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**Enthusiastic Image.
Strategies of Writing about the Self and the Other
in the Travelogue of Salīm Bustrus (19th c.)**

Summary

Salīm Bustrus, a nineteenth-century Beirut merchant, writer and literary translator, may be considered one of the first Middle Eastern tourists who not only visited large parts of the Eastern Mediterranean along with Southern and Western Europe, but also decided to disseminate his observations and experiences among his compatriots in the Arab World and published a travelogue. The article examines the strategies of representation in Bustrus's work, i.e. discourses of ignorance or innocence *versus* expertise or authority in constructing the image of the author's Self, as well as exoticization and familiarization of the Other. The study reveals that these dialectical strategies of representation were implemented in Bustrus's travel description in order to construct and confirm a predominantly enthusiastic image of Europe and Europeans.

Keywords: Salīm Bustrus, Arabic travel literature, image of the Self and the Other, the Arab World and Europe

There was a significant growth of travel movement from Europe to the Middle East in the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. In the time of Orientalism¹, the travel across the Eastern Mediterranean: Greece, Turkey, Syria and Egypt became a modification and substitution of the instructive and recreational journey across Southern and Western Europe, known in the 17th and 18th centuries as the Grand

¹ The term „Orientalism” refers here only to the fascination with the widely understood East and has no relation to the other meanings of Orientalism proposed by Edward Said; E. Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, New York 1979, *passim*.

Tour. Both destinations were so popular among young European gentlemen, and later ladies as well, that they may now be considered as tourism. Countless travelogues were written and published at these times. Many of these works became classics of travel literature and have been shaping the popular images of the places described on their pages since then².

Simultaneously, the opposite movement, from the Middle East to Europe, was almost non-existent, although there were always some individual Middle Easterners who travelled across Europe on their diplomatic, commercial or educational visits³. Nevertheless, those Middle Eastern travelers and sometimes long-time dwellers in Europe were not tourists, and if they had left some descriptions of their travels, whatever kind those texts might have been, the image of Europe and Europeans sketched on their pages was usually more or less ambiguous⁴. The tourist movement from the Middle East to Europe began in the middle of the 19th century, with Salīm Bustrus, the protagonist of this article, as one of the first Middle Eastern sightseers who visited large parts of the Levant as well as Southern and Western Europe, or at least one of the first tourists from the region who published a travelogue.

Even a preliminary reading of Bustrus's work reveals a dialectic of writing about the Self and the Other concealed in the text. The term "dialectic" is understood here as a coexistence of only ostensibly contradictory strategies of representation that could interweave and overlap each other, i.e. discourses of ignorance or innocence *versus* expertise or authority when constructing the image of the author's Self, as well as exotization *versus* familiarization of the Other. These strategies of representation were implemented in Bustrus's travelogue by means of selected stylistic and rhetorical devices, adequate narrative techniques or assorted subject matter. The following article examines

² Among the most famous travelogues written by Europeans about the Middle East until the first half of the 19th century are: F.R. de Chateaubriand, *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem et de Jérusalem à Paris en allant par la Grèce, et revenant par L'Égypte, la Barbarie et l'Espagne*, Le Normant, Paris 1811; A. de Lamartine, *Souvenirs, impressions, pensées et paysages pendant un voyage en Orient (1832–1833)*, Librairie de Charles Gosselin & Librairie de Furne, Paris 1835.

³ The literature concerning this subject is extensive. The pivotal studies on the earliest Middle Eastern, particularly Arab travelers in Europe include: B. Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York & London 1982; N. Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578–1727*, Columbia University Press, New York 2009; Idem., *In the Land of Christians. Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century*, Routledge, New York & London 2003. After the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt and in the time of the growing influence of the European powers in the entire Middle East, the number of the Arab, Persian or Turkish visitors to Europe increased significantly, but most of them came to Europe as members of educational missions, that were sent by Middle Eastern rulers to learn the secrets of Western progress and development. For the information on the nineteenth-century Arab students in Europe v. J. Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt*, Luzac & CO., London 1939; Abu-Lughod I.A., *Arab Rediscovery of Europe. A Study in Cultural Encounters*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1963; A. Louca, *Voyagers et Écrivains Égyptiennes en France au XIX siècle*, Didier, Paris 1970; R.R. al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris. Account of a Stay in France by an Egyptian Cleric (1826–1831)*, D.L. Newman (tr. and ed.), Saqi Books, London 2011.

