# Arabistik and Arabism: The Passions of Martin Hartmann

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The influence of European scholarship upon Middle Eastern nationalisms is a scarcely acknowledged one. The great work of retrieval and compilation done by European archeologists and philologists served their own inquiring spirit. But the findings extracted from excavations, inscriptions and manuscripts soon fed the imaginations of those who lived aside the digs and spoke the modern forms of retrieved languages. European scholarship breathed life into silent ruins and established the ancient ancestry of languages still spoken in Eastern lands. Such scholarship did not create the discontent which spread through the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century. It did stock a vast storehouse of scholarly findings which fed nationalism with grist.

Yet foreign scholars do not occupy any place of prominence in the conventional catalogue of influences which formed Arab nationalism. By most accounts, the Arabs bestirred themselves, or at least discovered the eclipsed greatness of their language and culture by their own labors. Still, it is impossible not to be struck by the similarity between many of the nineteenth-century theories propounded by European scholars in Arabic studies, and the twentieth-century theories propounded by Arab nationalists. The greatness of pre-Islamic Arab civilization, and the ingeniously Arab character of pristine Islam, were ideas championed by some of these scholars years before similar ideas appeared in the writings of Arab nationalists. This loses the aura of pure coincidence when it is realized just how much of this scholarly and semi-scholarly material quickly found its way into Arab libraries. Perhaps the most influential of these works was Gustave Le Bon's La civilisation des Arabes. The book was well known in the intellectual salons of turn-of-the-century Beirut and Damascus for its author's argument that the Arabs possessed a special genius, manifest in early Islam but later obscured by Persian and Turkish accretions.

A handful of these European scholars became so enamoured of their theories that they themselves embraced a sort of Arab nationalism. One of them went so far as to call for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the restoration to the Arabs of their independence. He was Martin Hartmann – a brilliant if quixotic German student of Islam and Arabic, a socialist visionary, and one of the first truly disinterested foreign friends of Arab nationalism.<sup>1</sup>

I

Young Martin Hartmann, born the son of a Mennonite preacher in Breslau, had the attributes of a prodigy. In 1869, at the age of 17, he

entered the university in his native city and displayed a remarkable aptitude for languages. Later he completed advanced studies at Leipzig under the eminent Semiticist Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer. The Leipzig of a century ago boasted one of Europe's leading schools of Semitic philology, at a time when philology reigned supreme among Orientalist disciplines. Young Hartmann received his doctorate in 1874 with a dissertation on pluriliteral forms in Semitic languages. No scholarly preparation could have been more remote from the living world of the Orient: Fleischer's school, in the words of one critic, resembled nothing so much as a tidy 'French garden', from which Hartmann sprang like a 'wild shoot'. Fleischer tagged Hartmann a 'flighty youth', and at the first opportunity the young man did fly: he made for Ottoman lands, in pursuit of a career far from staid academe.

In 1874 Hartmann arrived in Adrianople, where he spent a year as a private tutor. In March 1875 he proceeded to Constantinople, and there enrolled as a *jeune de langues* in apprenticeship for a career in dragomanry. Hartmann thus acquired a firm grasp of Turkish, the very practical language of Ottoman administration, as a supplement to his academic proficiency in Arabic. With these formidable credentials, the polyglot Hartmann, then aged 24, earned an appointment as Dragoman to the German consulate in Beirut. In 1876 he took up his post in the small Levantine port, where he remained for the next eleven years.

In Beirut, Hartmann's learning acquired the practical bent exemplified by his Arabischer Sprachführer für Reisende, a pocket-sized phrase-book and word-list which he published in 1880. The colloquial Arabic of the Beirut market served as Hartmann's model. His book is enlightening even now, for the conversational predicaments in which he situated the average German traveler and trader, and for the prices of goods and services cited in hypothetical transactions. Hartmann made strictly mundane use of his mastery of Arabic during these years, a period closed by his publication of an Arabic translation of the German commercial code. Hartmann also undertook minor expeditions, which were probably intended to gather information on economic conditions and topography. In 1882–83 he visited northern Syria, a journey which provided him with rich material for subsequent publications on the Aleppo region and the Syrian steppe.

Hartmann, in the judgement of one colleague, was transformed by his Syrian stay into a 'passionate Turk-hater' in sympathy with 'Arabs groaning under the Turkish yoke'. It was indeed during this decade that he formed the prejudices and preferences which would last him a lifetime. Sweeping judgments as to the intrinsic character of peoples, past and present, were the currency of many respected scholars and travelers in Hartmann's time, and he unabashedly declared his preferences. He had nothing but contempt for 'the Stambul Effendis and Hanums,' and the Turkish peasantry struck him as 'earnest but dumb'. The Egyptian was 'intelligent and witty, but from his infancy extremely lazy, and as he becomes older he becomes hopelessly indolent'. The Bedouin, with their incessant quarrels and lack of scruple, left Hartmann unmoved – he found nothing ennobling in the life of the desert. But in the Syrian, and especially

the Syrian Christian, Hartmann found that essential combination of intelligence and energy. 'The Syrian is industrious, consistent, eager for knowledge, has always an object in view, is generally active, and never overawed.' Hartmann was no romantic. He firmly believed in the benefits of railways, industries, printing presses, and modern schools in Ottoman lands, and offered no lament for the passing of old ways. The Syrians (and the Armenians in equal measure) shared his vision of steady progress along modern lines; he regarded both peoples as 'the light of the Near East', and they earned his abiding sympathies.<sup>8</sup>

But those sympathies found no ready outlet at the time. It was not Hartmann's duty to reflect or report on the politics of Syria. As the German consul's dragoman, Hartmann handled whatever local business had to be transacted in Arabic and Turkish, but the consul himself assessed provincial politics for Germany's ambassador in Constantinople. Hartmann occasionally substituted during a consul's absence from Beirut: In 1883, he wrote a dispatch about local agitation against the Ottomanappointed governor of Lebanon.9 Yet he left no account of the other burning political issues which were debated in the same Beiruti Arabic which he had studied so meticulously. Hartmann could and probably did know something about the spread of discontent in Syria following the outbreak of war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in 1877. In Beirut, Damascus, Tripoli and Sidon there were a few Arabic-speakers who secretly favored separation from the Ottoman Empire, a step advocated in anonymous placards which appeared on walls near Beirut's foreign consulates in 1880. Hartmann also later recalled having heard some of the subversive poetry composed by Ibrahim al-Yaziii in praise of the Arabs. 10 But Hartmann's views on the actual state and preferred fate of the Ottoman Empire were not yet a matter of record.

