

# NIQŪLĀ AL-ḤADDĀD'S CONTRIBUTION TO "AL-HILĀL" DURING WORLD WAR I AND ITS AFTERMATH

PAOLA VIVIANI\*

*In this paper I will be analysing a number of articles by the Syro-Lebanese thinker and man of letters Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād (1872-1954) for the magazine "al-Hilāl". He published articles in which he managed to discuss a good number of his favourite topics against the background of the ongoing First World War. He did not always deal directly with the conflict and its events, but rather preferred to reflect on "war" as an historical and sociological phenomenon or on the development of Nations from a scientific point of view, while revealing the links between his words and the particular context in which he was writing them. In a similar way, he would focus on its economic consequences, which obviously had a tremendous impact on the lives of people (usually the weakest), as History teaches us.*

## *Introduction*

In this paper, I will be introducing some aspects of the considerations on war as a phenomenon and on World War I as specifically expressed by Nahdawist Christian Syro-Lebanese intellectual Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, or Ḥaddād (Ġūn, Sidon, 1872-Cairo, 1954)<sup>1</sup> in a number of articles published in the well-known magazine "al-Hilāl", created by another

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\* Università degli Studi della Campania *Luigi Vanvitelli*.

<sup>1</sup> On his life and work, see, for instance: Matti Moosa, *Modern Arabic Fiction*, A Three Continents Book, Lynee Rienner Publishers, Boulder & London 1997 (second edition), pp. 241 ff.; D.M. Reid, *The Syrian Christians and Early Socialism in the Arab World*, in "International Journal of Middle East Studies", 5, 2 (April 1974), pp. 177-193; Salmā Miršāq Salīm, *Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, al-adīb al-'ālim*, Dār al-Ġadīd, Bayrūt 2013; P. Viviani, *Un maestro del Novecento arabo. Faraḥ Anṭūn*, Presentazione di I. Camera d'Afflitto, Jouvence, Roma 2004, *passim*; Ead., «La scuola del mondo sul Ponte di Brooklyn»: *uno scritto dell'intellettuale siro-libanese Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād (1872-1954)*, in *Itinerari di culture*, a cura di M. Cariello; E. Falivene; C. Saggiomo; P. Viviani; S. Obad; Prefazione di R. Verde, Loffredo Editore, Napoli 2011, pp. 261-275; F. Zachs; Sh. Halevi, *Gendering Culture in Greater Syria. Intellectuals and Ideology in the Late Ottoman Period*, I.B. Tauris, London-New York 2015, pp. 132 ff.; F. Zemmin, *Modernity in Islamic Tradition: The Concept of 'Society' in the Journal al-Manar (Cairo, 1898-1940)*, De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2018, pp. 272-274.

equally famous Syro-Lebanese thinker, Ğurġī Zaydān (1861-1914)<sup>2</sup>. In particular, I will focus primarily on the series of articles entitled *Taṭawwur al-umam ḥasab al-nawāmīs al-ṭabī'iyah al-‘āmmah wa mā yakūn min hādā al-taṭawwur ba‘d al-ḥarb* (The Development of Nations according to General Natural Laws and its Outcomes after the 1914-1915 War)<sup>3</sup>, which may be considered as the cornerstone of the construct successfully established by Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād during these fundamental years in human history. Like other writings, these ones reveal much of their author's personality. It is striking, for instance, the way he carefully and seriously details every single brick of his own construct, so that it can be neither undermined by anyone or anything, nor attacked by potential enemies or critics. From the very moment it broke out, the First World War was considered a real turning point in world history, which would certainly bring about masses of casualties, as every conflict does. Consequently, this event, which led to such tragic outcomes, needed to be approached with extreme caution, even in the attempt – as we will see – to find a good reason for it. Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād discussed this point in both the aforementioned articles and in another published in March 1919, *al-Ḥālah al-iqtisādiyyah ba‘d al-ḥarb* (The Economic Condition in the Aftermath of the War), which I will only briefly discuss here<sup>4</sup>.

The idea for this essay stems from a double line of research: the first into the *Nahḍah* press, through which certain facets of al-Ḥaddād's journalistic works have already been approached, scrutinising in particular some of the articles which appeared between 1906 and 1908 in "al-Ġāmi‘ah", the famous and leading magazine founded by the celeb-

<sup>2</sup> Much has been written on the life and activity of Ğurġī Zaydān, whose works have turned out to be seminal in many fields, as is notorious. Considerable bibliographic references on him and his magazine "al-Hilāl" were authored by Anne-Laure Dupont and Thomas Philipp. Among them, the former's impressive book *Ğurġī Zaydān (1861-1914), écrivain réformiste et témoin de la Renaissance arabe*, Institut français du Proche-Orient, Damas 2006; and the latter's *Jurji Zaidan and the Foundations of Arab Nationalism, with Selected Writings by Jurji Zaidan translated by Hilary Kilpatrick and Paul Starkey*, Syracuse Press in Cooperation with the Zaidan Foundation, Syracuse NY 2010. More information is available online at the Zaidan Foundation's website (<http://zaidanfoundation.org/index.html>). In the Italian language, see also M. Avino, *L'Occidente nella cultura araba dal 1876 al 1935*, Presentazione di I. Camera d'Afflito, Jouvence, Roma 2002, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *Taṭawwur al-umam...*, in "al-Hilāl", 23, 2 (I *nūfimbir* 1914), pp. 103-109; 23, 3 (I *disimbir* 1914), pp. 205-209; 23, 4 (I *yanāyir* 1915), pp. 301-305.

