

CHAPTER 7

PAPERS FOR GOING, PAPERS FOR STAYING: IDENTIFICATION AND SUBJECT FORMATION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

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Various recipes for state formation converged in the years before World War I. It emerged that the modern state should express its sovereignty through positive law, within well-defined borders, over a well-defined population.¹ Personal identification documents embodied this state formation process: they were portable signs of sovereignty, defining the human boundaries of the state and policing its geographic borders. As various studies of identification have shown, individual identity documents were crucial instruments for the formation of modern subjectivities.² States used documents to render their populations into the new, singular categories of citizen, subject and foreigner. This chapter offers an in-depth examination of the documents that delineated the subjectivities of foreign residents in Egypt at the turn of the twentieth century. At times, these residents relied on papers for residence, generated by censuses, naming practices, public health

statistics, and birth and death records, which served to bind populations to the expanding states in which they lived. At other times, they used paper tokens of state affiliation designed for people traveling from their home states. The distinction between papers for going and papers for staying illustrates the distinction between the municipally constituted citizen and the internationally constituted national, two types of modern legal subjecthood that are often conflated and confused.

The absolute number of identification documents in circulation ballooned in the nineteenth century, as a function of the expansion of the world economy, imperialism, literacy, governmentality and transportation technologies. This expansion peaked during World War I, which most scholars agree entrained a revolution in identification practices.³ The wartime emergency occasioned a dramatic increase of surveillance and monitoring of soldiers, aliens and civilians through personal documents, and these practices were extended and made permanent after the emergency ended. After World War I, expatriates became so common as to require fully bureaucratized routines, which fused the status of travelers and foreign residents. The novelty of this system is especially remarkable in light of the character of the preceding period, roughly since 1860, characterized as an 'open world', a 'passportless regime' of economic liberalism.⁴ Before the middle of the nineteenth century, meanwhile, the technologies of government enumeration were largely insufficient to the task of embracing the whole of their populations. With rare exceptions, identification was a personal undertaking rather than a paper procedure.

This chapter focuses on the foreign resident, a figure that came to prominence in the late nineteenth century.⁵ This figure exercised a form of subjecthood that differed from that of the citizen in his or her home state and from the passport-bearing traveler.⁶ The foreign resident lived away from her or his home state permanently, but continued to exercise its subjecthood, typically through consular channels. The mobility boom of the late nineteenth-century globalization coincided with an expansion of the state's reach, meaning that foreign residents were the object of new administrative procedures.⁷ The nature of identification documents changed, as translatable, mobile national status enforceable over a broad distance became desirable.

The passport has attracted disproportionate attention in the literature on the history of personal identification documents.⁸ Mobile subjects are especially important characters in this era of globalization, and the passport seems their obvious identity document. The passport may also be privileged in analysis due to the life experiences of most members of the academy, for whom border crossing is the dominant occasion for identification documentation. But the passport is only one of many types of identification document in circulation. In many ways, passports are exceptional rather than normative identification documents. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, passports were the preserve of those whose 'papers were in order' thanks to their elite class status.⁹ Mobility did not require them – typically, it happened without documents, even in states (such as Britain and the United States) which enforced relatively strong territorial controls. A well-dressed white traveler did not need a passport. In general, identification documents supported claims that were less self-evident. Those who truly needed passports were those who feared being turned away.

Migrants who did use documents could not rely on passports to certify their identity. As a result, there was surprisingly little overlap between the population that requested foreign residence (in the form of consular registration certificates) and those who required passports. A close reading of documentary practices reveals a distinctive subjecthood reserved for residents abroad. Whereas travelers used passports for territorial access, foreign residents used documents to win access to special privileges in the places where they lived. This figure calls into question the naturalized sense of uniform modern subjecthood with uniform domestic and international rights.

The story of the foreign resident is set, as it must be, in a third place, neither home nor away. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the Eastern Mediterranean emerged as a proving ground for state-based membership regimes. Jurisdictional complexity and the capitulatory exemptions of foreign subjects in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt made identification papers a key medium and measure of subjecthood. Recent scholarship on mobility in the Middle East has established the enduring importance of moving populations for any study of economy, thought, or administration.¹⁰ Even in the early

twentieth century, this work shows, mobility cannot be dismissed as an exception to the rule of settlement. But it is generally argued that the state considered its mobile populations troublesome, and sought to settle them; the state had a unified ideal of subjecthood, and that subject was settled.¹¹ Multiple forms of mobility were at work in this place and time, however. Foreign residents were of a different variety, and were able to hold off these demands, at least for a time.

This study draws on a collection of fifty different identification documents produced between 1860 and 1914. These documents appear in the archival dossiers of a wide range of official authorities operating in the city of Alexandria during this period.¹² This collection reveals the radical diversity of identification practices before universal standards emerged. The documents differ according to content, form, function and issuing institution. The collection includes travel passes, population registration certificates and protection certificates. It also includes employment documents, police forms, certificates from sectarian authorities and private letters of introduction.¹³

In the eyes of issuing authorities, passports and residency permits were not simply two varieties of identification documents. They had different functions, and different status. The functional distinction between papers for mobility and papers for residence is complex, and does not map straightforwardly onto any particular type of document. Identification claims were made in every context, using every type of documentation. Outside of nomadic populations, (re)settlement and not transit was the essential experience of late nineteenth-century mobility.¹⁴ Documents were certainly used to win access to territory, but this function was fleeting. Identification – and migration itself – was more substantially about establishing residence and managing access to local authorities. In this chapter, I will try not to amplify the message of these documents by suggesting that they faithfully recorded the identity of the person they signified. I will consider them as specific bureaucratic maneuvers, meant to achieve particular procedural ends.¹⁵ According to this narrow reading, the distinction between mobile and resident foreigners stands out quite clearly. The chapter will treat these two types of identification documents, and the two types of subjecthood they entrained, one after the other.