They would not be for some time. In 1887 Hartmann left Beirut for Berlin. Again he put his talent for languages to practical use, no longer in the distant province of a disintegrating empire but in the confident capital of an ascendant one. To win its due share of world dominion, Germany needed many more men with knowledge of difficult and esoteric languages, a need German universities had failed to meet. Bismarck therefore ordered the establishment in Berlin of the Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen, which opened its doors in the autumn of 1887. This institute sought to produce not more philologists, but to train aspiring diplomats, colonial officials and missionaries in the languages of peoples beyond Europe. And unlike the university departments, it planned to teach living languages in their colloquial and dialectal forms. Hartmann's popular Arabischer Sprachführer had established his reputation as an authority on colloquial Arabic. With his many years of service to the Reich in Ottoman lands, he appeared eminently suited to the mission of the new school. Hartmann accepted an appointment as lecturer and began to teach Arabic in the autumn of 1887, the institute's very first academic year. For the next ten years, he devoted his spare time to philological studies, with a special emphasis on metrics.

There was little in this portion of Hartmann's career to mark him a

political man. His youthful rebelliousness had been played out in a decade-long Levantine adventure, and he now seemed settled in a routine of teaching and philological research. His inspirational abilities as a teacher of Arabic found ample confirmation in the career of Ernst Harder, an editor of a Berlin newspaper and son of a prominent Mennonite congregation leader in Elbing. Under Hartmann's tutelage, Harder fell completely under the spell of Arabic, and gave himself over to the full-time study of the language and literature. He later became a professor of Arabic in his own right. In 1892 Hartmann married Harder's sister. After many years abroad, he had entered the fold of an eminent and respectable Mennonite family.

But in Berlin, Hartmann grew restless. His old resentment against the narrow range of the philologists grew once he joined their ranks, and finally overtook him after a visit he paid to Egypt and Tripolitania in 1897, when he again immersed himself in the tumultuous reality of the Orient. Did his academic colleagues not realize that a living Arabic and a living Islam existed alongside the time-worn manuscripts? Were these realities not worthy of scientific study as well, through methods developed by pioneering sociologists?

It was the spell of the new sociology which captured Hartmann's imagination and made him perhaps the earliest critic of his own discipline. He mounted his first siege, a modest one, in an editorial on the pages of the Berlin Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung in 1898. Teachers of Arabic were lecturing to almost empty classrooms, he complained. Too often their published works were dry recitations. Hartmann proposed to invigorate the field by establishing a German outpost of Arabic studies in Jerusalem, where students could learn Arabic in an authentic setting and apply their knowledge of the language to many other disciplines. Hartmann thus took up the professional cross he would bear for the rest of his career; his insistence on the necessity for scientific study of the contemporary history and sociology of Islam. He repudiated Fleischer's old dictum that 'there is no salvation save in Arabic', 12 calling instead for a 'break with Semitics' 13 and the creation of a chair for the 'new science' of Islamology in Berlin's university or in his own institute.<sup>14</sup> A similar movement had carried the day at the Collège de France in 1902, but not without controversy; Hartmann's proposal was bound to meet the even stiffer opposition of the philologists who set the academic agenda of German Orientalism. 15

In the same manner, Hartmann adopted a dissident stand within his own society, gradually embracing socialist ideas. The political tensions which divided the 'high culture' of Europe he attributed to 'the capitalist order', which concealed 'egotistical aims' behind the 'mask of nationality', 'b' Hartmann attested to the decisive influence upon his own thought of the Munich jurist August Geyer, whose theories of differentiation among social groups in some ways resembled Marx's concept of class. An ambivalence toward established authority and privilege characterized Hartmann's mature judgments, and led him to devote disproportionate attention to 'movements' opposed to economic and social oppression. Thus Hartmann wrote at length on the barely

audible complaints of women and workers in the Ottoman Empire; theirs was a struggle to reclaim the 'democratic-social content' of 'pure original Islam'. In this direction Islam could and would be reformed; 'new ideas' had undermined the 'old orthodoxy', and their victory was inevitable.<sup>17</sup>

By trumpeting the inevitability of change, Hartmann soon found himself at odds with some of his conservative colleagues. The decidedly aristocratic Carl Heinrich Becker summarized Hartmann's work in this manner: 'In the history of Islam, Hartmann seeks confirmation of his political opinions on state and society, and formulates his subjective value judgements in the terminology of modern radicalism'. Although an enemy of scholasticism, Hartmann had succumbed to yet another set of scholastic dogmas in the course of elaborating a sociological system. The most dubious of these, opined Becker, was the domination of society by capital. By this emphasis on material categories, Hartmann overlooked the vital force of Muslim mysticism, and indeed the power of religious belief in Islam, about which Hartmann had nothing to say, and without which Islam simply could not be understood.<sup>18</sup>

Hartmann was not the sort to leave such charges unrefuted. As a scholar, Hartmann claimed to have wrestled with the subjective moments that occur in all creative study. At the same time, he had a guiding vision of state and society, which came to him only after much inner struggle. That vision was essentially sociological. Hartmann took offense at Becker's description of his approach as an expression of 'modern radicalism'. Radicalism in the abstract had no boundaries and belonged to no one party. Luther, Lessing, Schiller, Goethe and Kant could all be tagged 'modern radicals'. The notion could not stand up to close scrutiny; it was a phantom conjured up to frighten children. Hartmann did admit to the influence of the new sociology and 'sociography' upon his work. But he denied that this 'system' represented a form of scholasticism, for its principles were not unalterable, and he cited his many travels as evidence of his demonstrated willingness to confront theory with 'human documents'. 19 The controversy between Becker and Hartmann embodied antagonisms which were at once personal, professional and political. It was in every sense an unequal match. Becker, despite his youth, represented the Orientalist consensus of his day, and while he too later dealt in grand theories and sweeping generalizations, he did so in what was then the more comfortably German fashion of the cultural historian.

