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## **Félix Boutros – Life, Works and His Contribution to Urdu Language and Literature\*\***

### **I**

The wave of European Nations' invasion of South-Asian subcontinent started in the sixteenth century and the Portuguese were the first to hoist their flag on the western shores of India. Soon, French, Dutch and the English followed in their footsteps in the guise of trading companies, and then a long period of sanguinary wars commenced among them for gaining political hegemony over India. Eventually, the English became successful and in the beginning of the nineteenth century took the administrative reins of the government, still headed nominally by the Mughal Emperor. After establishing political stability, the East India Company turned its attention to other aspects of the local life, for instance, the social and educational system, and took some initial steps to make Western learning popular among the natives. In this process of accelerating the pace of uplifting the mental and intellectual potentialities of the indigenous people, many learned personalities of other European countries participated, without having any colonial and imperial interest, though they were serving in different capacities in the British government. The number of such eminent persons was small, but the contribution made by these scholars, educationists and linguists in their respective fields is unforgettable. In this array of reputed literati, there were many of French descent, who, for certain reasons, migrated to England or went straight to India. Among them, many

distinguished scholars, linguists, missionaries, travellers and militarists (particularly in the Punjab and Mysore States)<sup>1</sup> made valuable contributions to the historical and cultural milieu of the Muslim India. Belonging to this group of French savants and Indologists, Félix Boutros embarked for India in the beginning of the nineteenth century on a private visit and stayed for some years, first in Bengal and then in northern India.

Very little is known about his life and the time he spent in India. Most of the French, English and Urdu biographical sources and the historians of the Oriental studies in France provide very scanty information about his life.<sup>2</sup> Even his friend and eminent contemporary French orientalist, Garcin de Tassy (1794-1878)<sup>3</sup>, has very briefly remarked about him in his *Histoire*<sup>4</sup> and in the *Lectures*<sup>5</sup>, delivered annually regarding the progress of Urdu language and literature. In this study, an attempt has been made to amass the scattered material about Boutros' life and works and also to emphasize the role he has played in removing the deficiencies of the Urdu language as a vehicle of transmitting the Western learning in it, which was at that time commonly considered as a language of poetry or hyperbolic prose styles. Most of this material is unpublished and has been culled and jotted down from records, largely in the form of educational correspondence and consultations which were kept by the Board of Control in its series namely "Board's Collections" and now housed in the section of India Office and Oriental in the British Library (London).<sup>6</sup>

## II

Despite the paucity of biographical material about Boutros, a few remarks, though brief and scattered in the voluminous educational records of the period, help us to draw a picture of his life and works which he completed during his stay in different regions of India. As stated by Garcin de Tassy, in one of his annual lectures, Boutros was born probably in

1806, in Maine,<sup>7</sup> a city of North-West Central France. Some cultural and literary historians of pre-Mutiny India, like Gail Minault, are of the opinion that Boutros' name suggests that he was an Arab Christian from either Egypt or the Levant who had been educated in France or he was by birth a Lebanese,<sup>8</sup> or Coptic but all these are mere conjectures, devoid of any factual authenticity.

Garcin de Tassy further mentions that one of Boutros' close relatives was residing in India, possibly in a remote part of Bengal, and he came to India to meet him in 1824 when he was still in his youth.<sup>9</sup> Various circumstances did not allow him to go back to France and he intended to settle here permanently. Deeply interested in European literature, he also acquired a workable knowledge of the oriental languages, especially the Urdu language in which he could easily write and converse. Unfortunately, these literary and linguistic attainments could not help him in getting a suitable job and he had to adopt other professions for his livelihood. In the records of the East India Company, we first find his name in 1833 as an indigo planter in Gundwarrah factory, situated in Purnea, a city about 263 miles to the north of Calcutta.<sup>10</sup> He remained in this profession up to 1835. As he mentioned himself in an important personal document that due to the cordial relationship with Mr. Dent, an influential member of the Court of Directors, he was placed in the Opium Department of Bengal.<sup>11</sup> In 1840, we again come across his name in the list of Bengal Civil Servants as the officiating Assistant to the Director in the Thuggee Department at Chuppra, with a monthly salary of 200 rupees.<sup>12</sup> In another contemporary source of Bengal Establishment, he is referred to as a trader who was doing his business in Monghyr.<sup>13</sup> According to Garcin de Tassy, he adopted the teaching profession in 1834,<sup>14</sup> but all the educational reports of the General Committee of Public Instruction of the Bengal Presidency are completely silent in this regard.

Before 1841, there was no Principal of Delhi College and both its Oriental and English departments were under the Head Master. In 1837, it was proposed that the serving Head Master should be promoted to the post of principalship, but an influential member of the Local Committee disagreed. A few years later, in one of the usual meetings of General Committee of Public Instruction (1840), it was finally decided to have a Principal. Then James Thomason, Secretary to the Government,<sup>15</sup> visited Delhi and examined the Delhi College. He found it necessary to make considerable changes and also endorsed the proposal of the concerned Committee for appointing the Principal. Soon the post was advertised. Boutros was one of the candidates. Ultimately, the members of the General Committee of Public Instruction (Calcutta) unanimously decided to select Boutros as the first Principal of the Delhi College, with this remark:

We are of the opinion, after a careful examination of the different candidates, that Mr. Boutros, at present a Deputy Collector in Behar, possesses the character and acquirements necessary for our purpose; by his intimate knowledge of European Literature and Science, together with a competent knowledge of the Oriental languages.<sup>16</sup>

Soon, the Committee's nomination of Boutros was approved by the Governor-General in Council and he was appointed on 10th February 1841 as the first Principal of Delhi College "to instruct the senior classes of the [English Institution] in literature and science, and to act as Secretary to the Local Committee [of Public Instruction]."<sup>17</sup>

For about four years (1841-1845), Boutros performed his duties as the Principal of Delhi College and in this period he incessantly strived to strengthen its academic traditions and initiated many schemes for enriching Urdu language and literature. His historic role in improving the teaching standards of the College and uplifting the level of scholarship will be discussed later, but here one can only say that within a short time he established the College on such firm footing that it

became an integral part of the literary and cultural life of Muslim India and set an example for the next generations to follow the policies, aimed at imparting western learning among the natives.

Constant hardwork for carrying out his new educational plan and the increasing burden of his multi-faceted responsibilities resulted in impairing Boutros' health. In 1844, Dr. A. Ross, his medical adviser and a member of the Local Committee of Education, diagnosed that he had strong symptoms of a softening of the brain – a mortal disease and one of the most dreadful maladies the human nature is subject to. His deteriorating health condition forced him to resign from the post of principalship and go back to France. The high-ranking officers and the representatives of local intelligentsia were not willing to lose this most talented and indefatigable person but they reluctantly accepted his resignation with the condition that after two years he could rejoin the College.

An official note on Boutros' resignation is as follows:

Mr. Boutros' health having unfortunately failed, has been obliged to resign his appointment as Principal of Delhi College for the purpose of proceeding to Europe. In making application to this effect, Mr. Boutros signified his intention of returning to India after the lapse of two years, and requested that he might then be considered as having a fair claim to an appointment of the same as that which he was about to vacate. He was deeply concerned that his illness was about to deprive the Government, for a time, of his tried and valuable services; and that his claim to re-employment would not be considered prejudiced by his present enforced absence, supposing, as was hoped, he should be able to return within the anticipated period.<sup>18</sup>

Amidst the warm farewell celebrations, organized for paying homage to his meritorious services in disseminating western knowledge in local schools and colleges, Boutros left India and the principalship of the Delhi College was conferred

on Dr. Alois Sprenger (1813-1893), an Austrian orientalist, on 19th March 1845. Two years after Boutros' departure (1847), James Thomason, wrote a letter to H. H. Wilson (1786-1860), an eminent British Sanskritist, with this remark:

Good masters are our great want. Mr. Middleton, Dr. Ballantyne at Benares are invaluable. Delhi has not been so far... since it lost Mr. Boutros.<sup>19</sup>

After reaching France, Boutros resided in Angers (rue de Trémur) his home town, on the Maine near the junction with the Loire, North-West-Central France. Suitable climate of the city made him rather healthy for a short time. Meanwhile, his old friend Sir James Thomason, offered him an appointment as Principal of a new College, he intended to have at Ajmer, but he declined due to his rapidly decaying health. As reported by Garcin de Tassy, he married the daughter of a magistrate of this city and before Boutros' death in 1864, a son was born who according to the expectations of his compatriot, would follow the footsteps of his father but he didn't.<sup>20</sup>

### III

Boutros was well-versed in oriental languages, particularly those taught in the *madrassas* or spoken by the Indian Muslims, but his academic and scholarly interest in Urdu has been implicitly displayed in his various schemes which he introduced in the Delhi College in order to make this language compatible with the requirements of the modern age. His linguistic skills and encompassing knowledge of the cultural heritage of Muslim India arrayed him in the comity of outstanding French orientalists, but he concentrated more on the studies, closely linked with his profession before he took charge as the Principal of Delhi College, or devoted to such topics which could be useful for the students. His books were published from Calcutta and Delhi and these are hardly available both in European or Indian libraries. Even Garcin de

Tassy had to struggle hard to get them. A list of his publications is as under:

1. *Principles of Legislation from Bentham and Dumont*. Calcutta: Serampore Press, 1842, pp. 419.

