

JURJI ZAIDAN

**HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO MODERN ARAB
THOUGHT AND LITERATURE**

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JURJI ZAIDAN¹

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO MODERN ARAB THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

¹ The spelling of the name varies from one text to another. Therefore, in direct quotes, the paper will retain the original transcription of the quote. However, the author of this paper will be using the agreed – upon spelling of the conference organizers for this work.

I. INTRODUCTION: PROVIDING THE CONTEXT

I am delighted to celebrate the legacy of a remarkable man, who in the short span of half a century, had a profound impact on the culture of his people, the history of his region, and the literature of his language. He helped forge the modern identity of the Arabs, founded the modern mass media there and brought culture to the broad public as he pioneered the use of the novel in Arabic. He was a man of letters who understood and publicized science; a man of the Christian faith who had a profound knowledge of Islam and the history of the Muslim peoples, and helped bring that history to life for generations of Muslims, including myself.

It is a remarkable legacy, and it is most appropriate that we should be celebrating this 150th anniversary of his birth, and the 120th anniversary of the founding of his publishing enterprise (Dar al-Hilal) and his cultural magazine al-Hilal, which is the longest-lived and still functional cultural journal in the Arab World.

Let me start with a brief overview of Zaidan and his times. It was a remarkable period of change and

transformation—called the period of the Nahda or the “Arab Renaissance” or the “Arab Awakening”, to use the title coined by George Antonius in his 1938 book.² Zaidan, I submit, was one of the artisans of that societal *prise de conscience*.

Like an unchecked cancer, bad governance had turned the once mighty Ottoman Empire into the “sick man of Europe”. Ottoman ossification had brought the Arab and Muslim worlds to a new low. The jolt of reawakening was to come in the form of the French invasion of Egypt in 1798. After the French defeat and withdrawal, chaos reigned under the nominal suzerainty of the Ottomans until Muhammad ‘Ali took the reins of power in Egypt and started his ambitious development and modernization programs. The momentum of reform was to continue, and by the second half of the nineteenth century, a true movement to modernize Egypt was underway.

It was in that world of transformation and transition that Zaidan would flourish. He was to make a signal contribution to this Arab Renaissance, the Nahda. Indeed he is considered by some like Philipp to have

² Antonius, George. *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London, H. Hamilton, 1938).

been “the archetypal member of the Arab Nahda (Awakening) at the end of the nineteenth century”.³

Two strands come together in this Nahda, this transformation: One is admiration for European achievements that promotes emulation of the West; and the other, an insistence on reviving the roots of the culture of the East. Each of these, in turn, has two identifiable strands:

In looking to the West, there is the desire to fully emulate it in terms of technology, modernity and much more; but a resistance to full westernization in terms of refusing to promote values that would undermine our own cultural roots and nascent national identity.

And again, when it comes to reviving the eastern identity and cultural roots, two strands can be identified: those who wanted a pan-Islamic revival as championed by Afghani, and those who wanted an Arab revival as championed by al-Kawakibi.⁴

³ Philipp, Thomas. “Jurji Zaydan’s Role in the Syro Arab Nahda: A Re-evaluation.” in Beshara, Adel (Editor). *The Origins of Syrian Nationhood*. (New York, Routledge, 2011) p. 79.

⁴ Al-Kawākibī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *Ṭabā’i’al-Istibdād wa-Maṣāri’al-Isti’bād* (*The Nature of Despotism and the Struggle Against Enslavement*). Introduction by Majdī Sa’īd. *Al-Fikr al-Nahḍawī al-Islāmī* (*Islamic Awakening Thought*). (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī; Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina; Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 2011).

It was part of the genius of Jurji Zaidan that he epitomized the weaving together of these four strands, as few have been able to do before or since. In so doing, he responded to a deep latent desire among Arab and Muslim intellectuals and reformers.

But Zaidan was much more than a contributor to the intellectual debates of his time. He transformed society by helping build the Arab media, the key instrument to educate the public in those days, and was an important literary figure, a pioneer of the novel and a historian of Islamic civilization.

So let's discuss several facets of Jurji Zaidan:

- Zaidan the builder of the Arab Press
- Zaidan the intellectual
- Zaidan the activist reformer of the Nahda
- Zaidan the literary author
- Zaidan the man

Then, I would like to conclude with a few comments about why I think that Zaidan and his thinking are both pertinent and relevant for our times, the times of the "Arab Spring".

II. ZAIDAN, BUILDER OF THE ARAB PRESS

It is difficult for people today to imagine a world without the internet and without cell phones and television. And even for those who, like myself, grew up without these modern wonders which we take for granted, it is almost impossible to imagine a world without newspapers, magazines and books. Yet up to the early part of the nineteenth century, that was the situation in Egypt, and except for a few lucky readers in Lebanon, it was so for the rest of the Arab World. A handful of men were to change all that, and Jurji Zaidan was one of them.

Following the introduction of the printing press in Egypt in 1820, and the official journal in 1828, the printed word began to spread throughout Egypt and much of the Arab world. Albert Hourani paints the picture vividly:

There grew up a new generation accustomed to reading... For those who had been educated to a high level in Arabic, a new literature was being produced. Printing in Arabic had scarcely existed before the nineteenth century, but it spread during the century, particularly in Cairo and Beirut, which were to remain the principal

centers of publishing: government schools in Cairo and mission schools in Beirut had produced a comparatively large reading public. Apart from school texts, books were less important in this period than newspapers and periodicals, which began to play a large part in the 1860s and 1870s. Among the periodicals of ideas, opening windows on to the culture, science and technology of the West, were two produced by Lebanese Christians in Cairo: *al-Muqtataf* by Ya'qub Sarruf (1852-1927) and Faris Nimr (1855-1951) and *al-Hilal* by Jurji Zaydan (1861-1914).⁵

It was these same people who would promote public education and public debate; they were to be the primary artisans of the Nahda. We all now recognize that the printing press, and especially the journal and the newspaper, were the major instruments for public debates in the Nahda. Every single member of the Nahda was a writer, a publisher, an editor, and/or owner of newspapers and journals. *Al-Hilal* with *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Manar* became the highest intellectual authorities within the Nahda movement. But Zaidan, the self-

⁵ Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge MA, Harvard Univ. Press, 1991) pp. 303-4.

made man, achieved what none of his contemporaries was able to do: he created a lasting institution. This was the unique strength of Zaidan, that far from simply creating something that he dominated—and dominate it he did—he successfully institutionalized *al-Hilal* so that it survived him by a century and is today the oldest continuously publishing cultural journal in the Arab World. He is rightly considered to have been one of a handful of individuals who created modern Arab journalism.