Hartmann's fascination with suspect sociology, his 'modern radicalism', and his fiery personality combined to mark him a dissident. The Dutch Orientalist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje found Hartmann to be an 'able man' of 'unmistakable talent', but Hartmann was of 'wild' and 'nervous' temperament, and his work was 'disjointed'. So convinced was Hartmann of the 'narrow-mindedness' of his colleagues that his conceit shone through, and he came to regard himself as 'the brightest star in the dim firmament of scholarship'.<sup>20</sup>

Becker would later eulogize Hartmann as a tragic figure, saddled with bad judgement, an immoderate temperament, bizarre notions, and a mode of argument more like a preacher's than a scholar's. Still, behind Hartmann's 'hatred for the church and the priesthood', Becker discerned 'a seeker of God'; behind Hartmann's 'tedious sociological scholasticism' lay 'an unfulfilled yearning for inner harmony'. Despite Hartmann's faith in historical materialism, he remained an idealist.<sup>21</sup> Becker did not seek the sources of these conflicts. Perhaps Hartmann's dissident idealism drew upon the traditional nonconformism of the Mennonite congregation. Perhaps his aggressively opinionated style, which so reminded Becker of a preacher, did owe something to a childhood spent in the world of the parsonage. In this controversial and volatile spirit, Arab nationalism found one of its first foreign champions.

П

Hartmann dissented not only from the collegial consensus over the contours of his academic discipline. In the same moment he broke with the prevailing wisdom about the resilience of the Ottoman Empire and the loyalty of its Arab Muslim subjects.

In his piece on the future of Arabic studies, published in 1898, Hartmann sounded a note which would resound throughout his later writings. Syria, he claimed, was the land in which 'Arab national feelings' were strongest, a land which had recently seen the development of a 'specifically Arabic cultural life'. 22 The following year, Hartmann made the point unequivocally in a piece devoted to the modern revival of Arabic literature and the growth of the Arabic press. In Hartmann's view, that revival had clear political implications. Strength through unity was indeed the cry of the hour in the Muslim world. But the Ottoman sultan could be ruled out as the focus of this quest for unity. Abdülhamid himself stood behind the campaign to have him recognized by Muslims everywhere as the defender of the faith. But Islam, in Hartmann's view, was 'in its inner essence democratic, and even the strongest leaders of Islam's largest movements have occupied center stage not because of who they were, but as expounders of an idea. The Sultan as a pure representative of the Islamic idea can carry no weight. He is first a Turk, then a Muslim'. For the non-Turkish population of the Ottoman Empire, the regime was above all Ottoman. And the Ottomans, conquering with empty heart and mind, had brought nothing to Islam. Their craniums had been filled only with lust for blood and carnal pleasures. The Ottomans were not the pillars of Islam they appeared to be, for Islam needed no such pillars. As for the Muslims of other lands, many of whom professed a vague allegiance to the Ottoman sultan as a kind of universal caliph, they were not oblivious to the 'glaring contradiction' between the Turkish way of government and 'strict Islam'. The Turk therefore 'has no friends. In the Turkish empire he is detested by the Christians and the non-Turkish Muslims in the same measure, as that element who is averse to every genuine advance, who thwarts all efforts toward progress and knocks to the ground nearly every stirring of national awareness with shocking harshness and brutality'.

No, Constantinople could not master the driving force of Islam's great masses. But the revival of the Arabic language by its speakers could. In

Hartmann's view, literary Arabic had made tremendous strides as the common language of all Muslims. In Syria and Egypt, a literary renaissance had completely recast the language. In India it occupied an increasingly larger place in Muslim education. In Constantinople the Turks themselves realized Arabic's binding strength, and conducted their own pan-Islamic policy largely in Arabic. In Arabic-speaking lands, the revival of Arabic had invigorated religious life, made religious reform possible, and at the same time instilled in the Arab Muslim a sense of special pride in his nation.<sup>23</sup> In Hartmann's view, Arabic and the Arabs were speedily regaining their place of primacy in Islam. He now pronounced that a sense of Arab cultural supremacy and resentment of Turkish misrule had created the climate for an 'upheaval'. 'The seed has been sown', Hartmann announced. A 'broad spectrum' of Arab opinion held this view as formulated by Hartmann on their behalf: 'We Arabs no longer wish to be the slaves of the Turks. We wish to unite ourselves in an independent state, governed by ourselves, in our own language, according to our own customs'.24

Hartmann did not claim that an organized movement existed. He took up that issue only when an Arab claimed that such a movement did exist and deserved external support to achieve the final aim of Arab independence. Negib Azoury provoked a spate of discussion in Europe with his publication of a small book entitled *Le Réveil de la Nation arabe dans l'Asie turque* in January 1905. Azoury's book was of no consequence among the Arabs themselves, and he later confided that the book was meant not to describe Arab discontent so much as to create it. This it failed to do. But the message it carried to Europe had a greater impact. Here was an Arab author, a former Ottoman official, who claimed that the Arab provinces were ripe for revolt, and that a movement already existed which needed only the assent of Europe to bring about the final confrontation. The book won serious consideration in various foreign offices, and was reviewed in the prestigious policy periodicals of the day. Azoury first posed to Europe what soon became known as the Arab question.

Hartmann had an answer to that question, which he felt compelled to offer following the appearance of Azoury's controversial book. The book itself, wrote Hartmann, was highly suspect. Azoury's prophecy that the struggle between Arabs and Jews for Palestine would prove decisive to the entire world struck Hartmann as a blatant sign of anti-Semitic motive, an impression strengthened by Azoury's promise of a forthcoming work entitled *Le péril juif universel*, *Révélations et études politiques*. Hartmann observed (correctly) that Azoury was a common family name among Syrian Jews, and speculated (wrongly) that Azoury himself might be an ex-Jew, whose work was an attempt to disown his origins.<sup>25</sup>

Yet what truly offended Hartmann was not Azoury's prejudices, but the alliance which Azoury urged upon the movement he purported to represent. Azoury's book was written in French for a French audience, and directly appealed to those Frenchmen who were eager to gain an advantage for France at the expense of its European rivals. In a word, Azoury proposed to make the Arab national movement an agent of French influence in return for French support. Hartmann was outraged, certainly as one who had idealized the Arab cause, but also as a German with a jaundiced view of all reliance upon France. Azoury, he averred, imagined France to be a disinterested good fairy, prepared to grant the Arab movement's every wish. But it was a delusion to think that the French would raise a finger or part with a centime for a free Arabia. Hartmann had even harsher words for Azoury's French collaborator, Eugène Jung, whose book of 1906, entitled *Les puissances devant la Révolte arabe*, was deemed by Hartmann a wretched, sorry piece. These were the Arab movement's 'false friends', whose activities brought 'discredit' to the cause.