An elementary work on the subject, was compiled from the writings of Bentham and Dumont, with “some illustrations and technicalities, of no great interest to the general reader, have been left out, for the purpose not only of reducing the bulk of the work, but also of adapting it to the capacity of every young man of ordinary intelligence, and making it fit to be put, as a school book, into the hands of the higher pupils of our Indian schools and colleges.”<sup>21</sup> A translation into Urdu is under preparation.” (preface, p. ii)

2. *Principles of Public Revenue*, with a short abstract of the Revenue Laws in the Bengal Presidency. Serampore: Serampore Press, 1844, pp. vi+ 166+6. MS. NOTES. 8° Interleaved.<sup>22</sup>

The book was written for the Anglo-Indians and the natives who were almost ignorant of the principles of Public Revenue which governed the conduct of their rulers in the domestic matters of the land revenue as in their foreign political relations. The writer intended to remove these deficiencies and provided the practical information about the crude and indigested mass of the Revenue Regulations to the people engaged in business. Marshman’s *Revenue Regulations* and R. D. Mangles’ articles, published in *Edinburgh Review* (July 1840 and January 1841) were the basic sources of this publication.

A footnote of its Preface: “A translation of this work into Hindustany will be immediately prepared, and will complete the series of elementary Anglo-Indian Law Books translated by the native teachers of the Delhi College. It will be useful as a supplement to the



translation of the Elements of Political Economy which has already been printed at Delhi.” (p. iii)

3. *Principles of the Law of Nations*, with numerous illustrations from Modern History. Calcutta: Serampore Press, 1844, pp. 346.

This book comprises two parts: one on the Rights of Nations which regulate their relations in time of peace and the other concerns with relations of belligerent nations with each other. Both parts have been divided into sub-sections. In the introduction, the author has dismissed the general principles and produced the historical illustrations as an appendix.<sup>23</sup>

These books were translated into Urdu by Pandit Ram Kishan, a teacher of Delhi College, under the supervision of Boutros and they were published from the Vernacular Translation Society.<sup>24</sup>

4. *An Inquiry into the System of Education*, most likely to be generally popular and beneficial in Behar and the Upper Provinces. Calcutta: Serampore Press, 1842, pp. 32.

In this treatise, the author opposes to teach Arabic and Sanskrit languages in Indian schools. He is of the opinion that the major classical works of Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and English must be translated into Urdu for educating Indian students. Boutros criticises the educational policy of the English who tended to make their language as the only medium of instruction.<sup>25</sup>

### DELHI COLLEGE<sup>26</sup>

In a circular of 12th September 1823, General Committee of Public Instruction (Calcutta) directed its Local Committee in Delhi to provide information about the actual condition of education in each district. Mr. John Henry Taylor, Secretary of the Local Agency of Delhi, responded and in his letter to H.H. Wilson (dated 16th November, 1824) he presented a very

deplorable situation prevailing in the educational institutions, particularly the *Madrassa Ghāzī-ud-Din Khan*, an edifice of great beauty and celebrity that had been established in 1792. The General Committee took immediate action and authorized the Local Committee to take control of this *madrassa*. In 1825 Taylor, its first Secretary and Superintendent, with a staff of three Muslim teachers, started teaching Islamic sciences to forty-nine stipendiary students.

In 1827, with the increase of the governmental funds the English classes were also started. Now the *madrassa* of Ghāzī-ud-Din Khan began to be called Delhi College, with an oriental section (the *madrassa*), where Arabic and Persian grammar, literature, and other Islamic subjects were taught, and an Anglo-Vernacular section (or Institution), where Western subjects were taught.

In 1829, the Prime Minister of the King of Oudh, Navvāb I‘timād-ud-Daula (d. 1831), donated a handsome amount of one lakh and seventy thousand rupees as an endowment to the oriental section of the College.

By the mid 1830s, the debate between orientalists and Anglicists within the British Indian administration called not only for the “revival and improvement of literature [presumably oriental] and the encouragement of the learned natives of India” but also for “the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences [presumably western] among the inhabitants of the British territories in India”. This wrangle was intensified by Lord Macaulay’s *Minute* (1835) in which further support for oriental education was firmly rejected, but despite all this antagonism, the orientalists never became disappointed and continuously endeavoured to promote the oriental institution in India where both influential schools of thought were accommodated and provided a platform for reconciling the oriental and western learning.

In 1837, it was suggested by the higher authorities to have a Principal of Delhi College. The President of the General Committee of Public Instruction proposed that “the Committee

should procure a Principal for both Institutions [Delhi College and English Institution], who will instruct the senior classes in Literature and Science, and will devote his whole time to the duties of his office. There is no person at present connected with the Institution qualified to fill this office . . . . I propose, whenever a Principal is appointed, that he shall, in addition to instructing the senior classes in Literature and Science, be required to carry out the duties of Secretary to the Local Committee [of Public Instruction]”.

Prior to this proposal, the head of the Delhi College was designated as the Superintendent or Head Master instead of Principal, and J. H. Taylor had been associated in this capacity with the College from its inception. This longest-serving member of the College was born in India of a native woman, therefore he called himself “East Indian.” He served as an officer in the Peshwa’s Brigade of Marhattās but was pensioned off. Besides the headship of the College, he held two appointments under the Government: Assistant Collector of Land Revenue in Delhi Division and Settlement Officer. These professional activities did not allow him to pay more attention to the College. Furthermore, influential representatives of the local nobility, like Navvāb Hāmīd ‘Alī Khan, son-in-law of the College’s donor and a member of the Local Committee, wanted to remove him for his actions that were damaging for the promotion of oriental learning.

In the process of administrative reshuffling of the College, J. H. Taylor was reprimanded and replaced by Boutros who also belonged to the Customs and Revenue Department. His period of principalship was of only four years but in this short span of time, he laid the foundations so firmly that the College became the pivot of the intellectual life of Northern India and it, directly and indirectly, played a vital role in generating a “Delhi Renaissance.”

Boutros, from his own experience, was fully conscious of the significance of Urdu as the *lingua franca* of India and also knew its shortcomings, which hindered it from becoming the

medium of instruction in transmitting Western sciences to the natives. In order to remove these deficiencies, he launched a valuable project of translating Western books, largely on scientific subjects, into Urdu. The main features of his Plan are given here:

The remarkable aspect of Boutros' initiatives, taken immediately after having the charge of principalship, was that Urdu was for the first time given the status of the medium of instruction in the Oriental Department of the College. But soon he realised that there was a want of good class-books in that language – not a want of elementary Readers, and of treatises on the Elements of Grammar, Geography and Arithmetic, but a want of class – books of a higher kind, corresponding to those studied by the most advanced students of the English Department. He, therefore, resolved immediately to commence the work of translation. This plan of translation was very significant for enabling Urdu to become a suitable vehicle for imparting scientific subjects. This historic plan is summarised here and a few significant excerpts from his *Minute* are given as follows:<sup>27</sup>

Having now been for three months incharge of the Delhi English and Oriental Colleges, I beg leave to submit some remarks on the state of instruction in both institutions, and the arrangements which appear best calculated to improve it. I will besides add some notes relative to the Urdu language, the translations we require, and the best mode of getting made.

Then he mentioned in detail the measures he took for uplifting the teaching standard of the College. He informs:

I am gradually introducing the habit of learning lesson at home, and the 5 hours of study at the College will be 5 hours of actual teaching by the Master, and that teaching is not wearisome to the pupils in consequence of the variety of subjects (Science, Poetry, History) which it daily embraces. I have also modified the plan of instructing the lower Class, regularized the study of the Urdu language,

and prepared a plan for teaching accounts... It is my intention to give a course of Lectures to the higher pupils on the Principles of Moral Jurisprudence, Political Economy, and Law . . . . .

With the view of ascertaining how far our Professors of Arabic, Persian and Sanscrit were qualified to introduce some European Scientific information into their daily lessons, I put various questions in writing relating to Arithmetic, Geometry, Natural Philosophy, Geography and History . . . .

The want of scientific knowledge in the Moulvees [teachers of Oriental Department] will necessitate some special arrangement for the teaching of Sciences at the College . . . . This, if there were not besides strong reasons for it, would also point to the necessity of separating the teaching of Sciences from that of Oriental Philology or Literature . . . .

. . . . Urdu should be the medium of imparting a knowledge of the sciences to the pupils of our Oriental Madrassas. Let the Students of those institutions learn the Elements of Modern European Science in their Vernacular language, and they become more familiar with the learned language they are studying, will look into it for its scientific treasures if it has any, and will be the more able from their previous scientific training to appreciate them.

