

survival. They see that even the discomfort of a hard life on beloved ground among a more alien, antagonistic foreign population helps maintain the distinctiveness and the unity of their nationality. Hardship may, in fact, sustain group identity better than the very convenient compatibility with the closely related language and civilization of Central Asia. Possessed of strong spiritual resolve, the physical survival of the Crimean Tatar nationality as a group in Crimea as well as throughout Central Asia yet faces an increasingly uncertain future.

Faris es-Sidyak
060057

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01 Temmuz 2021

HASSUN AND SHIDYAQ:
PENCRAFT AND SURVIVAL IN MID-NINETEENTH-
CENTURY ISTANBUL

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RIZQALLAH HASSUN AND AHMAD FARIS AL-SHIDYAQ occupy a place of prominence in the history of nineteenth-century Arab cultural revival, the *nahda*. Less famous than Shidyaq, Hassun is remembered primarily for launching the first private Arabic newspaper, and for some poetry and translations which he published. Shidyaq's name is more familiar: a gifted, creative, and prolific writer and a brilliant linguist, he made a major contribution to Arabic prose as well as to journalism. The biographies of the two men had other features in common. Both were born Christian and brought up in Syria; both were men of the world who traveled extensively throughout the Ottoman Empire and in Europe; and the highly checkered careers of both had significant chapters that took place in Istanbul. Their periods of residence in the Ottoman capital partially overlapped: Hassun came there in the mid-1840s, Shidyaq only in 1859. But for a brief historical moment, following Shidyaq's arrival, their ways intersected—and the encounter was stormy. The cosmopolitan imperial city, a magnet for people of all types at the time, proved too small for these two ambitious members of minority communities who sought, in their respective although similar ways, to survive and prosper.

The story of the highly charged collision between Hassun and Shidyaq is shrouded in mystery, and the evidence for what actually happened is scanty and problematic. Nevertheless, an attempt to reconstruct the affair is rewarding, for the story, even in its incomplete contours, casts light on important aspects of Arab cultural life around the middle of the nineteenth century.

We begin with Rizqallah Hassun, the lesser luminary who, however, played a more interesting role in our account. The record we have on him, sketched early this century by a Lebanese biographer and expanded somewhat by subsequent scholars,¹ leaves quite a few segments in obscurity. But we do have at least a skeleton of the story, as well as some clues to the more poorly documented parts.

The author wishes to express his gratitude to Nasir Basal, Mark Cohen, Moshe Ganner, Sasson Somekh, and Daniel Zisenwine for their help in obtaining some of the sources quoted here; to Sara Ayalon and Zalman Keinan for translating the Russian pieces; and to David Wasserstein for many valuable comments.

¹ Hassun's brief biography was written by 'Isa Iskandar al-Ma'luf. It was published in Jurji Zaydan, *Tarajim mashahir al-sharq fil-qarn al-tasi' ashir* (Cairo, 1907; the edition used here is Beirut: Maktabat al-Hayat, 1975), pp. 172–180; republished in *Al-Muqtataf* (Cairo, March 1910), pp. 224–231, and in Philip di Tarrazi's *Ta'rikh al-sihafa al-'arabiyya*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Al-Matba'a al-Adabiyya, 1913), pp. 105–110. Other authors have also drawn on this text, e.g., Sami al-Kayyali, *Muhadarat 'an al-haraka al-adabiyya fi halab, 1800–1950* (Cairo: Jami'at al-Duwal al-'Arabiyya, 1957), pp. 29–34. An independent, and highly useful, study on Hassun's life and works was published in 1926 by the Russian scholar Ignatii Kratchkovskii, "Rizkallah Hassun (1825–1880), perevodchik basen krylova na arabskii

Cultural horizons: a festschrift in honor of Talat S. Halman = Kültür ufukları:
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