Zaidan's commitment was to educate the public, not just to produce a literary magazine primarily for entertainment. Indeed, his foreword to the first issue of *al-Hilal* crystallizes his commitment to educating society in a liberal, pluralistic fashion, which he considers a duty:⁶

Our plan is to be true to our objective, honest in our tone, and to endeavor to do our best for the task we have set out to perform. To achieve this, we must necessarily support all contemporary writers and intellectuals from every realm and corner. What we aim at is to elicit the interest of the majority to read what

⁶ All translations from Arabic in this paper are by the author.

we write, approve of it and forgive us our mistakes. If we accomplish this, we will have achieved satisfaction and will thus endeavor harder to attain what we consider our duty⁷.

Jurji Zaidan was the founder, writer, editor-in-chief, manager and printer of *al-Hilal* magazine. His dedication to making *al-Hilal* a successful, popular periodical that would, inevitably, influence public opinion and help educate the people, made him exert great effort to maintain its excellence, high circulation rate and quality.⁸

He turned it into a platform for the works of distinguished authors, pioneers of Arabic literature, including giants like Husayn Haykal, Taha Husayn,⁹ Muhammad Farid Wajdi,¹⁰ 'Ali al-Jarim, 'Abbas

⁷ 'Ezzat, Maḥmūd (Editor). *Dār al-Hilāl: Madrasat al-Tanwīr (Dār al-Hilāl: School of Enlightenment)*. (Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2010) p.15.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ḥusayn, Tāha. *Mustaqbal al-Thaqāfa fī Miṣr (The Future of Culture in Egypt)*. Introduction by 'Imād Ḥusayn, *Al-Fikr al-Nahḍāwī al-Islāmī* (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī; Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina; Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 2012).

¹⁰ Wajdī, Muḥammad Farīd. *Al-Madaniyya wa-'l-Islām (Civilization and Islam)*. Introduction by Shukrī, Mu'tazz. *Al-Fikr al-Nahḍāwī al-Islāmī*. (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī; Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina; Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 2012).

Mahmud al-‘Akkad, Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti and Ahmad Amin.¹¹ And because of that, *al-Hilal* achieved great fame and survived his death, and became a towering institution of journalism.

But to achieve that popularity and continuity, Zaidan had noted from the beginning, that while he had to educate the public in what it did not know, he had to respect the taste, traditions, and moral values of the readers, even while trying to change them. Al-Tamawi cites him as saying: “the writer writes for the citizens of a country, and he relies on them to read what he has written.”¹²

Another major point of strength that Zaidan brought to *al-Hilal*, was the fact that he expanded the cultural scene to include more than just literature, and starting with Science,¹³ he made sure to offer his readers a

¹¹ The main purpose of this new magazine was to educate the public and help writers reach the readers and express their ideas no matter how diverse their intellectual schools were. See ‘Ezzat. p.13. These authors had great loyalty to the Journal and it is thanks to them that the magazine achieved great fame and carried on after his death to become a towering institution of journalism. See ‘Imāra al-Zākī, ‘Alī. “Jūrjī Zaydān.” <http://wadelhilew.ahlamontada.com/t94-topic>, Sat 20 Feb, 2010.

¹² Al-Tamāwī, Aḥmad, H. *Jūrjī Zaydān: Naqd al- Ādāb* (Cairo, National Book Organization, 1992) p. 125.

¹³ Al-Tamāwī observed that “... he created a special column in the magazine for scientific news, and was known to carefully note poets’

variety of interesting, informative and intellectually stimulating areas of knowledge as ‘Ezzat observes: “At the time *al-Hilal* was first issued, culture in Egypt was limited to literature. The new periodical gave it a wider and more comprehensive meaning. It included history, philosophy, science, sociology, politics and economics, thus merging intellectual thought with art, and science with philosophy.¹⁴ Zaidan believed in the importance of education for all of society, in the broadest sense of education.¹⁵ While it could be argued that this was out of self-interest,¹⁶ I personally do not share that view and rather believe that Zaidan, like

references about scientific issues as is seen in his article on *al-A‘lā’* and his knowledge of stars and astronomy and his book on *Abū Nuwās* in which he describes him as a man well versed in astrology.” p.11.

¹⁴ ‘Ezzat, p.13.

¹⁵ Al-Tamāwī remarks: “His competence in the English, French and German languages helped him a great deal to follow Western culture and journalism closely. His readings in these languages helped him to provide *al-Hilāl* all the new scientific, social, historical, political and literary topics on a bi-weekly basis.” p.14.

¹⁶ Philipp comments: “He and many of his colleagues in the Arab Nahda fit perfectly Benedict Anderson’s concept of ‘print capitalism’. The art of printing was the world’s introduction to mechanical mass production. As Anderson argued, a larger market for printed items meant lower costs per unit and higher profits for the print entrepreneur. This market could be widened by increasing literacy in the population and by the creation of a written language accessible to more sections of society than just the learned class.” See “Jurji Zaydan’s Role in the Syro-Arab Nahda...” op.cit. p. 86.

several of his reformer colleagues, all artisans of the Nahda, believed that education was the best means of achieving societal progress. To stay in circulation also required navigating the shoals of political censorship of his day. Confronting western occupation in the Middle East and North Africa was no easy feat, but Zaidan managed it with a delicate balance between cultural and political activism.¹⁷

III. ZAIDAN, THE INTELLECTUAL

But beyond Zaidan the journalist, the media mogul and the editor, is Zaidan the intellectual. While many would consider him to be primarily a historian, or novelist or journalist, the sum total of his contributions represented an enormously distinctive, effective and coherent body of work that made an enormous difference to the entire Arab World. His views on many topics were influential with his contemporaries and for subsequent generations.

¹⁷ ‘Ezzat observes that “Many of the magazines that were issued at the time such as *al-Abrām* (founded in 1876), *al-Muqtatāf* (founded in 1876 in Lebanon – transferred to Cairo in 1885), *al-Muqaṭṭam* (1889), *al-Mu’ayyid* (1889), *al-Nīl* (1891), *al-Bustān* (1892), *al-Ustāz* (1892) and others could not adapt to the challenges facing Egyptian society during that period. Several magazines could not continue due to the clash with the ruling (British) authorities or because they could no longer appeal to the public.” pp.13-14.

