



Master Buṭrus Al-Bustānī

Biography and Achievements

(1819 – 1883)

He is one of the most prominent figures of the Arab Awakening in both Lebanon and the Arab world. He was known as *Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus* (Teacher Buṭrus). He was a writer, encyclopedic author, educator and historian as well as the first to establish a distinguished secondary national school, the first to establish an esteemed magazine, the first to have collated a modern expanded Arabic dictionary and the first to launch an encyclopedic project in the Arabic language. In addition, he was at the helm of the women's rights movement and was one of the greatest contributors to the development of the first modern Arabic translation of the Bible in its old and new testaments.

His Family

He is Buṭrus son of Būlus, son of 'Abdallah, son of Karam, son of Shdīd, son of Abī Shdīd, son of Maḥfūz, son of Abī Maḥfūz Al-Bustānī of Lebanon.¹ The members of this family worked in agriculture in the village of Bqirqāshāh in the mountain of Bsharrī and owned a garden (*būstān*) that was distinct amongst the village's bounties of nature. That is how they became recognized by and started using the occupationally derived surname *Al-Bustānī* (gardener). The vicissitudes of life forced the father, Abī Maḥfūz, to depart from the village in 1560 with his three children: Maḥfūz, Abdūl-'Azīz and Nādir. Maḥfūz travelled to Ḍahr Ṣafrā in Akkār and settled there. The father and his two other children settled in Dayr Al-Qamar for quite a long time, where their descendants multiplied and the family continued to grow in number. A part of this family had

¹ Fu'ād Afrām Al-Bustānī, *Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus Buṭrus Al-Bustānī*, 4th ed., Al-Rawā'i' 22 (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Maktabah ash-Sharqiyyah, 1975), 68.

later on moved in the early eighteenth century to the region of Iqlīm Al-Kharrūb and settled in Ad-Dibiyyah whereby Al-Bustānī family made up most of its inhabitants.¹

His Infancy and Childhood

Buṭrus was born in November 1819 in the town of Ad-Dibiyyah in the Shūf district. His father passed away when he was only five years of age. It was in his hometown of Ad-Dibiyyah that he received the principles of Arabic and Syriac along with his relative Shiblī, son of Father Yūsuf Al-Bustānī, who later became the famous Archbishop Buṭrus Al-Bustānī.² He appeared to exhibit outstanding intelligence in his early years, which prompted his teacher, Father Mīkhā'il Al-Bustānī, to introduce him to Archbishop Abdallah Al-Bustānī,³ archbishop of Sidon and Tyre.⁴

¹ Fū'ād Afrām Al-Bustānī, *Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus Al-Bustānī*, 68-69; Fāyiz 'Alam'iddīn Qays, *Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus Al-Bustānī fī An-Nahḍah al-Waṭaniyyah fī Lūbnān*, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār Al-Farābī, n.d.).

² He is the grandson of the brother of Archbishop 'Abdallah Al-Bustānī. [Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-'Aṣrih: Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus Al-Bustānī, 1819-1883* ('Ammān; Beirut: Al-Ma'had Al-Malakī lil-Dirāsāt Al-Dīniyyah; Bisān lin-Nashr wat -Tawzi', 1995), 11, note 3]. He was ordained as a priest by Archbishop Yūsuf Rizk, the rector of the 'Ayn Waraqah School, upon his graduation from this school in 1842. In 1856 Patriarch Būlus Mas'ad ordained him titular bishop of Acre to serve as an aide to Archbishop Abdallah Al-Bustānī in the diocese of Tyre and Sidon, where he later served as the pastoral Archbishop over this diocese following the death of Archbishop Abdallah in 1866. He bought the family palace of Prince Bashīr II the Great Shihabī in the heights of Beyt-Eddīn making it his summer residence. A serious dispute arose between Archbishop Buṭrus and Rustum Pasha, the third governor of the Mutassarifat of Mount Lebanon between 1873 and 1883, over several issues and most notably the arrest of the monks of the monastery of St. Antonios Qozhayyā and their having been dragged handcuffed in their monastic habits all the way to prison, a clear violation of article 17 of the 1864 Protocol. He was banished to Jerusalem by an Ottoman decree on 1 June 1878 and was reinstated to his archdiocese on 29 October of the same year. [As'ad Rustum, *Lūbnān fī 'Ahd al-Muṭaṣarrifiyyah* (Beirut: Dār An-Nahdah lin-Nashr, 1973), 161–65]. For more on Archbishop Buṭrus Al-Bustānī and his dispute with the Mūṭaṣarrif, refer to: Khāṭir Laḥad, *'Ahd al-Mūṭaṣarrifīn fī Lūbnān, 1861-1918*, 14 (Beirut: Lebanese University Press, Section of History Studies, 1968), 66–137.

³ Archbishop Abdallah Al-Bustānī was born in 1780 and passed away in 1866. He assumed the archbishopric of Sidon and Tyre between 1837 and 1866. He lived in the village of Mashmūshah, where the sixty-first Maronite Patriarch Simon 'Awād, who served as patriarch for thirteen years, had previously resided (1743-1756). Archbishop Abdallah established within his residence a clerical school that was later sabotaged as a result of the events of 1860. He was succeeded in 1866 by his brother's grandson, Archbishop Buṭrus Al-Bustānī as we have seen in the previous footnote. Shākir Al-Khūrī, *Majma' Al-Masarrāt*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār Lahad Khātīr, 1985), 33; Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-'Aṣrih*, 11.

⁴ The Diocese of Sidon and Tyre included in that period: a) The city of Sidon and its environs, the provinces of Shūf, Jizzīn, the western Bekaa, Marjī'yūn and Hāshbayyā, as well as the Golan in Syria and the areas of Ḥūlā and Banyās; b) The city of Tyre and its environs up to Palestine and the Holy Lands. During the reign of Bishop Būlus Baṣbūṣ (1900-1918), the Diocese of Sidon and Tyre was divided into two sections: a) The Diocese of Sidon, located in the city of Sidon, and it included the areas mentioned above in section a), but the Western Bekaa was detached from this diocese during the reign of Archbishop Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥilū (1975-1996) and annexed to the newly established diocese of Zaḥlah; b) The Diocese of Tyre, based in the city of Tyre, and it included the areas mentioned above in section b). During the reign of Archbishop Ṭaniūs Khūrī (1996-2006), the districts of Marjī'yūn and Hāshbayyā were detached from the Diocese of Sidon and annexed to the Diocese of Tyre in compensation for the loss of Palestine and the Holy Lands, which became an independent diocese.

Having made certain of his intelligence, he then sent him at the age of eleven to the school of ‘Ayn Waraqah, one of the great schools of that era.¹

The School of ‘Ayn Waraqah

Buṭrus spent a period of ten years at ‘Ayn Waraqah from 1830 until 1840, during when he learned the Arabic and Syriac languages, history, geography and calculus in addition to logic, philosophy, literary and theoretical theology, and the fundamentals of legal rights. He learned Latin and Italian as part of the curriculum offered at the school and also mastered both languages. His cousin Shiblī (mentioned above as his study companion at this school) traveled to Rome to further pursue his studies after having completed his studies at ‘Ayn Waraqah.² On the other hand, Buṭrus himself was unable to travel abroad to pursue further education in fulfillment of the wishes of the Maronite Patriarch, who was willing “to send him to Rome to specialize in religious studies.” Yet because of his mother’s objection, who had been widowed and was the guardian of her three sons, “he stayed back as an educator at ‘Ayn Waraqah and endeavored to further strengthen his command of the English language while also taking care of the interests of Patriarch Yūsuf Ḥubaysh until 1840 when he resigned from the school and left for Beirut.”³

Beirut and the English and American Consulates (1840-1844)

Buṭrus moved to Beirut in pursuit of a living, where he began working at the English Consulate as a dragoman. It was during the same period that England had been preparing for a campaign – along with a few other countries – that would force the Egyptian Ibrāhīm Pasha to withdraw from Lebanon and Syria and in turn wipe out his ally Prince Bashīr Shihāb II. The reason behind his having approached the English Consulate is that “young and educated men like him at the time could find no better opportunity, where they could employ their skills, than to work with consulates or foreign missions.”⁴

During this period, he also got in touch with the American missionaries and put in a request to “work with them as an Arabic teacher. At that time, the American missionaries were having

¹ Bustānī (Al), *Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 69; Qays, *Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus Al-Bustānī*, 44.

