

CHAPTER 6

Cosmopolitan Cursing in Late Nineteenth-Century Alexandria

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In 1889, a dispute broke out in an alley in Damanhur, a large town near Alexandria. As Mohammad Effendi Safwat, tax collector for the local government, passed along the alleyway, he met Mohammad Abu 'Agila, a twenty-five-year-old merchant of Tunisian origin, who was coming out of his house. The tax collector seized the encounter (and indeed may have planned it) to serve the Tunisian with a demand for payment of back taxes on his property. The Tunisian replied that, as a foreign subject, he was not required to pay any such tax. Witnesses claimed that he threw the assessment papers to the ground and trampled them. In the course of their argument, one or both of these men uttered an Arabic phrase that was later rendered into French as "*maudit soit ton père*" ("curse your father").

A certain vision of cosmopolitanism – ethereal yet worldly, bohemian yet wealthy – takes the Alexandria of Forster, Cavafy and Durrell as its key site.¹ In this vision, Alexandria is not a Muslim context. Arabs, Muslims and indeed ordinary people feature only as a non-cosmopolitan backdrop that accentuates the exceptional character of the leading players. As this book demonstrates, the cosmopolitanism of Muslim contexts warrants different treatment. This essay recasts Alexandria as a site where a Muslim majority encountered non-Muslim and foreign minorities. Cosmopolitanism – curiosity about boundary crossing underpinned by a universalist ethical project – demands this inclusive frame of reference. This vision of cosmopolitan Alexandria – a society of mundane communication and the management of minor misunderstandings – is a more accurate depiction of the past, and a more realistic basis for thinking about cosmopolitan projects in the present day. The alleyway curse reveals a cosmopolitanism more genuine, if perhaps less glamorous, than the polyglot literature of elite salons.

In a sense, the Tunisian was correct: under the Ottoman–European capitulations agreements, foreign subjects were indeed exempt from most local taxation, as well as prosecution before state courts of the local government.² We know about this altercation because the Egyptian government pressed charges against the Tunisian on behalf of its tax collector. The case was heard by the French consular court in Alexandria, which had extraterritorial jurisdiction over its imperial subjects.³ Over ten pages, the court’s register records a manoeuvre repeated countless times in the late nineteenth-century Muslim world: the transposition of an interpersonal dispute into the language of a modern, Western, state court. Typically, this transposition involved two steps. The first was legal: in this case, the prosecution classified the tax collector’s injured dignity as that of a public official, and the insult to his person became an insult to the authority he served. The second step was linguistic: the language of the alley was translated for the court, and the voices of the actors were isolated and recorded.

This particular case amplified the typical process of transposition. The legal and linguistic meaning of the curse, exchanged by two Arabic-speaking Muslims, was obscure to the three French-speaking Catholic assessors who presided over the trial. Efforts to probe the meaning, intent and justifiability of this insult dominated the hearing, and the tribunal resorted to an unusual source of expertise to inform its deliberations. After being questioned on what he had seen, each witness was asked, in a sort of ethnographic survey, his opinion of the insult itself, and, as a point of law, whether it was a punishable offence.

In interpreting the curse, witnesses insisted on the importance of context. One neighbour, a dyer, testified that the insult “was without importance when exchanged between friends, but if addressed to a stranger triggers a complaint to the Tribunal”. Another dyer said that “curse your father” should not really be considered an insult; while the words could be spoken in anger, they could also be a joke. A guard at the French consular agency in Damanhur agreed: it was a “*plaisanterie*” between friends, but an actionable offence between strangers. A certain Gamal, an unofficial government messenger who was given a bit of food for his work, suggested that “curse your father” was a serious insult when used amongst locals (“*entre habitants du pays*”), and could be considered defamatory. The social and legal meaning of the insult, according to this testimony, depended on the relationship between the cursers; the signified – the curse on the father itself – had little independent force.

Clearly, the Tunisian and the tax collector were not friends, and the curse was no joke. But the court, working to distinguish one Muslim Arab from another, showed further curiosity about the difference between these men who shared language and religion. In what sense were they strangers? How did the altercation reveal lines dividing Arab Muslim society? Naturally enough, the court

sought to impose its own legal and social categories onto the field of insult. Could there have been a religious dimension? A Christian from the town, not present at the incident, when asked his opinion, said that the curse was nothing between friends, but serious if said to a Muslim. What about nationality? A dyer said that the tax collector had replied "curse your father, and your protection". While "protection" seemed a plausible line of difference, only a few witnesses provided support for this idea. This line of questioning proved inconclusive, and the witnesses were unable to satisfy the court's sense that a hidden social code might clarify the offence.