What can we say about the thinking of this self-made man? While it was undoubtedly multi-faceted, I will try to limit my remarks to a few of the many areas where he made important contributions. Specifically let me address his attitudes towards, science, culture, and women.

On Science and Rationality

First, he had a profound belief in rationality and science. Indeed, he had defended the right to teach Evolution when Darwin was still unacceptable to the Christian Church. Brugman notes that:

Zaidan supported avant garde ideas, and believed in the value of science to the extent that he had to pay a price for that. When in 1882 as a young medical student at the American College of Beirut he supported a certain Dr. Lewis who had given lectures on Darwin's theory of evolution, Zaidan, among others, was refused admittance into the then still Christian Protestant university.¹⁸

¹⁸ Brugman, J. *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt* (Leiden, E.J Brill, 1984) p.219. Although this is a verbatim quote from that source in fact Zaidan was a student at the Syrian Protestant College and neither the American College of Beirut nor the Christian Protestant university. Zaidan was admitted to the

He believed that the scientific approach was the key to education more generally. This carried over into his work as a journalist, where we note that Zaidan, who had been exposed to an education in medicine, chemistry, mathematics and pharmacology, wrote about many scientific issues such as radium, Roentgen's X-rays, tuberculosis and limestone.

Zaidan saw science as an important dimension of culture, and in his view, culture also included history, philosophy, science, sociology, politics and economics, thus merging intellectual thought with art, and science with philosophy. His commitment to science and getting the facts right, noted by al-Tamawi and Philipp among many, meant that he also wanted to apply this approach to understanding one's culture.

On Culture

So how did that "scientific" approach reflect itself in his writings on Culture? As I said at the outset, he was able to weave together the four strands of westernization and cultural authenticity as well as Arabism and Islam. These last two strands, involved important and distinct

Syrian Protestant College, but a year later, after a younger teacher had been censured by the faculty for lecturing somewhat sympathetically about Darwin's theory, Zaidan participated in a student protest and eventually did not return to the College. The Syrian Protestant College subsequently became the American University of Beirut.

political projects, to which I will devote the next section of this paper. Allow me here to focus on Westernization and cultural authenticity.

Zaidan was certainly open to the ideas of the West, though he was not uncritical of some of the aspects of what he saw there. In fact, El-Enany cites Zaidan's list of Do's and Don'ts in cultural borrowing from the West:

In the civilization of France and that of other European parts, there are many virtues that we should borrow and benefit from, but it has also vices that should be avoided. The virtues that we will do well to borrow are:

1. Recognition of duty;
2. Punctuality and not wasting time;
3. Refinement of the manners of the commonalty through true education;
4. The education and edification of women;
5. The promotion of education and expansion of the [study of] letters;
6. Hard work.

As for the faults of that civilization, the most important to remember of those are:

1. Excess of freedom and using it wrongly;

2. Whatever contradicts oriental decency, notwithstanding the adoption of a measure of knowledge and education that is suitable for our customs;
3. Indifference to religion...for that is the cornerstone of ruin.¹⁹

Cultural authenticity meant that he had to define what constituted the oriental roots that he felt needed to be affirmed in the face of westernization in order to be able to develop our own renaissance, our Nahda.

Zaidan was able to make a profound commitment to the notion of Arabism, as distinct from relating exclusively to Egyptians or Phoenicians, even though he recognized the contributions of these cultural strands. It was the common language of Arabic that established a true bond between Arabs. But with Arab culture he saw the influence of Islamic civilization as a major factor giving Arab culture a content and depth beyond its own linguistic reach, and contributing to the formation of the Arab identity. Though he shunned

¹⁹ El-Enany, Rasheed. *Arab Representations of the Occident: East-West Encounters in Arabic Fiction: Culture & Civilization in the Middle East* (New York, Routledge, 2006), p. 39.

political activism, “he was nonetheless concerned with Arab history and wrote openly of an Arab nation”²⁰.

On Women

Political reform brings into focus the issue of the status of women. While Zaidan undoubtedly believed in the education of women²¹ and says: “No two intelligent people differ in the matter of the education of women,”²² he still shows a certain wariness towards the full emancipation of women. Indeed, he writes with wistfulness about the more timid and tame oriental women of his time compared to the brazenness which he was witnessing in Paris.²³

²⁰ Matthews, Weldon C. *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists And Popular Politics and Mandate Palestine* (London, I.B. Tauris & Co, 2006) p.12.

²¹ Mūsā, Nabawiyya. *Al-Mar'a wa-l'Amal* (Women and Work). Introduction by Mona Abū-Zayd. *Al-Fikr al-Nahḍawī al-Islāmī* (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī; Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina; Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 2011) pp.13-14. Nabawiyya Musa's book is a seminal text on the education and work of women.

²² Philipp. *Jurji Zaidan and the Foundations of Arab Nationalism* (New York, Syracuse Univ. Press, forthcoming).

²³ Quoted by El-Enany as follows: “Jurji Zaydan's conservatism shows at its most extreme, as is common among modernizers of his and indeed later generations, when the issue is that of female emancipation and sexual mores. After describing the emancipation of the European woman and the parity she has achieved with men, he goes on to comment wistfully, ‘We used to protest at the ignorance and veiling of the oriental woman, and envy the European woman for her education

His views on the status of women were more conservative than those of some of his contemporaries such as Qasim Amin.²⁴ El-Enany further notes that “As conservatism regarding female emancipation tends to be habitually associated with Islam, we will do well to remember that Jurji Zaydan was a Christian.”²⁵ So, where does all this leave us?

On the whole, this prismatic author and publisher, historian and public educator made a major contribution to the culture of the Arab Renaissance, the Nahda, as one of his successors, Muhammad Farid Wajdy, said: “If I were to count the unique personalities that have appeared in the Middle East in the last fifty years; those who have enriched it with their writings and ideas, I find myself obliged to put Jurji Zaidan at the forefront”.²⁶

and freedom. Now that we have seen the latter in Paris, one has almost reverted to being content with the ignorance and the veil; they [the Europeans] have harmed that gentle creature with excessive freedom.’” p. 38.

