are not made evident only in the case of Taha Husayn. The Arabic translation of the Homeric *Ιλιάδα (Iliad)* in 1904 by Sulayman al-Bustani is greeted with enthusiasm,⁽¹⁸⁾ whereas with respect to the Arabic publication in 1924 of the Aristotelian text *Ηθικά Νικομάχεια (Ethica Nicomachea)* by Lutfi al-Sayyid,⁽¹⁹⁾ Mihailidis writes that this action "honours the translator and his birthplace."⁽²⁰⁾

What is remarkable is that Mihailidis identifies and makes known to the Greek public the increasing interest that the Europeanised Egyptian intellect of his period shows for those works of the ancient Greek literature that the translational movement of Baghdad of Abbasids, to a large extent, had been indifferent to.⁽²¹⁾ Many of the Arabic liberalism institutions, more specifically in its Egyptian version, undertake, from the late 19th century, the task to translate the Homeric epics and a great part of the tragedies – some of them get inspired by their subjects, as for example the playwright Tawfiq al-Hakim – infusing for the first time these literary works of Greek antiquity into the Arabic cultural web. Simultaneously, they revive their contact with the Aristotelian philosophy, they publish monographs on the ancient Greek history and, through the foundation of the department of classical studies in the newly-established university of Cairo, a fact in

In the last paragraph he estimates that the research about the history of pre-Islamic period or the *Jahiliya*, as it is usually called, is still in its infancy exhibiting many voids. Finishing the article he expresses the opinion that the findings of Taha Husayn's theoretical study may be probably confirmed or disputed after being cross-checked with the conclusions that will be derived from the archaeological excavations in the Arabian peninsula, when and if it is allowed to missions of archaeologists to start them.

In the dawn of '30s, Mihailidis deals with the novel institutions and the innovations that were introduced in the Egyptian society, wishing to examine more analytically the changes that they brought about in the cultural horizon of the country within the framework of its Europeanization. In order to accomplish his undertaking, he draws, to a great extent, aspects, perceptions and theories from the big reservoir of Orientalism of the 19th century. It is implied that they are readjusted so as to correspond to the reception conditions of the reading public of *paroikia*. He, therefore, publishes, seven articles in a sequence with the title of the series "Ta kiriotera aitia tis ithikopnevmatikis afipniseos tis Egyptou kata ton 19th aiona" (The main reasons of the spiritual-intellectual awakening of the Egypt in the 19th century) in the weekly alexandrian periodical *Panaigyptja* by Stefanos Pargas from the issue number 5 up to 11 of 1931. Then, in the issue 22 (June 4, 1931) of the same periodical he dedicates one more text about Taha Husayn, which is entitled "Taha Husayn kai i 'Antigone' iss tin aravikin" (Taha Husayn and 'Antigone' in the Arabic).⁽¹⁴⁾

After repeating a significant part of what he had written in his previous article on Taha Husayn, Mihailidis in his new paper deals with the issue of the Arabic translation of Sophocles' *Avriyónē* (*Antigone*) by the Egyptian professor of classic literature. More precisely, the council of professors of the newly founded Egyptian Faculty of Theatre (1930), where Taha Husayn teaches ancient Greek play-writing, assigned to him the task of translating the above tragedy. The Greek of Egypt scholar praises, first, Sophocles' personality, while afterwards he estimates that the translator of *Antigone* in the Arabic as well is "admirable in his great efforts, to interpret to his fellow-countrymen the civilizing spirit of the ingenious Greek."⁽¹⁵⁾ However, he considers it his duty to point out that the more valid and safe way for the success of his undertaking is "the translation through the ancient

Arabic literature". Mihailidis agreeing with the opinion that the Egyptian intellectual expresses in the text under examination about the principles that a scientist must obey and comply with during his research work, he opts for citing it into the Greek language:

In the scientific research, [...], we should leave aside our views about nationalism, individualism and religion and, thus, free from any external impact and especially the religious to explore the various subjects⁽¹²⁾