<sup>4</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *al-Ḥālah al-iqtisādiyyah...*, in "al-Hilāl", 27, 6 (I *mārs* 1919), pp. 489-500.

rated Farah Anṭūn (1874-1922)<sup>5</sup>, who was both brother-in-law and great friend to him. The second, more recent, line of research on the other hand dealt with the Great War and the Oriental Question, this being the difficult and controversial relationship between the Ottoman Empire, on one side, and the United Kingdom, France, Austria and Russia, on the other, as narrated in both the Arab press and in the memoirs of an Italian Colonel<sup>6</sup>.

In 1914, Ottoman society as a whole was going through one of its most difficult periods, due to the impending fear of being definitely destroyed, this time by the action of the same countries that had been opposing the Sublime Porte over the centuries through what is known as the Eastern or Oriental Question. This question was reignited on the occasion of the 1911 attack of Italy against Libyan soil, i.e. the Vilayet of Tripolitania and Benghazi with its surroundings. This violent attack was almost unexpected, both in terms of its timing and the manner it was accomplished, even though not quite completely unimagined by Constantinople (having been hoped for by the great European powers on the basis of a secret pact signed by Rome and Paris in 1902 regarding Italy's future conquest of Tripoli). The ongoing rejuvenation of the *al-mas'alah al-šarqiyyah*, as the Arabs labelled it, was soon under the analysis of more than one personality, including the Syro-Lebanese Muslim theologian and reformer *al-šayḥ* Muḥammad Rašīd Riḍā (1865-1935), who played a major role in this respect. When describing the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1912) and its possible consequences, *al-šayḥ* was certain about one fact: it would lead to further catastrophes in the Arab-Ottoman world. Foremost, the Sublime Porte was threatened with destruction: thus, he wondered what the

<sup>5</sup> On Farah Anṭūn and his activity, see the milestone book D.M. Reid, *The Odyssey of Farah Anṭūn: A Syrian Christian's Quest for Secularism*, Bibliotheca Islamica, Minneapolis 1975. See also M. Avino, *L'Occidente nella cultura araba dal 1876 al 1935*, cit., *passim*; P. Viviani, *Un maestro del Novecento arabo. Farah Anṭūn*, cit.

<sup>6</sup> P. Viviani, *Lo šayḥ Muḥammad Rašīd Riḍā sulla guerra italo-turca (1911-1912). Spunti di riflessione*, in *Itinerari di culture* 3, a cura di M. Cariello, E. Falivene, C. Saggiomo, P. Viviani, S. Obad, Loffredo, Napoli 2016, pp. 229-241; Ead., *L'Italia nella campagna di Siria e Palestina: le «impressioni della Guerra d'Oriente» di Gustavo Pesenti*, in *L'Italia a cento anni dalla Grande Guerra. Miti, interpretazioni, politiche industriali*, a cura di G. Cirillo, MIBACT, Roma 2017, pp. 91-115. *al-Šayḥ* Muḥammad Rašīd Riḍā's literary and socio-political activity has been undergoing a deeper and deeper scrutiny in the latest decades. Among the many studies devoted to him and his famous journal, see also the aforementioned monograph F. Zemmin, *Modernity in Islamic Tradition: The Concept of 'Society' in the Journal al-Manar (Cairo, 1898-1940)*, cit.

destiny of the Arabs would be, given that the Ottoman Empire *was* an obstacle and a defence against Western greed. In *al-šayḥ* Muḥammad Rašīd Riḍā's opinion, it was also a bulwark of Arabic religiosity and Muslim faith against people more often interested only in the material facets of life such as political and economic power, and subjugation of the poorest and weakest in the world. Moreover – we must add in the wake of the ideas spread by the vast majority of the Arab thinkers of the period, no matter what their religion was –, the possible eclipse of the Sublime Porte was threatening Eastern and Arabic culture and civilisation with destruction, due to the overwhelming impact of Western and especially European culture and civilisation. Despite the amazing evolution of the latter, which was something to be praised and emulated by the peoples of the Orient for the sake of development, the greed of the great powers was patently clear and could easily put an end to the particular customs and habits of Arab-Ottoman society, as well as its special virtues.

The debate on these very critical and fundamental issues was not new. It had been spreading among the Arabs for decades, long before the start of the Italo-Turkish War, which simply resumed it in a highly dramatic and urgent way. Furthermore, reflections concerning this crucial topic had been and were constantly expressed through articles in journals and magazines, exactly the way *al-šayḥ* Muḥammad Rašīd Riḍā did. Indeed, many authors continued to entrust their opinions to the press, and other publications as well, i.e. in literary works, essays, studies and pamphlets<sup>7</sup>. One of them was Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād who, following the example of his colleagues and friends, also dealt – in novels, poems, essays and newspaper articles – with the adversarial and ambivalent relationship between Western and Eastern ideals, values, politics and intent, and the consequences of these on the existence of the Arab (and Ottoman) people<sup>8</sup>. Generally speaking, he moved along an already familiar path, but he did so in a very surprising way, characterised by extreme tact, finesse, and