⁴ For the prominent example of this ambiguous image of the West in Arabic travel literature of the first half of the 19th century v. R.R. al-Tahtawi, op. cit.

some examples of the aforementioned discourses and their role in creating and confirming a predominantly enthusiastic image of Europe and Europeans sketched in Bustrus's travelogue. It seems to be an important issue for the studies of the nineteenth-century Arabic travel literature, since this gullible enthusiasm distinguishes the work discussed here from the majority of travelogues that preceded it in the Arabic literature.

The author and his travelogue

Salīm Bustrus⁵ (1839, Beirut – 1883, Folkestone) was a member of a rich and influential Christian family of Beirut. Following his ancestors' businesses and passions, he became not only a successful merchant, but also a writer and a literary translator. After living and working in Ottoman Syria and Egypt, he eventually moved and established his international trading house in Britain. In 1855, a mere teenager residing in the Middle East, Bustrus, accompanied by one of his cousins, went on a six-month tour round the Levantine and Egyptian coasts as well as Southern and Western Europe, in order to recuperate from a serious illness⁶ in a more moderate climate. Although a direct reason for Bustrus's travel differed from those of other young Arabs of the 19th century, who visited mainly France and England for strictly educational purposes, his Grand Tour may be not only counted among recreational excursions, but could be also treated as an instructive journey. Visiting Malta, Italy, France, England, Belgium, Prussia, Austria-Hungary, as well as Greek and Turkish shores, from 27th of March till 1st of October⁷, Bustrus could not only relax and enjoy his free time, but also observe Europe and Europeans and study their science and culture. Moreover, as an enthusiast of modernization and westernization, he decided to disseminate his travel experiences among his compatriots in the Arab World.

Bustrus's travel description, titled *An-Nuzha aš-Šahiyya fī ar-Riḥla as-Salīmiyya* ("Pleasant Wander through Salīm's Travel"), was published in Beirut in 1856. Although the text is arranged in a chronological order, in accordance with the travel itinerary,

⁵ The main references for the biographical information about Bustrus are: Y.I. Sarkīs, *Mu'ğam al-Maṭbū'āt al-'Arabiyya wa-al-Mu'arraba*, vol. 1, Maṭba'at al-Taqāfā ad-Dīmiyya, Cairo s.d., column 563; L. Šayḥū, *Al-Ādāb al-'Arabiyya fī al-Qarn at-Tāsi' 'Ašar*, vol. 2, Maṭba'at al-Abā' al-Yasū'iyyīn, Beirut 1910, pp. 113–114; Ğ. Zaydān, *Mašāḥir aš-Šarq fī al-Qarn at-Tāsi' 'Ašar*, vol. 2, Maṭba'at al-Hilāl, Cairo 1922, pp. 145–147 and Q. Wahab, *Al-Muqaddima*, in: S. Bustrus, *An-Nuzha aš-Šahiyya fī ar-Riḥla as-Salīmiyya*, Dār as-Suwaydī li-an-Našr wa-at-Tawzī', Al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya li-ad-Dirāsāt wa-an-Našr, Abu Dhabi & Beirut 2003, pp. 12–13; a short biography of Bustrus is included in: C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur*, Supplement vol. 2, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1938, p. 757; For more detailed information on Arabic and Western references to Bustrus's biography and his travelogue, as well as some preliminary remarks on its content that are elaborated in this article v. J. Musiatewicz, *A Young Lebanese in the Nineteenth-Century European City: Rome, Paris, London, Berlin and Vienna in the Eyes of Salīm Bustrus*, in: *Traditional Orient, Modern Orient. Literary studies*, A. Bednarczyk, M. Kubarek, M. Szatkowski (eds.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2015, pp. 21–36.