The reasons for adopting the Urdu language as a medium of scientific education in the *madrassas*, of the Western Provinces were briefly these, as enunciated by Boutros:

- 1) Urdu is the Vernacular language from Rajmahal upwards.
- 2) No really scientific Moulvees or Pundits are to be had in this part of the country.
- 3) If otherwise it would still be better not to add the difficulties of a foreign language to those inseparable from the study of the sciences.
- 4) The separation here adverted to is exactly similar to what takes place in Europe where

although the Greek and Latin languages are very exclusively cultivated, it would be thought preposterous to teach Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, etc. in either of those two classical tongues.

- 5) The teaching of European Science in our Oriental Madrassas through the medium of Urdu and by means of Lectures brought up in our English Colleges will be a direct and important step towards the end which the General Committee have always proposed to themselves, viz. teaching some natives English, that these having through that language acquired valuable knowledge, may communicate it to their countrymen through their native tongue.
- 6) And lastly. That the valuable information thus avowedly conveyed from European stores, and by means of our own pupils of the English Colleges, between whom and ourselves there is an increasing community of feeling, will give to the Students of the Madrassa an idea of the value of the knowledge contained in the English language, induce some to turn their thoughts to it from the comparatively unprofitable Arabic, Persian, or Sanscrit, and impress them with better feelings towards us than their exclusive Oriental education is calculated to do. . .

One difficulty in the way of following the above plan is the want of Urdu Scientific books.

[Then Boutros enumerates the details about the translation work, commenced in collaboration with the teachers of the English College and the senior students of Delhi College and then lists the completed, in preparation and recommended works for Urdu translation].

The Native Teachers and three of Senior Pupils have each their daily task. The Moulvees and Pundits of the Madrassa have agreed with very good grace to

enrich the Urdu literature with translations from the learned Oriental languages . . . . None of them has shown the slightest appearance of an objection to the teaching of European sciences through the medium of the Urdu language.

[At the end of the list, Boutros mentions about Urdu dictionary and remarks]

I place this last although it is urgently required, but it could be made much more complete after the above translations have been effected than before. However, the addition which the Urdu language must receive in the course of those translations might be reserved for an appendix and a regular Urdu Dictionary giving to meaning of the words in Urdu might be prepared in the meantime.

[Boutros informs that about 80 to 90 English books on different scientific subjects alongwith some authentic histories would be published within the next three to four years and the competent teachers and senior pupils of the College in Agra, Benares, Calcutta, Bareilly, Patna and Allahabad would co-operate in this undertaking].

### Scientific Terms

With reference to proposed translations one important remark remains to be made, and that is how the scientific words are to be translated. On this I submit the following remarks which may perhaps be useful in drawing attention to the subject.

- i) Whenever a scientific word has no equivalent in Urdu and expresses a simple idea as sodium, potassium, chlorine, etc., there is apparently no objection to its being transferred bodily from the English into the vernacular language.
- ii) If the scientific word expressing a simple idea have an equivalent in Urdu, the latter

- must be used of course as Loha for Iron, Gunduck for Sulphur, etc.
- iii) If the word be a compound one and the two original words be English and have neither of them equivalents in Urdu, the word must be transferred bodily into the Vernacular language as Hydrochlorine, for instance, the words Hydrogen and Chlorine having no equivalent in Urdu.
  - iv) If the word be a compound one and has no equivalent in Urdu, but be made from words which singly have Urdu equivalents, the latter may be used in conjunction with each other or some other equivalent translation made, as Parallelogram, *Mutwazee kutron Wasath*. Parallelepiped, *Mutwazeeturfen Jesm*. Chronology, *Ilm Zeman* or *Tavareck*.
  - v) When the rule or the following cannot conveniently be adhered to the foreign word should be transferred to Urdu as Hydrogen, Nitrogen etc.
  - vi) If the compound word be formed from two single words, one of which has an equivalent in Urdu and the other not, the Urdu compound one must be made of the English and Urdu single words as Hydrosulfuric *Hydro Gunduckee*, and etc.
  - vii) The word mono, di, proto, epi, peri, hypo, poly, so very frequent in compound words of Greek origin may be admitted in the composition of Urdu words, that is, with Urdu roots if necessary, to avoid what would otherwise be awkward and inconvenient compounds, (when introducing new compound words into the European language it is usual to take each of the roots from the same language only, but this is a fanciful rule apparently of no importance). It



is difficult to perceive in the abstract the superiority of the word Chronology over those of tempology or timology, which odd as they may appear would be more convenient than the classical word to assist the memory of a Frenchman or, an Englishman, but classically educated, in recollecting the meaning attached to them.

- viii) The words Order, Class, Genus and Species, although having in some respect equivalents in Urdu might be however transferred into that language, because the Urdu equivalents are synonyms of each other, and would constantly lead to a very objectionable confusion in distinctions highly important in the study of Natural History.
- ix) The names of the Natural families of plants are derived each from one of the most remarkable individuals of the family, or some of its common properties: a similar rule should of course be followed in Urdu unless it should be found more convenient and advantageous that the distinctive names of each family should be drawn from some of its special and distinctive characters.
- x) In general the Translators need not endeavour to translate literally word for word. It is the spirit, the meaning of every sentence which it is important to transfer from one language to the other, however difficult the construction or expression of the sentence may be.

The above rules might be, I believe if approved of and circulated, prevent any very great discrepancies in the Translators. When I speak of a word having as equivalent in Urdu I mean, that some word similar to it in meaning is well known among the middle and educated classes of the Native Community. If it was necessary for an equivalent to a scientific word not

found in our Oriental Dictionaries, to refer to a learned Pundit or Moulvee, it is obvious it would be better to adopt the English word which if equally unknown to the Urdu language would have at least the advantage of being known to the Translator who might thus proceed in his translation without any Moulvee's or Pundit's assistance. As all, or nearly all, the science which is to be infused into Urdu must come from the English language, it is next to impossible, even if it were desirable to prevent the introduction of many English words into it.

In the above of course are meant such words as are names of things and express simple ideas, or words formed from them, and not substantives and objectives, daily made from each other according to the well known Arabic Forms.

[Boutros opined that the books must be cheap so that the poor and common labourers could buy them. Therefore, it is necessary to publish books of general interest and in this way try to compensate the scientific books which had very limited number of buyers].

1st. The native teachers and some of the Senior pupils of the English Department, on the invitation of the Principal or in communication with that officer, undertake to translate into Oordoo [Urdu] a certain English work whether printed or in manuscript. They have hitherto in general been told, that if their translations were good they would, as soon as possible, be printed, and from 6 to 12 annas reward per printed page (according to the difficulty of the task and the quality of the translation) would be paid to them. Previous to the translation it is revised either by the Head Master or the Principal in the presence of the translator, or of some other competent native teacher, during leisure hours. This done the work is made over to the printer, and some

- competent person (generally the translator himself) requested to revise the proofs.
- 2nd. The same method, *mutati mutandis* as described above, is followed for translations from Oriental languages, except that they are not submitted to the revision of the Principal or Head Master, but in general to what of some Moulvee or Pundit of the College, as the case may require.
- 3rd. Hitherto all the translations prepared in the Delhi College were paid for by the Principal and, printed at his own risk, the price of the Urdu School Books being made as much as possible to cover both the expense of printing and that of translation. But now the Society for the promotion of knowledge, through the medium of vernacular translations, proposes to pay (at least in part) the translators out of its own funds and to sell the books at rates very little above the mere expense of printing them, that is from 12 annas to about 1 Rupee 2 annas per one hundred large octavo pages, *small* books being charged a little more in proportion than books of a larger size.
- 4th. Of the translations of School Books hitherto printed (lithographed) for the use of the Delhi College and other Educational Establishments, one hundred copies were struck off. Most of those books in the Mudressa; the teachers noting in the course of their lessons all errors, obscure passages etc. which in their opinion required correction. These proposed corrections have been since shewn to the Head Master or Principal and approved or modified. These corrections have been, or will be made in the second Edition, and as each successive Edition will be submitted to a similar

process, it may be expected that the translation will become in the end free from all errors of any importance if it be not already so.

- 5th. A good Oordoo [Urdu] translation of an English School book being once made and printed, it is used in the Mudressa exactly as the original work is used in the English Department. The course of study, of which the translation from an English work is the text book, has in some instances been superintended by a Moulvee himself not previously acquainted with the particular science to which the book required, and which he had to study at the same time he taught it. Such teaching must necessarily be imperfect, but the duty of instructing the pupils of the Mudressa in European science has since been entrusted to two young men who have received an English education, and are better qualified than Moulvees for the purpose alluded to any English Master having a good colloquial knowledge of Oordoo [Urdu] may teach in that language with a good text book both English and Oordoo [Urdu] with nearly as much facility and efficiency as he could in English. For this he has only to read the Oordoo [Urdu] translation to his pupils, or have it read by one of them; as he has the English work in his hands, he will easily understand the translation, and after a very short practice can find no material difficulty in giving in Oordoo [Urdu] all the verbal explanations which may be necessary.
- 6th. The pupils of the Oriental Department can learn European Science only through the medium of the vernacular language; but the English pupils are instructed so as to be able

to understand, explain, or teach both in English and Oordoo [Urdu] and every Sanscrit pupil in the Mudressa is also made to study Oordoo [Urdu]; instruction in *Hindee* might apparently be limited to indigenous schools.