In the end, the judges resorted to the most legible divide, that between officials and the population. They trusted the authority of the local headman, who had been present during the incident. He testified that in the native justice system, this particular phrase normally led to a twenty-franc fine and five days in prison, but was pursued only if there were witnesses and judgement could be assured. As a result, the insult was rarely punished. As far as the court was concerned though, the charge itself turned on yet another distinction, that between officials and ordinary people. The French code had a rich vein of law protecting the dignity of public officials, and the Tunisian was pursued on this basis.⁴ But something was lost in the translation between Egyptian and French officialdom, and the court (citing "continuous jurisprudence") found that the foreign (i.e. non-French) tax collector could not be considered a public servant according to French law.⁵ The charge was thus reduced to a private insult. Because there was no clear consensus among the many witnesses, the court again deferred to the account of the neighbourhood headman, a man "beyond reproach", who said he heard nothing. The Tunisian was acquitted.

Easy communication is a hallmark of the cosmopolitan, but that communication is typically genteel and literary. Cursing is a more puzzling form. It certainly qualifies as communication: without some bond between curser and cursed, words intended as insult are gibberish. As Thomas Conley argues in his recent study of insult, the practice is "at once 'antisocial' and constitutive of social relations".⁶ In a multilingual, multicultural context, this paradox is even more striking: insulting speech drives people apart, but it requires intimate knowledge of the culture and language of the other in order to have this effect. Effective cursing seems to demonstrate exactly the sort of boundary crossing that cosmopolitanism should entail. But while most notions of cosmopolitanism cast a warm and rosy glow, cursing brings a dimmer pallor to social description. Combining the two may clarify our view of each. This paper examines a handful of curses from turn-of-the-century Alexandria. It considers, in turn, the challenge of cosmopolitan communication, the meanings of the curses themselves, and the case of insults against officials, who became the law's ideal cursing

victims. The closing section suggests several connections between this example and broader debates about cosmopolitanism.

The cursing that makes its way into court records was often a public act: insults had to be uttered in a public place to meet the juridical definition of defamation. One morning in 1885, for example, one man stood before another at a café where they were regulars and shouted: "you are a thief, an assassin. I thought you honest, but I was wrong . . . I'm not only going to say it here, I'm going to other places where you're known and tell them what you are." And indeed he did go on to say the same words elsewhere.⁷ Such determined public cursing required a vocabulary comprehensible to most bystanders. Conventional accounts of cosmopolitan Alexandria hold that its lingua franca was French.⁸ These public insults were (probably) uttered in French, but records of non-elite practice show the marginality of Alexandria's francophone elite.⁹ Systems of communication were improvised, and depending on circumstance, Italian, Greek, Arabic, Maltese, English and French could serve as common languages. Because courts often recorded details about language choice, significant data about this inherently social characteristic are available. These data make it clear that while language use did not conform in any strict sense to nationality or citizenship, language formed a natural bond between certain categories of people and a barrier between others. Cursing in the streets reveals the practical polyglossia that was the medium of everyday communication.

Cosmopolitan insults emerged from their linguistic context to assume a place in the shared language of the city. While the Arabic "*maudit soit ton père*" had to be translated for the court, other taunts made their way untranslated into court transcripts. Two Maltese men looking for trouble in the street, for example, used the Greek word *pallikari*, which means tough young man or brave: "Tonight I want to fight. Whatever 'pallikari' is in the Haret el Maltie let him come and fight as I am not afraid of anyone."¹⁰ The resulting assault was tried at the British consular court. Neither the Maltese toughs nor the court's clerk spoke Greek, but the word was reproduced unproblematically in the court record. Many residents of Alexandria were promiscuous language users: Maltese and Italians signed their names in Arabic letters when necessary or convenient; Greeks used Arabic signet seals. To communicate in a mixed society, people used insults of convenience in the same way that they used languages, alphabets and nationalities of convenience.¹¹