⁶ S. Bustrus, *An-Nuzha aš-Šahiyya fī ar-Riḥla as-Salīmiyya*, Beirut 1856, p. 2.

⁷ S. Bustrus, op. cit., pp. 2, 130.

the author did not mention the exact dates of his records. Thus, the composition of the travelogue might be compared to the composition of memoirs, where observations and experiences are summarized. Like most of the nineteenth-century Middle Eastern travel literature, Bustrus's work is mainly descriptive. The obsession with facts and figures and aversion to share too many personal impressions and feelings is easily noticeable in *An-Nuzha*. Therefore, it may be classified as a mixture of a simple logbook and a collection of excerpts from guidebooks⁸. Although it cannot rather be considered as an exciting travel narrative with an extensive storyline and sophisticated means of expression, its content provides an interesting material for literary and cultural interpretation, if the strategies of representation that were used by Bustrus are studied.

Thus speaks a poor servant

As it is believed that travels broaden travelers' minds and widen their horizons, the explicit or implicit references to the process of gaining knowledge and experience may be considered fundamental for the author's Self-description in the majority of travelogues. *An-Nuzha*, where the traveler's formation is expressed through the discourses of ignorance or innocence *versus* expertise or authority, is not an exception. Before studying the exemplary stylistic and rhetorical devices, as well as narrative techniques used and subject matter selected by Bustrus in order to construct a desirable image of the traveler and travelogue writer, some terminological comments may be considered essential. The concept of innocence used in the article is borrowed from Mark Twain's satirical memoir *The Innocents Abroad*, where the nineteenth-century American writer wittily criticized both the contemporary sentimental and pompous travel literature, as well as his travelling companions, for their naivety and ignorance⁹. In relation to ignorance and innocence, the term "authority" is understood here mainly as supplemental to the term "expertise". Thus, it means a quality of someone who not only knows a lot about the subject, but is likewise respected because of this knowledge. The other meaning of authority, as a power and ability to control, may be also applied in some cases studied here. Since the discourses of ignorance or innocence *versus* expertise or authority seem to be the most visible stylistic, rhetorical, narrative, as well as content related strategies of representation in *An-Nuzha* and affecting the second aforementioned dialectic, i.e. exotization and familiarization of the Other, they will be studied here most extensively.

The author of *An-Nuzha* opened his work by the invocation to God, the Creator of the Universe, the Celestial Sphere and Earth, stars and waters¹⁰. Although in the 19th century such apostrophes, usually even more elaborate, were still almost compulsory in many

⁸ Cf. I. Abu-Lughod, op. cit., p. 78; A. Havemann, *A View of the "Other": Berlin in 1855 through the Eyes of Salīm Bustrus*, in: *Les Européens vus par les Libanais à l'époque ottoman*, B. Heyberger, C. Walbinger (eds.), Orient-Institut der DMG Beirut & Ergon Verlag Würzburg, Beirut 2002, p. 116.

⁹ M. Twain, *The Innocents Abroad or the New Pilgrims' Progress*, Hartword & Conn, San Francisco 1869.

¹⁰ S. Bustrus, op. cit., p. 2.

genres of Arabic literature written by Muslims and Christians alike, they should not be perceived here as a mere convention and therefore ignored as a mean of persuasion. By addressing God, Bustrus not only referred to Arabic literary tradition, but also might have figuratively asked for divine inspiration and approval, building the author's prestige on the foundation of God's infinitive knowledge. Immediately after the opening invocation, Bustrus continued his efforts to establish his authority as a traveler and travelogue writer by a firm and peremptory declaration "thus speaks". However, he simultaneously applied a *figura modestiae* and humbly named himself "a poor servant". In this way, probably not deliberately, he announced an ambiguous role that he would be playing in his work: a teenager, visiting Europe for the first time in his life on one hand, and an experienced traveler and travelogue writer on the other. Although the latter role may be seen as intended by Bustrus and therefore predominant in *An-Nuzha*, the former one can be easily read between the lines.