² Bustānī, *Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus Al-Bustānī*, 69.

³ Bustānī, *Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus Al-Bustānī*, 69.

⁴ Albert Habib Hourani, *Al-Fikr Al-‘Arabi fī ‘Aṣr An-Nahḍah: 1798-1939*, trans. Karīm ‘Azqūl, 4th ed. (Beirut: Dār An-Nahār lin-Nashr, 1986), 127.

much trouble in finding suitable teachers that could teach the Arabic language.” But his desire did not materialize “because the members of the mission had fled Beirut as a result of the war” that broke out in 1840 between the Egyptian army led by Ibrāhīm Pasha – who then controlled both Syria and Lebanon – on the one hand, and on the other hand England, Austria and Prussia, who were allied with Turkey. These European countries sent their fleet of ships to Lebanon in a successful attempt to drive Ibrāhīm Pasha out of the country. Following the English victory in forcing the Egyptians to evacuate Lebanon, the missionaries returned to Beirut in early November of the same year and reopened their school. Buṭrus joined them as a teacher of the Arabic language and began to cement his relationship with them.¹ During this time, the great Dr. Cornelius Van Dyck² returned to Lebanon and had the chance to meet Al-Bustānī before going on to build a strong friendship that resulted in their living together in one house during their years as single men. They lived in the house of American Pastor Eli Smith (who had Arabicized his name to ‘Alī Smith), who had during that time been out of Lebanon.³ This was a friendship that would bear many fruits and last a lifetime until Buṭrus’ death.

It was in the following year in 1841 that he met the head of the American Mission, Eli Smith,⁴ who had arrived in Beirut from Jerusalem in order to oversee the American printing press, which

¹ Khūrī, *RajulSabiqlī- ‘Aṣrih*, 13–14. Also refer to Qays, *Athār Al-Mū ‘allim Buṭrus*, 63–64.

² Dr. Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck was born in Kinder Hawk, New York on 13 August 1818 as the seventh and last son of parents, who hailed from a Dutch family that had emigrated to the United States in the sixteenth century. From his early years he had mastered several languages, such as Greek and Latin, as well as his native English and Dutch. His father was a doctor and owned a pharmacy in New York and so naturally Van Dyck practiced medicine under his father, helped him at his pharmacy and became a pharmacist. He commenced his medical studies at Springfield School before completing his degree at the Jefferson Medical Institute in Philadelphia with a diploma and doctorate in medicine. He arrived in Lebanon on 2 April 1840 at the age of twenty-one as a missionary sent by the elders of the American Presbyterian Church. In Beirut, he met Teacher Buṭrus Al-Bustānī, Sheikh Nāṣif Al-Yāzījī and Sheikh Yūsuf Al-Asīr Al-‘Azharī, under whom he had studied Arabic until he had become thoroughly trained in this language. He is credited with establishing the Syrian Evangelical College in Beirut or what is today the American University of Beirut. He continued to pursue his scientific, educational and charitable work in Lebanon until his passing on 18 November 1895 at the age of 77 after having suffered from typhoid for several days. He was buried in the American cemetery in Beirut following a prayer service conducted in the Arabic language at the Evangelical Church in accordance with his will. Rustum, *Lūbnān fī ‘Ahd Al-muṭaṣarrifiyyah*, 239–41; Kamāl Yūsuf Al-Hāj, *Al-Mū ‘allafāt Al-Kāmilah fīl-Falsafah Al-Lūbnāniyyah*, 1st ed., vol. 2 (Jounieh: Bayt Al-fīkr, 2013), 918–29; Philip Hittī, *Lūbnān fī At-Tārīkh Mundh ‘Aqdam Al-‘Uṣūr At-Tārīkhiyyah ilā Yawminā Hādhā*, trans. Anīs Frayḥah (Beirut: New York: Mū‘assasat Franklin Al-Mūsāhimah liṭ-Ṭibā‘ah wan-Nashr, 1959), 563–64; Philippe deTarazī, *Tārīkh As-Sihāfah Al-‘Arabiyyah*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Al-Maṭba‘ah Al-‘Adabiyyah, 1913), 144–50.

³ Antoine Sayf, *Thalāthat ḥukamā’ min Jabal Lūbnān: Buṭrus Al-Bustānī*, *Kamāl Jūmlāṭ*, *‘Adil Isma‘īl*, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Mū‘assasat Antoine Al-Jalakh liṭ-Ṭibā‘ah wat-Tajlīd, 1999), 65.

⁴ Eli Smith (1801-1857) was “an American from the town of North Ford in Connecticut, who joined the Protestant Presbyterian mission after having studied for the priesthood and volunteering to work abroad.” He was sent to Malta in 1820 to supervise the American printing press

was first founded in Malta before its transferal to Beirut in 1834.¹ The two men were deeply immersed in matters of religious doctrine and shared countless discussions and debates on many Christian religious issues that had been the subject of intense controversy and conflict between the Catholic Church and the Protestants. These discussions and debates resulted in Al-Bustānī renouncing his Catholic faith and embracing the doctrine of the American Evangelical missionaries.² One of Al-Bustānī's most prominent achievements during this period was his translation of articles that Smith had written in English into the Arabic language explaining the tenets of the Evangelical tradition. Al-Bustānī's translation carried the title "*Al-Bāb al-maftūḥ fī 'amal al-rūḥ*" (The Open Door in the Perseverance of the Spirit) (Beirut, 1843).³

His Marriage

In 1844, Al-Bustānī married Raḥīl 'Atā of the Greek Orthodox denomination. In view of the fact that this woman was special – in her upbringing, her having borne and nurtured a large and distinguished family, her fine rearing of her children, and her unwavering support of her husband – and represented a role model for many women, we saw it fit to observe her in a full section here.

Born in Beirut in 1826, Raḥīl was adopted by Sara, wife of Eli Smith, in 1834 and taken into their family as one of them. She is the first girl to attend the school established by Sara in Beirut. When Sara passed away in 1836, Raḥīl was moved between several American families before returning to the Smith home under the care of Eli Smith's second wife. She joined the Evangelical Church on the last Saturday of January 1843. She refused the request of the governor of Beirut to reconcile with her biological mother and rather chose to stay with Eli Smith's family as she objected to the life of depravity her mother was mired in. Raḥīl had four sons and five daughters with Al-Bustānī and had eighteen grandchildren. She died in 1894 and was eulogized in the weekly Evangelical Bulletin No. 1464 dated 17 February 1894 (p. 56). The bulletin also

there before landing in Beirut in 1827 as one of the very first American missionaries to have arrived in this country. At the forefront of his work in Beirut was the translation of the Bible in its old and new testaments and assisted by Buṭrus Al-Bustānī into the Arabic language. However he passed away in 1857 before he could complete the translation. Qays, *Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 47. "At the time of his death, only the Book of Genesis and 39 chapters of the Book of Exodus had been printed." Khūrī, *Rajul Sābiq li- 'Aṣriḥ*, 35.

¹ Hitti, *Lūbnān fī At-Tārīkh*, 555.

² Qays, *Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 48.