Praising the author's dedication towards the above declared values, that are derived from methods of thought of the European rationalism, he notes that the content of the text was considered "anti-religious" by various groups of native political, religious, journalistic and intellectual circles. Facing him like being blasphemous, they denounced him publicly forcing the authorities of the university of Cairo to buy all the copies in order not to be circulated in the wide public. Out of spite to all these, the academic institution, having as chairman Lutfi al-Sayyid, defended the right to free academic research maintaining Taha Husayn at his position. The latter, however, was obliged to proceed to a public confession of faith in the divine law of Islam. Proceeding, simultaneously, to a movement of good will he disaffirmed the controversial points and he differentiated the title with a view to appeasing the frayed tempers. The second edition was published in 1927 entitled *F'i'l-Adab al-Jahili (On the Proislamic Literature)*.

Then, he presents the main findings of the study of the Egyptian intellectual according to which it is concluded: a) that the story recounted in the Koran and the Old Testament about the escape of Abraham and his son Ismail is factitious, b) that, with the appearance of Islam, it was appropriated by the tribe of Quraish presenting Abraham together with Ismail building Mecca and Kaaba, wishing this way to sanctify these places so as their idolaters opponents to be defeated and to be expelled, and c) that the dominant views as regards the genealogy of the Prophet Mohammed, which prevailed later, are not verified. Mihailidis stresses that it was reasonable the "outspokenness"⁽¹³⁾ of the academic professor Taha Husayn to annoy many, who turned against him giving birth within one year to an enormous in number opposing literature that included innumerable articles and four self-contained studies whose total number of pages is calculated to have reached approximately one thousand one hundred. Thus, he cites the list of the self-contained publications.

becomes the pervasion and the positive reception of European ideas, behaviors and perceptions, as well as the parallel establishment of a European type of cultural institutions and governmental institutions. However, contrary to the disdainful views of Europeans and native circles for the educational and educative, in general, role of the Islamic university Al-Azhar in modern era, Mihailidis feels the obligation to defend it supporting that the above institution that was founded in 975 AD for the "Muslem world that will be the lighthouse for the traveling in the darkness of night boats!"⁽⁹⁾

Then he alleges that Egypt "has ceased to be part of Africa," a formulation that became particularly well-liked not only by the Egyptian Europeanised elite but also by the official intellect of Greeks in Egypt since it was first used by khedive Ismail, wishing to praise in a self-assertion way the results derived from the application of his modernizing program. Then, Mihailidis extols the role of "great reformers" including among them Taha Husayn, for whom he notes that, although he does not know him "in person," he observes, however, with admiration his writing work. More specifically, he clarifies that he appreciates "the spiritual independence, the limpid and sincere thought, the moral bravery and frankness, and finally the genius" of the Egyptian scholar.⁽¹⁰⁾ The expression of high esteem for Taha Husayn's above features will be repeated in the next articles by the Greek scholar of Egypt.

After having cited a short biographical note of the person under review, he expresses the judgement that Taha Husayn is a "philhellene and perhaps the only Egyptian, who loves the ancient Greek culture."⁽¹¹⁾ Through this observation the more special motives of the Greek conductor of intellectual movements of the modern Egypt are made evident. Mihailidis, therefore, aspires to detect points of contact with his contemporary Egyptian intellectuals that are connected to references to a jointly recognisable remote past, namely the ancient Greek heritage. This issue, however, will be discussed more extensively below.

The motive, nevertheless, for his occupation with Taha Husayn was the self-contained publication in 1926 of the academic lectures of the latter entitled *Fi'l - Shi'ir al-Jahili (On the Proislamic poetry)* together with the acute reactions that he caused. Reviewing his work he believes that it constitutes "a new turning-point of thought and life by no means in the

(1889-1976). The above contribution is published in the official periodical of the Patriarchate of Alexandria *Ekklisiastikos Pharos (Ecclesiastical Lighthouse)* from 1927 until 1929. Besides, in 1927 Mihailidis takes over the management of the periodical.