Obsession with numbers

From the very beginning the readers of Bustrus's travelogue recognize that the text is going to be extremely detailed. The accurate and practical data were probably intended to make the author of *An-Nuzha* a specialist in logistics of travel. He provided his readers with precise time references. He mentioned the exact hours of the steamer passing by the subsequent port towns on his way between Beirut and Alexandria¹¹ and frequently wrote about the length of his sojourns in the cities visited. Drawing an example from some popular guidebook authors, he extensively informed his readers on the conditions that one had to meet to enter the pavilions of the World Exposition in Paris¹².

In many passages Bustrus struggled to present himself not only as an experienced travel guide, but also as an expert on the places visited. Descriptions of the cities and monuments that he saw are exceptionally minute in his travelogue, although not always correct. He noted the dimensions of buildings, statutes, streets and squares. The passage about the papal library in Vatican might stand as an example of his inquisitiveness in collecting the material for his work. He specified not only the length of library halls, but also the number of printed volumes and manuscripts in Latin, Greek and Eastern languages that were stored there¹³. Numbers of the inhabitants in the cities on Bustrus's itinerary are also provided in his travelogue, as well as other statistics, which are typical for the nineteenth-century Middle Eastern works about the West and comply with the European "passion for statistics"¹⁴ of the time as well. For instance, although Bustrus was seriously ill during his visit in London and spent most of the time in his hotel room,

¹¹ Ibid., p. 2.

¹² Ibid., pp. 57, 64–65.

¹³ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁴ J. Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World. A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton University Press, Princeton & Oxford 2014, pp. 28–29.

he managed to collect and share with his readers many precise and detailed quantitative information about the capital of England. He noted number of its streets, households, churches, schools, prisons, theatres, department stores, railway stations, even steamers and boats on the River Thames. He characterized London's population by counting tailors, carpenters and shoemakers living and working in the city, as well as provided his readers with some nutrition data, like the number of sheep, cows, goats, fish and other animals eaten yearly by the Londoners¹⁵.

The world explained

Explanation may be seen as another mean of establishing the authority of the traveler and travelogue writer in *An-Nuzha*. Bustrus often, however rather briefly and sometimes even incorrectly, referred to the history of the places visited and monuments seen. He mentioned some names of the founding fathers of cities, palaces, public buildings, like Alexander the Great when describing Alexandria¹⁶. He also frequently seized the opportunities to boast of his erudition. In the passages about the Vatican Museum collections he proved to have some knowledge of the history of European art, when he mentioned the names of two artists whose works were exhibited to visitors there, i.e. Rafael Santi and Michelangelo¹⁷. He did not hesitate to deliver some authoritative judgments, as in the case of the closing paragraph about the modernized city of Alexandria, when he stated: "To sum up, we say, that if this city maintains this level of development in care (...) it will be soon counted among the most beautiful cities of Europe"¹⁸.

Not surprisingly, The Parisian World Exposition was certainly one of the main objectives of Bustrus's travel to Europe. He confessed in his memoirs that the information about it had reached him before and he had wished to take part in it. Thus, he confirmed that he had prepared himself intellectually before the journey¹⁹. After visiting the Expo pavilions, he ascertained his readers, that it was "undoubtedly worth the trip from the remotest countries"²⁰. He firmly believed that everything mankind was able to produce, as well as all fruits of nature and other resources, were exhibited there²¹. As a son of a merchant, he could not help himself admitting with regret that Syria was not participating in the event at all. Being probably aware of the Western fondness for oriental art, he expertly noticed, that some luxurious goods that were manufactured in his homeland might have been interesting from the European point of view²².