³ Khūrī, *Rajul Sābiq li- 'Aṣriḥ*, 15.

published the “panegyric in her honor at the Memorial Ceremony” in the issue No. 1474 of 28 April 1894.¹

Ḥaṣḥbayyā and ‘Abay (1844-1848)

Al-Bustānī’s relationship with the American missionaries grew stronger as he succeeded in earning their trust. He became active in the ranks of their church and operated as one of them: preaching, educating, and writing. In early March 1844 and during the illness of Eli Smith, Al-Bustānī and another colleague, Eliās Fawwāz,² were assigned to deputize for Smith in establishing a school in Ḥaṣḥbayyā in the south of Lebanon. This was in response to demands of some previous congregants of the Greek Orthodox community there, who had converted to Evangelicalism, for the establishment of a school in their town.³ The two men travelled there, founded the Evangelical school, taught a curriculum of subjects there and also took it upon themselves to teach the children of the Evangelical Church their prayers, the Ten Commandments, and the principles of the Evangelical doctrine. The curriculum was limited to “Arabic reading comprehension, arithmetic, English and handicrafts, whereby the students would graduate at the equivalent of primary level today.” He served in his mission in Ḥaṣḥbayyā for seven months until 1 October 1844 but continued to “supervise the missionary work in Ḥaṣḥbayyā, obligating him to return for a second time on 18 June 1845.” At the time, this school was unique amongst other missionary schools in that it was the only school to teach the English language.⁴

In the summer of 1843, the missionaries decided to move to Mount Lebanon, “with ‘Abay as their starting point for it offered all the necessary qualities of being a large, lively and booming

¹ Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣriḥ Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣriḥ*, 28–30; Teacher Buṭrus and Raḥīl had four sons, Salīm, Nasīb, Najīb, and Amīn and their daughters were Adelaide, Alice, and Sara. (Ibid., 131, footnote no. 4) Their fourth daughter, Louisa, married Khalīl Sarkīs in 1873 “and he was the proprietor of *Lisān-ūl-Ḥāl* newspaper and *Al-Mishkāṭ* magazine.” (Ṭarazī, *Tarīkh Aṣ-Ṣaḥafah Al-‘Arabiyyah*, 2:129). We have not been successful in tracing their fifth daughter.

² Elias Fawwāz (1803-1878) was a Lebanese missionary from Ḥaṣḥbayyā and the first person to convert to Evangelicalism in Ḥaṣḥbayyā. His family moved after the civil war of 1860 to Dayr Mimās and then to Beirut. When he passed away, he had attained the rank of presbyter in the Evangelical Church of Beirut. Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 64.

³ The school in Ḥaṣḥbayyā is still being run to this day and pictures of the early missionary figures still adorn the interior walls of the school. Qays mentions that he himself is a graduate of this school and studied there during the period of Reverend Ibrāhīm Dāghir, who passed away in 1983. Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 49–50.

⁴ Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 65–66; Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣriḥ*, 16–17.

village with a mix of denominations (the Druze, Maronites, Greek Orthodox and some Catholics) and for its central geographical location between the lands of the Druze and the lands inhabited by the Christians.” When they moved there, the missionaries established a school that soon after had to be closed due to the bloody conflict of 1845 between the Druze and the Christians. However, the missionaries returned there as soon as peaceful relations were reinstated. They reopened the school in the spring of 1846 and revamped its curriculum making “Arabic the main language of instruction and enforcing fair access to education for all students of different sects in the mountain.” Both Van Dyck and al-Bustānī were commissioned to carry out this task, the first for his proficiency in the Arabic language almost commensurate with some of the most prominent native speakers, and the second for his considerable experience as an educator.¹ They headed for ‘Abay in the spring of 1846 and commenced their mission by teaching Arabic during the day and putting together textbooks for their students in the evenings. It was there that Al-Bustānī wrote his very first book, *Kashf al-Ḥijāb fī ‘Ilm al-Ḥisāb (Unveiling the Science of Arithmetic)*, which was printed in Beirut in 1848. In putting this book together, Al-Bustānī benefited from Eli Smith’s book written specifically for missionary schools on arithmetic and printed several times across Syria.” He also wrote another book covering syntax and rhetoric in the Arabic language titled *Būlūgh Al-‘Arab fī Naḥw-il-‘Arab (Reaching the Goal in the Study of the Syntax of the Arabs)*,² which was never published. It was also in ‘Abay that his eldest son, Salīm, was born and who later would become his greatest aide in all his endeavors.

After having spent two years in his mission at the school in ‘Abay , Al-Bustānī returned to Beirut in 1848 and worked there as a dragoman at the American Consulate. It was not too long before he would become engrossed in more work from writing and giving speeches and establishing societies to assisting Eli Smith in the translation of the Bible, which the latter had begun

¹ Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 66–67; For more on the curriculum taught at the school in ‘Abayah, the teaching methods, level of education, and the school’s educational impact, see *ibid.*, 67–68. For more on the establishing of the ‘Abayh School, Al-Bustānī and Van Dyck’s mission to teach at the school and in turn their mandate to update the curriculum and teaching material, and for more on the number of students enrolled, refer to Khūrī, *Rajul Sābqūn ū-‘Aṣrih*, 20–22.

² Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 68; See also, Yūsuf As‘ad Dāghir, *Maṣādir Al-Dirāsāt-il ‘Adabiyyah*, vol. 2 (Lebanese University Press (Section of Arabic Studies), 1983), 182.

translating into Arabic from its two main languages, Hebrew and Greek, both languages in which Al-Bustānī had already been proficient.¹

Establishment of the National Evangelical Church in Beirut (1848)

The first Evangelical Church in Beirut consisted “in 1825 of nine people, As‘ad As-Shidyāq, Ṭannūs Al-Ḥaddād, Archbishop Ya‘qūb and Archbishop Karabāt (both Armenian prelates) and their wives, John Wartabāt (Armenian priest), Ms. Abbott, and the wife of the English consul. These members formed the nucleus of the very first Evangelical church in Beirut.”² After professing Evangelicalism in 1841 and in light of his active involvement with the Evangelicals, he sought along with a team of his native friends, who were adherents of this doctrine, to establish a national Evangelical Church independent of the American missionaries. The native Evangelicals, numbering twenty-six, met on 10 July 1847 and entrusted Al-Bustānī with chairing the meeting, from which ensued a “petition to the missionaries requesting the establishment of an autonomous Evangelical church” with its own laws and regulations. Following many deliberations, their desire was fulfilled and “the first Evangelical church in the Arab world was formally inaugurated in [the spring of] 1848 and has since been known as the National Evangelical Church in Beirut.”³ Since that date, and despite his lack of interest in “any official religious role,” Al-Bustānī grew to become a “cornerstone” of the Evangelical National Church and one of its most prominent members.⁴ He first served as a teacher at the “Sunday School,” lecturing and delivering sermons, before serving as its director for a long time to come. The last sermon he delivered was entitled in accordance with the words of the psalmist as follows: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”⁵ Many years later, “at the inauguration of the new edifice of the Evangelical National Church in Beirut in 1867”, Al-

¹ Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 69; Khūrī, *Rajul Sābiq Li-‘Aṣrih*, 34.

² Al-Ḥāj, *Al-Mū‘allafāt Al-Kāmilah*, 2:914.

³ Al-Ḥāj, 2:915–16. The date of 10 July 1847 is that of the first meeting of the local evangelicals as mentioned by Al-Ḥāj, which is quoted as 10 June of the same year by other authors, including Qays in his book on the teacher Buṭrus Al-Bustānī (*‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 51) and Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī in his book (*Rajul Sābiq Li-‘Aṣrih*, 36).

⁴ Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 51; Khūrī, *Rajul Sābiq Li-‘Aṣrih*, 36.

⁵ Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 64; Khūrī, *Rajul Sābiq Li-‘Aṣrih*, 37.

Bustānī stood in the front ranks of the church's most prominent sermonizers,¹ indicating his important status within this church.