On the other hand, despite the cosmopolitan myth of language transparency, the archival record shows that much social experience involved opacity: malentendus, misreadings, misunderstandings and meanings inaccessible to outsiders. When one could not make him or herself understood by another, and when there was a presumption of bad faith, the barrier was both linguistic and moral. The whole field of exchange across languages was sometimes the locus of blanket

animosity. This was the case in an 1886 brawl. In the aftermath, two battered sailors testified that their opponents spoke French to each other and “looked French”. They reported that one of the men had said to them “*sacré bleu* or *sacré bousse* or *sacré boof*”. One of the sailors, confident of his comprehension, told his companion that this phrase meant “bloody bugger”, and the fight was on. (It turned out that the men were not speaking French at all.)¹² Linguistic misunderstanding was an essential element of everyday cosmopolitan communication. Misunderstandings marked the key social boundary around the speech of the inexperienced, those lacking social and linguistic fluency, who produced and received unintended insults.

This was a porous boundary with both openings and barriers. The struggle to understand the curse that opened this paper is just one example of the uneasy translations required to unravel such cases. There are many others. When Sa’id Habib al-Daraghi insulted his father-in-law Hamida ben Khalifah in the courtyard of the building where he kept his shop, he certainly did not do so in French.¹³ The court record reads “*cochon, maquereau, teneur de C.*”, but, as in the story that opens this essay, this was a translation for the benefit of the judges. The same was true of the words *Hundsfoff* (“scoundrel”) and *Schwindler* (“charlatan”), used by a Romanian pharmacist (and French protégé) named Ladislav Lucaci against the Austro-Hungarian medical doctor Pecnik as the men were leaving a medical meeting.¹⁴ Another brawl broke out in a raucous beer shop near the port just before midnight on 31 December 1879. One Maltese witness testified that “. . . there was music – we were dancing – there were girls. I asked one of the girls to dance with me – she said I do not know you – I then asked prisoner [the accused] to tell her to dance with me. He said he was not a Dragoman.” The prisoner, accused of stabbing and shooting, was also Maltese. He took offence at the suggestion that he should act as dragoman (or translator), which is to say that he should facilitate communication on behalf of another. While alcohol and bravado were contributing factors, the position of intermediary itself was also despised in this instance.¹⁵

The linguistic challenge of even rudimentary communication, of which effective cursing is a central example, shows one limit of easily imagined cosmopolitanism. Genuine boundary crossing depends on a more patient social ethic than the actors in these cases displayed. Hospitality is a critical mechanism in cosmopolitan visions, notably Kant’s seminal 1795 essay on perpetual peace.¹⁶ It is prescribed as an international ethic for the treatment of strangers, for instance in the formulation of asylum laws.¹⁷ But defective and failing hospitality in everyday practice, of the sort just seen, rarely receives the attention it warrants. Although this is a failure of implementation rather than principle, it had very real consequences for the misunderstanding majority. This evidence tends to

support more gradualist and tentative cosmopolitan models, which are often criticised for their caution.¹⁸

Many curses were misunderstood, but in what way did the content of the curse matter in the first place? In December of 1882, the Alexandria police charged a local subject with assault and with insulting Islam (*sabb al-diyana al-muhammadiya*).¹⁹ Peaking with inferno, riot, bombardment, invasion and occupation, 1882 was a year of extraordinary tension.²⁰ According to the narrative of a mixed city breaking along sectarian and national lines, this insult appears easy to interpret. In this case, however, the man who insulted Islam bore the unmistakably Muslim name of Muhammad Ramadan. What then was the meaning of his insult? Speech acts (such as cursing), like identity labels (which abound in cosmopolitan settings), possess content and form. When one Muslim insulted the religion of another Muslim, it was clearly the person and not the religion that was being cursed. In this case, the damage to the religion must be considered collateral: one person said to another “curse your religion”, and that religion happened to be the same as the religion of the curser. And yet the offense was classified (here by a native rather than foreign authority) as an injury against Islam itself. It was a curse that (in the eyes of the court) did not depend on context, it was one of the “inherently abusive” phrases that Thomas Conley argues are so vanishingly rare.²¹