¹⁵ S. Bustrus, op. cit., pp. 103–104.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 4

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 35, 37.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 57.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 61.

Bustrus was particularly fascinated by the European order and organization, thus, by explaining their rules, he wanted to educate his readers in this discipline. In Paris, he was amazed by colorful streetscape and traffic management: pavements for pedestrians, unpaved roads for carriages, right-hand traffic regulations and traffic officer supervision²³. He also described in detail many customs and rules observed in galleries, theatres and other public places. The author of *An-Nuzha* was also fond of Europeans in general. He was particularly impressed by the character and behavior of Parisians who appeared to him as kind, friendly, sociable and hospitable²⁴. He noted the quality of care that the veterans residing in the Hôtel des Invalides enjoyed, and gave it as an example of French virtues²⁵.

According to Bustrus, the most praiseworthy aspect of European character, especially French, was people's predilection for science and innovation. He devoted extensive paragraphs of his work to descriptions of inventions, like periscope or telegraph²⁶. In his opinion, the social consequences of technical progress and industrial revolution were astonishing. He was amazed by the lifestyle of Parisian elites, whom he perceived idealistically as people who could spend their lives only on entertainments because of profits from real estate and shares in various companies²⁷. The negative aspects of European life are almost entirely omitted in *An-Nuzha*, and only once Bustrus had the courage to admit some inequalities among the Parisian population²⁸. These mostly stereotypical and in fact extremely naive remarks and explanations reveal how the intended discourse of expertise and authority inevitably turns into or overlaps with the factual innocence and ignorance, so typical for travelogues in general and in particular those written by young people.

One of the most evident examples of this mixture of ignorance and expertise strategies in explanation may be found in Bustrus's passage about the zoological garden in Cairo, where he mentioned some species he had probably never seen before, like rhinoceros. His observation must have been thus amateurish, but still, he used the opportunity to manifest his alleged knowledge. According to Bustrus, rhinoceros resembled a gazelle, when the color of its skin was considered, but when its moves were observed, it might have been compared to a donkey. He remarked the horn between its nostrils, but he also noted the hooves. In the end, he stated that the rhinoceros was a really odd creature, as the horn and the hooves would have never gone hand in hand with each other²⁹.

²³ Ibid., pp. 54–55.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 54.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 71–72.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 74–75, 76–78.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 55–56; cf. R. Wielandt, *Das Bild der Europäer in der moderner arabischen Erzähl- und Theaterliteratur*, Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft & Franz Steiner Verlag, Beirut & Wiesbaden 1980, pp. 100–101.

²⁸ S. Bustrus, op. cit., p. 56.

²⁹ On may ironically notice, that this description refers to a unicorn (Arabic term *waḥīd al-qarn*, used in this passage, applies to rhinoceros and unicorn alike), if Bustrus had had a chance to see this legendary creature in the zoological garden of Cairo; Ibid., pp. 9–10.

The overflow of recurrent magnifying epithets such as: numerous, big, long, wide, spacious, beautiful, wonderful, great, elegant, of great structure and order etc. is also a characteristic feature of Bustrus's travelogue. His admiration for Europe is sometimes expressed in poetry. Enchanted by the cultural and scientific life of Paris and its beauty, he wrote three eulogies in the honor of the city. He composed the eulogies in praise of Schönbrunn Gardens in Vienna and the city of Berlin, as well as Baden-Baden resort in Germany³⁰. Likewise, he sometimes resorted to the passages from classical Arabic poetry and its unquestioned authority among Middle Eastern readers, probably with an intention to confirm his own words. Again, this bombastic writing style is not only typical for many nineteenth-century Middle Eastern travelogues about Europe, but might be also considered as a result of his young age, and proves the innocent face of the traveler as well.

We went..., we saw...