<sup>7</sup> Among the first Arab intellectuals who dealt with this pivotal issue there was Buṭrus al-Bustānī (1819-1893). See, for instance, Buṭrus al-Bustani, *The Clarion of Syria. A Patriot's Call against the Civil War of 1860*, Introduced and Translated by Jens Hanssen and Hicham Safieddin, Foreword by Ussama Makdisi, University of California Press, Oakland 2019, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> He was much influenced by his predecessors, and especially by his friend and brother-in-law Farah Anṭūn, who, along with many other writers, managed to explain pros and cons of Western culture and civilisation as understood and adopted by Oriental individuals and societies. P. Viviani, *Un maestro del Novecento arabo. Farah Anṭūn*, cit., *passim*; Ead., *Farah Anṭūn e l'America*, in *Scritti in onore di Clelia Sarnelli Cerqua* (volume monografico di *Studi Magrebini*, vol. XXVI, 1998-2002), a cura di C. Baffioni, Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Napoli 2004, pp. 269-291.

politeness, features which however could not veil his deep knowledge of the topics he dealt with, not to mention the extreme scrupulousness, seriousness and mindfulness he demonstrated when exposing those very topics for the sake of all peoples.

*Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād and World War I*

As we know, Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād was from the Syro-Lebanese region, and was a prominent thinker and man of letters who, like so many colleagues sharing the same Levantine origins and based mainly in Alexandria and Cairo, greatly devoted himself to the reinforcement and development of the Arab world and its people in the *Nahḍah* period and up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. A prolific novelist, poet, treatise writer and journalist, Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād was and still is appreciated for his particular focus on socio-political, economic and psychological issues, as well as for his deep sensitivity and insight in dealing with thorny questions like love and marriage, family relationships, gender problems and female rights/duties, class differences, poverty, unemployment and the peculiarities of Eastern and Western society, to mention but few of the topics he touched on in his long career<sup>9</sup>. He was also one of the Arab intellectuals responsible for importing and spreading Western Socialism in its various forms in their society, thereby becoming one of its main analysts and communicators through literature and journalism, and has been especially studied for this peculiar “affiliation”. His background as a teacher and chemist; his love for language and literature; his interest in the behaviour of people either as individuals or as effective and active members of a collective body, that being human society, and his deep attraction and fascination with economics and its profound influence on the existence of the poor (he followed the theories of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century American economist Henry George, for instance)<sup>10</sup> also clearly emerge from the articles that appeared in “al-Hilāl” during and soon after the world conflict.

With regard to al-Ḥaddād’s involvement in “al-Hilāl”, it is important to remember that he had first contributed to it in his early youth, in 1893,

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<sup>9</sup> Apart from many interesting and groundbreaking novels and poems, and his well-known divulgative work in the field of economics, he is indeed the author also of research in a number of other scientific disciplines, among which sociology and ethics. As far as sociology is concerned, see afterwards, p. 60. Several works by al-Ḥaddād are available online at <https://www.hindawi.org/contributors/60483937/>.

<sup>10</sup> P. Viviani, «La scuola del mondo sul Ponte di Brooklyn»: *uno scritto dell'intellettuale siro-libanese Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād (1872-1954)*, cit., *passim*.

submitting an article on the education of children<sup>11</sup>, which he sent to the magazine from his native village in Lebanon. Twenty-one years on from this journalistic experience, when World War I broke out in 1914, Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād began a new and fruitful collaboration with the editorial staff of Zaydān's magazine in October, which lasted slightly more than three decades, until 1946, despite some interruptions, two of which were lengthy indeed (1921-1927; 1927-1932). Precisely in 1914 he also worked for "al-Muqtaṭaf", from March until November, when he finally devoted himself to "al-Hilāl" and a significant discourse on the Great War and the new world it would lead to<sup>12</sup>. This emerges in the very first article, inaugurating the aforementioned series entitled *Taṭawwur al-umam...* which, as we should remember, was produced between November 1914 and January 1915. The article is divided into sections preceded by two paragraphs. The first very brief but illuminating; the second, equally meaningful, begins with the words: «Tulawwanu 'l-nawāmīs al-'āmmah fī 'l-'awālim al-muḥtalifah» («In the different kingdoms general laws have various nuances»). Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād cleverly and interestingly explains:

In all its vital movements, society (*al-hay'ah al-iḡtimā'iyah*) is subject to general natural laws which are at work in all the kingdoms of nature, be it the animal, the plant or the mineral kingdom. If we consider these general laws and the way they work within these bodies, we can easily predict what the future of the nations and their destiny will be, especially those of the European nations after this Great War.

In the different kingdoms general laws have various nuances, in view of the fact that in each of them, every single law seems to us to be different than it is in the others. That is why its names [also] differ with the differing of the kingdoms that are subject to this law<sup>13</sup>.

al-Ḥaddād, then, shows his readership that, despite the distinctions deriving from the specific aspects inherent to each kingdom of nature as well as each phenomenon in the whole of creation, both these kingdoms and these phenomena are subject to the same natural laws, which however are usually named differently. Hence the confusion one may feel when ana-

<sup>11</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *Tarbiyat al-awlād*, in "al-Hilāl", 1, 7 (I mārs 1893), pp. 258-260.