Papers for going

Those who traveled with passports did so not to win access to territories (as passport-bearers do today), but to win privilege based on their status. Identification documents eased passage, but were not necessary to it. On arrival in Alexandria, a turn-of-the-century guidebook advised, 'a few letters of recommendation can be very useful if one has no passport, which is never absolutely necessary (*n'est jamais exigé*). The traveler's visit card is always collected at customs.'¹⁶ Passports did not yet have special status in the world of documents; absent a universal regime of identification, it was impossible to require one at the border. In the community of nations, it was considered bad policy to control freedom in this way.¹⁷ Borders were sites of surveillance but not yet exclusion. Often, one 'visit card' was as good as the next; only confirmed undesirables (the diseased, the poor, the recidivist, the mendicant) were excluded.

Before World War I, most passports were single, letter-sized sheets of paper.¹⁸ Often, they were perforated along their left side, where they had been torn from a bureaucrat's ledger. Their face was filled with prescribed fields, corresponding to the specifications of the ledger. This form listed name, profession, birthplace and date, destination, and the names of family members and servants. Some passports listed the evidentiary basis on which they were granted. Most gave a physical description of the bearer, though members of the elite were spared such an intrusion.

In contrast to their faces, which specified a detailed and limited protocol of identification, the backs of passports were unconstrained spaces. Various markings, such as visa stamps, endorsements, and names written in Arabic and Hebrew clarifying the European-language transliteration on the face of the document, traced the practical work of international travel. In fact, it was the ink of visas, more than the paper of passports, that made mobility.

This French passport belonged to 'Aziza Cohen, an importer of curios (*entrepreneur dans les affaires de curiosité*) living in Jerusalem. She was given the passport in Jerusalem in 1873, and it was valid for a single voyage to Algiers. She was not a privileged subject, and

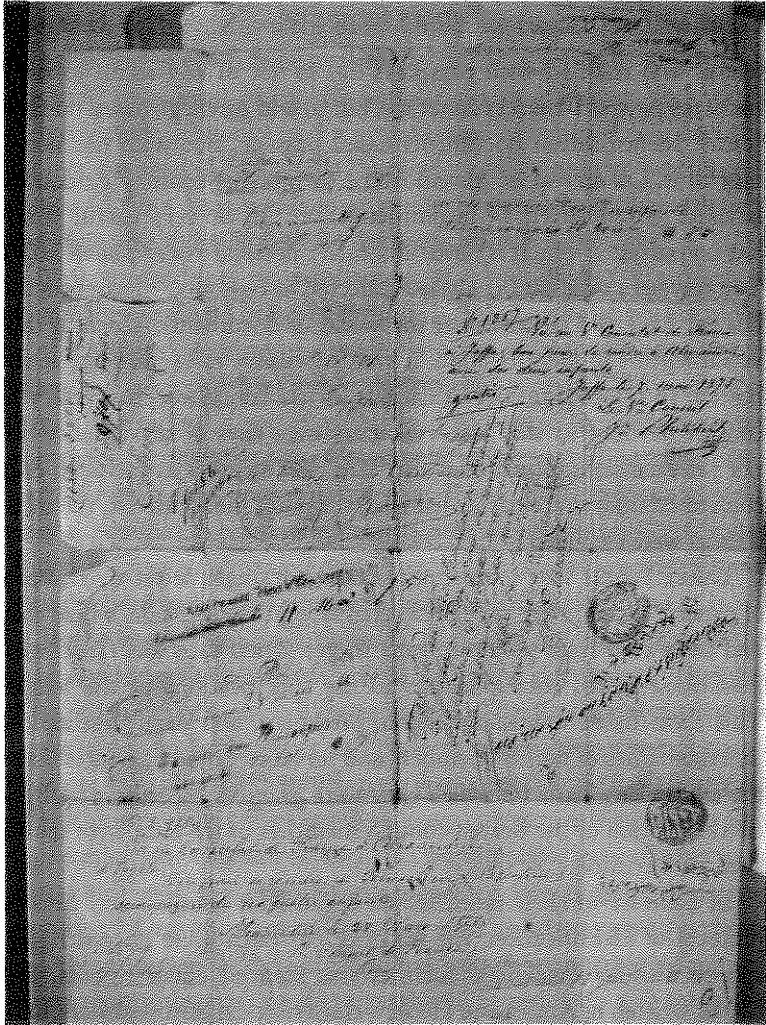


Illustration 7.1 Back of French passport, issued in Jerusalem in 1873⁵⁰

she was given the passport for free. It had only one purpose: to get her back to Algeria, once and for all, freeing French authorities in the Eastern Mediterranean from her requests for charity. As the back of the passport shows, however, she traveled extensively between

Palestine and Egypt in the years that followed on the strength of this passport. Two Ottoman visas from Jaffa gave her permission to travel to Alexandria, and French authorities in Jaffa confirmed the passport's validity for trips to Alexandria in 1875 and 1878. The Alexandria consulate, meanwhile, confirmed its validity at least eight times.