Apart from the predilection for clichés in descriptions or poetry, Bustrus struggled to present himself as extremely objective in his travelogue. He wrote mainly about the facts, predominantly leaving personal impressions and assessments of less value. In this aspect, he presumably imitated or even copied guidebooks. This strategy of description might have lessened the authenticity of his writing, thus he tried to provide some evidence for his truthfulness in the travelogue. His readers are assured that he had really visited the places described by constant presence of the traveler, travelogue writer and narrator in the text.

The traveler-writer-narrator unity established at the beginning of his travelogue is consistently visible, however it may vary in the use of narrative strategies and stylistic devices. As it was mentioned before, he introduced his memoir in the third person singular perspective. There are also several passages written in the first person singular perspective, but in most of the times he used the first person plural. The meaning of the last strategy is ambiguous. It might be considered both as *pluralis maiestatis* or *pluralis modestiae* figure, and could be seen as an application of a literary mannerism. However, it has also some more literal consequences. Readers of *An-Nuzha* may think that Bustrus' experiences, observations and even impressions were totally shared by his companion, who is almost invisible and silent in the text. By that means, Bustrus, as a narrator, might have claimed to possess the entire truth and strengthened his authority. In this aspect, the authority could be also understood as a power.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 57, 85, 102, 108, 120, 122.

How wonderful the Europeans are!

The second dialectic applied by Bustrus in his travelogue - the opposition between discourses of exotization and familiarization of the Other - is a paraphrase of a well known pair of strategies in literature translation, i.e. foreignization and domestication of the text. This opposition was thoroughly analyzed by Lawrence Venuti in his *The Translator's Invisibility. The History of Translation*³¹. According to Venuti, foreignization is a strategy that preserves and even highlights the specifics of the original text by emphasizing the linguistic and cultural differences between the content translated and the language and culture of the translator, as well as the readers of his translation. Domestication is an opposite strategy that reduces the original text to the rules of the language and culture of translation. In this article, the original opposition introduced by Venuti is replaced with two ideas that seem to be more suitable for travel writing understanding.

The concept of "exotization" has already become quite popular in literary and cultural studies, but its meaning remains vague. The present study refers to concise definitions of the exotic-related terms proposed by Andrzej Stoff, who highlighted the relative, shifting and passing nature of the aforementioned ideas which are based on the historical and cultural context. According to Stoff, the exotization is a literary phenomenon that tends to represent places, societies and cultures as distant from the narrator's perspective and aims to fascinate readers³². The term "familiarization" is used in the following passages in place of Venuti's domestication, assuming that travelers never domesticate entirely the places seen and people met, as it would be against the principal aim of travel, that is leaving home and going somewhere, possibly far away, without settling down there. However travelers, particularly tourists, may not want, and usually do not want to meet with the absolute Other, since they consider him or her, consciously or unconsciously, more or less dangerous. They may be curious about something new and different, but they usually look for a novelty and difference that are safe as these novelties and differences share some familiar features. Thus, familiarization may be of two kinds. Firstly, travelers and tourists may look for and focus on something familiar in the Other. Secondly, they may try to reduce any difference between the Self and the Other by explaining it in familiar terms.

Most of the passages in Bustrus's travelogue where Europeans are represented tend to exotize the Other by stating that he is somehow different than the members of the author's community of origin. In Bustrus's travelogue this exotization does not mean that the Other is perceived as inferior. On the contrary, the result of the comparison between the Other and the Self in *An-Nuzha* is usually in favor of the Other. For instance, after learning the secrets of a periscope he states: "How wonderful the Europeans are, if they

³¹ L. Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, Routledge, London 1995, passim.