<sup>12</sup> He contributed to many other journals and magazines. Before 1914, for instance, he wrote for "al-Rā'id al-miṣrī" (1896); "al-Ġāmi'ah", founded by his brother-in-law; his wife Rūzā Anṭūn's magazine which, first entitled "al-Sayyidāt wa 'l-banāt" (1903-1906), became "al-Sayyidāt" (1921-1925) and, then, "al-Sayyidāt wa 'l-riḡāl" (1925-1930); and "al-Muqtaṭaf", of course. In the interwar period and after 1945, not only did he contribute on a regular basis to "al-Muqtaṭaf" and "al-Hilāl", while supporting his spouse in her journalistic efforts, but he also gave his support to "al-Adīb" (1942-1983) and "al-Risālah" (1932-1952), among others.

<sup>13</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *Taṭawwur al-umam...*, 23, 2, cit., p. 103.

lysing a particular situation<sup>14</sup>. al-Ḥaddād takes the law of attraction or mutual attraction (*al-ḡaḍab/al-taḡāḍub*) as an analogy to describe how this process works in the various kingdoms, and the names by which this single law is known. On *al-ḡaḍab/al-taḡāḍub* and its relationship with human beings, he writes that the law of attraction or mutual attraction is known, «among human groups (*ḡamā'āt al-insān*), as league (*ḡāmi'ah*), or by other synonyms expressing any condition of association (*iḡtimā'*). If we look closely, what unites individuals in society, ants in colonies, pigeons in flocks, living vesicles in animals or plants, chemical particles of matter in vesicles, and atoms in molecules» is always *al-ḡaḍab/al-taḡāḍub*, «which is just a general term attributed to all these combinations»<sup>15</sup>. Indeed, through this introduction, the writer immediately shows his readers one of the major natural principles or laws at work in every sphere of the universe and of human experience, and fundamental both in the creation and development of all kingdoms. When people unite in a community (*ummah*) or league (*ḡāmi'ah*), it means that *al-ḡaḍab/al-taḡāḍub* is in action; very significantly, community, league, social group are founded on the element of attraction, that is *al-maṣlahah al-muṣṭarakah*, the common interest, which consists of «all those elements which, from a given perspective, are considered useful by the individuals forming the group»<sup>16</sup>. Among such elements, there are convergent «religious, economic and political goals and aspirations»<sup>17</sup>. Within one only group, there are or there may be several sub-groups, whose members are linked to each other by particular interests and elements of attraction. Among them, the most relevant are:

1) Belief, be it of a religious, scientific, political or economic kind<sup>18</sup>;

2) Language: it is the means of mutual comprehension *par excellence* and it helps people share ideas; it is sometimes even more important than belief, because it conveys and preserves the belief itself, and habits and customs as well<sup>19</sup>;

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105. He gives the example of the Jews, who, despite their diaspora, keep up the same belief, traditions, etc.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* In this regard, al-Ḥaddād energetically hints at the special and fruitful relationship that was established in the past between dominators and the dominated in Syria, when Greeks first and then Romans subjugated the region culturally and politically.

3) Politics, «in the broadest sense of the word»<sup>20</sup>;

4) Climate: it can create a bond between different people only in the case other elements already unite them<sup>21</sup>;

5) Hereditariness<sup>22</sup>.

The other two principles or natural laws which these kingdoms and these phenomena subject to are: (mutual) contrast/fighting or even repulsion (*al-tanāzu* / *al-tadāfu*'), and change (*al-taḥawwul*)<sup>23</sup>. However, before delving into al-Ḥaddād's discussion on these three laws and the other issues to be found in this series of articles, in order to both contextualise and better understand his words and his position it is worth mentioning the usage and meaning of the syntagm *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah*, which linguistically renders the pivotal concept underlying his discourse. We will also draw attention to other words he uses in this text, in particular *ğamā'āt* (sing. *ğamā'ah*) and *iğtimā'*.

First of all, it is worth noting that *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah* was the most widespread Arabic translation for the European concept of "society" in the 1800s and up to the 1920s-1930s, when it was substituted – as Florian Zemmin recalls – by the term *muğtama'*<sup>24</sup>. In his work, Zemmin also summarises the views of various scholars on the intellectual and linguistic transposition, and use, of the concept of "society" within the Arab-Ottoman world, and these perspectives are in the most part founded on the analysis of articles, essays, pamphlets and other production by Nahdawist Christian intellectuals, whose importance in this and many other fields proved to be fundamental in that particular period. Zemmin primarily focuses on Buṭrus al-Bustānī, who is seemingly the first one to have used *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah* "prominently" from 1869, when he stated: «By society (*al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah*) is meant the inhabitants of a country or city, who have shared interests [...], or, better put, it is the state resulting from human association [...]. And the true and material basis [...] of hu-

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* He pinpoints the importance of politics in the break-out of the American Revolution.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* In al-Ḥaddād's opinion, this happened with African slaves in America, and Spanish and Portuguese when they settled in the New Continent. As a matter of fact, these people were affected by American climate to the point that they met with a development unknown to their fellow countrymen remained at home.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>24</sup> The first occurrence of *muğtama'* in the sense attributed until then to *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah* is to be found in *Elias' Modern Dictionary*, al-Maṭba'ah al-‘Aşriyyah, al-Qāhirah 1922. F. Zemmin, *Modernity in Islamic Tradition: The Concept of 'Society' in the Journal al-Manar (Cairo, 1898-1940)*, cit., paragraph 6.2.