- 7th. The work in the accompanying list might almost immediately, so far as the Standard of instruction reached by the pupils in the Government Schools and Colleges will permit, be introduced into all the Institutions alluded to.

The great merit of this Plan was that it furnished the means of translating a large number of books in a comparatively short time. No one has ever ventured to-day that the translations were models as regards elegance of style. Such was not aimed at, such could scarcely be attained at first, certainly not by the method employed. By this method books were published on a large scale. The great object aimed at, was to supply the article abundantly, speedily and cheaply. It was chiefly scientific treatises that were translated, in which the sense is of more importance than the style.

Soon after Boutros' labours commenced, a "Society for Promotion of Useful Knowledge"<sup>28</sup> through the medium of the vernacular languages" was formed in Delhi. The Plan which Boutros, as the first Secretary of this Vernacular Translation Society,<sup>29</sup> had set on foot, was taken up and patronized by this Society. Translations continued to be made by the native teachers and senior pupils of the College, who received some remuneration for the work.

The Prospectus of the Society will give a clear idea of the objects which led to its organization, and the means of which it was proposed to accomplish them:

- 1) The object of the Society will be to get the most celebrated Works in the English, Sanscrit, Arabic and Persian languages translated into the chief vernacular

languages of the Bengal Presidency, Urdu, Bengali and Hindi, and generally in the first instance to have a complete set of good Vernacular School Books.

- 2) It is not expected that the first vernacular translation will attain a very high standard of perfection, but it is confidently hoped the vernacular languages will be rapidly improved by the systematic attempt to patronize their use for literary and scientific purposes.
- 3) Whenever a translation is intelligible and tolerably correct, and it is likely to be useful, it will be patronized by the Society (so far as its means will permit) though below the standard of attainable perfection. As comparatively few copies will be printed, a translation will be improved in the successive editions of it which may be called for, or it will be given up as soon as the first editions are disposed of, if a better translation be available.
- 4) Useful original works in the vernacular languages and manuscript translations from English, Arabic, or Sanscrit standard works, when approved of, will be purchased, at the rate from 6 Annas to one Rupee (according to their comparative value and difficulty of preparing them) per royal octavo page of twenty lines to each lithographed page. Translations from Persian, or from one of the Vernaculars into the other, will be purchased at one half of the above rates.
- 5) Where a translation is purchased under the preceding rate, the copyright will belong to the Society, unless otherwise specially provided for.
- 6) The above rule (5) will not apply to original works in the vernacular languages, or to the

vernacular translation of an original work presented within three years after the printing of that work.

- 7) The Managing Committee of the Society will decide on the comparative usefulness of translations presented to it, and will employ its first funds in the printing of the works which may appear most urgently required.
- 8) The Society proposes generally to purchase at first, for the sake of printing them, such works only as will not when printed contain more than about 400 or 500 octavo pages.
- 9) The Society will sell its books as cheap as possible, part of the expense of translation (the whole in some instances) being generally borne by the subscribed fund.

This Plan was supported by a large body of the British functionaries in the North West Provinces, in whose minds observation and experience had created a strong conviction of the necessity of using a vernacular lever for raising the intellectual condition of the people. It had also been honoured with the warm patronage of the Native chiefs and nobility in those Provinces, who were to a certain extent the patrons of Oriental learning in their respective spheres of influence. A subscription was raised of 14,437 Rs. (approximately 12 lacs of the present time) by their combined efforts, of which the sum of 8,735 Rs. or rather more than one half was contributed by the Native Rajahs, nobles, and men of influence. A portion of this sum was extended in the preparation and translation of works likely to be instructive and attractive to the Natives in the higher and middle classes of society, and in carrying them through the Press.<sup>30</sup>

### **Boutros and Urdu Journalism**

The first Urdu newspaper appeared in mid 1830s, under the editorship of Maulavī Muhammad Bāqir (d. 1857), a

staunch *shī'a* writer who remained closely attached with the College affairs. With the installation of the litho press in Delhi, the printing industry gained speed and many journals began to appear from different cities of Northern India. In this early formative period of Urdu journalism, the newspapers were devoting more space to the political happenings of India and abroad, combined with the personal likes or dislikes of their proprietors. As the Principal of Delhi College, Boutros was the first person who realized the effectiveness of this media organ and thought of using it for the promotion of his educational and translation plans. In one of his unpublished "Minutes" of 1843-44 (op. cit.), he proposed to have a 'Hindustani' (Urdu) weekly periodical of four quarto pages and it would be sent to all the public officers who received "Agra Government Gazette" and several copies to the schools and colleges of Northern India. The periodical was named "Tālib-ʿilmon kā Akhbār" (Newspaper for Students) and it contained the news, translations of important editorials from Anglo-Indian papers or translations from English periodicals of articles or parts of articles of any peculiar interest to India and the original articles on the various subjects, taught in Delhi College. In his opinion this periodical would combine many advantages. For instance, it would:

- i) cost very little to Government,
- ii) convey great deal of useful information to public officers,
- iii) in some measures, be a check on, and a model for common native newspapers, and
- iv) in some degree, be for the Oriental pupils a substitute for the English periodical.

Unluckily, this periodical did not come out, probably due to Boutros' health problems or his other teaching and administrative responsibilities, but his successor, Dr. Aloys Sprenger, with the support of senior staff members like Master Ramchandra (1821–1880), took up this proposal and started publishing three journals namely *Qirān-us Sā'dain*, *Muhibb-i*



*Hind* and *Favā'id-un-Nāzirīn* on the same lines that were chalked out by Boutros in his 'Minute'. These periodicals gave a new impetus and direction to Urdu journalism and its credit should go to Boutros.

### Boutros and Urdu Literature

Boutros' knowledge of European literature helped him to be selected as the Principal of Delhi College. With this literary background, he took keen interest in contemporary Urdu literature and his personal contacts with some renowned scholars and writers of the College and outside expanded his literary horizon. His critical or informative writings about Urdu literature are not extant, except a part of his unpublished report of 1st July, 1842, referring to some works of Urdu poets which were highly popular among the natives, and some of which had not been either printed or lithographed. He further mentioned the poetical collections of Mīr, Saudā, Mīr Dard and Nāsikh – the highest classical authorities of this language. According to him, Mammūn and Momin “are still alive, and the former was not long ago Principal Sudder Ameen of Ajmere. He is nearly blind and has been pensioned by Govt. in consequence. Momin Khan is in the pay of Padshah, and so is another poet who writes under the name of Zouk<sup>31</sup> and whose official employ is said to be to correct the verses of His Majesty. Zouk and Momin Khan receive a salary of 60 rupees per mensem.”<sup>32</sup> At the end of this remark, Boutros describes a biography of Urdu poets in Persian entitled *Gulshan-i Bekhār* by Nawwāb Mustafā Khan (Delhi, 1837), containing 650 poets, “which would seem to indicate that the editor cannot have been very particular in his selection”. Boutros sent a manuscript of this work (dated 1835) to Garcin de Tassy who utilized it for a comprehensive study of the collections of Urdu poets (*tazkirās*).<sup>33</sup>

Boutros encouraged many promising teachers of the College and literary figures of the metropolis and under his aegis they completed their studies relating to literature and lexicography. Most of such writers have paid rich tribute to Boutros for the completion of their works. Among these authors, the names of Imām Bakhsh Sahbā'ī<sup>34</sup> (d. 1857) and Master Ramchandra, both senior teachers of Delhi College, can be mentioned. Garcin de Tassy, in his *Histoire*, has referred to some books which were written under the patronage of Boutros.

Boutros was also one of the close friends and informants of Garcin de Tassy. Others were Dr. Peterkin, N. Bland, C. Tarral, K. Kempson and Mr. Taylor, Charles d'Ochoa. Garcin never visited India, therefore, he had to contact persons like Boutros who could provide the required information for his *Histoire* and annual lectures.<sup>35</sup> In one of his letters (dated 19th December, 1841) written to Garcin de Tassy, Boutros described the importance of the Urdu language, its official status and its growing popularity throughout India. He has also discussed the primary aims and objectives of his plan of translating books into Urdu.<sup>36</sup>

Garcin de Tassy translated in French certain portions of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's topographical study of Delhi under the title *Āsār-us Sanādīd* and in its explanatory footnotes the translator has reproduced the historical and architectural information about the different monuments of the Mughal capital that was sent by Boutros. It is evident from these notes that Boutros had a vast knowledge about the historical and cultural aspects of Delhi's life.<sup>37</sup>

### Shī'a Classes

During Boutros' period of principalship, the Oriental Department of Delhi College was divided into two separate systems of instruction; one for the *sunni* students and the other for *shī'a* pupils. It was done after strong protest by Nawwāb

Hāmid ‘Alī Khan, a son-in-law of its donor (Navvāb I‘temād-ud-Dawlāh) and a member of the Local Committee, who claimed that the interest yielded by the donation (one lakh and seventy thousand rupees), had been used against what the donor desired, who was also of *shī‘a* persuasion and intended the money to be used only for the education of *shī‘as* of Delhi. The Government disagreed with him because the dispersion of money in this way might create sectarian disputes that would spoil the College’s peaceful environment. In spite of official and public opposition, this bifurcation took place and a new post of the First *shī‘a* teacher was created and Qārī Jā‘far ‘Alī of Jārcha, a *shī‘a* scholar and a nominee of Navvāb Hāmid ‘Alī Khan, was appointed. This was the first example in the educational history of the Subcontinent for instructing the students on a sectarian basis.<sup>38</sup>

#### IV

A Memorial of Boutros was addressed to the Court of Directors (20th Feb. 1856), complaining of the conduct of Dr. Aloys Sprenger in failing to fulfill a pecuniary engagement into which they had entered on the occasion of Boutros’ relinquishment of the office of Principal of the Delhi College.