Having dispensed with Azoury and his French collaborator, Hartmann took up the more consequential issue of the actual state of Arab opinion. It would be wrong, he warned his German readers, to see the Arab cause as one championed solely by intriguers and careerists. Resentment against Turkish rule ran deep and wide. The 'Arabic-speaking masses of Asia and Africa' were 'astir'. But it was true that these masses had failed to form one alliance and recognize one of their own as leader. Hartmann attributed the lack of movement to the Arab dilemma of self-definition. 'What is the "Arab nation"?" Did these disparate elements, settled across North Africa and into Asia, indeed constitute one nation? 'The worst enemy of the Arab is himself,' answered Hartmann. The Arabs were 'selfish, envious, quarrelsome', qualities evident throughout their history, and which brought them quickly under the domination of foreigners - first of the Persians, then of 'an inferior people', the Turks. With the fall of the Umayyads, Islam had ceased to be the religion of the Arab ethnos. A foreign religious autocracy devoted ostensibly to preserving the interests of Islam now held sway. The 'dictatorship' of the 'deranged' Ottoman sultan rested on religious fanaticism, which preached to Arab Muslims the hatred of unbelievers and foreigners. The reawakening of the Arabs to their identity began only with the literary revival authored mostly by Syrian Christians, who were by disposition 'energetic, diligent, and persevering'. Only they were truly free of the mind-shackling constraints of Muslim solidarity. But while Arab Muslims still clung to a tradition of self-abnegation in the name of Islam, even here there was 'movement'. Hartmann placed particular emphasis on an event which now occupies no place at all in retrospective accounts of early Arab nationalism: the uprising of 1904 against Ottoman rule in the Yemen. The new Imam of Yemen, Mahmud Yahya, had laid siege to the Ottoman garrison in San'a that year, forcing the Ottomans to withdraw and sue for peace. These Yemeni highlanders were 'wild' and defiantly independent, and Hartmann did not rule out the possibility of their northward expansion into the Hijaz and even Syria, uniting Arabia under one rule. It was not clear to Hartmann whether Syrian Christians or Yemeni rebels would ultimately shape the Arab movement. But either could build on the eventual support of the discontented mass of Arab Muslims, who knew Turkish rule to be a 'misfortune'.30

Hartmann's very early claim that the Ottoman Empire had lost the

loyalty of its Arab Muslim subjects could only arouse controversy. The prevalent political mood in Germany at the time was strongly Turcophile, a mood inaugurated by the celebrated visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II to Syria in the autumn of 1898. Such sentiment received crucial validation from other German observers who claimed that the Ottoman Empire most certainly did command the allegiance of its Muslim subjects. The Wilhelminian policy of professed friendship towards Islam rested on the assumption that Islam's true center resided in Constantinople, and that Turkish primacy in Islam stood uncontested. Hartmann's bold dissent raised eyebrows. It could only have damaged his simultaneous effort to have a chair of Islamology established in Berlin. The creation of such a chair required the backing of interested official circles, willing to force a door otherwise held shut by academic purists. So it had been in France. But who could possibly be interested in lending the authority of an endowed chair to the kind of ideas Hartmann now propagated? Hartmann, in championing an unorthodox view regarding the health of the Ottoman Empire. demonstrably set aside self-interest.

A decade of these claims reached their culmination in 1908, with Hartmann's completion of a great grab-bag of archeological, philological, and historical ruminations on Arabia, published as Die arabische Frage. This was a strangely proportioned book in which the notes occupied five times the space of the text; and it was strangely titled, since only a few pages were devoted to what was widely understood to constitute the Arab question. By this time, the Imam of Yemen had reached an accommodation with the Ottomans, so demonstrating himself to be of 'small spirit'. It would be wrong, Hartmann now wrote, to see the Imam's movement as an Arab nationalist one. Indeed, it seemed to Hartmann that the obstacles to the development of any independent, national Arab polity, 'as the kernel of an Arab national state', were now 'colossal'. To think that these could be overcome by bombarding foreign governments with memoranda pleading for help was 'the summit of naivety'. To all those who worked on behalf of the Arab cause, he offered this sobering advice: 'Act with the courage of optimism, but without self-deception'. 31

Here was a telling sign of disillusionment, not with the undeniable justice of the Arab cause, but with the ability of the Arabs ever to see it to fruition. It stemmed, too, from Hartmann's growing realization that Arab Muslims still held firmly to the rope of Muslim solidarity. In the decade since he had first taken up the Arab cause, Hartmann had been unable to adduce any evidence for his claims concerning the shifting loyalties of Arab Muslims, and he eventually felt it necessary to modify them. It is noteworthy that Hartmann made no mention of Kawakibi's *Umm alqura*, which he might have cited as evidence for the spread of Arab nationalism among Muslim thinkers. But Hartmann believed the British to be behind the appearance of Arab nationalist ideas in Egypt. From England's 'ruthless power policy' had emerged the idea of an Arab state under the nominal rule of an Egyptian king, a state in which each constituent part would enjoy autonomy. It was an idea which Hartmann regarded as a betrayal, for again it placed the Arab movement directly

under the tutelage of an outside power. If he knew at all of Kawakibi's work or activities, he might well have dismissed them as a part of this scheme, which owed its life to foreign paymasters. By 1908, Hartmann had come to believe that Arab independence would follow only an arduous 'step-by-step' process of enlightening Arab Muslim opinion.