man social association is the needs of individuals and their fears »<sup>25</sup>. In those same years, in al-Bustānī's innovative dictionary *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ* we see the definition – according to the translation of Ilham Khuri Makdisi, whose study of the social and the use of it made by Christian intellectuals has led to interesting outcomes<sup>26</sup> – of *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah* as «the condition that results from the gathering [...] of a people or of kinsfolk [...] who have *common benefits/interests*<sup>27</sup> [...]»<sup>28</sup>. Again, Khuri Makdisi stresses the link – and the subservience – existing in the debates of the 1860s-1870s – between «the notion of society, expressed as social body/social configuration (*al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah*)» and the notion of civilisation (*tamaddun*)<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, a healthy social body/society began to be considered as the essential condition for civilisation, and these two concepts would finally be equated<sup>30</sup>. In a way, both the definitions of al-Bustānī quoted above, and the successive reflections on the same subject remind us of the Khaldunian concept of (*ilm*) *al-'umrān*, however problematic the act of conveying the exact meaning of such an expression and of finding a most suitable translation for it has proved to be over the centuries. Notoriously, many scholars have been tackling this very difficult challenge<sup>31</sup>;

<sup>25</sup> Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *Ḥiṭāb fī 'l-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah wa 'l-muqābalah bayn al-'aqā'id al-'arabiyyah wa 'l-ifranğiyyah* (Treatise on Society and a Comparison between Arab and European Customs, 1869), in Ğān Dāyah, *al-'Ālim Buṭrus al-Bustānī. Dirāsah wa waṭā'iq*, Manšūrāt Mağallat Fikr, Bayrūt 1981, pp. 163 ff., quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>26</sup> Ilham Khuri Makdisi, *The Conceptualization of the Social in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Arabic Thought and Language*, in *A Global Conceptual History of Asia, 1860-1940*, Edited by H. Schulz-Forberg, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), London-New York 2014, p. 95. See also by the same author *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914*, University of California Press, Oakland 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Italics are Khuri Makdisi's.

<sup>28</sup> Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ: Qāmūs mutaḥawwal li 'l-luğah al-'arabiyyah* (The Encompasser of the Ocean [or The Ocean's Ocean]: an Extensive – or Long – Dictionary of Arabic Language), s.n., Bayrūt 1867-1870, quoted in Ilham Khuri Makdisi, *The Conceptualization of the Social in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Arabic Thought and Language*, cit., p. 95.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Needless to say, there is a vast bibliography on both Ibn Ḥaldūn's theorisation of (*ilm*) *al-'umrān*, one of the core concepts in his *Muqaddimah*, and its meaning(s)/translation(s). See, for instance, Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism. Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1988, p. 22.

nonetheless, we find an overlapping of different concepts when trying to crystallise the true meaning of (*'ilm*) *al-'umrān*, and especially those of (science of the) body social/society, with urbanisation up to civilisation. What is relevant here is the fact that, just as the *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah*, (*'ilm*) *al-'umrān* of the Tunisian historiographer implies a "human association", living and working together based on cooperation, the latter being the real means of satisfying one's own needs as well as of overcoming one's own fears, i.e. earning a living, and defence from threatening people and beasts<sup>32</sup>. It is patently clear indeed to what extent Nahdawist (Christian) intellectuals drew on the theorisation by Ibn Ḥaldūn, whom they held in the highest consideration. At the same time, however, those literati and activists attempted to go beyond it by developing the concept of society/civilisation as coined by Ibn Ḥaldūn himself. Ilham Khuri Makdisi explains the issue by founding her conclusions on Buṭrus al-Bustānī's words, and even more on one article that appeared in his magazine "al-Ġinān" (1870-1886) in 1875 and authored by the Christian Syro-Lebanese playwright Saḫīm al-Naqqāš (1850-1884). She underlines the similarities and the dissimilarities existing between al-Naqqāš – and the other Nahdawist Christian intellectuals next to him and al-Bustānī – and Ibn Ḥaldūn himself. The latter, however, was the Arabic point of reference to these thinkers and reformers, who tried to look at modernity and future without neglecting the figures populating their own cultural past whose ideas had been an indubitable landmark. In those decades, these ancient Arab personalities were considered to be inspiring even by the highly civilised Europeans, those same people from whom the Arabs were willing to learn the way by which their own world as a whole could better improve and develop<sup>33</sup>.

Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād's position is also studied by Zemmin, who underscores his disagreement with the statement according to which the 14th-15th century Tunisian historiographer had been a sociologist hundreds of years before sociology was officially created as a discipline in the 19th century. Moreover, al-Ḥaddād claimed that he was the one who had laid the foundation of sociology in the Arab world. As a matter of fact, the Syro-Lebanese thinker believed that he himself was the founder of this science among the Arabs, as he wrote in his seminal book on sociology<sup>34</sup>,

<sup>32</sup> 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Ḥaldūn*, Dār Ṣādir, Bayrūt 2000 (al-ṭab'ah al-ūlā), p. 39.

<sup>33</sup> Ilham Khuri Makdisi, *The Conceptualization of the Social in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Arabic Thought and Language*, cit., pp. 96-97.

<sup>34</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *'Ilm al-iğtimā'ī. Ḥayāt al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah wa taṭawwuruhā* (Sociology. The Life of Society and its Development), 2 vols., al-Maṭba'ah al-'Aṣriyyah, al-Qāhirah 1924-1925. It must be underlined that already in 1919 a book on this topic had been published: *Ta'rīḥ 'ilm al-iğtimā'ī* (History of Sociology) by the distinguished Egyptian author Muḥammad Luṭfī Ġum'ah (1886-1953).

since Ibn Ḥaldūn «did not discern universal principles or laws on which a proper science could be based»<sup>35</sup>. In his own book, al-Ḥaddād seems to be predominantly using the phrase *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah* as a reference to «the group of people forming a society»<sup>36</sup>. But how did he use it before? More precisely, how did he use it in the articles we are analysing in this paper?