The Syrian Society (as of 1847)

The Syrian Society is an intellectual, literary, political and social society founded in Beirut in 1847. Dr. Anṭwān Sayf believes that this could most likely be the same society, *Majma' al-Tahdhīb* (The Society of Refinement), that Al-Bustānī had founded back in the year 1845 and whose principles the Americans had later revised. The society had thirteen members, including only two Americans, one of whom was Van Dyck, and all of whom were Evangelical with the exception of Sheikh Naṣīf Al-Yāzījī, who was a Maronite. Smith, who was not in Beirut at the time the Society was founded, also joined the society after arriving from the United States.²

Teacher Al-Bustānī played an active role in its advancement until it became a regular society. He would come down to Beirut from 'Abay - during the period when he was still teaching at its school - in order to deliver an address and further its activities, until he became one of its most prominent sermonizers, "one of its most active members, and one of the most prolific editors of its newspaper." He remained an active member of this society for many long years and it is there that he delivered his famous speeches on: "*Ta'lim An-Nisā'* (Women's Education) on 14 December 1849), '*Adāb Al-'Arab* (The Literature of the Arabs) on 15 February 1859, *Al-Hay'ah Al-Ijtimā'iyah wal Muqābalah Bayn-al'Awā'id Al-'Arabiyyah wa-l-Franjiyyah* (The Social System and the Comparison between Arab and Western Norms) on 11 May 1869." Not to mention "the weekly articles, which he contributed to the missionaries' periodical *Al-Nashrah* (The Bulletin). His hierarchical order within the society was fourteen."³

In his book on Al-Bustānī, Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī details the dates of the society's meetings, the total number of meetings between 1847 and the end of 1851, as well as its open sessions, the number of "speeches and excerpts" delivered at these meetings and published in *A'māl Al-Jam'iyyah As-Sūriyyah* (Proceedings of the Syrian Society). These publications included, apart from his address on the education of women, two more articles, *Al-Ḥarīrī* (of Baṣrah), and *Fī*

¹ Qays, '*Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 51; Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-'Aṣrih*, 37.

² Sayf, *Thalāthāt Hūkamā'*, 67; For more on the society, its formation, members and their rankings, constitution and meetings, refer to Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-'Aṣrih*, 23–25.

³ Qays, '*Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 49.

Madīnat Bayrūt (In the City of Beirut), in addition to a summary of Anṭoniūs Amyūnī's *Iktishāf Jadīd* (A New Discovery) on "copper casting through electricity," and a summary of Van Dyck's article *Amālī Falakiyyah* (Astrological Hopes).¹ In addition, he served as the honorary secretary of the special committee formed in Beirut in the fall of 1855 with the aim of overseeing the six schools established by the Americans and British in the areas of Aley, Metn, Shūwayr, Sidon and Ḥaṣḥayyā, together forming what later came to be known as "the Lebanese schools." The committee included "the consuls of America and England, John Luthian, Sūlaymān and Eliās Aṣ-Ṣalībī, a delegate of the American missionaries, and two other members."²

Translation of the Bible (as of 1848)

The American missionaries arrived in Lebanon with the aim of preaching and proselytizing amongst other reasons. They would rely since their first arrival in 1822 and until 1857 on "the Bible or some of its chapters/books that they had revised and reprinted based on the earlier translated version, which had been revised by Bishop Sarkīs Ar-Razzī (1567–1638), Maronite Archbishop of Damascus, and printed in Rome in 1671 from the original version known as *vulgata* (vulgate).³ This version, which they took on entirely or partially, was known as the "Roman Propaganda Bible" and was in two languages: Latin (according to the texts of the vulgate) and Arabic.⁴ However, the missionaries did not find it fit for them, as the Latin text "adopted by the Catholic Church at the time" was different "in some parts" than the version adopted by the "American Protestant Church." Moreover, although "the Roman Propaganda Bible" has "managed to unify theological texts," it was unable to "unify the Arabic text nor phrase it in a modern coherent style" in addition to its failure in recording any significant progress in the quality of the Arabic language used whether in diction or style.⁵ These were all reasons behind their decision to produce a new Arabic translation of the Bible.

Their first initiative was in 1844 when missionary 'Alī Smith had asked "the American Board of Missions in Boston permission to translate the Bible into Arabic." In his report to the board, he

¹ Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li- 'Aṣrih*, 25.

² Kamāl S. Ṣalībī, *Tārīkh Lūbnān Al-Ḥadīth*, 7th ed. (Beirut: Dār An-Nahār lin-Nashr, 1991), 177–78.

³ Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li- 'Aṣrih*, 30–31.

⁴ Amīn Albert Ar-Rayḥānī, "At-Tarjamāt Al-'Arabiyyah lil Kitāb Al-Mūqaddas Wa 'Āthārihā fī Ḥarakat An-Nahdah Al-'Arabiyyah" (American University of Beirut, November 2, 2015), 12. For more on the "Roman Propaganda," refer to pages 12–13.

⁵ Ar-Rayḥānī, 13, 17.

noted down a number of benefits to this work should it be given the authorization to be translated. In 1847 and following the approval of the Boston board, a committee was formed consisting of three of the top missionaries, Eli Smith (as president), Cornelius Van Dyck and William Thompson (as members), with the task to immediately commence the translation. And thus the committee decided to solicit the help of a member from the “Syrian Mission,” with great mastery of the Arabic language. It was also decided that the translation be done directly from the Hebrew language, which is the language of the Old Testament, and from the Greek language, which is the original language of the New Testament. Thus it was only in Al-Bustānī that the committee could find all their needs.¹

It had been aforementioned that Teacher Buṭrus left his work at the ‘Abay School and moved in 1848 to Beirut, where he joined the American consulate as a translator and began helping Eli Smith in translating the Bible. He was proficient in both Hebrew and Greek, the languages in which the scriptures were written. He also gained a deep knowledge of Syriac and Latin when he was at the ‘Ayn Waraqaḥ School. It was during this period that he “trained” in the Syriac and Latin languages. Thus, and just like this, he became a sophisticated reader of the ancient languages, “in which the oldest scriptures that make up the Bible were written.”² Not to be forgotten is his mastery of the Arabic language, as it was at the forefront of reasons that led the missionaries to invite him amongst them and in turn learn Arabic at his hands. Thus, possessed all the necessary requirements that rendered him a distinguished translator.

In the translation process, he would prepare a rough translation of the texts directly from their original languages and once completed would be handed over to Eli Smith, who would review the translation and then have a discussion with Al-Bustānī about “the meaning behind certain words or terms before comparing what they had translated from the original texts in Hebrew, Syriac, and Latin.” Once all that was done, the work was then handed over to Naṣīf Al-Yāzījī, linguist and editor at the American Press, who did a second revision of the translation that he

¹ Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 121–22.

² Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 122; Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣriḥ*, 34.

would have completed with Smith, and wrote it down on a page juxtaposed with Al-Bustānī's translation.¹

Al-Bustānī continued his translation work in this pattern until 1857 and only stopped after the death of Eli Smith on January 11 of the same year as the contract signed between them was designed to be made invalid if either party were to pass away. Sometime after the death of Eli Smith, Van Dyck was commissioned to complete the translation² by the Boston board, patrons of this translation of the Bible that was led by Eli Smith. He was appointed on 11 April 1857 to complete this task. Upon assuming “full responsibility, Van Dyck abandoned the services of Al-Yāzījī” and solicited the services of Ash-Sheikh Yūsuf Al-Asīr Al-Azharī.³ He also “dispensed with the services of Buṭrus Al-Bustānī” and chose not to renew the contract that had ended between Al-Bustānī and Smith upon the latter's death.⁴

Van Dyck reviewed what his predecessor had accomplished with the help of his Lebanese aides, Al-Bustānī and Al-Yāzījī, and completed the translation of the remaining untranslated books of the Bible. As soon as the translation was complete, he proceeded with the task of printing the translated Bible, supervising the process at large until its publication in 1865 as what came to be known as the Van Dyck version.⁵ Dr. Ameen Ar-Rayḥānī refers to it as the *Protestant translation* and notes that it was published in collaboration with the New York based American

¹ Qays, *Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 122–23; Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li- 'Aṣrih*, 34.