In July 1908, Sultan Abdülhamid restored the Ottoman constitution, ending what Hartmann had long decried as Hamidian 'tyranny and terror'. The news from Turkey recalled for Hartmann the stirring days of 1876, when the disastrous Sultan Abdülaziz had been deposed and Sultan Abdülhamid had been persuaded to grant the first Ottoman constitution. Hartmann had been a student of Turkish in Constantinople at precisely that time, and the restoration of the suspended constitution after more than thirty years seemed almost a personal invitation to reassess his position. Hartmann passed the months of September and October 1909 in Salonika and Constantinople, making notes along the way. The resulting book, published under the title *Unpolitische Briefe aus der Türkei*, made it clear that, for Hartmann, the revolution had failed, just as it had in his youth. It had produced mostly chaos and corruption, all portrayed in the book with an unbridled animosity.<sup>33</sup>

Among the revolution's many failures, Hartmann included its unwillingness to redress the grievances of the Ottoman Empire's Arab population. Everywhere Hartmann saw evidence for blatant discrimination against the Arabic language and its speakers. Even before his visit, he noted that Arab representation in the new Parliament fell far short of the Arab share of the general population. He also learned of the founding in Constantinople of a Society of Arab-Ottoman Fraternity, and even secured copies of its publication in French and Arabic. The Society, composed of Arab parliamentary delegates and Arabs residing in the capital, did not preach separatism, but it did demand equality for the Arabs and their language. Hartmann cited an article in the Society's Arabic periodical which attacked the Turkish-language press for presenting the Arabs 'in the filthiest way', a practice which gained currency during a press campaign against Sultan Abdülhamid's hated Arab advisers. All this, in Hartmann's view, simply hastened the day when 'the Arab peasants', regarded so contemptuously by their Turkish overlords, would 'give marching orders for good to the arrogant foreign pests'.84 As Hartmann later ascertained during his visit to Constantinople, the Society quickly broke apart on the rocks of internal quarrel. 35 But in its short life he saw the pattern for a future movement, assertive of Arab rights but free from dependence on any outside power.

For nothing so threatened Arab nationalism's prospects as the continued attempts to win it foreign support. Now another Syrian Christian, Rashid Mutran, busied himself in Paris, posing as the head of a committee 'representing all the Syrians of Turkey and abroad', and issuing proclamations and a publication in order to win foreign backing. Hartmann recognized the 'well-known trick' by which an upstart traveled about the capitals of Europe and created the illusion that he headed a movement. Hartmann thought Mutran a fraud and said so. <sup>36</sup> According to

Hartmann, those truly working for national independence in Syria knew that its time had not yet come, and so preferred to operate within existing frameworks. Arab eyes were gradually opening to the fact that the Turks were 'cunning and violent', and a clean break between 'Ottomans' and Arabs would eventually occur. (The break-up of the Ottoman share into three states – Turkish, Kurdish, and Armenian – was 'a matter of time'.) As for an interim strategy, Hartmann speculated freely about how the Arabs might wrest control from the Turks without rebellion or reliance on foreign powers. Against the Turks, the Arabs needed able allies within the Ottoman Parliament; the people best suited for such an alliance, both by temperament and shared interests, were the Greeks of Asia Minor. Were the Arabs to join hands with the Greeks, and win the support of Jews, Armenians and even a few Albanians and dissident Turks, the public administration and finance of the Ottoman Empire might finally be placed on an even keel.<sup>37</sup> But this co-operation would be no more than an interim arrangement; Arab independence was again simply a matter of time 38

# Ш

Many years had passed since Hartmann had last set eyes on Syria's shores. Since coming to Berlin he had visited Cairo and Constantinople, and had gone on adventurous expeditions through the Libyan desert and Chinese Turkestan. But he had not been through Syria since his departure from Beirut in 1887, and what he knew about subsequent shifts in the mood of its people reached him by circuitous routes. Hartmann was an assiduous student of the Arabic press, which he followed as best he could under difficult circumstances. He knew something about the orientation and content of all the principal Arabic newspapers published in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, although he could not follow them regularly and assessed many of them only on the basis of a few issues. He also knew some Arabs and Turks residing in Berlin, but rarely cited them as a source. 39 In short, it had become difficult for Hartmann to speak authoritatively in his own country against a growing Turcophile sentiment, fed by German correspondents, travelers, engineers and advisers who regularly traversed Syria. For lack of first-hand evidence, Hartmann even took to quoting these would-be authorities – when they confirmed his theories about the spread of Arab discontent. 40 Hartmann finally resolved to return to Syria and to give an account of his journey in regular dispatches to the Frankfurter Zeitung. In March 1913 he arrived in Haifa, and over the next five weeks visited Damascus, Beirut, Hamah, Tripoli, Lattakia, Homs and Aleppo. The dispatches were quickly published as a book entitled Reisebriefe aus Syrien, a valuable account of the state of Syria on the eve of war.

Hartmann, viewing Syria with an eye for progress, could not but dwell upon the economic transformation of the country in the 26 years since he had last seen it. He recognized the tremendous significance of the new railroads, and declared Haifa 'the city of the future', with its railhead and

harbor. By his estimate, the population of Damascus had more than doubled since his last visit in 1887, and while the atmosphere of the old market-place had not changed, even the most modest residential streets now had electric light. And Beirut, a thriving center of commerce and education, had the features of a European city. All of this progress he attributed to the combination of foreign capital and local ability, and the growth had been in spite of onerous Ottoman policies.

But Hartmann concerned himself above all with charting changes in the political climate, and assessing the prospects for an Arab movement. He himself had no doubt about the ultimate aims of the 'Stambul Effendis' and the ruling Committee of Union and Progress. They sought the Turkification of the Arabs through the 'swindle' of 'Ottoman nationality'. For Hartmann the very notion of an Ottoman identity seemed riddled with contradictions. In appealing to its Muslim subjects, the regime emphasized religious allegiance to the Caliph; in appealing to non-Muslim subjects, the regime insisted that they cast aside religious allegiance in favor of a secular loyalty to the Sultan. In either instance, Ottomanization amounted only to Turkification, at the obvious expense of Arabic language and cultural expression.<sup>41</sup>

This Hartmann knew; but did the Arabs know it? His dispatches were guarded. In Damascus he met Muhammad Kurd Ali, 'an extraordinary man' and editor of the newspaper al-Muqtabas, which had published Arab grievances against attempts at Turkification and had been shut down in the past by the authorities. But Kurd Ali was 'nervous and excited' during the meeting, which took place in the presence of others, and Hartmann did not find the setting conducive to a frank exchange. One can well imagine Kurd Ali being circumspect in speaking with Hartmann, and Hartmann showing discretion in writing about their meeting. In any event, Hartmann attributed no views directly to Kurd Ali.