Annotations like those on 'Aziza's passport provided steady work for the consulate, which endorsed visit cards of various kinds, acknowledging arrivals and giving them permission to continue on their way. Backpage visa palimpsests were not restricted to passports; many other identity documents could and did bear the same mobility marks. If these endorsements offered travelers a measure of protection during their local sojourns, they did not correspond to strong protection. When 'Aziza asked the Alexandria consulate for French support in 1880, she was refused, despite many previous endorsements. It was not at all unusual for bearers of French passports to be denied consular registration and the services that went with it.¹⁹ In the eyes of consular officials, travel documents were useful things because they alleviated burdens by sending people away.

In any event, the undocumented could enter Egypt with ease. Outside of certain check points, such as Port Said on the Suez canal, local authorities showed limited interest in making the Ottoman-Egyptian frontier effective in practice.²⁰ The Egyptian archives contain passenger lists of arrivals in Alexandria from Ottoman ports during the 1880s, which give the name, age, and residence of passengers (by boat and arrival date), as well as the date and location where their passports were issued. These large forms were printed in Turkish.²¹ Entries (which were in Arabic), though often incomplete, represented a preliminary step towards border control. By 1895, the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior expected all Egyptian travelers to use passports. A regulation of that year stipulated that every local subject coming from abroad or the Ottoman Empire (*de l'étranger ou des pays ottomans*) who did not show a passport or *permis de passage* was fined twenty piasters (less than a quarter of a pound).²² The same law ended the requirement that locals present a guarantee when traveling, as one system of securitization replaced another.

But the Egyptian border remained a permeable barrier, governed by half measures. Controls were not systematic. It was no difficulty for the banished to re-enter Egypt; the challenge was re-establishing residence. In 1910, a man arrested in Alexandria showed the police a certificate of identity from Quebec, and other documents, giving his name as Jules Desmet. This claim crumbled when one of the policemen recognized him – privileging personal over paper knowledge – as a Frenchman named Odile Gouin. Eventually Gouin admitted that the documents were false. He had procured them in order to return to Egypt, believing that (for unspecified reasons) he was forbidden entry there, or at best ‘unfavorably received under his true name’. The French consular court sent him to two months in prison for this fraud.²³ Judicial and police archives overflow with cases of banished men, returning again and again, passing the frontier without difficulty but running into trouble once resident.

Why, then, would anyone carry a passport? Most European travelers who used passports used a single, permanent document similar to those in use today – issued to an individual, who retained it for years. While Europeans traveled with permanent passports, many of their colonial subjects used transit passports, which specified destinations and were reissued or endorsed at each stage of a journey. Where destination was specified, visa patterns show that citizens could travel to the initial destination indicated on the passport, and there acquire a visa that would take them to yet another place, beyond their original destination. An Algerian traveling on pilgrimage to Mecca might need half a dozen passports, each for a specific leg of the journey. In these cases, the consulate retained the arrival passport, exchanging it for a new one that would carry the traveler to his or her next destination. Most of the passports in consular archives were surrendered by foreigners coming from elsewhere, rather than residents of Alexandria. Destination was usually specified on passports, but travel itineraries in the Mediterranean and Red Seas involved changes in plan and direction, and many passports in consular files were not issued for travel to Alexandria. This finding shows that, alongside those entering Alexandria without papers, many foreigners entered the city with the wrong papers.

Although many foreigners surely traveled without passports, consular archives contain large numbers of them, suggesting that they were a useful and desirable tool for many more. The passport was free to those who could demonstrate poverty, so there was no great material barrier to its use. Few Maltese, Algerians, or Tunisians were able to make a convincing claim to protection by their empires without documentation. For this reason, they were more likely than their Europe-born 'compatriots' to use passports.

British passports were used above all by those with a special need to demonstrate British nationality.²⁴ The consulate produced perhaps one hundred a year. There were about eight thousand British subjects in the city at the turn of the century; this evidence suggests that only 1 per cent of them used a passport. In Malta, on the other hand, even though passports were not legally required until 1899, they were in common use during the 1880s.²⁵ The lax control of borders, even while transportation controls formalized, eroded confidence in mobility identification systems. Yet despite their limited and debased use, passports were surprisingly valuable objects.

Labor migrants, political exiles and pilgrims claimed certain positive rights of territorial access using passports.²⁶ But late nineteenth-century mobility operated in a number of other, more compulsory modes, notably deportation, repatriation, evacuation, conscription and enslavement. Each of these modes employed documents for mobility that were markedly different from passports. Although many passports specified destination, generally they were documents addressed to a constellation of authoritative strangers. Compulsory movement, on the other hand, was accomplished with identification documents that resembled interior memos or shipping receipts, transferring migrants from one known set of hands to another, often under guard (*bi-risq al-rafiq*). These expulsion orders, condemnations, and draft notices spelled out individual identity in a far more purposeful manner than any passport. These mobility documents represented the strong face of state power, but they were uncommon. The most common identity document in the consular archives was the token of soft control to which we now turn: the residence certificate.

Papers for staying

Residents of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire who could establish foreign protection or subjecthood held numerous advantages over local subjects. They were protected from prosecution, conscription and search at the hands of local authorities. They were also exempt from many forms of taxation. In addition to these formal privileges, foreign residents could win informal advantages through their reputation. Foreign subjects had a reputation of impunity, for example, which discouraged locals from confronting them. Often, the same markers of national or class difference that won elites access to territory protected them from disputes. For foreign residents who did not look the part, that protection came in paper form. In many cases, papers presented only once could establish durable social credentials of foreign subjecthood. Sometimes, however, new administrative challenges required documentary reiteration of foreign status. That was the case for al-Haj 'Ali Muhammad bin 'Ali, a foreigner who might have passed as a local but for the residence certificate reproduced below.