Before answering this question, and delving into the ideas which he divulged through “al-Hilāl” in the critical period of time under analysis, it is important to repeat what the Nahdawists who had preceded him really meant by *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah*: in summary, it can be said that this latter was seen as «a living organism, whose health depended on the health of its every part and on the good functioning of the whole [...]»<sup>37</sup>. Bearing this in mind, we can then wonder as to whether al-Ḥaddād’s own concept of *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah*, as overtly expressed soon after the Sublime Porte entered the war, was consequential to the idea of society as a living organism of his predecessors and colleagues, or whether his was a different kind of concept, akin to the previously mentioned *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah* as «the group of people forming a society», which he appeared to be theorising in his 1924-1925 book on sociology.

When re-reading the previously mentioned *incipit* of *Tatawwur al-umam...*, and especially after following, at least in part, the intellectual debate on the delicate issue of finding the exact term and definition for the European concept of society, we can say that in *al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah* as used by al-Ḥaddād, it is first and foremost seen as a “living organism”, at this point. Indeed, he writes: «In all its vital movements, society [or the body social<sup>38</sup>] is subject to general natural laws which are at work in all the kingdoms of nature, be it the animal, the plant or the mineral kingdom». In addition, and what is very striking, is the Syro-Lebanese thinker’s firm determination in asserting that: «If we consider these general laws and the way they work within these bodies, we can easily predict what the future of the nations and their destiny will be, especially those of the European nations after this Great War». In effect, the latter sentence is almost staggering to read, because it seems to reveal unusual harshness, which might be seen as the result of, or may lead to, tension.

<sup>35</sup> F. Zemmin, *Modernity in Islamic Tradition: The Concept of ‘Society’ in the Journal al-Manar (Cairo, 1898-1940)*, cit., p. 272.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>37</sup> Ilham Khuri Makdisi, *The Conceptualization of the Social in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Arabic Thought and Language*, cit., p. 101.

<sup>38</sup> We can now adjoin and better specify, in the wake of the discussion that has been carried on so far.

In turn, such tension is immediately defused later by al-Ḥaddād himself, since he lets his purely scientific side prevail in order to show his readership precisely how the mechanism behind this phenomenon exactly works.

As the above quotations show, Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād instantly creates a definitive connection between his life-long own concerns and the main concern of the entire world in those days. Thus, he closely links the study of the dynamics inherent in the laws ruling every single living body on Earth and in the universe – and their inexorable and scientifically demonstrated influence on social life – to the analysis of the present and dramatic situation, in the desperate attempt – this is at least my feeling – to help both himself and his entire readership. Given this grave and difficult juncture, they were all worried for the whole world and, to recall it once again, for the future of the Ottoman and Arab world, which was the major concern of both al-Ḥaddād and his readers. Thus, when studying the general laws at work in the various kingdoms in order to predict the destiny of the European nations after the Great War, he is obviously attempting to foresee the destiny of his own nation and its subjects. In addition, he seems to be doing so by reminding himself, and conveying to the readers, to what extent this war works according to laws and principles familiar to all scientists, and which all people interested in science likewise know well. In this way, even so tragic an event – whose undoubtedly nefarious consequences terrify all who happen to experience it, be it from near or far – can be rationally analysed and, in a sense, understood, in its birth, evolution and outcomes.

We read that al-Ḥaddād's explanation of this phenomenon is based on a description of the three fundamental principles of attraction or mutual attraction, (mutual) contrast/fighting/repellence, and change. The first we have previously summarised based on the outlines provided by al-Ḥaddād himself. As for the second principle, that of (mutual) contrast/fighting/repulsion (*al-tanāzu'*/*al-tadāfu'*), the writer also sketches it in a simple way so as to reach out to a broad target. In the section "al-Tanāzu'", al-Ḥaddād chiefly underlines that *al-tadāfu'* would have been a more appropriate term to use in the title, because *al-tanāzu'* should only apply to *al-ḥarakāt al-ḥayāwīyyah* (vital movements)<sup>39</sup>. Thus, while the two terms share the same general meaning, they differentiate from one another on the basis of the elements involved. Some vivid examples are provided by the writer, who finally deals with *al-tanāzu'*, which had by then become one of the principal subjects ever debated, thanks to the studies carried on by Charles Darwin, who showed what "survival of the fittest" (in Arabic, *tanāzu' al-baqā'*) meant. In particular, al-Ḥaddād focuses on *al-tanāzu'*

<sup>39</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *Taṭawwur al-umam...*, 23, 2, cit., p. 108.

among individuals and animals, and their specific nature. We could say that human beings are not slave to *al-tanāzu* ' as animals are, because of laws and rules both political and religious, and rules that prevent them from behaving like beasts. The truth is that evolved individuals legislate. Consequently, it can be said that an advanced community (or nation, *ummah*) is the entity where legislation and the act of legislating are evolved, that is where «safety, justice and peace» exist<sup>40</sup>, as opposed to what happens in undeveloped communities and nations. Again, al-Ḥaddād continues, a social group will be truly developed when *al-tanāzu* ' is eradicated from it; and that will be the case only when it fully and freely accepts and permits law and legislation<sup>41</sup>. In that moment, human communities will be able to become one only group without being affected from the desire to fight one another<sup>42</sup>. Here – in a very gentle and scientific manner we can say – al-Ḥaddād introduces his discourse on the «just Socialist regime» characterising the world of the ants, and human society (*al-hay'ah al-iğtimā'iyah al-bašariyyah*), since ants are to microbes as human beings are to beasts: both ants and man live thanks to attraction, whereas microbes and beasts live thanks to fighting and repulsion<sup>43</sup>.