² Al-Hāj, *Al-Mū'allafāt Al-Kāmilah*, 2:921.

³ Yūsuf Al-Asīr was born in 1815 in his hometown of Sidon, where he studied the Quran and the principles of sciences. He then travelled to Damascus in 1847 and studied at the Murādiyyah school for one year. He then moved to Egypt to join Al-'Azhar, where he remained for a period of seven years and studied the rational sciences (*'Ulūm 'Aqliyyah*) and the revealed sciences (*'Ulūm Naqliyyah*). Al-Asīr returned to Sidon with liver disease before moving again to Tripoli and then Beirut, where he was appointed as chief clerk at the sharī'ah court. He then went to Acre in order to undertake the role of mufti there. He was then appointed as public prosecutor of Mount Lebanon for seven years before moving to Istanbul, where he chaired the panel of examiners at the Ministry of Education and taught at the Dār Al-Mū'allim Al-Kūbrah (the Higher Normal School). He retired in Beirut and became engrossed in writing and jurisprudence and also worked as an editor at several newspapers. He passed away in the year 1890. For more on his life, refer to: Philippe deTarazī, *Tārīkh Aṣ-Sahāfah Al-'Arabiyyah*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Al-Maṭba'ah Al-'Adabiyyah, 1913), 135–38.

⁴ Qays, *Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 123. Here Qays specifies as well the books of the Bible that Al-Bustānī did not translate: books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon; in addition to the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi. He also points out that Al-Bustānī's wages over ten years of translation services assisting Eli Smith amounted to fifty thousand qūrūsh or the equivalent of 1,923 USD at that time. In the same token, Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī had also identified in his book (*Rajūl Sābiq li- 'Aṣrih*, 35–36) the parts of the Bible which Al-Bustānī did not translate, as well as the fees paid to him for his translation services.

⁵ Al-Hāj, *al-Mū'allafāt Al-Kāmilah*, 2:917. Qays indicates in his book (*Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 128) the year 1866 as the date when the translation was completed.

Bible Society and the London based British Bible Society. It was published eight years after the death of Eli Smith, the original architect of this project.”¹

This translation is of special value, whether in the quality of the language used or the integrity of its content. In his lecture, Ar-Rayḥānī points out several features of this translated Bible, of which the fourth feature is namely worth mentioning here. Behind this great undertaking, was an “informal ecumenical body, a precedent for assemblies with similar ecumenical purpose in the last 100 years.” It brought together “the Catholic Naṣīf Al-Yāzījī, the Protestant and former Maronite Buṭrus Al-Bustānī, the Sunni Azharite Sheikh Al-Asīr and the American Protestants Smith and Van Dyck.”²

Speech on Women's Education (14 December 1849)

The social climate during this period of the nineteenth century and for a long duration afterwards was a very trying time for women. The reality of life for the women of Lebanon and Syria could be summed up as “a deplorable state of humiliation, which could only be regarded as disgraceful. Women were not permitted, [...] to appear before strange men or in public places. While Christian women enjoyed a greater margin of freedom than their Muslim counterparts, they were also subject to this system of seclusion and both Christian and Muslim women were equal in illiteracy and suffered together from a lack of rights.”³

Al-Bustānī grew mindful early on to this detrimental reality and became conscious of the importance of the emancipation of women and the dire need to lift the veil from the injustices that had afflicted the women of his country. He knew that the fastest and shortest way to combat the illiteracy that had befallen women was through enabling them to attend schools. On 14 December 1849, Al-Bustānī delivered his famous discourse *Ta’līm An-Nisā’* (Women’s Education) before the Syrian Society “opening the door for dialogue on women's education and its importance in the advancement of society.”⁴ His speech marked the beginning of a new era of

¹ Ar-Rayḥānī, “At-Tarjamāt Al-‘Arabiyyah,” 17.

² Ar-Rayḥānī, 20. For more on this topic, refer to pages 16–20.

³ Henry Harris Jessup, *Fifty Three Years in Syria*, 71 quoted in Fāyiz Alameddine Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 168.

⁴ Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 169. “Al-Bustānī’s discourse was published in Beirut in 1853 in the proceedings of the Syrian Society (Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 169). Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī states in his book (*Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣriḥ*, 28–29) that Al-Bustānī had published this discourse 32 years later in issue 13 of *Al-Jinān* in 1882, “having edited out many passages that were no longer relevant to his contemporary

struggle for the advocacy of women attaining their most basic rights - a struggle that is still ongoing almost a century and three quarters later.

Two Other Speeches (Fī 'Ādāb Al- 'Arab [On the Literature of the Arabs], 1859; Al-Hay' a Al-Ijtima' iyyah [Social Structure], 1869)

After nearly a decade, Al-Bustānī took again to the stage before the Syrian Society and delivered “in the presence of the most prominent orators and in front of a large audience of Arabs and Westerners [...], on 15 February 1859,”¹ his famous second discourse *Fi Ādāb Al- 'Arab* (On the Literature of the Arabs). Just as he had conveyed his reformist vision on women's education in his previous discourse, he expressed in this discourse his cultural vision. His speech was divided into three sections: the state of the sciences amongst the Arabs before Islam, the state of the sciences after the advent of Islam and the state of the sciences in his contemporary times (1859).²

It was another decade before Al-Bustānī would take before the same society and deliver “on the eve of Tuesday 11 May 1869”³ his third and celebrated discourse on “society and a comparison between Arab and Western customs” (published later in 42 pages).⁴ In this speech, he expressed his perspective on the “advancement of the “*Al-Hay' a Al-Ijtima' iyyah (Social Structure)*” or in simpler terms, society, as an integrated perspective in its divergent angles. He called for the abandonment of diseases, which he designated respectively as *al-jahl* (ignorance), *al-inqisām* (fragmentation), *al-tashattūt* (dispersion), *al- 'abath* (absurdism), and *al- 'ādāt al-mūtakhallifah* (backward practices), all of which he considered as being beyond any scientific, economic, and literary justification.”⁵

times.” Khūrī also mentions, citing al-Jinan magazine itself, that the discourse he had orated was actually an exercise in improvisation. For more details on the discourse and its content, refer to: Qays, 'Āthār Al-Mū' allim Buṭrus, 169–78; Al-Bustānī, Al-Mū' allim Buṭrus, 89–111.

¹ Qays, 'Āthār Al-Mū' allim Buṭrus, 193.

² Qays, 'Āthār Al-Mū' allim Buṭrus, 194. For more on this discourse, refer to Qays, 'Āthār Al-Mū' allim Buṭrus, 192–226. Also refer to Fuad Afrām Bustānī, Al-Rawā' i', no. 22 (n.d.): 112–128; Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li- 'Aṣrih*, 48–52.

³ Qays, 'Āthār Al-Mū' allim Buṭrus, 232.

⁴ Dāghir, *Maṣādir Ad-Dirāsāt Al- 'Adabiyyah*, 2:184.

⁵ Qays, 'Āthār Al-Mū' allim Buṭrus, 231. For more on this discourse, refer to Qays, 'Āthār Al-Mū' allim Buṭrus, 232–25. Also refer to Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li- 'Aṣrih*, 69–80.