This residence certificate was issued in 1894, when 'Ali, an Algerian French subject residing in Egypt, was about fifty years old. Born in Ouled Derradj, near Bou Saada (Algeria), he lived near the Egyptian delta city of Damanhour, where he was a farmer (*cultivateur*). He had come to Egypt from Syria, where he had lived for two decades. He first registered with the French consulate in Alexandria in 1884, in the turbulent early years of the British occupation of Egypt.

This residence certificate is remarkably plain. Like a passport, it is a single, printed sheet bearing the name of the foreign subject, his residence, birthplace and date of birth. It specifies his status (Algerian national), his consular registration number and physical description, and bears the consular seal. Residence certificates were only issued to heads of households. 'Ali's children are named on the face of his certificate. Often, however, the names of these subsidiary subjects were listed on the back.

The distinction between documents for internal use and those for external use is immediately apparent in their physical aspect. 'Ali's residence certificate employs none of the security features

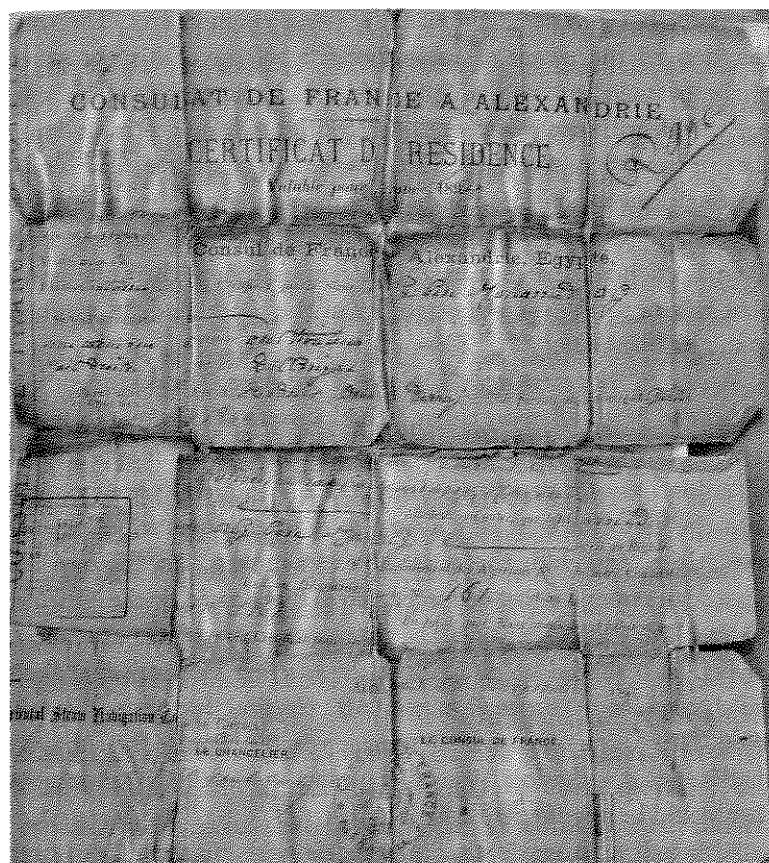


Illustration 7.2 Residence certificate for the year 1894 of
‘Ali Muhammad bin ‘Ali⁵¹

current in nineteenth-century travel documents, such as elaborate engraved borders, complex emblems, or security paper.²⁷ Its simplicity is a mark of its status as a document for local consumption, for residence.²⁸ Migration historian Leo Lucassen makes the useful distinction between the function of documents for individuals and their function for the state.²⁹ Documents for travel deployed much stronger symbolic discourse, in an effort to communicate to strangers. They carried emblems and seals, while their content was

generally less detailed than their local-use counterparts. The traveler derived the power of subjecthood by virtue of his possession of the passport, rather than through the characteristics of his own person. Identification systems were reconfigured and centralized over the nineteenth century; whereas a letter of guarantee represented personal integration into the neighborhood community, a passport signaled impersonal affiliation with the state.³⁰ As we have seen, identification was a secondary function of passports; their main purpose was signaling the respectability of the bearer and the symbols of the issuing state.³¹

'Ali's residence certificate is in a very bad state. The document was folded and unfolded many times, until its paper failed along its quadruple folds and tore into sixteen pieces. At some point, it appears, the folded document met a flame. Later, the singed pieces were mounted onto the cloth backing which now holds them together. There are several problems with the reassembled document. The bottom left piece comes from another document altogether, issued by the 'Oriental Steam Navigation Company'. The two pieces above it are out of place, having been shifted up and filling the gap left by a missing piece, which contained the greater part of 'Ali's physical description (*signalement*). These 'errors' in assembly were acceptable because the authority that issued it – the local French consulate – was the only authority that would be asked to evaluate it.

Although most residents of Alexandria were migrants (both from abroad and from elsewhere in Egypt), migration to Alexandria required travel documents only once, if at all. Winning institutional access upon settlement and establishing a resident's positive rights (such as civil standing) and negative rights (such as conscription exemption) was the hard part. Maintaining access was less challenging. Once established, local, informal status did not often need to be reconfirmed. As a result, most of the thousands of residence documents preserved in consular dossiers are pristine. It is clear that they were issued for foreigners who, having established their residence, did not intend to leave Egypt and did not have to prove their status again and again.