Boutros detailed his ‘Claim’ against Dr. Sprenger (dated 13th October 1855, from Angers, France) that is still available in the Record Department of Board’s Collections.<sup>39</sup> Besides, in other official records under Bengal Despatches and Consultations many letters were exchanged among the higher officers and the claimant (Boutros) and the defender (Dr. Sprenger). The basic facts of this official correspondence have been stated here briefly.

After having been for some years Principal of the Delhi College, Boutros’ health completely failed him, and he was compelled to leave India. Under the orders of the Government he was at liberty to apply for leave on medical certificate and go to the Cape of Good Hope or to the Hills drawing one half

of his allowances as Principal. But his medical adviser, Dr. A. Ross, also a member of the Local Committee of Public Instruction, strongly recommended that he should go to Europe. This could not be done without resigning his appointment and he hesitated much about it. Finally, he applied to the Lieutenant-Governor, James Thomason, to know whether he would allow him to make with his successor such an arrangement as had been permitted under the sanction of the Governor-General in Council in the case of Sutherland, Principal of the Hughly College. Boutros mentioned the name of a gentleman whom he knew only from reputation and who, he supposed, would be glad to succeed him, at the same time that his superior knowledge of the Arabic language and his talents might render his services very useful at Delhi. The Lieutenant-Governor approved of the gentleman for the duties of Principal, but he required that the precise terms of the initial arrangement should first be communicated to him. This was done. The terms were 200 Rs. per mensem (out of a salary of 600/- rupees) for two years and a half; this was, two years proposed absence and six months during which it might be expected that he should have to wait for an appointment on his return to India. These terms were proposed to Dr. Sprenger of the Bengal Medical Service, with the undertaking, firstly that these were the conditions of his resigning his appointment instead of applying for leave of absence; secondly that Dr. Sprenger should be appointed to succeed him. With some reluctance, Sprenger accepted the arrangement. This transaction was considered advantageous to the Delhi College in so far that it secured to that institution the services of an officer believed to be most fit for the duty and who could not have accepted the officiating appointment, although he did express his intention of giving it up to Boutros on his return, if it was agreeable to the Government and suited his own purpose. Shortly after Boutros left India with the most gratifying testimonials of the sense which the Government

entertained of his services<sup>40</sup> and Dr. Sprenger was appointed Principal of the Delhi College on 19th March, 1845.

Afterwards, as stated by Boutros, Dr. Sprenger declined to fulfill and repudiate the engagement he had voluntarily, deliberately, entered into it. He considered this arrangement as null and void and refused to make to Boutros the monthly payments he had agreed to. This denial compelled him to save more than ten thousand rupees for going back to France. Before leaving India, he corresponded with Lieutenant-Governor for his interference, but he did not think proper officially to meddle, apparently on the ground that his official intervention might not be conclusive and would only deprive the Delhi College of Sprenger's services by driving him back to his regiment.

In 1856, Boutros decided to return to India for settling the dispute with Dr. Sprenger. He wrote to James Thomason, his intimate friend who appointed him as the Principal of the College, for giving him an appointment after his return to India, but he had no possibility of being able to do so, and as Boutros' health was yet far from good, he advised him to stay in France a year longer.

Ultimately, Boutros approached some members of the Court of Directors who unanimously expressed their opinion "that on his own showing he (Dr. Sprenger) is bound as a gentleman and a man of honour to fulfill his agreement with Mr. Boutros."

Again Sprenger declined and made up his mind not to accept any arbitration. His uncompromising attitude compelled Boutros to present this case to the Court of Directors for substantial justice. At the end of his 'Claim' Boutros demanded: "I beg, therefore, your Honourable Court, in the exercise of your high authority, will either at once direct him [Dr. Sprenger] to satisfy my claim, or leave him no alternative but to do so, or clear his character before a Court Martial from the charge I bring against him of disgraceful conduct unworthy of an officer and a gentleman."

The members of the Court of Directors carefully scrutinized this case and finally decided to remove Dr. Sprenger from all the appointments held by him. On 29th July, 1856, Governor-General Charles John Canning (1812-1862) decided in Boutros' favour<sup>41</sup> and it runs thus:<sup>42</sup>

Dr. Sprenger  
29 July, 1856

Dr. Sprenger having been informed that it was the desire of the Hon'ble Court that he should have an opportunity of explaining his share of a transaction between himself and Mr. Boutros, formerly the Principal of Delhi College, and of shewing, if possible, that his conduct in it had not been inconsistent with that character for integrity and honor which the Court hold to be essentially necessary in all those entrusted with high functions connected with Public Education, now replies to that appeal.

Dr. Sprenger does not attempt to fulfill the object with which the appeal was made. No explanation or vindication of his conduct is offered by him; and he simply pleads lapse of time, and condonation of his offence in bar of any penalty.

He argues that Mr. Thomason, as Lieutt. Governor of the N.W. Provinces, continued from the year 1845 to accept his services after he had erred; and he refers to his promotion in 1850 from the College at Delhi to his appointment in Calcutta, made, as he says, with full knowledge on the part of the Governor-General of the transaction now referred to, as a proof that Lord Dalhousie did not view it in the light in which it is now regarded.

He observes that from Mr. Boutros' Memorial the case appears to have been submitted to the Governor-General in 1849 and in 1850.

It is clear that from the beginning the Lieutt. Governor of the N.W. Provinces, received the transaction between Mr. Boutros and Dr. Sprenger as one which could not be officially sanctioned or guaranteed by Govt., but Mr. Thomason did none the less maintain, and urge upon Dr. Sprenger that the latter

was bound to abide by his engagement. Dr. Sprenger however, appears to have been fully satisfied with Mr. Thomason's declaration that he did not intend to enforce it, and to have abstained from acting upon the opinion which the Lieutt. Governor expressed unofficially.

As regards the transfer of Dr. Sprenger from Delhi to Calcutta in 1850 the Govt. of India was not at that time aware of the nature of the transaction which had passed between Dr. Sprenger and Mr. Boutros. A letter has been addressed by the latter to the Governor-General in 1849, which had been referred to the Lieutt. Governor of the N.W. Provinces; but according to the view taken of the matter at Agra no orders were issued upon it. There is, I understand, no trace of any subsequent letter from Mr. Boutros to the Governor-General in 1850 — indeed it was early in that year that the transfer of Dr. Sprenger to Calcutta took place.

It was not then until 1854 that, upon an application from Dr. Sprenger himself to be protected against the persecution of Mr. Boutros, the case came before the Government of India. The application was refused, and Dr. Sprenger was informed that he was not exonerated from blame.<sup>43</sup>

A Despatch has since been received from the Honourable Court, in which whilst admitting it to be right that the Govt. should not interpose its authority in private transactions between public servants, they point out that, if it becomes notorious that a public officer employed in a prominent and highly responsible situation has been guilty of conduct in his personal or private capacity inconsistent with principle and honour, it is the duty of the Govt. to remove him from his position. A Memorial from Mr. Boutros is at the same time enclosed, and an opinion is expressed that the conduct of Dr. Sprenger, as detailed in that Memorial, and as admitted by himself, is opposed to integrity and honour. The Govt. of India is therefore instructed to take steps for enabling Dr. Sprenger to set himself right in this respect, or for removing him from an

appointment which he could not hold without detriment to the public interests.

I venture to express my respectful concurrence in the rule of duty laid down by the Honorable Court. I think it clear that the conduct of Dr. Sprenger is inconsistent with principle and honour and I find no reason in Dr. Sprenger's answer to the appeal last made to him, why the rule should not be applied in his case.

It is certainly to be regretted that the details of the transaction between Dr. Sprenger and Mr. Boutros were not sooner brought to the notice of the Govt. of India, and it appears to me that this ought at all events to have been done at the time when Dr. Sprenger was summoned from Delhi to Calcutta. But nothing has passed which will make it unjust on the part of the Govt. to deal with Dr. Sprenger as may seem best to it.