²⁴ Amīn, Qāšim. *Taḥrīr al-Mar’a (The Emancipation of Women)*; Ḥarb, Muḥammad Tal’at. *Tarbiyat al-Mar’a wa-l- Ḥijāb (Women’s Education and the Veil)*. Introduction by al-Bandarī, Amīna. *Al-Fikr al-Nahḍawī al-Islāmī* (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī; Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina; Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 2012).

²⁵ El-Enany, p. 38.

²⁶ Quoted in Imāra al-Zākī. “Jūrjī Zaydān.” Op.cit.

IV. THE ARAB NAHDA AS A CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PROJECT

On Being an Arab

The cultural and political project of the Pan-Arab Nahda did not only have to cope with the issues of westernization and cultural authenticity, it had also to cope with the rival project of the Pan-Islamic Revival. It had to answer what constituted an Arab identity that would transcend the identities of Egyptians, Phoenicians, Iraqis, Syrians, etc.

Egypt detached itself from the Arab movement and evolved a nationalist policy of her own. The change had begun in the seventies of the nineteenth century, during the reign of the Khedive Isma'il, when that ruler's extravagance and his entanglements with European finance had brought about a wave of popular discontent. Hitherto, the movement of ideas in Egypt, so far as the Arabic cultural revival and the birth of the Arab national consciousness went, had marched hand in hand with the same process in Syria; and the lead given by the

one country evoked a ready response in the other.²⁷

This is further emphasized by Antonius again when he remarks that:

It is in the nature of the Arab temperament to conceive action in spasms rather than on a plan of sustained effort, and the history of the national movement is in a sense a chronicle of vivid outbursts with periods of recovery and preparation between them. It unfolds itself in a pattern of flames shooting upwards from a dull fire of smoldering feeling.²⁸

Zaidan, who straddled the Levant and Egypt was firmly committed to the Arab identity, and for him, the Arabic language was the key, “For Zaidan the existence of the Arabic language...as a functioning means of communication and information for society was proof that an Arab bond existed.”²⁹

In his ability to transcend geographic affinities as well as religious ones, and to emphasize language as the

²⁷ Antonius, pp. 99-100.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 89.

²⁹ Philipp, “Jurji Zaydan’s Role in the Syro-Arab Nahda,” p. 85.

cornerstone for defining his cultural worldview, Zaidan was not only progressive, but he also rejected the racial or ethnic basis on which other intellectuals in Europe and elsewhere were building their view of society and politics. Zaidan is considered to have been an architect of the modern Arab identity and, as Philipp rightly says: “Zaidan is considered to have laid the foundation for a pan-Arab national identity.”³⁰ Here it is important to note that his Arabism is not of the extreme and chauvinistic kind supported by people like Mustafa Sadiq El-Rafa‘i,³¹ a judgment held by no less eminent a person than Muhammad Husayn Haykal Pasha.³²

On Islamic Civilization

Zaidan was a distinguished historian of Islamic civilization. He undoubtedly read western sources and admired the precision and method that European Orientalism brought to the task of interpreting history. But while, like other Arab intellectuals in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, he was profoundly influenced by the methods of European research,

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Egyptian poet, intellectual, critic and writer. Born in 1880 and died in 1937.

³² Haykal, Muḥammad, Ḥusayn. “Jūrjī Zaydān kama ‘Araftuhu,” *al-Hilāl* 47 (1929/40?) p. 964

he also had enormous mastery of Arab and Muslim History and his historical knowledge came often from Arab writers, whom he also criticized severely.

The balance of these various influences is best seen in his writing, and it is amazing that this largely self-taught man should have produced the first modern historiography of Islamic civilization. That enormous multi-volume work would open the door to successors, most notably Ahmed Amin. In fact, no less a figure than Salama Musa notes:

Jurji Zaydan was a self-made man, culturally as well as in matters of finance. He was the first who, in our modern age, devoted his life to studying Islamic history; he wrote a great many historical novels, in addition to his major work *The History of Islamic Civilization*. Writing the latter was a pioneer's task, by which he opened the way for all the historical studies that have after him, in the past twenty or thirty years, appeared in ever increasing numbers.³³

Others were seeking to revive a pan-Islamic project. But Zaidan remained true to his Arab cultural project,

³³ Mūsā, Salama. *The Education of Salama Mūsā*. Transl. Schuman, L.O. (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1961) p. 153.

even though he did more than any other to link it with the content of Islamic civilization. Beyond his master work on Islamic Civilization it would be as novelist that he would introduce Islamic and Arab History to a very wide public (see below).

While many thinkers, both Muslims and Christians, shaped the Arab nationalism that emerged with the Nahda, Zaidan was truly a founding figure. Al-Tamawi goes further and says that: “Jurji Zaidan is considered one of the greatest guides of Arab culture in its modern renaissance (Nahda).”³⁴

Zaidan and the Pan-Islamic Revival

The Ottoman Empire could no longer provide a viable model for those who saw power and modernity embodied in the West with its nationalism and imperialist tendencies. Yet that old Muslim empire had been capable of accommodating a plethora of local identities, precisely because the Muslim faith was embracing so vast a territory with so many cultures and subcultures, and so many ethnicities and religious minorities. The national parliament, the Ottoman *majlis al-milli* provided some sort of recognition and even some channels of communication to the Sublime

³⁴ Al-Tamāwī, p.16.

Porte and to the centralized decision-making structure when there was a need for it. Local affairs were largely dealt with locally.

Some were intent on reforming the Ottoman Pan-Islamic project, and intellectuals from Afghani to Muhammad 'Abduh to Rashid Rida provided the intellectual framework for such political endeavors. If Zaidan differed with these and others on the pan-Islamic versus the Arab dimension of his cultural project, he shared with many his belief that education of the public would be the key to modernizing the backward eastern societies. As Musawi aptly puts it: "Jurji Zaydan's contributions are in line with a sense of national commitment and an intellectual moral responsibility to participate in the education of the public."³⁵

But the political dimensions of the Pan-Islamic project were to continue for quite a while, and even until today, echoes and variations are found in the works and actions of intellectuals and politicians from Iran to Morocco and from Pakistan to Turkey, while Egypt remains at the heart of that debate, even as the debate remains at the heart of Egypt. However, I believe that

³⁵ Mūsawī. Muhsin Jāsīm, *Islam on the Street: Religion in Modern Arabic Literature* (Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), p. 29.

the polarization that we now witness between liberal secularist reformers and pan-Islamic revivalists denies a meeting ground that has a long and distinguished intellectual tradition, which my colleagues and I, at the Library of Alexandria, are trying to revive by “reissuing the classics” of the last 200 years.³⁶ However, even though I will allude to this in my concluding comments about the “Arab Spring”, this important discussion is beyond this paper focusing on Zaidan and his work.