It was unusual for an identity document to be as worn as that of 'Ali. It is possible that he carried it with him, and found occasions to

use it. It seems more likely, however, that it was damaged due to neglect. Although he was supposed to renew his registration annually, the records show that he requested residence certificates only four times: in 1884 (when he first registered), 1886, 1894 and about 1906. These were, it seems, the years in which he found a use for his French subjecthood. Ancillary documents in his registration dossier show that 'Ali registered his large family, including four wives and a dozen children, with the consulate in 1906. For unknown reasons, his administrative situation required this step, and so he dredged up his well-worn certificate, now a dozen years old, and presented it to the consulate. This paper was a key that could unlock the consular registers and transfer his foreign residence to his children.

Like 'Ali, most Algerian and Tunisian subjects registered with the consulate appeared not to find regular use for the certificates to which they were entitled. Although 12 Tunisians and 24 Algerians in my sample renewed their certificates a dozen times or more, 169 Tunisians and 129 Algerians earned a dossier but never renewed the first certificate they received or did not request a certificate in the first place.³² Individuals would claim a certificate one year, wait five, claim another, wait seven, then claim another. This pattern suggests that these individuals found no regular need to confirm their foreign nationality. The pristine condition of rarely used certificates suggests that foreignness was an occasional convenience. The minority who renewed their certificates annually were often those who came into contact with people and officials whom they did not know, to whom they needed to demonstrate their foreignness. Many more foreign subjects lived in a world of familiarity and recognition, however. For these people, it was not necessary to prove their foreignness again and again. Once it had been demonstrated, to tax collectors or military recruiters, for example, it was established and remembered. This social dynamic explains why so many foreigners collected only one or two certificates in the course of their lives.

Consular records contain few reports of the ways that these identity documents were used (other than collection and presentation at the consulate itself). 'Ali used his certificate in a circular way, presenting

it to the institution that had issued it in order to perpetuate his registration. There is also some evidence that residence documents could be used to support claims to estates or pensions.³³ Above all, residence documents functioned as certificates of conformity, for instance through the paying of registration fees. They confirmed the resident's good standing with the consulate, which gave them access to a variety of services. Poor relief (of the sort that 'Aziza requested but did not receive) was chief among them.³⁴

Foreign consulates attempted to limit the power (and proliferation) of registration certificates – and the services that went with them – through annual renewal. As we saw in the case of 'Ali, most residents did not comply. The French consulate issued between one and two hundred of each series (Algerian and Tunisian), and a dozen or more special certificates for non-Maghrebi protégés. France's registration certificates were used by subjects and not by citizens—as was the case with passports, they were favored by those with more tenuous claims for protection.³⁵ As we have seen, during this period residents did not require passports: only two of the four hundred Algerian files I examined showed evidence of Alexandria residents requesting passports for brief trips away from Alexandria.³⁶

The French consulate relabeled its residence document several times after 1880. It was called a 'registration certificate' (*certificat d'inscription*) until 1887–88, when it became a 'residence certificate' (*certificat de résidence*). This name change might be read as a tightening of procedures: whereas it had once been sufficient merely to be registered, it now became necessary also to be settled in Alexandria or its environs. In fact, however, the name change was merely semantic. The physical format and bureaucratic function of the certificate remained the same. In 1904, the document was given yet another name: 'nationality certificate' (*certificat de nationalité*).³⁷ Each of these documents was called a *carte de séjour* in ordinary consular parlance, however.³⁸ All three were printed expressly for the Alexandria consulate, in Tunisian and Algerian versions, in a style and layout that did not change over three decades.

Under the 1873 Order in Council, registration with the British consulate was mandatory for all British subjects. Britons and British

colonial subjects throughout the Ottoman Empire and Egypt used the same form of certificate, which listed name, city, number and date. These certificates were especially common because the British government did not issue passports. The large majority of certificates in Alexandria's British consular archives were issued to non-Briton subjects of empire, suggesting that it was they who found the certificates most useful. Categories of subjecthood were often (but not always) specified. An ambiguous note at the foot of the certificate instructs the bearer to take care of the document 'if he would avoid delay and inconvenience'. Like the French certificates, these cards were strikingly plain and casual in form, particularly considering the advantages that foreign protection could convey to residents of lands governed by the Capitulations. But while this plainness might appear to invite forgery, this was not in fact a serious concern.³⁹ The registration document had no intrinsic force; it was only a key to access consular registration dossiers. For this reason, forgeries were largely futile, while flawed documents (such as 'Ali's) retained their usefulness.