But once in Beirut, Hartmann began to formulate conclusions about the nature of 'the Arab opposition to Turkish rule'. This opposition took two forms, national and religious. In its national form, it obviously sprang from resistance to Turkification and administrative centralization. In its religious form, it arose from the resentment of pious Arab Muslims against the Young Turks, who stood for equal treatment of believers and unbelievers. Most Syrian Muslims did not understand that Arabdom would never have fallen as 'booty' to the Turks had Arabic-speakers of differing religious faiths worked together. Few were prepared to work together now. And so the principal obstacles to true national consciousness were international bonds of religion - of the Maronite clergy, and of what Hartmann called the international 'church' of Islam. It was especially the international nature of Islam which 'breaks the courage of the opposition to foreign rule'. Arab national awareness was struggling towards maturity, towards victory over these other forces, and one could discern early signs of a break with the already weakened bonds of international religion. This had produced an Arab national spirit in Syria.<sup>43</sup> Now Hartmann looked forward to the day when a reformer of Islam would arise to sweep away finally 'the entire debris of ritual' so that

Arab Muslims might advance together with Arab Christians as one Arab nation.<sup>44</sup>

In mid-April, as Hartmann moved through northern Syria, important news reached him. The Ottoman authorities had moved against the Beirut Reform Committee, a group of local notables who had proposed a plan for administrative decentralization back in January. This development was a welcome sign of discontent, although Hartmann thought the Beirut plan too modest. 45 An informant then gave him an account of the related activities of those Syrians belonging to the Ottoman Decentralization Party in Cairo, and Hartmann began to discern the contours of a wider movement linking Cairo, Beirut and Damascus. This finally prompted him to question openly the wisdom of established German policy. Germany had withheld moral support for the subject peoples of the Ottoman Empire in accordance with a policy of 'non-intervention'; it had systematically ignored Arab claims in deference to Turkish prestige. But as the Arabs drew apart from the Turks, they were bound to seek assistance from foreign nations, and Germany stood to lose if it failed to act. Germany's position in Syria was still sound, 'despite all the intrigues against us', and Hartmann implied that a German effort should be made to extend support for legitimate Arab claims. Certainly the big German concerns operating in Syria should have demonstrated a measure of respect for the Arabic language; and by way of annoying example, Hartmann noted that train information at the Aleppo station on the German-managed Baghdad railroad was offered only in Turkish and Armenian.46

But the remarkable point about Hartmann's Syrian journey was that he met no one who openly professed the idea of Arab separatism. When he met leaders of the Beirut Reform Committee, they were quick to assure him that they had no intention of undermining the caliphate of the Ottoman sultan, or challenging the inclusion of the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire. 47 Nor did the nervous Kurd Ali confide in him. It was not merely that Hartmann did not enjoy their trust. Obviously a German scholar writing for a newspaper could not expect these new acquaintances to share even one subversive thought with him. But it also seemed to Hartmann that his Arab interlocutors had not yet been convinced even themselves that reform could not work or that their only solution lay in independence. No one took schemes for an Arab caliphate seriously, and when the Sharif of Mecca was mentioned to a prominent Muslim supporter of reform in Beirut, Hartmann heard him dismiss the Meccan grandee as 'a wretched simpleton' with a 'wild' following. 48 And so, while Hartmann did not alter his own view - that Turkish rule was 'a succession of violations'49 - he saw no Arab revolt on the horizon, and did not predict one.

While Hartmann probed for cracks in the Ottoman edifice, Germany committed itself still further to a policy of holding that edifice together with much more than railway ties. Hartmann obviously had done little to inspire the confidence of official circles with his writings, and it became clear to him that his efforts to have a chair of Islamology established in

Berlin were bound to fail. He himself would remain a teacher of Arabic in what many scholars regarded as hardly more than a state-supported 'Berlitz School' (or, in the uncharitable words of Becker, a 'trade school for overseas routine').50 It is impossible to tell from published sources just how Hartmann's criticisms of Turkish rule in Arab lands might have worked against him professionally. He had done much else to make himself an unacceptable candidate for such a chair. In print, Hartmann pointed an accusing finger at the narrow-mindedness of philologists and the inertia of Berlin bureaucrats, but unspecified 'circumstances' did not permit him to speak 'more openly.' In the end, he simply set aside convention by acting as though he did occupy a chair. From the summer of 1910 he began to offer courses on Islamic culture, society, and theology.<sup>51</sup> And in January 1912 he and some like-minded colleagues founded the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde, a scholarly society devoted exclusively to the study of contemporary Islam. Hartmann accepted the presidency of the new society, which exercised considerable influence through its journal, Die Welt des Islams. On its pages, Hartmann continued to follow developments in Syria, particularly in his detailed reviews of foreign journals and books. In Beirut he had met the Viscount Philippe de Tarrazi, who had just published the first volume of his monumental history of the Arabic press.<sup>52</sup> Back in Berlin, Hartmann reviewed this essential source for the early history of Arabism, and pronounced again that the 'religious bond' between Arabs and Turks was weak, and that the deep chasm between them remained unbridged.58

## IV

Then an unnatural transformation occurred. Becker put it delicately in his account of Hartmann's career. After 1914, 'as regards the Turks, he turned from a Saul into a Paul'. Hartmann's sudden enthusiasm for the Turks seemed 'suspect' to some, wrote Becker; but the change was not for 'lack of character; quick reassessments lay at the heart of his character'. 54 Yet it was not the speed of the reassessment which seemed suspect. It was the timing, coming as it did precisely when Germany entered a war alliance with the Ottoman Empire. And while Hartmann did sometimes think and write impulsively, his views on Turks and Arabs had not changed in any important respect since he first formulated them many years earlier. Harmann certainly could not have continued to write about the Turks as he had written in the past, even had he wished to do so. Freedom of expression disappeared with the war, and no criticism of an ally could be tolerated in print. Yet Hartmann went still further, substituting adulation for ridicule. In recalling his devastating 1909 account of the new regime in Constantinople, Hartmann insisted that his Unpolitische Briefe aus der Türkei was mistakenly regarded as an anti-Turkish tract. 'I have never felt animosity towards the Turks,' he protested in 1916; the harsh words in the book had been directed only against individuals.55 During the war, Hartmann turned his talents almost exclusively to the study of Turkish literature and modern Turkish

thought. But more than that, Hartmann began to write pieces which served Germany's war propaganda needs. Although they never approached Becker's war articles for sheer polemical distortion, they dealt with similar themes in a similar manner. Most of Hartmann's pieces were published in two periodicals created especially for the purpose of convincing readers of German that the alliance with the Ottoman Empire served essential German interests and constituted a moral necessity.