National School of Beirut (1863)

During the 19th century, schools in Lebanon were predominantly sectarian. Therefore, the ‘Ayn Waraḡah School (1789), established by Patriarch Joseph Istfān (1766 - 1793) in the fashion of the Maronite College in Rome (1584), and from which Al-Bustānī had graduated, was amongst the famous schools of that era and considered - meritoriously - “the mother of all national schools in the country.”¹ When the missionaries arrived in Lebanon, they were active in the establishment of schools. The Jesuit Fathers established the ‘Ayntūra School in 1834 and the Ghazīr school in 1847. The American missionaries in Beirut established the first girls’ school in 1834 - one of their very first schools - run by Sarah Smith, the wife of American missionary Eli Smith. The first girl to join and graduate from this school was Raḡīl ‘Atā, who later became the wife of Teacher Buṭrus . Raḡīl was eight years old when Sarah Smith adopted her at the same time she founded this girls school in 1834.² We had already mentioned the schools of Hāsbayyā and ‘Abay and established Al-Bustānī’s role in their growth. It was only a matter of time before the nationalists began initiating the establishment of schools and Al-Bustānī was at the forefront of this initiative.

In the autumn of 1863, Al-Bustānī established his Al-Madrasah Al-Waṭaniyyah (The National School) upon intellectual foundations that were shaped in him as a result of many factors, perhaps most prominently the education he had attained since his early youth, his connection with the missionaries, his extensive experience in the field of education, and his sharp awareness of the correct methods that impel people and groups to progress in the direction of advancement, development and civilization. Add to this his traits of deep loyalty and his detachment from personal and selfish interests and motives, which had engulfed the country and its people and had thrown them into the depths of backwardness and decline. This ignorance could have only been combated through the dissemination of education and knowledge. Moreover, the events of 1860 may have perhaps hastened him to embark on this pivotal project.

¹ Qays, ‘*Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*’, 225.

² Sayf, *Thalāthāt Hūkamā*’, 66.

“Teacher Buṭrus Al-Bustānī [...] had laid down the goals and objectives of his national school”¹ and had strived to ensure their application and abidance. He did not at any point deviate from these goals and objectives and did not yield to any of the pressures exerted on him with the intention of diverting him from his determination nor did he respond to any temptations designed to shake his certitudes. He remained steadfast in his choices and forevermore committed to his convictions.

Students of all backgrounds flocked to attend Al-Bustānī’s nonsectarian national school. “It was home to Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian, Turkish, Greek, Iraqi and Iranian students who studied side by side.” Al-Bustānī assumed supervision of the school and also taught one class on the English language. “He would deliver a discourse to the students there twice a week, urging them to strive towards a path of devoutness, virtuousness and ethical values.” His son Salīm was delegated to deputize for Al-Bustānī in case of the latter’s absence, whereby he would run the school affairs and teach Al-Bustānī’s English class. His sister Sara was in charge of teaching another English class. A team of some of the greatest notables of that time taught various other subjects at the school, notably: Sheikh Naṣif Al-Yāzījī taught Arabic, Sheikh Khaṭṭār Ad-Daḥdāḥ taught French, as well as Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Yāzījī, Sheikh Yūsuf Al-Asīr, Salīm Taqlā, and Yūsuf Al-Bāḥūt to name a few. “The school was a great success such that the Ottoman government conferred on Al-Bustānī the Order of the Majīdī for his achievement of establishing this school and he was visited by the Ottoman governors as a show of support for this endeavor.”²

Al-Bustānī and the Press (1860- 1875)

From the early 1850s, Beirut witnessed a remarkable awakening in the field of journalism. It was not long before that the Lebanese themselves became pioneers in the revival of the press throughout the *Mashriq* (Arab East) and all the way to the Americas with the emigration of some of these pioneers. We shall not delve here into the reasons behind the emergence of periodical publications and their role in this awakening. However, we shall focus here on how Buṭrus Al-Bustānī kept pace with this revival since its nascence and initiated three newspapers and one

¹ Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 70. For more on the school’s objectives, system, educational curricula, its relationship with the Anglo-Saxon schools, the Syrian Protestant College (later the American University of Beirut) and the Ottoman authorities, and for its important role and impact, refer to Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 70–84. Also refer to Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣriḥ*, 53–66.

² Rustum, *Lūbnān fī ‘Ahd Al-Muṣaṣṣarriyyah*, 111.

magazine respectively published across a varied period of time. Below is an overview of these periodicals in chronological order of establishment:

1. *Nafīr Sūriyyah* (The Clarion of Syria) (29 September 1860 – 22 April 1861)

He founded this newspaper following the cessation of the civil strife that took place in Mount Lebanon in 1860. It continued to be published for nearly six consecutive months (April until late August) as a “weekly broadsheet that included only Al-Bustānī’s introductory piece on that one page, of a length varying between 25 and 72 lines.”¹ The first issue came out on 29 September 1860 and the eleventh and final issue on 22 April 1861, almost two months after the previous tenth issue.² Al-Bustānī signed off these issues with the phrase “*Min Mūhib li-l Waṭan*” (From a lover of his homeland) and commenced each issue with “*Yā Abnā’-al- Waṭan*” (O sons of the homeland), a phrase which he repeated over and again at the beginning of every section. Starting from the fourth issue of 25 October 1860 and through to the eleventh and final issue, he began to refer to his newspaper with the term *waṭaniyyah* (national).³

¹ Rustum, *Lūbnān fī ‘Ahd Al-Muṭaṣarrifiyyah*, 288.

² The tenth issue or rather the tenth *Waṭaniyyah* (national) came out on 22 February 1861. For more on this, refer to the following: Jean Dayah, *Al-Mū‘allīm Buṭrus Al-Bustānī : Dirasāt wa Wathā‘iq*, 1st ed. (Al-Fikr Journal, 1981), 2, 150; Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī, *Nafīr Sūriyyah*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dār Fikr lil-‘Abhāth wan-Nashr, 1990), 55. Both authors published in their books (respectively Dayah, 113–162 and Khūrī, 9–70) the texts of these *waṭaniyyah* issues from their original copies held at the Jafet Memorial Library of the American University of Beirut.

³ Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣrih*, 41–40; Sayf, *Thalāth Hukamā’*, 26–27, 58–59. It should be noted that Ṭarazī had mistakenly described it as having consisted of two pages released in thirteen issues (Ṭarazī, *Tārīkh As-Ṣaḥāfah Al-‘Arabiyyah*, 1:64) as well as Fū‘ād Afrām Al-Bustānī (*Ar-Rawā‘i*: 77) and Kamīl Hūshaymah Al-Yāsū‘ī, *Al-Mū‘allifūn Al-‘Arab Al-Masīhiyyūn min Qabl Al-Islām ila Ākhir Al-Qarn Al-‘Ishrīn*, 1st ed., vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār Al-Mashriq, 2011) and Dāghīr, *Maṣādir Ad-Dirāsāt Al-Adabiyyah*, 2:182). In fact, the actual number of issues is eleven and they are held in the Jafet Memorial Library at the American University of Beirut and they number together up to 579 lines (Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣrih*, 41, footnote 4). However, Khūrī contradicts this in the same page by mentioning rather thirteen issues. Khūrī had collected, verified and issued the newspaper in a book published in 1990 by Dār Fikr lil Abhāth wan-Nashr. The reason for the discrepancy in the issue numbers amongst the abovementioned authors is due to the fact that Al-Bustānī had once referred to two of his editorials in *Al-Jinān* magazine as respectively *Al-Waṭaniyyah Ath-thāniyah ‘Asharah* (The Twelfth National) and *Al-Waṭaniyyah Al-thālithah ‘Asharah* (The Thirteenth National). (Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣrih*, 121, footnote 1). In his other book published five years earlier in 1990 (*Nafīr Sūriyyah*) Khūrī corroborates that the twelfth editorial appeared in *Al-Jinān* magazine in its first issue in 1870 and not *Al-Jannah* newspaper. Khūrī, *Nafīr Sūriyyah*, 302–303.