The present study, however, is not to deal with Mihailidis' aforementioned extensive article-writing, but it aims at focusing on the reception of Taha Husayn's work and action only during interwar period. The time restriction is dictated by the fact that, although Mihailidis is the first, to the best of my knowledge, who made the Egyptian intellectual known, then more and more representatives of the Greek intellect in Egypt dealt repeatedly with him, which means that the whole subject cannot be exhausted within the limited in terms of length present work.

The first text of Mihailidis on Taha Husayn is published in the periodical *Ekklisiastikos Faros* in 1927, as part of the article-writing under the general title: "I pnevmatiki en Egypto epistimoniki araviki kinissis. O Doctor Taha Husayn kai to ergo tou" (The intellectual scientific Arabic movement in Egypt).⁽⁵⁾ After having referred concisely to the beginning of the formation of modern Egypt considering that both Napoleon and Muhammad Ali have been the enlightened leaders that set the foundations of its modernisation, then he supports that the European communities, which "being spread all over the Egypt, disseminated Civilisation lights aplenty."⁽⁶⁾ It is self-evident that he attributes a decisive and pioneer role to the Greek *paroikia*, whose special trait is, on the one hand, the great spreading out in the Egyptian inland and on the other hand the fact that it is the most multitudinous among them.

Besides, he considers that to the "renascent" Egypt have contributed all those Egyptians that studied in universities of European metropolises with scholarships of Muhammad Ali dynasty, as well as "many intellectual distinguished people of Syria," that resorted to the country of Nile during the second fifty-year period of the 19th century.⁽⁷⁾ With the performance of the latter ones in journalism and in the Arabic literature a vivid cultural movement, whose dominant feature is that "it bears the stamp of Christianised Arabism."⁽⁸⁾ With this viewpoint, Mihailidis supports, more or less, that the contribution of Christian Syrian-Lebanese to the emergence of the intellectual movement of *nahdah* was fundamental and pioneer. Simultaneously, he implies that the 'renaissance' of Egypt is a consequence of a combination of favourable factors where the sovereign element

ancient Greek, history and Arabic language in private and community schools. He often gave lectures at cultural and philological associations, undertook managerial positions in Greek and Arabic-speaking theological printed material of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, he collected up the Greek publications in Egypt from the circulation of the first printed form in 1853 up to 1966, he contributed to plenty of local magazines and newspapers, while he published self-contained texts – some in the Arabic language – with a history-researching, bibliographical, biographical, and theological content. ⁽⁴⁾ He used to sign his Arabic-speaking articles under the name of Najib Mikhail Sa'ati.

The great geographical broadness of Middle-East experiences provides Mihailidis with a wide and heterogeneous background of experiences. This is why the content of his publications is not only limited to the territory of Egypt, but it also includes Palestine and the wider region of Syria and Lebanon. His contributions, which are characterized by an extensive time vector, constitute indicative evidence of the range of attitude changes that *paroikia* intellect shapes under successive circumstances towards the culture and the most historical incidents of modern Egypt – a phenomenon associated to a large extent with the process of transformation of the Egyptian society.

In 1920s, Mihailidis' more general Arabic article writing, which focuses on Arabs' performance in literature and sciences during the medieval period or keeps track of the development of the Arabic-speaking journalism in Palestine during the 19th century, coexists with the Egyptian article-writing. While, however, the first thematic recedes, the second one begins gradually to prevail. By focusing his attention on the latter, the Greek of Egypt Arabist attempts to chart the intellectual horizon of modern Egypt. He presents, therefore, to the Greek public certain remarkable Arabic-speaking periodicals of that period, he undertakes to analyze the long-lasting process of the proliferation of the European-origin institutions in various sectors of the Egyptian society from the Napoleonic occupation (1798-1801) up to the interwar, he observes the evolution of the feminist movement and he writes in a series of articles the biography of ten distinguished intellectuals and scientists, who are considered to represent the *nahdah* movement. He maintains friendly relationships with some of them, as for example with Jurji Zaydan (1861-1914) and, later on, with Taha Husayn

members of Marxist circles of intellect express their objections, proposing the factual and without postponements implementation of readjustment to the Egyptian reality measures. At the same time they contribute in a pioneering way to the construction of a field of common counter-colonial struggles and expectations together with their Egyptian competitors.⁽¹⁾