As far as the principle of change (*al-taḥawwul*) is concerned, it is the element devoted to helping social groups and communities/nations on their path towards unity<sup>44</sup>, the latter being both the reason why the natural law of change works within every living organism, and its final purpose. In al-Ḥaddād's description, this depends on the fact that social groups and communities/nations are subject to various kinds of change, just like every other living organism within the three natural kingdoms. Indeed, all of them are born, develop and die. Moreover, all of them depend on a multiplicity of factors, qualities and equipment provided by nature, which characterise every organism and every society; what is more, they are all subject to *hadam* (*al-qaḍīm*) and *binā'* (*al-ğadīd*), i.e. destruction (of the old) and construction (of the new)<sup>45</sup>, a further form of change as well as «another demonstration that the social group is a body that accepts development and change just as every other living organism»<sup>46</sup>. It is for these reasons that people have, for instance, different skin colours, different

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *Taḥawwur al-umam...*, 23, 3, cit., p. 205.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

tastes, different religions, and so on. Indeed, civilisation emerged thanks to change and its varieties, as did equality and law, from dark phases in human development. More importantly, aristocracy mutated into democracy, slavery was abolished and freedom appeared, which may lead observers to envisage the achievement of the same level of development by communities/nations, thus coming closer and closer to a condition of harmony and unity<sup>47</sup>. Destruction and construction, in turn, are exemplified by revolutions and «economic, political and religious reform»<sup>48</sup>.

At this point, al-Ḥaddād moves on to discuss the next major issue he intends to focus on, i.e. the response of society as a whole to World War I. In other words: he wonders to what extent and in what way this conflict is going to affect the existence of society, as a living organism, throughout the world. In effect, given the premises he described so far, al-Ḥaddād felt that he was able to foresee the future of all nations, and especially the future of the European great powers involved, precisely because they were living organisms subject to the previously outlined laws and principles.

In the third article of the series under analysis, al-Ḥaddād first highlights the lack of a true and firm "society" in the world. The most obvious and clear demonstration of that being the break-out of internal and international strife, revolutions and conflicts, which implies the absence of a «perfect social body» made up of «individuals and groups» working together for a single goal: «human happiness and the conservation of society itself»<sup>49</sup>. Indeed, *al-tanāzu'* and *al-taḡāḍub* are to be found here: the former tends to separate elements when they are within heterogeneous groups, while the latter tends to unite elements within a group in order to form a homogeneous group. On the other hand, *al-taḥawwul* is central in helping groups develop and join with each other to create a greater community of nations with a main goal of achieving greater levels of peace and happiness for mankind<sup>50</sup>.

Now, if these natural laws were to operate as expected, al-Ḥaddād foresaw a development in the European nations. That becomes clear in a number of fields and occasions, and results in some significant consequences. Firstly, in countries made up of different social groups subject to one only political regime, there will necessarily be a separation of these groups from one another so that each of them can create its own independent State-nation with one single community sharing the same "qualities", i.e. language, ethnicity, and so on. When this separation is

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *Taḥawwur al-umam...*, 23, 4, cit., p. 301.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302.

completed, *al-taḡāḏub* will work to the detriment of *al-tanāzu*<sup>51</sup>. Secondly, this will also lead the new social and political entities to focus on their own evolution, thus neglecting any possible contrasts with other countries as well as eliminating *al-tanāzu* at an international level. Indeed, these countries will begin mutual competition, or emulation of the most civilised nations, in order to transform into more and more developed entities. In this way, they will fully experience the principle of *al-taḥawwul*<sup>52</sup>. Thirdly, aristocracy will give way to democracy, because all the people who witnessed and were the victims of unspeakable pain and horror will compel the elite, as well as governments, to adopt a democratic political system, which is the most effective means of avoiding despotism, and averting the danger of fanaticism among the subjects. Democracy is certainly the clearest demonstration of evolution, and implies unwillingness to wage war, as showed by three democratic countries, i.e. the United Kingdom, France and Belgium, before they entered this world conflict; on the contrary, the attitude adopted by Germany and Austria (where aristocracy still dominated) was absolutely different<sup>53</sup>. Again, al-Ḥaddād goes on, Socialism will have the chance to firmly affirm itself, given the enormous monetary and employment losses suffered by the vast majority of the populations involved in the World War<sup>54</sup>. Hopefully, arbitration will spread more and more, since one cannot deny that struggle and conflict may happen even within a pacified world. The importance of arbitration is indeed demonstrated by the actions of some European countries, like the United Kingdom<sup>55</sup>.

al-Ḥaddād focuses then on another critical issue: political communities where a minority lives side by side with and is strictly linked to a majority, as it happens within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans and some Austrian regions. Religion, language, habits differentiate them, but they are politically and emotively one only body. A solution to such condition must be found, even though it could lead to so much pain. What would be the best ways to solve this problem? al-Ḥaddād finds them in four fundamental elements: 1) plodding on, which may however be made difficult due to the different languages spoken, as well as by the different religions practised; 2) merger by acquisition of the minority into the majority of the population; 3) the migration of the minority members to a country where their community is already the ma-