The twentieth-century was to bring many transformations. To list but a few: the changes within the Ottoman Empire before the First World War; the war itself and the famous Arab revolt against the Ottomans, supported by Lawrence and aborted by Sykes-Picot; the 1919 revolution in Egypt, and the subsequent emergence of a liberal regime with the 1923 constitution; the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of modern Turkey under

³⁶ The Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the New Library of Alexandria, is re-issuing the classics of Muslim humanist and reformist thinking in the last two centuries, in an authoritative edition, each with an introduction by a specialist about the author and the work in question. Since the series is about the masterworks of many Muslim intellectuals who were the predecessors, contemporaries and successors of Jurji Zaidan, the reader may wish to consult some of the works issued by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in that series entitled *Al-Fikr al-Nahdāwī al-Islāmī* (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī; Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina; Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī).

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; and the abolition of the Caliphate; then Palestine and the military coups that came after the Second World War and the autocratic regimes that ruled the Arab World till the current waves of revolutionary movements we refer to as “The Arab Spring”. All of that was to have a profound impact on the subsequent evolution of the ideas championed by Zaidan during his brief lifetime. But discussion of these issues is, again, beyond the scope of this paper. However, two observations are worth making here:

First, since there was competition between the Pan-Islamic and the Arab cultural projects, the changes in the Ottoman Empire before its final collapse and the impact of these changes on the Nahda are worth noting. In fact reformers in both camps were encouraged, showing that they had a substantial common ground. Here are Anne-Laure Dupont’s observations on the impact of the 1908 Ottoman Constitution:

The return of the Ottoman constitution in 1908 was immediately perceived as a revolution (*inqilāb*), and was widely commented in the Arabic press – not only in newspapers but also in cultural and educational reviews such as *al-Hilāl* and *al-Manār*, both edited in Cairo by Syrian Ottoman subjects, Jurji Zaydan

and Mohamed Rashid Rida. Until then, Zaydan and Rida had not been directly involved in political matters but, as advocates of the reform (*iṣlāḥ*) and progress (*taqaddum*) of society, they felt encouraged in their mission by the advent of a constitutional regime in Istanbul and the granting of new rights. They actually saw in these the triumph of their ideas and ideals. Both were very typical of the modernist or reformist movement in Egypt, and the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, of its shared values as well as its various trends. Zaydan and Rida claimed to educate individuals and society”.³⁷

On Political Reform vs. Revolution

It was not a call for violent revolution or political upheaval that these enlightened men sought. Indeed both Zaidan and Rida believed in education but feared

³⁷ Dupont, Anne-Laure, “The Ottoman Revolution of 1908 as Seen by *al-Hilāl* and *al-Manār*: The Triumph and Diversification of the Reformist Spirit” in: Schumann, Christoph. (Editor). *Liberal Thought in the Eastern Mediterranean: Late 19th Century Until the 1960s* (Leiden, Brill, 2008) pp. 122-146, p. 123.

social change. They wanted a “revolution without a revolution.”³⁸ To them, Liberty was a state of mind.

Zaidan remained committed to educating the public very broadly, not just on political issues. In furthering this cause of educating the public more generally, he saw clearly the importance of bringing valuable, affordable knowledge to the general reader. Thus in 1894, Zaidan issued the series “*al-Hilal* Historical Novels” which were mainly translated works meant for the general public, and sold at a low price by his own Dar al-Hilal. With these novels he aimed to compete with other works that he viewed were not in line with the general habits and traditions of the culture he was defending and the cause he was advancing.³⁹

Toward the end of his life, Zaidan added to his interests reflections on what made a society distinctive, and what made power legitimate, but he remained overall committed to his great cultural project and did not succumb to the siren song of participating in political power.

³⁸ Ibid. Dupont observes that “both Zaydan and Rida believed in education but feared social change. They wanted a “revolution without a revolution”, one which would give power to the newly educated elites and let them achieve their reformist program.” p.134.

³⁹ ‘Ezzat, p.15.

V. THE LITERARY WORK OF ZAIDAN

Jurji Zaidan's instrument was the pen. He was a writer. He pioneered the use of the historical novel – and, indirectly, the novel in general – as a genre of Arab literature. His twenty-two novels⁴⁰ were popular and enjoy until today an unbroken fame. Indeed, Zaidan “Despite his short literary life, which did not exceed twenty-two years, ...carved for himself a distinguished place among Arab writers, and his name has been forever recognized by everyone”.⁴¹

If he was not of a literary stature comparable to later figures like Taha Husayn, ‘Abbas al-‘Akkad or Naguib Mahfouz, he was the precursor and pioneer who revolutionized the Arab novel and paved the way for them.⁴² And, as Albert Hourani noted:

Jurji Zaydan did more than any other [writer of the Nahda] to create a consciousness of the Arab past by his histories and still more by his series of historical novels, modeled

⁴⁰ See Appendix below.

⁴¹ ‘Imāra, al-Zākī. “Jūrji Zaydān.” Op.cit.

⁴² “Though Zaydan may not be considered a great novelist in some world sense, he revolutionized the Arab novel and paved the way for future novelists, whether they were inspired by historical themes or not.” See Mūsā, Matti. *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*. 2nd edition (Colorado, Lynne Rienner, 1997) p. 213.

on those of Scott and creating a romantic image of the past as Scott's had done.⁴³

Jurji Zaidan's role as a leading figure in the Arab Nahda, and his firm belief in the value of advocating this movement, rendered much of his work a reflection of that very idea he revered and upheld. His novels, histories and linguistic works all revolve around this cause.

A prolific writer, Zaidan's legacy comprises twenty-two novels, six historical books and three works on language and literature. His novels, primarily historical as Hamdawy notes: "In the novels of Jorge Zeidan, two aspects intersect: the historical and the narrative where the first constitutes the basis and objective, and the second merely an artistic device"⁴⁴, have often been an educational source for many young Arabs. Indeed, Zaidan "stuck to actual historical events because his main objective was to teach history to the public"⁴⁵ as Matti reiterates.

⁴³ Quoted in Suleiman, Yasir & Muhawi, Ibrahim (Editors). *Literature and Nation in the Middle East* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2006), p.12.