The British consulate issued more than a thousand registration certificates each year, but little more than one hundred passports. While it issued more certificates each year than the French, the British consulate kept (and its archives contain) fewer records of registration. Consular registration, though mandatory, was less expensive and arduous than the French procedure, and was far from universal. When the Foreign Office surveyed consuls regarding this practice in 1887, it found that a good number of subjects avoided registration and more still complained of the annual registration fee of five shillings (from which the poor were excused). In Istanbul, the consul found that three-quarters of the Maltese known to the city's Maltese priest were not registered with the consulate. The Alexandria consul admitted, 'it is difficult to estimate exactly what proportion of British Subjects are not registered'. His efforts to induce registration, especially among the poor, had netted no great increase in numbers. The response of the Smyrna consul was most pointed of all. Rich and poor subjects alike, he wrote, complain about the fee, 'because the Certificate is found to be perfectly useless in the Ottoman Empire... the fact being that the Certificate is not recognized by Turkish Authorities as establishing

the holder's nationality to be British'. British subjects wishing to prove their nationality in an Ottoman court required a special certificate from the consulate and those wishing to travel required a different consular permit (*tezkeere*), both of which carried a fee. 'No wonder then that the Registration Certificate, which confers no advantage whatever on the holder, is regarded as a Capitation Tax, and is consequently unpopular'.⁴⁰

This stark expression of the uselessness of residence certificates helps to explain evidence of non-registration, non-renewal and non-use of the documents. Despite sweeping statutory claims, nationality was an inchoate characteristic of personal identification before World War I. State and consular authorities often demanded it in order to access their facilities, but outside those facilities (and after an initial demonstration of foreign residence) other markers of status were more useful. I have argued elsewhere that Egypt's multiple legal institutions functioned as a fused justice system during this period.⁴¹ Within that system, it was institution-to-institution documents that established identification; personal certificates of identification were ignored.

Nevertheless, in the hierarchy of documentation, residence certificates were superior to passports. Passports were easily obtained, and were a weaker form of identification as a result. A consular historian relates the story of a group of French/British/Russian gypsies in Turkey, who, 'as in so many [cases] where foreign nationality was claimed', held passports that British consular officials believed 'had been through a dozen different hands and were useless as a means of identity or as a guarantee of nationality'.⁴² Generally speaking, officials issued passports more easily and received them more skeptically than any other identity document. The incentive for this liberal treatment is clear: mobility documents worked to externalize administrative burdens. Almost a fifth of Algerians registered with the consulate were merely passing through Alexandria, and required passports rather than registration certificates.⁴³ They moved from port to port on that weaker document. If they did not have their passport stamped at the consulate or turn it in within three years, they lost consular protection.⁴⁴ In issuing a passport to a dubious candidate, a local authority might

reasonably hope never to see him again.⁴⁵ Residence documents, which entailed an ongoing obligation, were another story altogether.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the documentary practices of European subjects resident in Egypt. Although Ottoman and Egyptian identification documents have not attracted much research attention, what little we know suggests a murkier distinction between mobility and residence. Preliminary evidence suggests that the two classic state forms of identification in the late nineteenth century, the *mürur tezkeresi* (internal travel permit) and the *nüfus tezkeresi* (census registration document), were not simply mobility and residence documents. Despite its name, the internal passport was as much a residence document as it was a mobility document.⁴⁶ From the 1820s to the 1870s, Egyptian authorities issued *tezkeres* to those who responded to the census.⁴⁷ These internal passports were a key administrative tool in the decades of conscription and taxation before the British occupation. Ottoman *tezkeres*, too, were about settlement. The back of 1880s Ottoman *tezkeres* featured the fourth article of the *Sicil-i Nüfus Nizamnamesi* (*Regulation for Population Registers*) of 1881.⁴⁸ 'The significance of the Population Certificate was that no one could buy or sell property, appear in court, travel within or outside the Empire or have any dealings with the police or municipal officials without producing the document'. This assertion, featured on the document itself, suggests the non-observance of the rule. It seems that locals were even less likely to carry and use identification than foreigners. It was of little value in everyday life, and state institutions made their own decisions without recourse to personal *tezkeres*.

Whether Ottoman or European, the imperial systems in place by the end of the nineteenth century used law and bureaucracy to distinguish between different categories of human beings. Each great power enforced differences between subjects and citizens in the domestic space of its own metropole and colonies. In places like Egypt, which lay outside of any one imperial power's full

sovereignty, various empires developed consensual systems of population regulation. These systems, which prefigured the emergence of a universal sense of private international law, aimed to process in-between subjects, such as the Algerians and Maltese discussed in this chapter, with as little effort as possible. Residence certificates and passports were useful tools for reluctant consular administrations willing to shoulder their part of the international burden of mobile imperial subjects. Bureaucratic experience with these mobile subjects informed identification procedures that flourished in Europe after World War I, as identity documents became part of life for those residing in their home states. More and more people required paper keys in order to access the state institutions that governed the obligations and privileges of state subjecthood. Local subjects of Egypt were also drawn into this process, as they began to expect their state to dispense services.

This twentieth-century standardization of subjecthood feeds into a certain twenty-first-century logic, according to which identification documents and the persons they represent belong to a fairly uniform genre. The individual legal subject – the person – has become a universal fact, and identification documents derive their status from that individual. Just as humans are all of a type, the documents that attempt to fix their identities are also comparable and commensurate. From this perspective, the historical documents discussed in this chapter are reassuringly straightforward: the data they offer are terse and specific, and generally unburdened by context. This sense of uniformity is enhanced by the materiality of the papers themselves. They were mass-produced objects that varied only slightly from one to the next. They contain standard categories.

For their users, however, these documents were talismans of status and recognition, and they retain that power in the hands of historians. Although we might read them burdened by our sense of their function as a key site of governmentality, we must look carefully for the stories that their individual personalities can reveal. Identification documents are dauntingly numerous and resistant to close reading, and their plain, apparent meaning is a methodological challenge. But the subtle stories

told by these documents can be found. The archives contain more residence documents than travel documents, showing the greater value of residence rights. Travel documents were liberally distributed but of limited strength; residence documents were controlled but could better reproduce themselves. The experiences of travelers and foreign residents in the turn-of-the-century Eastern Mediterranean prefigured new forms of subjecthood for Egyptians and metropolitan European subjects alike. Mobile populations relied on paper technology to make both meager and robust rights claims. Even in the present day, mobile populations are at the forefront of citizenship experimentation.⁴⁹ As in the past, their paper markers of status reflect and create new lines of distinction between state subjects.