It may be helpful here to propose a simple cursing typology. Montagu’s classic history of swearing is typical of the genre: it is a scholarly genealogy of the origins of terms and concepts that populate a swearing lexicon.²² But it is utterly specific to a single tradition, that of the English-language texts that are its source. In this sense, it is of little help in understanding cosmopolitan cursing. Anecdotally, it is clear that most of Alexandria’s insults probed a similar set of moral and social boundaries: parents, women and family honour were key themes, as was religion; in a sense, the terms thief, assassin, pimp, bugger and whore were stock insults. But neither Montagu’s reading of these concepts, nor the finely-shaded distinctions in Muslim jurisprudence on blasphemy are sufficient to describe Alexandria’s curses.²³ Instead, we might best analyse Alexandria’s curses by their effects, which crossed all social and cultural boundaries. In doing so we follow the logic of the legal institutions that recorded them. Broadly speaking, there were three kinds of effect: speech injury (both to individuals, in the form of defamation, and to God, in the form of blasphemy), social injury (to public order, in the form of actual or potential violence incited by speech acts) and civil injury (to the state, by disrespect of its servants).²⁴

This is a rather narrow list in light of present day debates over cursing in Muslim contexts. In his recent work on Islam and religiously injurious speech,

for example, Andrew March argues (against prominent critics of Western secularism) that blasphemy can produce the broadest possible range of injuries: emotional and social (to the believer) and religious (to the belief system itself).²⁵ But the insult to Islam cited above was one of very few such prosecutions in the legal records of Alexandria. More often, even these most weighty words were judged entirely by context, which is to say that their effect superseded their meaning. In 1900, a port policeman named Hassan Al-Sa'aran told an eighteen-year-old French subject named Salomon Brakkha to step away from the edge of the quay. Brakkha's retort, something like "I'll get whoever makes me leave here to leave his religion", was, the court noted, considered an insult according to local customs. Here too it is clear that the insult required translation, both literally and figuratively.²⁶ The court did not consider the case serious, however, and the fine was the desultory sum of five francs. Modern readers might be tempted to classify this conflict between a French-protected Jew and a local Muslim along sectarian lines. But such conclusions must be approached with caution. Many of the most devastating critiques of cosmopolitan (and indeed multicultural) societies hold that they are about signalling, about the form of diversity, but provide limited space for its true realisation.²⁷ In other words, the content is of little importance.

While the bias to misunderstanding discussed earlier might dampen cosmopolitan expectations, the bias to context offers a more hopeful and practical formula. We must consider one further facet of Alexandria's evidence that may shed light on cosmopolitan dilemmas, however: the bias to power. By the turn of the century, the law came to shield a certain class of individuals – officials – from all insults, over and above the religious and national lines that are presumed to mark obvious boundaries in mixed cities.

Two decades after 1882, a French subject named Mahmud Hassan Ghimé was gambling with students outside Alexandria's *École des Frères*. When children who had lost their money started to cry, a police officer named Mustafa 'Allam came over to investigate the commotion. Mahmud called Mustafa a pimp and the son of a dog, then said that all police were pimps and that their religion was cursed ("*maudite*", the records says).²⁸ Again, all evidence suggests that both men were Muslims (and of course the religion of most policemen was Islam), and the blasphemy was not pursued. Instead (as in the opening story), it was officialdom that gave these curses their most actionable force.

Insults to officials have special status in the legal records of Alexandria. The emerging cosmopolitan class of officialdom provided a legible frame for the prosecution of curses. Whereas insults between private individuals depended on a close investigation of the whole context, insults to officials could be classified unilaterally: if the official felt insulted, it was enough. As we saw in the opening

story, translation of this feeling into the legal context was not always successful. Often, however, it was. Edouard Maroque, a French citizen, was arrested when a man he was walking with called a mounted policeman, Sulaiman 'Ali Ghazal, a "blind donkey". The court did not consider this case conclusive: "because it happened at nine o'clock in the evening, it would have been impossible for the policeman, who was crossing a crowded alley at full gallop, to tell who had said something he didn't like". Maroque's mistake came later, at the police station, when he was overheard calling a police captain a "Maltese captain pig".²⁹

This growing category of cursing was compounded by official sensitivity to offence, which only added to the repertory of insults available for use. A Tunisian facing a policeman in Kafr al-Zayat (a town outside of Alexandria) managed to roll all insults into one stream: "*maudit soit ton père, maudit soit ton gouvernement, fils de chien etc.*" ("curse your father, curse your government, son of a cur, etc.").³⁰ Officials themselves could also draw on this stock: a guard mocked a man who was especially officious in challenging a fee increase by calling him "*chef de village*" ("Mr. Biggety-Big").³¹ It will be noticed that none of the insults cited thus far invoked national, ethnic or racial categories (except for the Maltese captain, who was probably most upset to be called "pig"). The boundaries that mattered in vulgar speech were linguistic, spatial, moral and official.