Hartmann now forged new friendships with the many Ottoman propagandists, Turkish- and Arabic-speaking, who arrived in Berlin during the war. <sup>56</sup> He did not comment on the disaster which soon befell some of his past Arab interlocutors. In the editorial offices of *al-Muqtabas* in Damascus, he had conversed with Rushdi al-Sham'a, 'a man in his forties with a round, rosy countenance', and Amir Umar al-Jaza'iri, 'a tall, slender man of plain appearance'. <sup>57</sup> Both were sentenced to death for treason by an Ottoman military court and were hanged in May 1915. In Beirut, Hartmann had fallen under the spell of Shaykh Ahmad Tabbara, a bold newspaper editor, 'cheerful and strong and confident of victory', whom Hartmann regarded as 'a shining example of Arab vigor'. <sup>58</sup> He too met his end on the gallows. But other Arabs whom Hartmann admired, especially Muhammad Kurd Ali, stood solidly behind the Ottoman war effort. Their decision made Hartmann's choice still easier.

And Hartmann, too, had his allegiances. Despite his support for the Arab cause, he had refused to subject Germany's Eastern policy to trenchant criticism. He shared the wider German preoccupation with the 'intrigues' spun by France, Britain and Russia against the legitimate interests of Germany in Ottoman lands. And he strongly disapproved of any form of Arab nationalist expression tainted by association with Germany's rivals in Europe. Now the Young Turks had shed their neutrality in favor of a German alliance at a crucial moment in the war, while Arab nationalists entered the not-so-secret embrace of Germany's enemies. Hartmann did not confuse his allegiances with his sympathies. And as a man too easily given to enthusiasm, he did his duty as a German not with dour resignation, but with the zeal of a true Turcophile. 'Hartmann's present enthusiasm for Muslim prayer and the Turks is as distasteful to me as was his previous slander of them,' wrote Hurgronje.59 Hartmann spent his last days immersed in Turkish texts, and when he died after a short illness in December 1918, representatives of the Turkish colony of Berlin saw him laid to rest.60

From the turn of the century until the war, Martin Hartmann wrote and published as a friend of Arabism. His sympathy was forged by early personal experience and a dissident temperament which were shared by very few of his compatriots. But Hartmann was a lone friend in still another sense. If there had been an organized Arab movement in his time, it almost certainly would have sought him out. The diverse nationalist groups within the Ottoman Empire made a point of cultivating foreign friends in their struggle for foreign sympathy, and they had use for scholar-publicists as well as for statesmen. Hartmann would have been a valuable ally to such an Arab movement, for his imagination needed little stoking.

As it happened, it was Hartmann who finally had to rush about Syria in search of a nationalism still without form. He found a 'spirit' of Arabism, but did not know of the secret societies and the clandestine dealings. What he did see constituted a movement in its infancy. Arabism could not have known Hartmann, and so does not remember him. It arose too late, and then chose friends of lesser fidelity.

#### NOTES

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Abbreviations: BZO = Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Orients; IO = Der Islamische Orient; MH = Martin Hartmann; MSOS = Mitteilungen des Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen, Abteilung II; OLZ = Orientalistische Literature-Zeitung; RBS = Martin Hartmann, Reisebriefe aus Syrien (Berlin, 1913); RMM = Revue du Monde Musulman; WI = Die Welt des Islams, old series.

- 1. This study is based upon MH's many published writings. For his bibliography, see G. Jäschke, 'Islamforschung der Gegenwart. Martin Hartmann zum Gedächtnis', WI, Vol.23 (1941), pp.111-21; and WI, Vol.6 (1918), pp.86-7 (for MH's contributions to WI). Jäschke's bibliography, which is comprehensive for MH's scholarly publications, does not include the many articles written by MH for the daily press. The most important additional source for MH's career is his private papers, which are preserved in the old library of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft in Halle (Saale), East Germany. The existence and scope of the collection are indicated by H. Lülfing and R. Unger (eds.), Die Nachläße in wissenschaftlichen Instituten und Museen und in den allgemeinbildenden Bibliotheken (= Gelehrtek-und Schriftstellernachläße in den Bibliotheken der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Vol.2) Berlin, 1968), p.40 (item 186). As I have not consulted this collection, the conclusions of the present study must be regarded as tentative. The most influential piece of writing on MH has been the compassionate but highly critical obituary written by C.H. Becker, 'Martin Hartmann', in his Islamstudien, Vol.2 (Leipzig, 1932), pp.481-90, first published in Der Islam, Vol. 10 (1920), pp. 228-33. For other brief descriptions of MII and his work, see L.Bouvat, 'Martin Hartmann', RMM, Vol. 12 (1910), pp. 530-31; G. Kampffmeyer, 'Martin Hartmann', WI, Vol. 6 (1918), pp. 67-71; J. Fück, Die arabischen Studien in Europa (Leipzig, 1955), pp. 269-73; W. Reuschel, 'Zu Werk und Persönlichkeit des deutschen Arabisten Martin Hartmann', in Arbeiterklasse und nationaler Befreiungskampf (Leipzig, 1963), pp. 159-66; W. van Kampen, 'Studien zur deutschen Türkeipolitik in der Zeit Wilhelms II', doctoral dissertation, Kiel University, 1968, pp. 298-9; and U. Haarmann, 'Die islamische Moderne bei den deutschen Orientalisten', in F.H. Kochwasser and H.R. Roemer (eds.), Araber und Deutsche (Tübingen and Basel, 1974), pp. 59-63.
- 2. Becker, 'Martin Hartmann', p.481.
- 3. Kampffmeyer, 'Martin Hartmann', p.69, as related to him by Nöldeke.
- 4. Becker, 'Martin Hartmann', p.483.
- Such judgements pervade MH's Unpolitische Briefe aus der Türkei (Leipzig, 1910), discussed below.
- A judgement formed during visits to Cairo; MII, The Arabic Press of Egypt (London, 1899), p.3.
- 7. MII, The Arabic Press of Egypt, pp.3-4.
- MH's attachment to the Armenians also dated from his Beirut years, for it fell to him to arrange the placement of Armenian children in German orphanages after a massacre of Armenians at Urfa in 1882. RBS, p. 102.