Notes

1. See the classic accounts of Eugen Joseph Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976) and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. and extended ed. (London, 1991). For the purposes of this chapter, Anderson's most interesting recent critic is Manu Goswami, 'Rethinking the modular nation form: Towards a sociohistorical conception of nationalism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44:4 (2002), pp.770–99.
2. The major history of identification is an edited collection of considerable range: Jane Caplan and John C. Torpey (eds), *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton NJ, 2001). Other notable contributions include James C. Scott, John Tehranian and Jeremy Mathias, 'The production of legal identities proper to states: The case of the permanent family surname', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44:1 (2002), pp.4–44; Claude Moatti and Wolfgang Kaiser (eds), *Gens de passage en Méditerranée de l'antiquité à l'époque moderne: procédures de contrôle et d'identification* (Paris, 2007); Gérard Noiriel (ed), *L'identification: genèse d'un travail d'état* (Paris, 2007). An excellent bibliography is hosted here: <http://identinet.org.uk/bibliography/>.
3. The clearest statement of this view is John C. Torpey, 'The Great War and the birth of the modern passport system', in Jane Caplan and John C. Torpey (eds), *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton NJ, 2001), pp.256–70.

4. Alan Dowty, *Closed Borders: The Contemporary Assault on Freedom of Movement* (New Haven, 1987), p.54. Quoted in Torpey, 'The Great War and the birth of the modern passport system', p.256; Leo Lucassen, 'A many-headed monster: The evolution of the passport system in the Netherlands and Germany in the long nineteenth century', in Caplan and Torpey, *Documenting Individual Identity*, p.246.
5. Before this time, formally sanctioned foreign residence was rare and tenuous enough to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
6. On the related figure of the emigrant, see Nancy L. Green and François Weil (eds), *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation* (Urbana, 2007).
7. Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York, 2008), chap. 2.
8. Notably, John C. Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* (New York, 2000); Craig Robertson, *The Passport in America: The History of a Document* (New York, 2010); and several essays in Caplan and Torpey, *Documenting Individual Identity*. For the extra-European context, see Radhika Viyas Mongia, 'Race, nationality, mobility: A history of the passport', *Public Culture* 11:3 (1999), pp.527–55; Radhika Singha, 'A "proper passport" for the colony: Border crossing in British India, 1882–1920' (presented at the Colloquium series, Program in Agrarian Studies, Yale, 2006), <http://www.yale.edu/agrarianstudies/papers/16passportill.pdf>.
9. Martin Lloyd, *The Passport: The History of Man's Most Travelled Document* (Stroud, 2003).
10. Resat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle, 2009); Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800–1900* (Berkeley, 2011); Selim Deringil, '"They live in a state of nomadism and savagery": The late Ottoman Empire and the post-colonial debate', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45:2 (2003), pp.311–42. Several works tie Indian Ocean migrations to the Middle East: Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley, 2011); Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley, 2006).
11. Generally, James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, 2009). For the Middle Eastern context, see Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*; Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge, 1999); Deringil, 'Nomadism and Savagery'.

12. I collected these items from various files in the Dār al-Wathā'iq al-Qawmiyya, Cairo (DWQ), the Foreign Office records, National Archives, London (FO), the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN), and National Archives of the United States, College Park, Maryland (USNA).
13. Compare John Torpey's study, which focuses on documents for movement, offering a simple three-way distinction between international passports, internal passports and identity cards: *The Invention of the Passport*, pp.158–67. This rather narrow set of types privileges the role of the state (as does Torpey's study as a whole). A preferable typology for a study of documentary practice appears in Lucassen, 'A many-headed monster', p.247. He distinguishes between eight kinds of documents: travel, work, certificates of nationality, 'identification documents', population registration, military passports, miscellaneous, and (crucially) no identification. He usefully traces shifts in their use in Amsterdam registrations between 1850 and 1905, drawing on a sample of more than two thousand items.
14. Here I differ somewhat with Kasaba's provocative recent study, which sacrifices important distinctions between different modes of mobility in the interest of its (admitted quite convincing) general insistence on the normative nature of mobility in Ottoman history. Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*.
15. Like Bhavani Raman, I find that the authority of the papers consists in the procedures that produce them. It is perhaps a mark of the inferior status of the Egyptian residents I discuss that their papers triggered comparatively little anxiety over procedural forgeries, however. Bhavani Raman, 'The duplicity of paper: Counterfeit, discretion, and bureaucratic authority in early colonial Madras', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54:2 (2012), pp.229–50.
16. Georges Bénédite, *Égypte* (Paris, 1900), p.27.
17. McKeown, *Melancholy Order*.
18. The modern booklet form of passports came into use after World War I. Lloyd, *The Passport*.
19. See, for instance, the dossier of Hadj Abou-Chéé'b ben Abdul-Gélil. The Alexandria consulate gave this man a passport in 1878 for travel to Algeria. Four years later, when he tried to use the document to win registration, he was rejected: 'these documents are insufficient; the claimant must produce authentic documents proving his Algerian identity (*ces pièces sont insuffisantes, l'intéressé doit produire des documents authentiques prouvant son identité d'algerien*)'. CADN-RA 47/1127. CADN-RA 46/1058 tells a similar story: Dimitri Gregoriadis received a passport to travel to France in 1877, but was refused a registration certificate three years later.