⁴⁴ Hamdawy. Jamal, "The Novels of Jurji Zaidan between History & Artistic Suspense, <http://www.dahsha.com/old/viewarticle.php?id=32970>

⁴⁵ Moussa. Matti, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, Colorado: Lynne Reinner, 1997. 2nd edition. P.199.

But beyond the societal impact of Zaidan's novels, his literary work in these novels had certain characteristics that set them apart, as the attention to historical context is pronounced, much more so than the treatment of character and plot, usually a love story with a happy ending. Walid Hamarneh comments on his literary style, saying:

Many critics have observed that his novels are composed of two basic elements. The first element consists of the historical background, which can be subdivided into two types – historical time, usually composed of long passages (sometimes with footnotes and references to historical works) that provide the reader with an elaborate temporal context; and a second type associated with space, where Zaydan provides elaborate and detailed descriptions of cities or areas in which the action takes place. The second element in Zaydan's novels is the love story. This typically involves a man and a woman who fall in love, then are separated by circumstances, only to meet again and in most cases come together in a happy ending. The plot

structure can thus be considered closed and dominated by historical facts.⁴⁶

These distinctive characteristics of his approach, as contrasted to western novelists of the time as well as those that followed him in the Arab world, enable us to appreciate his political and cultural purpose, not just his literary achievement.

In all of his novels, based on Arab-Islamic history, Zaidan “attempted to recreate ... society in the spirit of historical research”⁴⁷. His novel, *Fath al-Andalus* (1903), for example, weaves fiction and historical events to narrate the history of Spain before the Muslim conquest and describes the conquest itself under the leadership of Tariq ibn Ziyad. Similarly, his *Al-'Abbasa ukht al-Rashid* (1906) accurately describes the reign of Harun al-Rashid, the lifestyle of the times and the fall of the Barmakis who were the chief administrators of the Abbasid Caliph. The novel entitled *17 Ramadan* (1900), tells the story of the assassination of Imam Aly, the emergence of Al Khawarej, the eventual control of the Ummaids over the Islamic state and the ending of the

⁴⁶ Hamarneh, Walid. “Jurji Zaydan.” in: Allen, Roger. (Editor). *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography: 1850-1950* (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 2010) p. 385.

⁴⁷ Moreh. Shmuel, *Studies in Modern Arabic Prose and Poetry*, Leiden: E.J Brill, 1988. P. 97

power of the house of the prophet (PBUH). In *Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf* (1902), Zaidan describes the novel at the outset saying:

A HISTORICAL NOVEL

It tells the story of the siege of Mecca at the time of Abdullah Ibn Al Zubair until its conquest, the death of Ibn Al Zubair, and the transfer of the Caliphate to Abdullah Ibn Marawan. It includes a description of Mecca and Medina, the habits and behavior of the people and their living conditions.⁴⁸

As such, he emphasizes his interest in narrating, rather than fictionalizing, history. His contribution to the genre of the historical novel, and the novel in general, has “revolutionized the Arab novel and paved the way for future novelists, whether they were inspired by historical themes or not”.⁴⁹ And, as Thomas aptly puts it: “Zaydan was a true literary pioneer, establishing the historical novel – and, indirectly, the novel in general – as a genre of Arab literature”.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Jurji Zaidan, *Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf*, Cairo, Dar El Hilal, 1902. Inside cover.

⁴⁹ Moussa. P.213

⁵⁰ Phillip. Thomas, “Jurji Zaydan’s Role in the Syro Arab Nahda: A Re-evaluation” in: Beshara. Adel (ed), *The Origins of Syrian*

Likewise, in his books on history, the author identifies the content and purpose of his endeavor. In *Tà'rikh al-Tamaddun al-Islami*, a five volume book published in Cairo between 1901 and 1905, he states that the book is about the founding of the Islamic state, its military, political and administrative structure as well as the habits of its people. He then specifies what each volume, of the five that comprise the history of the Islamic state, is about to tackle. For example, in volume two, he subtitles it: "On the wealth of the Islamic State, the wealth of its rulers and caliphs; the reasons behind the accumulation of this wealth, and the reasons behind its loss, as well as the riches of the kingdom with its cities and villages".⁵¹

In the area of literary and linguistic studies, Zaidan was an innovator. His three books: *Al-Alfaz al-'Arabiya wa'l-Falsafa al-Lughawiya* (1886), *Tà'rikh al-Lugha al-'Arabiya Bi'itibariha Ká'in Hayy Khadi' li Namus al-Irtiqa'* (1904), and *Tà'rikh Adab al-Lugha al-'Arabiya*, published in Cairo between 1910 and 1913, are considered milestones in the development of the Arabic

Nationhood , New York: Routledge, 2011. <http://books.google.com.eg/books?id=nr9Ivt-pcoIC&pg=PT159&dq=Jurji+Zaydan&hl=en&sa=X&ei=qTazT6eDMsbm4QTetLWwDw&ved=oCEsQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q=Jurji%20Zaydan&cf=false>

⁵¹ Zaidan, *Tà'rikh al-Tamaddun al-Islami*, Vol II, Cairo, Dar Al Hilal, 1926 (4th edition). Inside cover.

language⁵². In his four volume book on Arabic literature, he divides its history into stages: the pre-Islamic, the Islamic and Ummaid, the Abassid, the Moghul and Ottoman and finally, the Modern Arab Renaissance stage. And despite the fact that this four volume book was published in the early twentieth-century, it still stands as one of the seminal works on Arabic literature as Sahrawy remarks in his introduction to volume one in a new edition published in Algeria in 2007.⁵³ As a leading figure in the Arab Nahda movement, Zaidan's interest in promoting, analyzing and upholding the value of the Arabic language meant, for him, a triumph for Arab renaissance as Phillip rightly observes:

the members of the Nahda, with Zaidan in the forefront, changed the paradigm of the language from a classicist idealization and unalterable sacred standard to a secular and evolutionary one, in which change was not only good but necessary as a proof that the language, and with it society, still possessed its vital powers of growth and development.. The language became

⁵² Phillip. Thomas, "Jurji Zaydan's Role in the Syro Arab Nahda: A Re-evaluation" – "Zaydan was one of many whose writing contributed to the creation of Modern Standard Arabic"

⁵³ Sahrawy. Ibrahim, Introduction to Vol I, Zaidan, *Tā'rikh Adab al-Lughā al-'Arabiya*, Ministry of Culture, Algeria, 2007. P. IX

symbol and program at the same time: symbol for the existence of an Arab nation, consisting of all Arabic-speaking people; and program for establishing practical communication between all Arabs. It became the basis for a pan-Arab, national identity.⁵⁴

Zaidan's great achievements on the literary, historical and linguistic fronts bear witness to his individual achievement but also serve to underscore his dedication to his goal and dream of establishing the Arab Nahda project of which he was a major pillar.