2. ***Al-Jinān* (The Gardens)** (1 January 1870-1886)

It was a bi-monthly, political, literary, historical and scientific magazine. It was published in “32 paper pages that were large in size and divided along two vertical columns and the newspaper achieved great reach.”¹ The first edition was published on 1 January 1870 after the newspaper received its publication license from the vali of Syria, Rashīd Pasha, (Damascus and Beirut, 1866 – 1871). The motto was chosen as “*Hob Al-Waṭan min Al-Īmān*” (Love of the homeland is an article of faith). Buṭrus Al-Bustānī handed over the editorship to his eldest son, Salīm (1846-1884), who wrote most of its articles “and featured a serial novel towards the end of every issue.” After Salīm’s death, the editorship was transferred to his brother Najib until the newspaper ceased publication altogether in 1886.²

3. ***Al-Jannah* (The Garden)** (June 11, 1870 - June 1, 1886)

It is a political, commercial and literary newspaper founded by Buṭrus on 11 June 1870 upon the request of his son, Salīm, who was its editor-in-chief. In its first month, it was being issued once a week before the rhythm of the newspaper was adjusted to a bi-weekly (Tuesdays and Fridays) starting in its second month. It was at first printed by *al-Ma‘ārif* printing press “before settling with *Al-Maṭba‘ah Al-Adabiyyah*.”³ When the *Al-Jūnaynah* (Little Garden) newspaper first came out in early February of the following year at a rate of four times a week, *Al-Jūnaynah* constituted together with *al-Jannah* almost one daily newspaper. In 1881, Buṭrus and Salīm agreed with Buṭrus’ son-in-law, Khalīl Sarkīs⁴, owner of *Lisān-ul-Ḥāl* (The Tongue of the Times) newspaper, to place *Al-*

¹ Rustum, *Lūbnān fī ‘Ahd Al-Muṭaṣarrifiyyah*, 288.

² Sayf, *Thalāth Hukamā’*, 33; Dāghir, *Maṣādir Ad-Dirāsāt Al-‘Adabiyyah*, 2:182–183; Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 101. For more information on *Al-Jannah*, refer to Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 104–107.

³ Ṭarazī, *Tārīkh As-ṣaḥāfah Al-‘Arabiyyah*, 2:10.

⁴ Khalīl Sarkīs was born on 22 January 1842 in ‘Abay and passed away in 1915. He received his training in the printing industry and established in 1868 *Al-Ma‘ārif* printing press with Salīm Al-Bustānī. In 1873 he married Louisa, one of Buṭrus Al-Bustānī’s daughters, and in 1875 Sarkīs split from his partnership with Salīm and established *Al-‘Adabiyyah* printing press, *Lisān-ul Ḥāl* newspaper and *Al-Mishkāt* (The Lantern) magazine. He also directed his attention towards “casting letters that were known for their quality and mastery across the five continents.” He published *Ar-Rūnāmah As-Sūriyyah* (Syrian Almanac) in 1868, “which was then the second Arabic almanac in the world.” In 1898 he covered the Emperor of Germany’s visit to both Syria and Palestine through “frequent telegrams, cablegrams and postal messages published in succession in *Lisān-ul Ḥāl* newspaper.” As a result of being diagnosed in 1911 with hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis), Khalīl was forced to retire and rely on his only son Rāmiz Sarkīs to run his businesses. Ṭarazī, *Tārīkh Aṣ-Ṣaḥāfah Al-‘Arabiyyah*, 2:10.

Jinān, *al-Jannah* and *Lisān-ul-Ḥāl* “under one administration and one printing press. However, the editing of each newspaper would remain decentralized under their original owners.” After Salim’s passing on 13 September 1884, “the license was transferred to his brother Najīb (1862–1919),” who continued to publish *Al-Jannah* in conjunction with *Al-Jinān* for the next two years before it was forced to cease operations following increased “press censorship” as a result of the arrest of Midḥat Pasha and the suspension of the Ottoman constitution.¹

4. ***Al-Junaynah* (Little Garden)** (February 2, 1871 - June 1, 1875)

It is a daily political and commercial newspaper edited by Salim Al-Bustānī, who employed the help of his nephew Sūlaymān Al-Bustānī (1856-1925), famed translator of Homer’s *Iliad*. It was issued four times a week and its front page was decorated with headlines of political news covering all the states of the Ottoman Empire alongside international news. The second page carried “cablegram and telegram news from Europe and distant lands and news of the conflict between the Ottoman and the Russian empires.” On the third and fourth pages, the reader would find “financial data and trade news under the trade section of the newspaper, which was as sophisticated and lengthy as financial supplements in our contemporary newspapers.” *Al-Jūnaynah* ceased publication on 1 June 1875, almost four years and four months since its first issue following “an outbreak of the yellow fever in Beirut and some parts of Syria.” “The annual subscription fee on its own was 10 francs and a subscription fee of 17 francs with *Al-Jannah* newspaper and a subscription fee of 33 francs with both *Al-Jannah* newspaper and *Al-Jinān* magazine. The logo was designed by the famous Lebanese sculptor Mīkhā’il Farah.²

We would like to mention briefly the background behind Al-Bustānī’s choice for the title names of his periodicals. To start with, Al-Bustānī chose these titles for his three newspapers as

¹ Dāghir, *Maṣādir Ad-Dirāsah Al-‘Adabiyyah*, 2:184.

² Ṭarazī, *Tārīkh Aṣ-Ṣaḥāfah Al-‘Arabiyyah*, 2:22; Qays, ‘*Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 107–8. We would like to note that Qays had mistakenly on page 107 characterized *Al-Jūnaynah* as having consisted of two pages rather than four pages as it appears from his discussion non the contents of the third and fourth pages, as stated above.

variations on his surname Al-Bustānī (literally gardener). These three titles represent analogues of *Al-Bustānī* (the gardener) in its nominal sense, whereby they fall under the principle of “mūrāʿāt an-nazīr (consideration for rhetorical congruence).” The plural term *Al-jinān* (gardens) represents this “consideration for rhetorical congruence,” as well as its singular form *Al-jannah* (garden) and its diminutive form *Al-Jūnaynah*. These three *nazāʿir* (sing. *nazīr* – congruencies or likes) are, therefore, congruent with *Al-Bustānī* (the gardener) in the plural form *Al-Jinān*, singular form *Al-Jannah* and diminutive *Al-Jūnaynah*.

Al-Bustānī the Lexicographer (1855-1869)

Teacher Buṭrus is considered the godfather of the modern Arabic dictionary. In putting this dictionary together, he relied on some of the most prominent ancient Arabic dictionaries, namely *Al-Qamūs Al-Mūḥīṭ* (The Surrounding Ocean) by Fayrūzʿabādī. However, Al-Bustānī’s dictionary differed from the older dictionaries by at least three elements. The first is that Al-Bustānī’s dictionary was arranged by alphabetical order using the first letter of the base form of a three letter word or the lexical root (*mūjarrad*) while the older dictionaries used the last letter. As for the stretched or augmented form (*mazīd*), the word is thus stripped back to its lexical root and listed under its first letter. As for words in which letters have been rearranged or transposed forming anagrams (*hūrūf maqlūbah*), the word would be searched for under the entry for the original form of the word. By adopting this approach, Al-Bustānī hoped to make it easier for those interested to be able benefit from his dictionary. The second element that Al-Bustānī implemented and distinguished this lexical project is his having collated new terms pertaining to the sciences and the arts, as well as terms used by the common people, and many rules and exceptions. The third and last element is his having utilized evidence from both ancient and modern sources.¹

Al-Bustānī named his dictionary *Mūḥīṭ Al-Mūḥīṭ* (Circumference of the Ocean) as if he had desired for it to be like an “ocean” enveloping the “ocean” of the Arabic language - with all what the word ocean represents in terms of breadth and comprehensiveness. He completed it “across two large volumes published respectively in 1867 and 1869.”² As Al-Bustānī had been working

¹ Qays, *ʿĀthār Al-Mūʿallim Buṭrus*, 144–45.