20. See Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge, 2013), as well as Matthew Ellis, 'Between Empire and Nation: The Emergence of Egypt's Libyan Borderland, 1841–1911' (Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2012).
21. DWQ Muhāfizat Iskandariyya series, passport volumes.
22. 26 June 1895 legislation in Gouvernement Egyptien, Ministère de l'Intérieur, *Législation administrative et criminelle: recueil des lois et règlements en vigueur intéressant le Ministère de l'intérieur*, vol. 2 (Cairo, 1906).
23. CADN-AJ 536/p57 (d'office c. Jules Odile aka Desmet Souin, 2 July 1910).
24. Foreigners did not need passports to enter Britain until 1905, and before 1915, the government issued passports to Britons only in special circumstances. Torpey, 'The Great War and the birth of the modern passport system', p.258; Mark B. Salter, *Rights of Passage: The Passport in International Relations* (Boulder, 2003), p.26.
25. Passports were obtained quickly and for free, and (according to one historian) were often required on arrival at a port. Charles Archibald Price, *Malta and the Maltese: A Study in Nineteenth Century Migration* (Melbourne, 1954), p.222. He surveys 1826–80.
26. See, for instance, Radhika Singha, 'Passport, ticket, and India-rubber stamp: "The problem of the pauper pilgrim" in colonial India c. 1882–1925', in Ashwini Tambe and Harald Fischer-Tiné (eds), *The Limits of British Colonial Control in South Asia: Spaces of Disorder in the Indian Ocean Region* (New York, 2009), pp.49–83; Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914* (Berkeley, 2010).
27. For a brief discussion of these features, see Andreas Fahrmeir, 'Governments and forgers: passports in nineteenth-century Europe', in Caplan and Torpey, *Documenting Individual Identity*, pp.225–8.
28. Fahrmeir makes a similar observation concerning the simplicity of local papers in early nineteenth century German. *Ibid.*, p.225.
29. Lucassen, 'A many-headed monster', p.237.
30. For an argument for the critical role of impersonal legal and financial instruments, see Timur Kuran, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East* (Princeton NJ, 2011), chap. 12.
31. The work that documents do for the state is not the focus of this study. But in considering the materiality of documents, it is worth noting their flexible, even uncertain, work in symbolizing the state; in this sense, they resemble nationality itself.
32. Those Tunisians who renewed their certificates at all renewed an average of four times, and a median of two. When those who never received or renewed are included, the average drops to 2.15, and the median to one. For Algerians

who renewed, the average was 6.2 and the median four. For all Algerians, the average was 3.5 and the median one.

33. At the end of an letter to the consul asking for the estate of her estranged husband, a British subject wrote: 'PS I should be very obliged if you could let me have my certificate of registration'. FO 847/42/26 (Estate of Francesco Panayotti, 1909).
34. In a global context, poor relief was the leading motive for registration. Lucassen, 'A many-headed monster', p.253.
35. Citizens may have used some sort of identity document, but I found no evidence of this.
36. CADN-RA 49/1229, 50/1288.
37. CADN-RA 47/1107, for example, contains a few of each of these certificates. Nationality had a pointed meaning in the context of the French Empire. Those who received this certificate were not French citizens (who had no need of such a document), but French nationals, a term reserved for colonial subjects. In his comprehensive history of French nationality, Patrick Weil asserts that these *certificats de nationalité* were only used after World War II (*How to Be French: Nationality in the Making Since 1789* [Durham NC, 2008], pp.245–7). Here as elsewhere, the metropole was last to introduce technologies of rule developed in the colonies.
38. The certificates themselves were called *cartes de séjour* during the 1860s. See an example in CADN-RA 46/1017.
39. This in contrast to the situation described in Raman, 'The duplicity of paper.'
40. FO 78/4115, 'Respecting the working of the compulsory registration of British Subjects in the Ottoman Dominions' (1887–8).
41. Will Hanley, 'The 1876–83 reform and its implementation: Many institutions or one?', in Khaled Fahmy and Amr Shalakany (eds), *New Approaches to Modern Egyptian Legal History* (Cairo, forthcoming).
42. D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls Since 1825* (London, 1971), pp.137–8.
43. Only a handful of Tunisians asked for passports. This is probably because French affiliation was a new and unfamiliar procedure.
44. See bilingual notice on back of passport in CADN-RA 46/1005.
45. Often the authority also paid his (one-way!) passage.
46. In this it resembles the internal passports of tsarist Russia. Charles Steinwedel, 'Making social groups, one person at a time: The identification of individuals by estate, religious confession, and ethnicity in late Imperial Russia', in Caplan and Torpey, *Documenting Individual Identity*, pp.67–82.

47. Kenneth Cuno and Michael J. Reimer, 'The census registers of nineteenth-century Egypt: A new source for social historians', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 24:2 (1997), p.198.
48. Servet Mutlu, 'Late Ottoman population and its ethnic distribution', *Nüfusbilim Dergisi/Turkish Journal of Population Studies* 25 (2003), p.6.
49. Craig Calhoun, 'The class consciousness of frequent travelers: Toward a critique of actually existing cosmopolitanism', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:4 (2002), pp.869-97.
50. CADN-RA 46/1054.
51. CADN-RA 48/1167.