It has already been determined that the payment by Dr. Sprenger of his debt to Mr. Boutros would not suffice to set him right in the estimation of the Honourable Court and of the Govt. Dr. Sprenger has not vindicated his character against the charge of want [charge a man and] of honour in private pecuniary matters; so long as he thought himself safe from the interference of the Govt. he boldly disregarded all extra official opinions and advice; and however much I may regret that it should be necessary to reject any offer of payment to Mr. Boutros which Dr. Sprenger might under present pressure be disposed to make, and that anything should be done to render a recovery of the claim more hopeless. I submit that the only course now left by which the Govt. can save its service from scandal and discredit, thereby fulfilling the intentions [instructions] of the Honourable Court, is to remove Dr. Sprenger from his civil appointments as Head of the Calcutta Madrassa, Examiner of Junior Civil Officers and Persian Translator.

Dr. Sprenger will in that case be placed at the disposal of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>44</sup>



So, Boutros won his case but we are unaware of any compensation, demanded by him in his 'Claim'. Soon afterwards he passed away and was forgotten. He was a true lover of Urdu and made sincere efforts to make it a language of scholarship but the scholars and historians of the Urdu language and literature refer to him only briefly. No doubt, his services will deserve a special, exhaustive and well-researched study, especially as a founder of the Vernacular Translation Society (in Delhi College) and his pioneering efforts to transfer the western knowledge into Urdu through translations which was continued by his successor, A. Sprenger (1813-1893).<sup>45</sup> The basic principles laid down by Boutros, were, later on, strictly followed by the institutions like Anjuman-i Punjab (1865) and the Scientific Society (Ghazipur 1863, founded by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan) etc. etc.

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## NOTES

- \* Researcher and historian, Lahore.
- \*\* Revised version of the article, presented at the Collège de France (Paris) in 2001.
- <sup>1</sup> Cf. Jean-Marie Lafont: *French Administrators of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*. Delhi 1988 ("Military Activities of French Officers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", pp. 1-44; "Private Business and Cultural Activities of French Officers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", pp. 127-159 etc. etc.); Ibid.: *La présence française dans la royaume Sikh du Penjab, 1822-1849*. Paris 1992 ("L'oeuvre militaire. Effectifs et organization, 1822-1839", pp. 118-149; "L'oeuvre militaire. Le Missions, 1822-1839", pp. 150-181 etc.etc.); Ibid. (dir.): *L'Inde, la France, la Savoie. Le général de Boigne: Recondres à l'université de Savoie*. Chambéry 1996; M. Derenbourg: *Silvestre de Sacy, 1758-1838*. Paris 1895.
- <sup>2</sup> H. Dehéraïn: *Orientalistes et antiquaires, Silvestre de Sacy, ses contemporaines et ses disciples*. Paris 1938; *Cinquante ans d'orientalisme en France 1922-1972*, in: *Journal Asiatique* (=JA), cclxi (1973), pp. 89-107; D. Reig: *Homo orientaliste. La langue arabe en France depuis le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1988; G. Salmon: *Bibliothèque des*

*arabisants français*, 2 vols., Cairo 1905–1923; G. Dugat: *Histoire des Orientalistes de l'Europe du XII<sup>e</sup> au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1868-70.

- <sup>3</sup> Joseph-Héliodore Garcin de Tassy. For his life, see *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*. Publiées par MM. Firmin Didot Frères. vol. XIX, Paris 1857, pp. 468-469; J. N. Döllinger: “Garcin de Tassy on India”, in: *Contemporary Review* (London), vol. 35 (1878), pp. 385-403; Necrology by E. R., in: *Indian Antiquary* (Bombay), vol. VII (Nov. 1878), p. 292; Sayida Surriya Hussain: *Garcin de Tassy. Biographie et étude critique des ses oeuvres*. Pondichéry 1962 (also available in Urdu, with emendations and additions by the author, entitled *Garcin de Tassy. Urdu Khidmāt, ‘Ilmī Kārnamē*. Lucknow 1984); *Muslim Festivals in India and Other Essays* by Garcin de Tassy. Tr. and ed. by M. Waseem. New Delhi: OUP, 1995; “Garcin de Tassy, a member of Anjuman-i Punjab, Lahore. (Further Research)” by M. Ikram Chaghatai (in Urdu), in: *Me’yār* (Islamabad). July-Dec. 2010, pp. 279-310.

Both de Tassy and Boutros had cordial relations with each other. In his personal library, de Tassy had some of Boutros’ books. (See. F. Deloncle: *Catalogue général des livres orientaux et autres composant la bibliothèque de feu Garcin de Tassy*. Paris 1879.

About ten months after being appointed as the first Principal of Delhi College, Boutros wrote a letter to de Tassy (19 Dec. 1841). Its English translation is as follows:

“Hindustani (Urdu) language has acquired an importance within the last two or three years which it did not have earlier. It has become the official language of the area from Bihar to Western Provinces, that is, from Rajmahal to Hardwar. Hardwar is a small town at the foot of the Himalayas. Moreover, it is understood throughout India. At least four crore people use it as a spoken language. Now the British Government has introduced it in the courts and official newspapers.

About six months before, I employed twenty translators in the College who translate in Urdu the famous books of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit together with the English books on the subjects of physical sciences, political economy, history, philosophy, jurisprudence and the prevalent Anglo-Indian legal system.”

(cf. Original letter in: *JA* (Paris), III sér., vol. xiii (1842), pp. 207-208. Translation is mine).

- <sup>4</sup> *Histoire de la littérature Hindouie et Hindoustanie (=Histoire)*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 3 vols. Paris 1870-71. Rerprinted: New York 1968 (Complete Urdu tr. of *Histoire*, ms. (preserved in the library of Karachi University); Reviewed of its 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (vol. I, Paris 1839); in: *The Asiatic Journal*, Jan.-April 1840, pp. 95-106, “Hindustani Literature”; Hammer-Purgstall: “Indische Literaturgeschichte..... par Garcin de Tassy”, in:

*Jahrbücher der Literatur* (Vienna), 120 (1847), pp. 126-147 (1<sup>st</sup> ed., vol. II, Paris 1847); *A critical study of Garcin de Tassy's 'Histoire'....* Thesis submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi (Deptt. of Urdu) for the degree of Ph. D. by Robert Ardovin, Reader (in French language), Deptt. of Modern European Languages, vols. 1-4 (1977). (Delhi University Library Cat. No. 3143-46); Qāzī ‘Abdul Wudūd: *Garcin de Tassy* (Collection of author’s Urdu articles). Patna 1995; *Garcin de Tassy*. par Sayida Surriya Hussain, see above.

<sup>5</sup> a) Discours à l’ouverture de son Cours d’Hindoustanie à l’École des Langues Orientales Vivantes, 1850-1869, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. La Langue et la littérature hindoustanies de 1850 à 1869. Paris 1874.

b) La Langue et la Littérature hindoustanies, Revue annuelle. Paris 1871-1878. Urdu translation of these *Lectures* under the title *Khutbāt-i Garcin de Tassy* (= *Khutbāt*) (by different scholars), vol. I (1850-1864); rev. by Dr. M. Hamidullah, Karachi 1979 (1935), vol. II (1865-1869), Karachi 1974 (1935); *Maqālāt-i Garcin de Tassy* (= *Maqālāt*), vol. I (1870-1873), Karachi 1964 (1944), vol. II (1874-1877), rev. by Dr. M. Hamidullah. Karachi 1975 (1943); *Garcin de Tassy: Tamhīdī Khutbē (1850-1855)*. Ed. by Dr. Abdus Sattār Siddiqī. Delhi 1940.

<sup>6</sup> The Board of Control, instituted in 1784 by the British Government to exercise supervision in London over the Indian policies of the East India Company; it was abolished in 1858 and replaced by a unitary department of state known as the India Office.

The bulk of the Board of Control records are the series of Board’s Collections consisting of copies of correspondence, minutes and resolutions.

<sup>7</sup> Discours, op. cit., *Khutbāt*, op. cit., 1935, p. 450.

<sup>8</sup> See Gail Minault: “The Patronage Puzzle: British Patronage of Vernacular Education in North India in the early 19th Century”, in: Sandria Freitag (ed.): *Public Culture and the State in Colonial India*. New Delhi 1996 (?); *ibid.*: “Delhi College and Urdu” in: *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, 14 (1999), p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> *Khutbāt*, op. cit., 1935, pp. 450-453.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *The East India Register and Directory for 1833*. Compiled by G. H. Brown and F. Clark. London 1833, p. 159. “List of European Inhabitants, Bengal.”

<sup>11</sup> See “Claim of Mr. F. Boutros against Dr. Sprenger”, in: Board’s Collections: 165866-165930 (1855-56), vol. 2621, No. F/4/2621 (British Library, London)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Bengal Civil Servants*, 1840 (British Library, India Office and Oriental) vol. 23, No. 170. Library No. L/F/10/23.