² Rustum, *Lūbnān fī ʿAhd Al-Muṭaṣarrifiyyah*, 110.

on the dictionary, he noticed that it was going to turn out large in size and vast in its subjects thus discouraging many from making use of it. Therefore, and as he was compiling the dictionary, he worked in tandem on an abridged version entitled *Qūṭr-ūl-Mūḥīṭ* (Diameter of the Ocean) dedicating it to “the Great Khedive Sa‘īd Pasha” (Khedive of Egypt) [...] who had financed the publication of this work.¹ Al-Bustānī spent almost fourteen years from 1855 till 1869 working on *Mūḥīṭ Al-Mūḥīṭ*, for which he received “a prize of 250 Ottoman liras and was awarded the Order of the Majidi of the third class by Sultan Abd-ūl-Āzīz.”²

Shortly after the publication of *Mūḥīṭ Al-Mūḥīṭ*, criticisms began to pour in. The first to express his disapproval of this work was Ahmad Fāris Ash-Shidiāq, whose critique was aggressive and harsh, as he lobbed personal prejudices and stabs his way. Sheikh Ibrāhīm Al-Yāzījī, in turn, challenged some of the contents of the dictionary and its subject entries. Father Anastās Al-Karmalī (1866-1947) participated at a later point in this campaign of objection thus expressing his objections and proposing corrections that he felt would be most fitting.³

Al-Bustānī the Encyclopedist

In this specific field of collating and authoring encyclopedias, Al-Bustānī pioneered the first Arabic encyclopedia embarking on this project after having completed *Mūḥīṭ Al-Mūḥīṭ*. He had promised “towards the end of *Mūḥīṭ Al-Mūḥīṭ* that he would put together a lexicon for the names of famous luminaries. However as he began work on this new project, he decided to expand it into a larger project, which then became the encyclopedia entitled *Dā‘irat Al-Ma‘ārif* (Circle of Knowledge).”⁴

Al-Bustānī defined *Dā‘irat Al-Ma‘ārif* as “a general encyclopedia for every theme and art.” Indeed, this is exactly what it was, an encyclopedia “containing all there was to know of the

¹ Sayf, *Thalāthat Ḥukamā’*, 52.

² Tarazī, *Tārīkh Aṣ-Ṣaḥāfah Al-‘Arabiyyah*, 1:89–90.

³ For more on their criticisms, refer to: Qays, *‘Āthār Al-Mū‘allim Buṭrus*, 146–49; Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-‘Aṣrih*, 85–90.

⁴ Rustum, *Lūbnān fī ‘Ahd Al-Mutaṣarrifiyyah*, 110. On this page, Rustum points to a historical and geographical encyclopedia organized by “alphabetical order” that Salīm Shaḥādah and Salīm Al-Khūrī had agreed together to collate. The first part of the geographical section was published in 1875. For further details, see Rustum, 273.

sciences of the time thus making it a formidable substitute for any large library.”¹ For this purpose, Al-Bustānī set up a special “task force” to aide him, which some of the most famed translators, correspondents and researchers of his time along with his sons Salīm and Najīb and his cousin Sūlaymān Al-Bustānī. Every person who had contributed whether in research or writing had their name credited in this encyclopedia.² There is no doubt that a publication of this kind required huge funding that major institutions could fall short of fulfilling. Al-Bustānī relied on the participation of subscribers to this encyclopedia at a fee of one gold lira per issue in addition to donations from the Egyptian Khedival government, the Ottoman Sultan and the Ottoman vali of Syria.³

Al-Bustānī had published six volumes and was still working on the seventh volume of *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif* before passing away. The seventh volume was completed and published by his son Salim, who managed to also publish an eighth volume before passing away in the prime of his life. His brother Najib took over with the assistance of Sūlaymān Al-Bustānī and the remaining volumes of the encyclopedia continued to be published until the eleventh volume, after which work on this project ceased in 1900 “having not progressed beyond the letter ‘ayn of the Arabic alphabet.”⁴

His Death

As abovementioned, Teacher Buṭrus passed away while he was still working on the seventh volume of *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif*. He died on 1 May 1883 as a result of heart failure “that afforded him very little time”⁵ before it took his life at the age of sixty four and at the height of his success. Shākir Al-Khūrī mentions in his *Majma' Al-Masarrāt* (The Anthology of Delights) that Al-Bustānī died while he was working on the expression “*dāyrah*” (colloquial for *dā'irah*) and

¹ Qays, *Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 156. For more on the many and varied subjects contained in this encyclopedia, refer to Qays and Yūsuf Qūzmā Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li-ʿAṣriḥ*, 98–106. For more on the work plan that was put in place and for more on the stance of contemporary scholars, refer to Khūrī, 106–115.

² Qays, *Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 150–52.

³ Qays, 152. In his book, Sayf mentions that “in 1875 the Egyptian Khedive Ismā'il Pasha paid Teacher Buṭrus five thousand Ottoman gold liras as a first installment in return for a thousand copies of *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif*, a detail that Al-Bustānī had refrained at that point from making known.” Sayf, *Thalāthat Hukamā'*, 52–53.

⁴ Qays, 150. As to the motives behind this encyclopedia and its financing, the sources adopted in its composition and its methodology, and the order of its contents, subjects and proper nouns, refer to Qays, 151–156.

⁵ Bustānī, *Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus Al-Bustānī*, 71.

urged his readers to refer to the expression “*Ad-dā'irah*” (circle) for a thorough review of this term.¹ He was put to rest in a teeming funeral in Beirut attended by “thousands of people, both locals and foreigners,” not to mention the officials and the most prominent of luminaries. He was eulogized by poets and orators and men of science and literature, most notably his friend Van Dyck and newspapers payed homage to his achievements, erudition and manners. He was buried “in the cemetery of the Evangelical Church in Beirut located near Shām Road,”² where his tomb still stands to this day.

The Al-Bustānī Award

Two years after Al-Bustānī's death, and in recognition of his outstanding scholastic contributions, the Oriental Scientific Society of Beirut, of which Al-Bustānī was an honorary member, announced an award in his memory with a monetary value of “three French liras presented each year to the author who would write the best article on Al-Bustānī in a theme proposed by the Society.” For the year 1885, the Society introduced the theme of that year as “*Al-Wasā'il li Tarqiyat Al-ma'ārif fi Sūriyyah*” (The Means Through Which to Promote Knowledge in Syria). But in the end this endeavor never materialized “as a result of the dissolution of the Oriental Scientific Society.”³

The First Centennial Anniversary of His Birth

The first to take heed to the necessity of commemorating the anniversary of Al-Bustānī's passing was Jirjī Nqūlā Bāz, “historian and biographer of the most notable people of the Levant.” He called for this commemoration in an article published in the newspaper *Lisān-ūl-Ḥāl* in late October 1919. Indeed, the commemorative celebration was held “on the evening of Friday 26 December 1919 at the school clubhouse of the American College and included 65 speakers from around the world from writers, poets, journalists to architects lawyers, doctors, and nine female novelists [...] Scholars and novelists of the twentieth century gathered in celebration and observance of the greatest genius of the nineteenth century.”⁴ By this, Al-Bustānī is considered to have been the first scholar in the Levant to have had a commemoration held in his honor.

¹ Al-Khūrī, *Majma' Al-Masarrāt*, 103.

² Qays, ' *Āthār Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus*, 52.

³ Khūrī, *Rajūl Sābiq li- 'Aṣrih*, 118; *Al-Mūqataṭaf*, no. 9 (1885): 561–62; *Al-Jinān*, no. 16 (1885): 163.

⁴ Bustānī, *Al-Mū'allim Buṭrus Al-Bustānī*, 72.