During this age-old and multifaceted discussion, a clear sign of orientation crisis of the *paroikia*, one of the central arguments is the need for a narrower and without interventions, as much as possible, acquaintance with the cultural reality of Egypt. Indicative with respect to this is the dramatic call that Mihailidis addresses not only to the leading circles but also to the *paroikia* public. Its style refers to the type of writing of *Ecclesiastes* of the Old Testament:

It's high time to modernize! It's time to appreciate the environment, where in we breathe! It's time to realise directly and without interpreters what happens around us, learning the language of people, whose country we live in, and teaching them suitably the history of our past in Egypt.⁽²⁾

Therefore, various teams of scholars and men of letters undertake the venture to record and 'accommodate' varied forms of its expression. They make an anthology of the folk oral tradition, incorporate in their literary works representative types of Egyptians as being intermingled with Greek characters, they 'reshape' the revolutionary events of 1919, present through the printed mass media more and more often pictures and snapshots from aboriginal inhabitants' life, write biographies of representatives of the intellectual movement of *nahdah*, they keep track of the emergence and evolutionary course of the Egyptian feminist movement, observe the artistic visual arts movement, etc.

A central personality among the limited group of Arabists has become Evgenios Mihailidis.⁽³⁾ It is about a tireless person, as Alexandrian scholars of that period used to call him wishing to describe his unparalleled hard work, which is further substantiated by his manifold writing production and his active presence in the intellectual life of the *paroikia*.

Evgenios Mihailidis was born in 1885 in Jerusalem, where he studied at the Theological Faculty of the Holy Cross of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. Then he studied Arabic language and literature in the university of the city Zahle in Lebanon. In 1912 he went to Alexandria, where he remained until his death, in 1975. There he taught theology,

European metropolises, processes western theoretical concepts, properly adapted to the local environment, that aim at the production of a national Egyptian literature and thought. The interwar period is characterized by the flourishing of poetry, novel, short story, play-writing, philological criticism, historiography and visual arts. The developments in the political, cultural, economic and social sector are ceaseless. The natives begin firmly to claim and occupy the places that until then the foreign residents possessed. The colonial established order enters a period of crisis and it seeks to ensure its vital strategic interests. Finally, after age-old discussions and postponements, the regime of Capitulations is abolished in 1937 by the Montreux Convention. Thus, the right to arrange a series of issues that are related to the conditions of existence of foreign communities is granted to the Egyptian state being under creation.

The Hellenism of Egypt, on its part, starts to be possessed of feelings of intense anxiety and insecurity concerning the near future. It begins, gradually, to realise that in order to exist in depth of time it needs to permanently invent policies of equal distance. In other words, it tries it adopts sober and realistic proposals for "meditative adaptations" between the two mainly involved parties: the Egyptian counter-colonial nationalism and the British colonial policy. At the same time, especially after the Asia-Minor destruction in 1922, the Greek population of Egypt realises in a painful way that the metropolitan Hellenic state proves to be powerless or incompetent to provide any type of help. The next decade turns out to be more difficult, as the consequences of the economic crash of 1929 influence the *paroikia* as well. Many categories of small tradesmen are negatively affected by the unemployment and poverty. Besides, an equally great part of the Greek population of hinterland abandons the place of its first installation and it moves mainly to Alexandria and Cairo, whereas a relatively small number opts for repatriation.