The Zaidan project was a great success. He succeeded in promoting historical knowledge among the non-intellectual elite and thus provided a broad grounding for a common Arab identity. As noted earlier, no less an authority than Albert Hourani remarks that "perhaps it was Jurji Zaydan who did more than any other to create a consciousness of the Arab past by his histories and still more by his series of historical novels."⁵⁵

Zaidan wrote in clear and simple prose. It was a distinctive style, that no less a stylist than Manfaluti

⁵⁴ Philipp Thomas, *Jurji Zaidan's Secular Analysis of History and Language as Foundations of Arab Nationalism*, Bethesda: The Zaidan Foundation, 2010. P.139

⁵⁵ Hourani, Albert. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986), p. 277.

admired his pellucid prose.⁵⁶ But beyond style, as Philipp notes: “His writings contributed massively to the development of Modern Standard Arabic, a simplified written language which is today understood by all literate Arabs.”⁵⁷

Zaidan remains a towering figure in the history of modern Arab Literature. His legacy endures. It has stood the test of time. More importantly, Zaidan the novelist, has had a major impact on Arab letters and on global literature, for it is through his work that the novel was introduced into Arabic literature. Musa confirms this by saying that: “It was with the appearance of the eminent writer Jurji Zaydan that the Arab novel, and in particular the historical novel, was brought to fruition”.⁵⁸

Zaidan’s impact on the development of the genre in Arabic cannot be overestimated. Philipp notes that he was a true pioneer.⁵⁹ He paved the way for his

⁵⁶ “As I read Jūrjī Zaydān written style, I always imagined it to be like a clean, perspicuous mirror” Manfalūṭī quoted in: ‘Imāra, “Jūrjī Zaydān.” Op.cit.

⁵⁷ Philipp, *Jurji Zaidan and the Foundations of Arab Nationalism*. op.cit.

⁵⁸ Mūsā, p.195.

⁵⁹ “Philipp. In “Jurji Zaydan’s Role...” op.cit. he says: “Zaydān was a true literary pioneer, establishing the historical novel—and, indirectly, the novel in general—as a genre of Arab literature.” p. 83.

successors, who in the last hundred years produced phenomenal developments culminating with Naguib Mahfouz being awarded the first Nobel Prize for an Arab novelist. Zaidan with his serialized novels encompassing Arab-Islamic history was the major pioneer of the Arabic novel. His novels were popular and enjoy until today an unbroken popularity. Roger Allen, in his classic historical and critical introduction to the Arabic novel observes that:

The novels of Zaydan and other contributors to the historical-romantic and philosophical novel certainly fulfilled the important function of bringing fictional genres into the public awareness and at the same time using episodes from Middle Eastern history as a means of rousing and fostering an emerging Arab Nationalist consciousness.⁶⁰

Zaidan himself recognized that there were many types of novels, thereby emphasizing that the genre he had selected was to suit his own purpose. He says: "Today, novels have diverse types that differ according to the

⁶⁰ Allen, Roger, M. A. *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction* (New York, Syracuse University Press, 1995) p. 62.

mode and purpose of their creation; there are didactic, historical, scientific, literary and other forms.”⁶¹

There is no doubt that he selected the historical novel as a means of promoting – nay, creating – a new Arab consciousness. He was, of course, a specialist in Arab and Muslim history, but that is not the sole reason he chose that genre. After all, he had broad knowledge of many aspects of literature.⁶² In fact Musa underlines that, in his view, where “writers like Scott and Dumas only used historical settings for their characters, Zaidan used the novel and its characters as a means of teaching history to the public.”⁶³

To emphasize that point, Musa observed that the challenge for Zaidan was not how to integrate historical knowledge into the novel’s narrative as much as how to spice up the historical narrative by using the fictional characters almost as props. The novel was not a means

⁶¹ Quoted in *al-Tamāwī*, p. 218.

⁶² Some specialists have noted that “Zaydān’s view of literature as a living entity facilitated his knowledge of its development and his ability to delineate all the novel images and meanings across different ages”. See *al-Tamāwī*, p. 97.

⁶³ “While Scott and Dumas used historical events only as a frame for the novel and took liberty in relating these events to achieve their novelistic ends, Zaydān, on the contrary, stuck to actual historical events because his main objective was to teach history to the public.” *Mūsā*, p.199.

of exploring the human frailties and sensibilities of the characters the author created, rather the unfolding historical events were the story, and thus:

In his historical novels Zaydan did not follow strict canons of historiographical practice in his attempt to reproduce the past. His intention was to recall some of its more salient and entertaining aspects to reach a popular audience and inform them of their unknown past. This is why Zaydan's novels invoke historical events rather than minutely reconstruct and profoundly analyze them. Thus, Zaydan portrayed most of his fictitious characters as simple and fixed – being almost passive instruments for the unfolding for an already determined general historical sequence. Often, he was compelled to create fictitious characters and tie them in somehow with the real ones to lend the novel necessary excitement and adventure. He could not do this with authentic historical characters.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Mūsā, p. 213.

So, in the end, what did those historic novels amount to? They certainly pioneered the use of the novel in the Arab World, and they certainly were a marvelous tool that introduced generations of Arabs and Muslims to their history, and created the Arab public's consciousness of a collective past, and hence a common bond, if not an outright commitment to a common future.

V. ZAIDAN THE MAN

Born on the 14th of December, 1861 in Beirut to an Orthodox Christian family of limited means, Zaidan was forced to drop out of school after two years of elementary education to help his father run his restaurant business. Yet, his enthusiasm for education and his keenness on improving himself finally got him into the Syrian Protestant College as a medical student, which he eventually left after supporting his professor's right to academic freedom against the administration. He then went to Cairo to study medicine but finally opted for a career in writing which created the legend that he became.

In 1891 he married Maryam, a girl he loved, and they had three children: Emile, Asma and Choucri born in 1893, 1895 and 1900 respectively. He was devoted to his family and to his work. He died in July 1914, at

his desk, completing the last tome of his work on the history of Arab Literature. He was only 52 years old.