Modern officialdom cut across social and indeed class lines, reshaping and constraining numerous social categories. It was a dispenser of benefits, such as employment. In this role, it could also be a lightning rod for injurious speech. The Maltese Carmelo Psaila, for example, brought a civil dispute with his sister-in-law to court in 1890. He claimed that she had shouted, in public, that he had won his government job by pimping his own daughter to his superiors. In her statement, the sister-in-law corrected him: she had actually said it was his wife. The court awarded him one farthing in damages.³² As Ann Stoler has recently argued, archival sources are at their best in telling these stories of officials, who were their own best constituency.³³ It is not surprising, therefore, that legal reflection on the nature of the insults made a clearer and clearer distinction between the lawmakers and the litigants. In 1911, for example, a policeman named 'Ali Sid Ahmad Musa arrested Yussuf Makluf Huta's eleven-year-old son because he was playing in the street with a wagon belonging to the municipality. The men began to argue, and Yussuf, a French subject, was arrested for insulting a policeman. "The insults (which probably went in both directions) are, as it were, traditional in this country", the court ruled. "Undoubtedly, the accused uttered them almost on instinct, as occurs in all discussions which take place in the street." The altercation was not of great importance, but because "the police would lose all authority if this sort of abuse went completely unsanctioned", the father was sentenced to six days in prison.³⁴ Context again overwhelmed content – the street was a site of routine cursing, produced on instinct, but the

dignity of the forces of order was the primary concern. Officialdom became a means to simplify the complex social transactions that cursing registers, to make the practice legible for prosecution before Alexandria's courts, and to preserve the dignity of the powerful.

The conventional image of cosmopolitan Alexandria fails to describe its historical reality because it requires the conjuring of a faceless, voiceless non-cosmopolitan mainstream of poor Muslim Arab Egyptians who, by definition, cannot be cosmopolitans. They exist, submerged as a sort of human ballast, in order to elevate the cosmopolitan pinnacle. They are the context that creates cosmopolitan Alexandria, from which they are excluded by definition.³⁵ Exclusion plays a similar role in certain key works of modern political theory. The just, liberal state described by John Rawls, for instance, insists resolutely on its boundaries.³⁶ Will Kymlicka's multicultural citizenship is a project restricted to a handful of Western liberal democratic nationalisms.³⁷ Kwame Anthony Appiah's cosmopolitanism is marketed to (and flattering of) elites.³⁸ Clearly, this exclusion is a theoretical rather than empirical shortcoming: an abundant and growing literature (including this book) shows that Muslim and non-Western cosmopolitanisms exist.³⁹ But the challenge is not to expand existing models of cosmopolitanism to include Muslims. The problem is to describe a cosmopolitanism that does not require the non-cosmopolitan.

The historical example treated in this essay is intended to qualify the received image of Alexandria. I also believe that the question of cursing has some relevance to modern-day efforts to grapple with a complex, globalised society. Political theory seeks usable pasts, and it seems to me that the story told here is useful in two ways.

First, this story corresponds to the stakes of modern-day politics. Cosmopolitanism is not merely about cultivating a broad cultural palette. It is about tackling injustice: cosmopolitanism, like cursing itself, is meaningful only when it is dangerous, when it hurts. Craig Calhoun's brilliant "Class Consciousness of Frequent Fliers" provides a glimpse of actually existing cosmopolitanism – elitist, consumerist, neo-liberal, secular – as a *plaisanterie entre amis*.⁴⁰ Echoing David Harvey, he depicts a capitalist cosmopolitan class that rejects communitarianism by celebrating postmodernism and neglecting local particularities.⁴¹ This cosmopolitanism corresponds exactly to Alexandria's conventional image. The remedy, Calhoun argues, is to battle the Western, capitalist cosmopolitan consensus by making room for multiple national and religious solidarities. This is the task of more difficult cosmopolitan projects, which are full of uncertainty and risk. And here it is essential to note that Muslim experiences and Muslim symbols (the veil, human rights, democracy, terror) provide the content for the genuinely dangerous debates that most incisively challenge the present-day

globalised slate of liberatory programmes: feminism, multiculturalism, human rights, cosmopolitanism.⁴² These debates are unresolved, obviously, and their danger is palpable in much Western liberal treatment of Muslims, who have in many ways assumed the suspicious figure of the “rootless cosmopolitan” once assigned to Jews.