³² Stoff used the Polish term *egzotyzm* in his work; A. Stoff, *Egzotyka, egzotyzm, egzotyckość. Próba rozgraniczenia pojęć*, in: *Egzotyzm w literaturze*, R. Kuźma (ed.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 1990, s. 7–25, passim.

used their brains to produce such amazing miracles!”³³. As it has been already mentioned, one can hear some silent echoes of the negative side of Other’s image in the passage about the inequalities inside the French society. Bustrus admitted there that many people committed suicides because of the high costs of living in the French capital. In his opinion, it was a phenomenon unheard of in the Middle East, despite the relative poverty there³⁴. Moreover, the poverty in the nineteenth-century Europe manifested itself in a way that might have been perceived by a Middle Easterner as rather surprising. Bustrus noted that the poor inhabitants of Naples did not beg for alms, but asked the passers-by for the equivalent of the price paid for a bottle of alcohol³⁵.

While describing Europe, Bustrus nonetheless did not focus only on the differences. He struggled to find some similarities between the Other and the Self and could have sought to facilitate the understanding of the Other among his readers, but it should be highlighted that mainly in the paragraphs devoted to places, not people. He remarked those tourist attractions that had some oriental origins or traits. In the paragraph dedicated to the Basilica of Saint Paul outside the Walls in Rome, he remarked, that from the Eastern point of view this was the most beautiful church in Rome, although the Westerners thought that it was surpassed by the Saint Peter’s Cathedral³⁶. Describing some fragments of internal decorations in the Roman places of worship, he paid attention to *Salus Populi Romani* icon of Madonna and Child from the Basilica of Saint Mary the Major. His Eastern eye perceived the Byzantine character of its ornamentation, since he admitted that even though its colors were so dark that the contours were hardly visible, the oriental form of the icon was still evident for the visitor³⁷. He also reminded the Arab episodes in the history of Malta and the Arab origin of its language³⁸.

Conclusion

Bustrus travelogue, although relatively superficial and unsophisticated in comparison to many other examples of the nineteenth-century Arabic and Middle Eastern travel literature in general³⁹, may provide the researcher with some interesting and valuable material for literary and cultural studies. The analysis and interpretation of exemplary stylistic and rhetorical devices, narrative techniques and subject matter of *An-Nuzha* proved that the

³³ S. Bustrus, op.cit. pp. 74–75.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

³⁹ With such milestone works of this genre as: R.R. al-Taḥṭāwī, *Ad-Dīwān an-Nafīs fī Īwān Bārīs aw Taḥlīs al-Ibrīz fī Talḥīs Bārīs*, Būlāq 1250 (1834), A.F. al-Šidyāq, *Kitāb ar-Riḥla al-Mawsūma bi-al-Wāsita fī Ma’rifat Aḥwāl al-Maliṭa wa-Kašf al-Muḥabbā ‘an Funūn Ūrubba*, Maṭba‘at ad-Dawla at-Tūnusīyya bi-Ḥaḍāratihā al-Maḥmiyya, 1283 h. (1866); H.D. at-Tūnusī, *Aqḡam al-Masālik fī Ma’rifat Aḥwāl al-Mamālik*, Maṭba‘at ad-Dawla bi-Ḥaḍāratihā Tūnus al-Maḥmiyya, Tūnus 1284h. (1867).

dialectic of writing about the Self and the Other not only exists in the text, but also is fundamental for its imagery. The discourses of ignorance or innocence *versus* expertise or authority, as well as exotization *versus* familiarization were used by Bustrus to create and confirm a predominantly enthusiastic image of Europe and Europeans seen through Middle Eastern eyes. This representation was intended to attract attention of Bustrus's readers, educate them about the European art of living and promote benefits of scientific, technical, political, cultural and moral modernization and westernization of the Middle East, which eventually became a very popular idea among its 19th century elites⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ There is a plethora of studies on Arab and, more broadly speaking, Middle Eastern response, modification and implementation of Western scientific, cultural and philosophical concepts during the 19th century. For the comprehensive analyses of Arab thought in the period of *an-nahḍa*, i.e. revival of Arabic culture and language v. R. El-Enany, *Arab Representations of the Occident. East-West Encounters in Arabic Fiction*, Routledge, London & New York 2006; A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939*, Oxford University Press, London & New York & Toronto, 1962; H. Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years 1875–1914*, Baltimore & London 1970.