- <sup>13</sup> *Scott & Co.'s Bengal Directory and Register for the year of our Lord 1842*, p. 342.
- <sup>14</sup> *Khutbāt*, op. cit., 1935, p. 451.
- <sup>15</sup> Sir Richard Temple: *James Thomason*. Oxford 1893; Sir William Muir: *The Hon'ble James Thomason: Lieutenant-Governor, N. W. P., India, 1843-1850*. Edinburgh 1897; Peter Penner: *The Patronage Bureaucracy in North India: The Robert N. Bird and James Thomason School, 1820-1870*. Delhi 1986, "James Thomason's Role in Vernacular Education", pp. 141-149; James Thomason: *Despatches: Selections from the Records of Government, NWP*. 2 vols., regarding 1844 to 1853. Edited by William Muir. Calcutta 1856, 1858.
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. *Reports of the General Committee of Public Instruction of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal, for the year 1839-40*. Calcutta 1841, para VI, p. cxii. "From Members of the General Committee, Fort William, dated 30th Oct. 1840."
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. cxliii. Signed by G. A. Bushby (Secretary to the Government of India), dated: Court Chambers, 16 Oct. 1840.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. *General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1844-45*. Agra 1845, pp. 75-76.
- <sup>19</sup> See H. H. Wilson Collection. British Library, India Office and Oriental, vol. 10 (1846-47), folio 190 f., (No. MSS Eur E 301)
- <sup>20</sup> *Khutbāt*, op. cit., 1935, p. 453; Gail Minault writes: "Biographical data on Boutros are scarce. He retired to France, hence the presumption has been that he was French. He had been in British service in Bihar before being appointed Principal of Delhi College because of his knowledge of Arabic."  
(in: *South Asian Research*, 31: 1 (2011), p. 19, Notes (no. 8), "Aloys Sprenger: German Orientalism's 'Gift' to Delhi College", pp. 7-23.
- <sup>21</sup> "...Mr. Boutros' work, in which the principles of jurisprudence inculcated by Bentham are set forth in an interesting and attractive form." (*General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1847-48*. Agra 1849, p. 17). See also the answers by Gobind Chandra Sandal (Benares College) to the 'Questions on Boutros' Jurisprudence'. (Ibid., Appendix A, pp. xlix-li).
- <sup>22</sup> British Library, London. No. 5319. aa. 21.
- <sup>23</sup> Revised ed. by Dyal Singh of Amritsar and published by Padri Rajab Ali from "Wakīl Hindustan" Press, Amritsar.  
(cf. Discours de M. Garcin de Tassy, 1877; *Maqālāt*, II (Delhi 1943), pp. 331-332, lecture, 1877).  
Contents:

Introduction: General Principles

Book I: Rights of Nations and Laws which regulate them relations in time of peace.

Book II: Relations of Belligerent Nations with each other.  
Appendix: Historical Illustrations.

(see also *The Delhi Gazette*, 17th May 1845, p. 337)

<sup>24</sup> It was published for the students of Government schools. Boutros offered the sale of 100 copies of this book in a letter of 1855 to the Department of Education (The British Library, 2/P/34, Index for 1855). Replying to his letter, the Department instructed the Director of Public Instruction, through the letters of 22nd Dec. 1855 and 31st March 1856, for purchasing as many copies of this book as would enable the Director to supply a copy of each *zillah* (district) School Library and Public Library of the *Mufasssil*.

<sup>25</sup> See Suriyya's French book, op. cit., pp. 166-167 and its Urdu tr., p. 302.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *The Delhi College. Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1859*. Edited by Margrit Pernau. New Delhi: OUP, 2006 and M. Ikram Chaghatai: *Qadīm Delhi College* (in Urdu). Lahore 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Minute by F. Boutros, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1842, in: *General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1843-44*. Agra 1845, pp. lxxii-lxix.

<sup>28</sup> 'Useful Knowledge' (translated in Urdu as '*ulūm* or *Matālib-i mufīda*') was a term, commonly used in the nineteenth century and it usually means western knowledge that was considered very essential for educating the natives of India.

In Dec. 1836, Charles Knight & Co., doing business in Ludgate Street, published in 2 vols. "Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" a book... by E. W. Lane."

See also *Report of the Anjuman-i Punjab, or the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge for the year 1865*. Lahore 1866; R. Rauch: *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians Morality and the March of Intellect*. Durham 2001; M. Dodson: " 'Re-Presented for the Pandit': James Ballantyne", Useful Knowledge, and Sanskrit scholarship in Benares College during the mid-nineteenth century" (in: *Modern Asian Studies*, 36/2 (2002), pp. 257-298); "... Of real use of the people": The Tanjore printing press and the spread of useful knowledge" By Savitri Preetha Nair (in: *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 48/4 (2011), pp. 497-529).

<sup>29</sup> "The Vernacular Translation Society of the North West", in: *The Friend of India*. No. 570, vol. xi (Dec. 4, 1845), pp. 771-772, Editorial)

“We have had for some time in our possession a copy of the “Society for the promotion of knowledge through the medium of the vernacular languages” established at Delhi, through the energetic exertions of the late Principal of the Delhi College, Mr. F. Boutros.”

(pp. 770-71)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Boutros possessed a ms. of *Tazkira-i Zauk* (cf. *Khutbāt*, op. cit., 1935, p. 107)

<sup>32</sup> Minute by F. Boutros. Delhi College. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1842. (in: *Report of the General Committee of Public Instruction of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal for 1840-41 and 1841-42*. Calcutta 1842. (V/24/948). Appendix No. XV, p. cxxxii; *Tamhīdī Khutbē*, op. cit., 1940, p. 140 (= *Khutbāt*, op. cit., 1935, p. 92, 179).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Tamhīdī Khutbay*, op. cit., (Lecture, dated 4 Nov. 1854). He also possessed a copy of *Tazkira-i Zauk* in his private library (See *ibid.*, p. 82); *Histoire*, III: 123, f.n. 2.

<sup>34</sup> See his i) *Hadā'ik al-Balāghat* Delhi (1842). In the beginning, Sahbā'ī writes:

”بوترس صاحب... ارشاد کیا کہ اگر یہ نسخہ فارسی زبان سے اردو میں ترجمہ کیا جاوے اور اس میں عربی اور فارسی کی جگہ اردو اور زبان دانی ہند کے مندرجہ ہوں تو ان لوگوں کے واسطے کہ اردو اشعار سے ذوق رکھتے ہیں... بہت مفید ہوگا۔ اس واسطے اس خاکسار نے بموجب اس کے کہ المامور معذور باوجود کمی استعداد کے تقدیم امر میں سعی کر کے اس رسالہ کو ۱۲۵۸ھ/ ۱۸۴۲ء میں مرتب کیا۔“

See also *Navā'i Adab* (Bombay), vol. 47, no. i (April 1997), pp. 92-101, art. by M. Z. Husain.

ii) *Intikhāb-i Davāvīn* (Delhi, 1844).

In the preface, the author writes:

”... ناچار شائقین سخن کی خدمت میں عرض کرتا ہوں کہ صاحب والا مناقب حاکم بلند مناصب داور عدل گستر بوترس صاحب بہادر پر نپیل کے ارشاد سے دو اویں اردو میں سے ہر صنف کے اشعار انتخاب ہو کر مجموعہ مرتب ہوا تاکہ ناظرین کو اکثر شعرا کے کلام سے ایک جائے میں احتفاظ وافر وار التذاذ میکاثر حاصل ہو...“

<sup>35</sup> See my article on Garcin de Tassy, in: *Mi'yār*, (Islamabad), vol. 4 (July-Dec. 200), pp. 279-310.

<sup>36</sup> See *JA*, III. Série, Feb. 1842, pp. 207-208.

<sup>37</sup> The title of this French translation by Garcin de Tassy is:

“Description des monuments de Dehli en 1852, d'après le texte hindoustanie de Saiyid Ahmad Khan”, published in: *JA*, V Sér., vol. xv (1860), pp. 508-536; *Annexe au JA*, V Sér., vol. xvii (1861), pp. 77-97.

The translator incorporated information, provided by Boutros through his letters, in his footnotes about some historical monuments of Delhi like Qutb Minār (pp. 243-444, f.n.2), Mausoleum of Humāyon

(p. 433, f.n.2), Jāmi‘ Masjid (p. 445), Maosoleum Ghāzīuddīn Khan (pp. 532-33, f.n.2) etc. etc.

<sup>38</sup> See my article “Āzād aur un kay Wālid”, in: *Mutālī‘a-i Āzād* (Collection of Articles) by M. Ikram Chaghatai. Lahore 2010, pp. (55-87); M. Ikram Chaghatai: *Qadīm Delhi College*. Lahore 2013.

<sup>39</sup> in: British Library (London). Vol. 621, Document No. 165909; Correspondence relating to “L’affaire Boutros” is also contained in Foreign (Political) 26 Sept. 1856 63-64 & KW and Foreign (Political) 17 April 1857, 410-11, National Archives of India (Delhi).