The second usable past that everyday cosmopolitanism of the sort presented in this paper might contribute to contemporary theory is the virtue of the banal. I have argued that cosmopolitan cursing exhibited biases to misunderstanding, context and power. The effort made in the opening case to probe the meaning of the insulting words themselves was ultimately fruitless when it came time to issue judgement. In practice, difference was managed through attention to the concerns of the actors involved. A similar concern for the effects rather than the ultimate causes of cosmopolitan conflict might assuage present-day debates. In debates over the Islamic veil in Western states, for example, the insistence on principle has blocked an approach at once less fraught and more profound, which acknowledges that there are relatively few burqas and, on a collective scale, their effect is almost negligible. These historical data support cosmopolitanism theory that privileges local context and is wary of the misunderstandings and the bias to power that results from insistence on pure principle.

NOTES

1. See especially Michael Haag, *Alexandria: City of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) and Philip Mansel, *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).
2. For a brief introduction to the capitulations, see John E. Wansbrough, et al., “Imtiyazat”, in H. A. R. Gibb (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1986). The best in-depth study is Maurits H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls, and Beratlis in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).
3. Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, Fonds Alexandrie: Jugements (hereinafter CADN-AJ) 525/#14 (D’office c. Mohamed Abou Eghela [‘Agila?], 29 March 1890). Partial transcript of testimony in CADN-AJ 553, pp. 103–7.
4. In this case, the charge arose from Article 224 of the Code Pénal of 1810: “L’outrage fait par paroles, gestes ou menaces à tout officier ministériel, ou agent dépositaire de la force publique, dans l’exercice ou à l’occasion de l’exercice de ses fonctions, sera puni d’une amende de seize francs à deux cents francs.”
5. It had become an established principle of French jurisprudence that minor agents of foreign governments were not treated as public officials.
6. Thomas M. Conley, *Toward a Rhetoric of Insult* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. vii.
7. CADN-AJ 520/#25 (Alfred Levi c. Jean Baptiste Esquier, 10 April 1885).
8. The leading studies of Alexandria’s modern history are Robert Ilbert, *Alexandrie, 1830–1930: Histoire d’une Communauté Citadine*, 2 vols. (Le Caire: Institut Français

- d'Archéologie Orientale, 1996) and Michael J. Reimer, *Colonial Bridgehead: Government and Society in Alexandria, 1807–1882* (Cairo: AUC Press, 1997).
9. See Khaled Fahmy, "For Cavafy, with Love and Squalor: Some Critical Notes on the History and Historiography of Modern Alexandria", in Anthony Hirst and Michael Silk (eds), *Alexandria, Real and Imagined* (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 263–80; and Khaled Fahmy, "Towards a Social History of Modern Alexandria", in Anthony Hirst and Michael Silk (eds), *Alexandria, Real and Imagined* (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 281–306. More generally, this is the argument of Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
 10. Foreign Office records, National Archives, London (hereinafter FO) 847/27/2 (Regina vs Francesco Zammit, 1897).
 11. We should read such temporary appropriations cautiously. On nationalities of convenience, see my forthcoming *Nationality Grasped: Identification and Law in Alexandria*.
 12. FO 847/11/11 (Regina vs Andrea Grima and Guglielmo Farrugia, 1886).
 13. CADN-AJ 528/#40 (Héméda ben Califah c. Saïd Habib El Daraghi, 23 August 1895).
 14. CADN-AJ 529/1896/#46 (D'office c. Ladislav Lucaci, 4 December 1896). Note: "Hundsfott" could perhaps be "Hundspott"?
 15. FO 847/2/54 (Regina vs Giuseppe Pace, 1880).
 16. "The law of cosmopolitanism must be restricted to the conditions of universal hospitality." Quoted in Jacques Derrida, "On Cosmopolitanism", in David Held and Garrett Wallace Brown (eds), *The Cosmopolitanism Reader* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p. 419.
 17. For example, Marguerite La Caze, "Not Just Visitors: Cosmopolitanism, Hospitality, and Refugees", *Philosophy Today* 48, 3 (2004), pp. 313–24 and Garrett W. Brown, "The Laws of Hospitality, Asylum Seekers and Cosmopolitan Right", *European Journal of Political Theory* 9, 3 (2010), pp. 308–27.
 18. See, for example, the responses in Şeyla Benhabib, et al., *Another Cosmopolitanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
 19. Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiya [Egyptian National Archives] – Dabtiya Iskandariya (hereinafter DWQ-DI) 738/73. Thanks to Emad Helal for an illuminating discussion of the meaning of insults to religion in this and other cases.
 20. Alexander Schölch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!: The Socio-Political Crisis in Egypt 1878–1882*, St Antony's Middle East monographs no. 14 (London: Ithaca Press for the Middle East Centre St Antony's College Oxford, 1981); Juan Ricardo Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's 'Urabi Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) and Donald Malcolm Reid, "The Urabi Revolution and the British Conquest, 1879–1882", in M. W. Daly (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2: Modern Egypt, From 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 217–38.
 21. Conley, *Toward a Rhetoric of Insult*, pp. 9 and 25.
 22. Ashley Montagu, *The Anatomy of Swearing* (New York: Macmillan, 1967).
 23. Andrew F. March, "Speech and the Sacred: Does the Defense of Free Speech Rest on a Mistake About Religion?", *Political Theory* (2012): pp. 13–4, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1642754.