As a consequence of the above changes, the subaltern strata of the population of the *paroikia* are forced to look to the Egyptian society, which surrounds them, attempting to re-define their relation with it. They hope that this way they will manage, after having comprehended the problems they face seeking and suggesting ways of solving them, to regain the lost social prestige. Through the daily and periodical press, a public dialogue evolves at a pace of a permanent condensing, in which high-profile representatives of various institutional power centres participate. It is towards them that

social exploitation due to a lot of factors: the pasha landowners, the tax system, the obligatory requisitions for any land reclamation and civil works, the foreign tradesmen of cotton, and the usurers.

The territorial colonization keeps pace with the economic one and is accompanied by the cultural colonization that European scholars communities impose in collaboration with the local leading class. Towards the last decades of the 19th century the circulation of the Greek-speaking daily and periodical press gradually becomes greater, while the first Greek educative associations are founded at the same time. This dynamism, however, was intercepted at that time due to Ahmad Urabi's movement (1881-1882), whose central motto becomes "The Egypt to the Egyptians" – an indicative clue of the emerging Egyptian nationalism. Urabi's and his collaborators' revolutionary undertaking sustains defeat and the country falls into the sphere of influence of the British empire. The Greek turns into the "petit blanc" of the colonial system, being simultaneously its component and support.

Since the main body of the Greek urban layers lives on the island of the magnificent construction of the *paroikia* (Galyia), it experiences the feeling of independence and cultivates its ethno-cultural dissimilarity to the aboriginals and the other foreign residents. In the dawn of the 20th century, the 'organic' intellectuals of the Greek community in Egypt urbanism, representatives of *Logios* (Scholar) *Hermes*, aspire to raise a Modern Greek intellectual edifice comparable to the affluent *Kerdoos* (Economic) *Hermes* in the 'new' Alexandria of khedives and Britons. We are found, indeed, in the heyday of literary periodicals, in the pages of which even the novelists and poets of the Hellenic centre expect to have their work published. The colony seems to become the centre, a fact that reminds of the Hellenistic glory, while the metropolis seems to turn into a satellite. However, the above climate of euphoria and optimism lasted only for the first two decades of the 20th century.

Immediately after the end of the First World War, the Egyptians return to the political scene contesting again in a more well-organised way and with greater decisiveness their self-determination snatched by the community. The outbreak of the *thawra* in 1919, in the events of which wide social layers take part, reveals that it is the corollary of important processes that have taken effect in many domains of the native society. The maturity of the Egyptian national conscience is made evident not only on the political level, but it is also 'mirrored' over the cultural sphere. The community of the literate elite, educated mainly in universities of the 202

Taha Husayn and the Greek community in Egypt intellect of the interwar: The case of Evgenios Mihailidis

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Thessalonica

The surge and settling down of Greek tradesmen in Egypt beginning from the dawn of 19th century is connected with the phenomenon of the increasing European infiltration in Northern Africa and Middle East, which is further associated with the course of disintegration and loss of territories of the Ottoman Empire. More specifically, the influx of foreign populations into Egypt becomes favourably accepted by Muhammad Ali and his descendants, given that they are useful for their undertaking to create a state mechanism of an authoritarian type, capable on the one hand of beating off the expansionist plans of the powerful western states, and of serving on the other hand the strategic plans of the Albanian-origin dynasty.

The initial Greek core of tradesmen and landowners is organised into a community in 1843 in Alexandria. Until the end of the 19th century a number of communities are founded in many provincial cities from the coasts of Mediterranean to the Upper Egypt – a fact that attests the massive settling down of new populations. Tradesmen's colony develops gradually into a *paroikia* (Galyia) of immigrants with clearly distinguished social stratification, different starting lines and aims. After the institution of communities has been first established, churches, schools, and welfare institutions are erected.

The Greeks – favoured by the positive attitude of the governmental elite and by the preferential established order of capitulations – have started to acquire a powerful financial capital that lends them a high social prestige. The Egyptian territory, with the continuing installation of foreign populations, is divided into the zone of colonists and in that of natives. Fellahs, who are regarded as the most representative types of Egyptians, are reduced to poverty even more as they suffer from callous economic and