<sup>40</sup> “The distinguished services of Mr. Boutros were acknowledged especially as regarded his efforts to impart the knowledge of European Science through the medium of Vernacular languages.” (*General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1843-44*. Agra 1845, p. 64)

Before his departure from India, Boutros submitted his last report in which he “expressed himself well satisfied with the result of his endeavours to assimilate the historical, moral and scientific studies in every department. We saw no reason to hope, that in one year more of similar effort, the oriental students would be little inferior to those of the English College in any branch of knowledge, except History; to put them on a level in that science would require more extensive and voluminous translations than had yet been effected. He stated, as a gratifying result of the information thus imparted to the youths of the Delhi College, that many of them had been diligently striving at leisure hours, with such assistance as they could obtain out of college, to acquire a knowledge of English, in order that they might prosecute their researches after truth with greater freedom, it was even anticipated that some of these youths would become competitors for Senior English Scholarships. Boutros thought too that the introduction of other subjects of study into the Oriental College than those usually read in native *madrassas* had tended to moderate the prejudiced and illiberal spirit, which the mere students of Arabic and Persian literature are apt to imbibe. This improvement would be still more manifest, when the present race of teachers had passed away, and had been succeeded by those who had themselves enjoyed the advantages of the new course of instruction.

Another encouraging fact, according to Boutros, was the appearance which had arisen of a diminution in the existing prejudice on the part of the native aristocracy, against the British system of Public Instruction. Two youths of noble families, one a brother of the Navvāb of Jhajhar, and to other a son of Raja Sohan Lāl, late Prime

Minister of the Mughal Emperor, had been sent to the Delhi College, and it was expected that more of the same grade would follow.”

(Ibid., pp. 74-75)

- <sup>41</sup> In the *General Report* (op. cit.), it is mentioned that “Mr. Boutros’ health having unfortunately failed, he has been obliged to resign his appointment as Principal of the Delhi College for the purpose of proceeding to Europe. In making application to this effect, Mr. Boutros signified his intention of returning to India after the lapse of two years, and requested that he might then be considered as having a fair claim to an appointment of the same nature as that which he was about to vacate. He was informed, in reply, that the Lieutenant-Governor was deeply concerned to find that illness was about to deprive the Government, for a time, of his tried and valuable services; and that his claim to re-employment would not be considered prejudiced by his present enforced absence, supposing, as was hoped, he shall be able to return within the anticipated period.

Mr. Sprenger, an Assistant Surgeon on the H.C.’s Bengal Establishment, was considered to possess suitable qualifications for the post vacated by Mr. Boutros, and was accordingly appointed, thereto on 19th March 1845.” (Ibid., pp. 75-76)

- <sup>42</sup> Cf. West Yorkshire Archive Service. Leeds District Archives. Canning Papers, vol. 83, item no. 48.

- <sup>43</sup> In Board’s Collections (vol. 2663), another person has written the following note:

“Lord Canning omits to notice the decision of the Govt. of the day—“No decision to take any cognizance whatever the dispute in question.” ”

- <sup>44</sup> For the detail of this dispute between F. Boutros and A. Sprenger see:  
i) *India and Bengal Despatches* (4 Feb.—25 March 1856) vol. 103, Record Department No. E/4/842. British Library.

“Removal of Dr. Sprenger from his Civil Appointments.”

- ii) Ibid. (2 Jan.—26 Febr. 1856), vol. 95. No. E/4/834.

“Memorial from Mr. Boutros”.

- iii) Board’s Collections: 165866-165930 (1855-1856). Vol. 2621. No. F/4/2621.

“Claim of Mr. F. Boutros against Dr. Sprenger” and also “Mr. Boutros’ Remarks on Dr. Sprenger Memorial to the Governor-General in Council, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> Febr. 1854” (dated 13<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1855).

- iv) Ibid., 176499-176915 (1856-57), vol., 2663. No. F/4/2663.

“Removal of Dr. Sprenger from the several appointments held by him.” (Letter dated 18 August (no. 112) 1856, p. 1 and also pp. 25-30. (“Minute by the Right Hon’ble the Governor-General, dated 29<sup>th</sup> July



1856, subscribed to by the Members of Government of India”, the same as in Canning Papers).

v) *Report of the General Committee of Public Instruction of the North Western Provinces ... 1855 and 1856*. British Library (London), no. Z/P/75.

- <sup>45</sup> See “Vernacular Translation Society. Reports of the Vernacular Translation Society, for the year 1845”. Delhi, printed at the Delhi Gazette Press, by Kunniiah Lall (1846), Semiannual reports for 1845. (Cf. *Early Indian Imprints*. By Katharine Smith Diehl...New York/London 1964, p. 329)

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D<sup>r</sup> Sprenger.

29 July 1856.

D<sup>r</sup> Sprenger having been  
informed that it was the desire  
of the Honble Court that he

should have an opportunity of explaining his  
share of a transaction between himself and Mr.  
Boutros, formerly the Principal of Delhi College,  
and of showing, if possible, that his conduct was  
not been inconsistent with that character of  
integrity and honor which the Court hold to be  
essentially necessary in all those entrusted with  
high functions connected with Public Education,  
now replies to that appeal.

D<sup>r</sup> Sprenger does not attempt to  
fulfil the object with which the appeal was made.  
The explanation or vindication of his conduct is offered  
by

by him; and he simply pleads Capse of time,  
and condonation of his offence in bar of any penalty.  
He argues that Mr. Thomason, as Lieut. Gov.  
of the M. Provinces, continued from the year 1845  
to accept his services after he had erred;  
and he refers to his promotion in 1850 from the  
College at Delhi to his Appointment, in Calcutta,  
made, as he says, with full knowledge on the  
part of the Gov. General of the transaction now  
referred to, as a proof that Lord Dalhousie did not  
view it, in the light in which it is now regarded.  
He observes that from Mr. Bentinck's Memorial the  
case appears to have been submitted to the  
Governor General in 1847 and in 1850.

It is clear that from the beginning  
the Lieut. Governor of the M. Provinces viewed the  
transaction

transaction between Mr. Bontas and Dr. Springer as one which could not be officially sanctioned or guaranteed by Govt. - but Mr. Thomson did not the less maintain, and urge upon Dr. Springer that the latter was bound to abide by his engagement. Dr. Springer however appears to have been fully satisfied with Mr. Thomson's declaration that he did not intend to enforce it, and to have abstained from acting upon the opinions which the Lieut. Govt. expressed unofficially.

As regards the transfer of Dr. Springer from Delhi to Calcutta in 1850, the Govt. of India was not at that time aware of the nature of the transaction which had passed between Dr. Springer and Mr. Bontas. A letter has been addressed by the latter to the Govt. General in 1849, which has been referred to the Lieut. Governor of the Provinces; but according



to the view taken of the matter at Agra no orders were issued upon it. There is, I understand, no trace of any subsequent letter from Mr. Bantros to the Gov<sup>t</sup> General in 1850 - indeed it was early in that year that the transfer of Dr. Sprenger to Calcutta took place.

It was not then until 1854 that, upon an application from Dr. Sprenger himself to be protected against the persecution of Mr. Bantros, the case came before the Government of India. The application was refused, and Dr. Sprenger was informed that he was not exonerated from blame.

A Despatch has since been received from the Honorable Court, in which, while admitting it to be right that the Gov<sup>t</sup> should not interpose its authority in private transactions between public servants, they point out that, if it becomes notorious that a public officer employed in a prominent

prominent and highly responsible situation has been guilty of conduct in his personal or private capacity inconsistent with principle and honor, it is the duty of the Government to remove him from his position - A Memorial from His Excellency is at the same time enclosed and an opinion is expressed that the conduct of Dr. Sprenger, as detailed in that Memorial, and as admitted by himself, is opposed to integrity and honor - The Government of India is therefore instructed to take steps for enabling Dr. Sprenger to set himself right in this respect, or for removing him from an appointment which he could not hold without detriment to the public interests -



I venture to express my respectful concurrence in the rule of duty laid down by the Honorable Court. - I think it clear that the conduct of Dr. Spranger is inconsistent with principle and honor - And I find no reason, in Dr. Spranger's answer to the appeal last made to him, why the rule should not be applied in his case. -

It is certainly to be regretted that the details of the transaction between Dr. Spranger and Mr. Bontras were not sooner brought to the notice of the Government of India; and it appears to me that this ought at all events to have been done at the time when Dr. Spranger was summoned from Delhi to

Calcutta

Calcutta. But nothing has passed which will make it unjust on the part of the Government to deal with Dr. Springer as may seem best.

It has already been determined that the payment by Dr. Springer of his debt to Mr. Bontras would not suffice to set him right in the estimation of the Honorable Court and of the Government. Dr. Springer has not vindicated his character against the charge of want of honor in private pecuniary matters; so long as he thought himself safe from the interference of the Government he boldly disregarded all Extra Official opinions and advice; and however much I may regret that it should be necessary to reject any offer of payment to Mr. Bontras which

D<sup>r</sup> Springer might under present pressure be disposed to make, and that any thing should be done to render a recovery of the claim more hopeless, I submit that the only course now left by which the Government can save its service from scandal and discredit, thereby fulfilling the intentions of the Honorable Court, is to remove D<sup>r</sup> Springer from his Civil Appointments as Head of the Calcutta Madrasa, Examiner of Junior Civil Officers, and Persian Translator. -

D<sup>r</sup> Springer will in that case be placed at the disposal of His Excellency The Commander in Chief. -

J. Lanning  
29<sup>th</sup> July 1885 -