Jurji Zaidan: A man of dedication and rectitude, a self-made man and largely a self-taught intellectual of encyclopedic breadth, he was a man whom everybody loved. There are many great testimonials by his contemporaries and his successors. Ahmed Amin described him as “A self-made man, who built himself, bore the burden and outlined an example he believed in, drew careful plans and did not rest until he reached what he aimed for. He wanted to learn but had no money and so he bent time to his will, and balanced between his desire to learn and to make money.”⁶⁵

Similarly, the renowned ‘Akkad saw him as:

A man whose intellect is not characterized by bias, fault finding or disturbance but rather mostly distinguished by gentle and subtle guidance. And has this reduced his sense of direction? No, in fact it has increased it. But he did not benefit from the attention and limelight he could have

⁶⁵ Quoted in al-Jindī, Muḥammad. “Jūrjī Zaydān, Mu’assis *al-Hilāl*.” *al- Hilāl* Special Issue (Jan. 2012) p. 324.

received had he been a man of prejudice and extremism.⁶⁶

With regard to his contribution to the revival of Arabic literature, Haykal told us that Zaidan was “the first to tackle this history (of Arabic literature) in a way that resembles modern research in its absence from bias and its seeking of truth for its own sake”.⁶⁷ Indeed, Zaidan’s integrity and achievements have won him the admiration of many as Bishara Takla’s comment after his death clearly demonstrates: “In truth, if historians measured his age to his legacy, they will realize that the owner of *al-Hilal* was one hundred years old when he was only in his fifties when he departed”.⁶⁸ But perhaps it is Emile Amin who captures it best in this brief summary statement:

We can summarize his life by saying that this man, Christian by religion and Islamic by culture, who has succeeded, through his fiction, to introduce Islamic history with ease and lucidity, highlighting the aspects of tolerance and rationalism in it, represented

⁶⁶ Quoted in al-Bīsī, Ṣanā’. “Jurī Zaydān: Lā Yuṣiḥḥ illa al-ṣaḥiḥ.” May 10, 2012. <http://www.ahram.org.eg/90/2010/02/27/10/9358.aspx>.

⁶⁷ Haykal, p. 964.

⁶⁸ Quoted by al-Bīsī, Ṣanā’ “Jurī Zaydān: Lā Yuṣiḥḥ illa al-ṣaḥiḥ.”

a bridge for positive connection between East and West.⁶⁹

VI. JURJI ZAIDAN AND THE “ARAB SPRING” OF TODAY

Zaidan died before the 1919 revolution and the liberal age between the wars (up to 1952 in Egypt). His thinking and contributions had a profound impact on that period. Today, following the totalitarian systems that ruled the Arab world for the second half of the twentieth century, we are witnessing the “Arab Spring”. Is Zaidan’s thinking still relevant for a democratic Arab society today? Or is it only of historical interest for a few scholars?

Can the Nahda as the liberal and national base for Arab thought and politics serve as an inspiration for the unfolding events set in motion by the revolutionary waves of the “Arab Spring”? Is it a viable alternative to fundamentalist tendencies?

Today, the polarization in our countries, the Arab and Muslim worlds, generally is between those who seek the revival of Muslim culture while others choose to

⁶⁹ Amīn, Emīle. “Jūrjī Zaydān: al-Mufakkir al-Maṣīhī al-‘Arabī wa-Ru’yatihi lil-Islām wa-ḥiḍāratihi.” April 21, 2012 <http://www.terezia.org/section.php?id=2300>

follow the path of western style political liberalism and pluralistic democracy. Both parties imagine that there is no meeting ground possible, but that is not true. From its antecedents in the modernization efforts of Muhammad 'Ali and Rifa'at al-Tahtawi⁷⁰ to the Nahda of Jurji Zaidan and others, the meeting ground of the two currents is indeed a Nahda for the twenty first century, a new renaissance of the Arab world and through it a broader renaissance of the Muslim world. Thus Zaidan's legacy has a major relevance today. He was a Christian scholar of Islam, and Arab nationalist who saw the importance of the Islamic component of Arab culture and identity; he revived the understanding of the Muslim tradition, while championing modernity, science and westernization. He saw educating the wide public as primarily the elite's responsibility. He recognized the importance of an open exchange of ideas and practiced it by creating the best intellectual forum for such exchanges, al-Hilal, the longest-lived and still surviving cultural journal in Arabic.

⁷⁰ Al-Tahtawi, Rifa'at. *Manābij al-Albāb al-Miṣriyya fī Mabāhij al-ādāb al-ʿAṣriyya (Paths for Egyptian Minds in the Joys of Contemporary Culture)*. Introduction by Abdu Ibrahim Aly. *Al-Fikr al-Nahdāwī al-Islāmī* (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī; Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina; Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 2011).

VII. CONCLUSIONS

This is but a very brief overview of some of Jurji Zaidan's accomplishments. It was a remarkably productive professional life of some three decades. So it is most fitting that we should all honor the achievements of a man who with deceptive ease went from striving to success, from ambition to achievement and from humble beginnings to the heights of recognition. Throughout the Arab World he is remembered for his glorious contribution to the modernization of values and the values of modernization. A man of many facets, he was an artisan of the Nahda, the renaissance of the Arab World. He championed all the right causes, from the rationality of science to the romance of history, from the importance of knowing the cultural heritage of the past, to the value of creating the cultural heritage of the future... Jurji Zaidan was a giant among his contemporaries, and successive generations of Arab readers rediscover him with joy. Such is the legacy he gave his people and the world.

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- Zaidan. Jurji, *Tā'rikh al-Tamaddun al-Islami*, Vol II, Cairo, Dar Al Hilal, 1926 (4th edition). Inside cover.

APPENDIX

A LIST OF ZAIDAN'S WORKS

Zaidan. Jurji, *Al-Alfaz al-'Arabiya wa'l-Falsafa al-Lughawiya*,
Beirut 1886

-----, *Tà'rikh al-Masuniya al-'Amm*, Cairo 1889

-----, *Al-Tà'rikh al-'Amm*, Cairo 1890

-----, *Al-Mamluk al-Sharid*, Cairo 1891

-----, *Asr al-Mutamahdi*, Cairo 1892

-----, *Istibdad al-Mamaleek*, Cairo 1893

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