24. This is an abstraction, based on more technical distinctions. For example, French law offered special categories for insulting language, and one-fifth of all criminal cases before the consular courts of Alexandria between 1880 and 1914 (110 of 558) involved insults. British law defined speech crimes more narrowly (as libel); only five such cases appear in the criminal records during the same period, but there were also thirteen civil suits for libel.
25. March, "Speech and the Sacred" and Talal Asad, et al., *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (Berkeley: Townsend Center for the Humanities and University of California Press, 2009).
26. CADN-AJ 531/34 (D'office c. Salomon Brakkha, 1900). The offending phrase is given as "celui qui me fera partir d'ici, je lui ferai sortir sa religion", which the court said were "paroles considérées comme un outrage, selon les habitudes locales". A year later, Brakkha was jailed for six days for insulting another local policeman, who intervened to stop him hitting a child. CADN-AJ 532/22 (D'office c. Salomon Brakkha).
27. For example, the argument and responses in Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, *Multiculturalism : Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
28. CADN-AJ 533/p9b (Moustapha Allam c. Mahmoud Hassan Ghimé, 1903).
29. He was only fined five francs, however: CADN-AJ 529/1897/#17 (D'office c. Edouard Maroque, 2 April 1897).
30. CADN-AJ 529/1896/#12 (D'office c. Abdel Kader Aly Haikal, 28 March 1896).
31. CADN-AJ 532/p137 (D'office c. Hassan Ahmed Haikal, 10 June 1903).
32. FO 847/20/50 (Carmelo Psaila vs Riccarda Zahra, 1890).
33. Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
34. CADN-AJ 536/p138b (D'office c. Youssef Maklouf Houta, 29 September 1911). "... les injures proférés probablement de part et d'autre, ont dans le pays un caractère pour ainsi dire traditionnel; que l'accusé les a proférés sans doute presque instinctivement, comme il arrive dans toutes les discussions qui ont lieu sur la voie publique . . ."
35. For a detailed exposition of this argument, see Will Hanley, "Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies", *History Compass* 6, 5 (2008), pp. 1346-67.
36. This despite efforts to globalise his model, such as Joseph H. Carens, "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders", *The Review of Politics* 49, 2 (1987), pp. 251-73 and Kok-Chor Tan, *Justice Without Borders: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, and Patriotism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
37. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Will Kymlicka, "Territorial Boundaries: A Liberal Egalitarian Perspective", in David Miller and Sohail H. Hashmi (eds), *Boundaries and Justice: Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 249-75.
38. This, it seems to me, is a great failing of Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, 1st edition, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).
39. See also Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse, *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). For a refreshing approach to cosmopolitan literature, see Deborah Starr, *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt: Culture, Society, and Empire* (London: Routledge, 2008).
40. Craig Calhoun, "The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Toward a Critique

- of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism", *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, 4 (2002), pp. 869–97.
41. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1989).
 42. For instance, Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (London and New York: Verso, 2003); Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Sherene Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008) and Joseph Andoni Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).