- This and other occasional dispatches from Hartmann are found in the German Foreign Office Archives as microfilmed by the University of California, National Archives Microcopy T-139, reel 275.
- 10. MH, Unpolitische Briefe aus der Türkei, p.173.
- 11. MH, 'Die Arabistik Reformvorschläge', OLZ, Vol.1 (1898), pp.334-42.
- 12. MH, 'Neue Bahnen der Orientalistik', BZO, Vol.1 (1902-3), pp.28-9.
- 13. MH, 'Les Études musulmanes en Allemagne', RMM, Vol.12 (1910), pp.534-5.
- 14. A proposal which MH first made in his 'Islamologie', OLZ, Vol.2 (1899), pp. 1-4.
- 15. For the parallel controversy surrounding the establishment of a chair for 'the sociology and sociography of Islam' at the Collège de France, see E. Burke, III, 'La Mission Scientifique au Maroc', Bulletin économique et social du Maroc, nos.138-139 (1979), pp.45-6.
- 16. MH, 'Les Études musulmanes', p.536.
- 17. For MH's favorable view of Islamic reform, se his 'Islam und Arabische', pp. 14-18.
- 18. C.H. Becker, 'Islam', Archiv für Religionwissenschaft (Leipzig), Vol. 15 (1912), pp.535-36. In this review article, Becker criticized MH's popular Der Islam Geschichte Glaube Recht (Leipzig, 1909), which he thought had been hastily composed, doing only damage to Hartmann's reputation.
- 19. MH, Islam, Mission, Politik (Leipzig, 1912), pp.iv-xvii.
- Scholarship and Friendship in Early Islamwissenschaft: The Letters of C. Snouck Hurgronje to I. Goldziher (= Abdoel-Ghaffaar: Sources for the History of Islamic Studies in the Western World, Vol.2) (publ. by P. Sj. van Koningsveld; Leiden, 1985), pp.179, 196, 200, 220.
- 21. Becker, 'Martin Hartmann', pp. 482-3, 490.
- 22. MH, 'Die Arabistik', p.336.
- 23. MH, 'Islam und Arabisch', 10, Vol.1, pp.6-10; disparaging remarks on the Ottomans in MH, Der Islam: Geschichte Glaube Recht, pp.185-6.
- 24. MH, 'Die Mekkabahn', OLZ, Vol.2, No.1 (1908), pp.5-6.
- 25. MH, 'Das neue Arabien', BKO, Vol.2 (1904/05), p. 15.
- 26. In fact, Azoury was cautious in his book not to burn Arab bridges to Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm II had erred in pursuing the friendship of the tyrannical Sultan Abdülhamid. Still, Germany's true interests lay not in Arab lands but rather in Anatolia. Azoury expressed the hope that the cause of Arab independence might yet win the Kaiser's sympathy. N. Azoury, Le Réveil de la Nation arabe dans l'Asie turque (Paris, 1905), pp.131-42.
- 27. MH, 'Die Mekkabahn', p.5.
- 28. Ibid.
- 29. MH, Die arabische Frage (= IO, Vol.2) (Leipzig, 1909), p.91.
- MH, 'Das neue Arabien,' pp. 94-5, 98-101; MH, 'Quid novi ex Arabia?' Das freie Wort (Frankfurt), Vol.5 (1905), pp. 257-9, 305-6.
- 31. MH, Die arabische Frage, pp.88, 91-2.
- 32. MH, Die arabische Frage, pp.559-61.
- 33. MH, Unpolitische Briefe aus der Türkei (= 10, Vol.3) (Leipzig, 1910). For MH's initial enthusiasm, see MH, Die Frau im Islam (Halle, 1909), p. 19.
- 34. MH, 'Der Islam 1908', MSOS, Vol.12 (1909), pp.52-5.
- 35. MH, Unpolitische Briefe aus der Türkei, p. 172.
- 36. For MH's discussion of Mutran, see MH, 'Der Islam 1908', pp.56-8, 106.
- 37. MH, 'Der Islam 1908', pp.58-60.
- 38. MH, 'Abdulhamid', Das freie Wort, Vol.9 (1909), p.130.
- 39. For one instance, see MH, 'Der Islam 1908', p.61, note 1.
- 40. In a typical instance, MH quoted an article by a German traveler, with whom he was obviously unfamiliar, as evidence that the Arabs in Palestine expected the revolt in Yemen to proceed northwards and free them from Ottoman rule; MH, 'Das neue Arabien', p.105, note 15.
- 41. *RBS*, pp.xii, 66-7.
- 42. *RBS*, pp.13–15.
- 43. *RBS*, pp.24–5, 34–6, 45.
- 44. RBS, p.68.

- 45. For MH's discussion of the plan, see RBS, pp.39-43; and MH, 'Die Vereinigten Staaten des Osmanischen Reiches', Das freie Wort, Vol.13 (1913), pp.199-206.
- 46. RBS, pp.91-5.
- 47. RBS, pp.107-8.
- 48. RBS, p.108.
- 49. RBS, p.99.
- G. Kampffmeyer, 'Das Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin', WI, Vol.8 (1923), pp. 10-11.
- 51. MH, 'Les Études musulmanes en Allemagne', pp. 533, 535.
- 52. RBS, pp.106-7.
- 53. WI, Vol.1 (1913), p.246.
- 54. Becker, 'Martin Hartmann', p. 488.
- 55. MH, 'Aus der neueren Osmanischen Dichtung', MSOS, Vol.19 (1916), p.129.
- 56. The importance of these friendships is mentioned by Becker, 'Martin Hartmann', p.488. MH even wrote a sympathetic introduction to a pro-jihad tract by one of these propagandists. Schaich Salih Aschscharif Attunisi, Haqiqat Aldschihad, Die Wahrheit über den Glaubenskrieg (trans. K.E. Schabinger; Berlin, 1915), p.1.
- 57. RBS, p.14.
- 58. RBS, pp.110-12.
- 59. Scholarship and Friendship in Early Islamwissenschaft, p.500.
- 60. Kampffmeyer, 'Martin Hartmann', p.67.