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.

majority of the population. The solution envisaged in point 3) would help avoid what is briefly discussed in point 4), that being conflict between a majority and a minority, which would in any case lead to migration, oppression and abuse<sup>56</sup>.

al-Ḥaddād also states that the development of the European powers would not stop with the end of this awful war. On the contrary: a stronger and united Europe would be expected to rise from the ashes. More importantly, this would take all possible steps to preserve peace and bring happiness to all citizens<sup>57</sup>. Finally, al-Ḥaddād foresees a further, negative result, that being a recrudescence in West/East relations, which could be overcome by the East increasingly adopting Western customs<sup>58</sup>. These final sentences could evoke some perplexity, if we consider al-Ḥaddād's attitude towards some habits to be found in the Western world. Nonetheless, he is now the spokesman of an entire community struck and frightened by the atrocities they are witnessing; more importantly, he is perhaps referring to specific Western customs, those being democracy and Socialism. He could not but express his own ideas through a ploy.

On the basis of his argument, we could say that al-Ḥaddād describes society in these articles as a living organism consisting of a group of people forming a society: he thus follows the path laid by his Nahdawist Christian colleagues and, at the same time, introduces a concept destined to form the core of his own future discourse on the subject.

### *Conclusions*

As previously mentioned, the writings that make up the series of articles *Taṭawwur al-umam...* effectively mark the start of al-Ḥaddād's cooperation with "al-Hilāl" in the 20th century, and it must be stressed that they altogether embody just one of the instances of the way al-Ḥaddād – in the initial phase of his new collaboration with the magazine, and during and after the conflict's years – delved into the matter of war. His articles published in this magazine deal with various subjects, but they often take on with the concept of war from different standpoints, such as its origins, its relationship with Socialism and economics, its consequences in Syria and so on. Indeed, al-Ḥaddād did not always deal directly with World War I and its events, but rather preferred to reflect on "war", and World War I in particular, of course, as a natural, historical and sociological phenomenon; or on the development of nations and their behaviour from a scientific point of view, while always revealing the links between his words and the particular context in which he was writing them. In a sim-

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 304-305.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

ilar way, in the post-war period he would specifically focus on its economic consequences, which obviously had a tremendous impact on the lives of people (usually the weakest), as History has shown.

This latter theme appeared, though briefly, in the texts discussed so far, and would be thoroughly dealt with again, for instance in 1919 in the article *al-Ḥālah al-iqtisādiyyah...*, which is a long and detailed outline devoted to this issue so dear to Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād. Like all his other articles published during those years, this one would be deserving of a complete analysis. Nevertheless, it suffices to say here that al-Ḥaddād comments on a thought he had previously highlighted in 1914, however ironically tragic it might sound in the post-war period. Indeed, despite all the ugly deeds it caused, the Great War resulted in something absolutely good: a new freedom, a new awareness for normal people and workers, those who truly represent the bulk of human society throughout the world. Ultimately, it strengthened Socialism, which would reveal its true (positive) essence more and more in the years to come. In this article, al-Ḥaddād explains that he intends to answer all the questions asked by people, and workers especially, about their present and future, increasing prices and so on. He does that in his own peculiar way, by showing both profound realism and optimism. He puts forward analyses, solutions and proposals. Above all, he tries to reassure and appease people by reminding them to what extent this war helped them conquer a great deal, if compared to the dubious and very few benefits they had in the years and decades preceding this “revolutionary” war. It is true, however, that these words contrast with the reality of some of the terrible events brought about by the war itself and experienced in the Greater Syria. Consider, for instance, of the tragic situation lived by the Syro-Lebanese people who suffered a tragically famous famine, also recorded and described, though very briefly, by the Italian Colonel Gustavo Pesenti, who was one of the heads of the Italian troops of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force’s campaign in Egypt and Palestine (1917-1919).

al-Ḥaddād was from Greater Syria, of course, and he could not forget or underestimate the pain of his brothers. Rather, he aimed at conveying a precise message, which he had begun to divulge, more or less timidly, back in 1914, in *Taṭawwur al-umam...*: the world needed a war like the Great War in order to change, to go through an authentic process of *tahawwul* which, in turn, had to submit to another process, that of *al-hadam* and *al-binā*, which is always essential and necessary in the evolution of a living body, and was extremely important those days. Otherwise, democracy (and true Socialism – in *al-Ḥālah al-iqtisādiyyah...* at least he does not appear to be writing any words of real approval for Bolshevism)

would never have a true chance to overcome aristocracy and all other forms of subjugation practised by the powerful to the detriment of the powerless<sup>59</sup>.

I would like to conclude by adding that the articles of al-Ḥaddād under analysis reveal so many characteristics and facets of this man of letters. Among them, the fact that his well-rooted scientific background is perfectly matched with a deep sense of history. These qualities give him great ability to move easily between past and present, as well as to bravely and skilfully compare data, and express insightful considerations whose value is considerable, both in the short and in the long term.

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<sup>59</sup> Niqūlā al-Ḥaddād, *al-Ḥālah al-iqtisādiyyah...*, cit. It should also be remembered that al-Ḥaddād wrote two entire books devoted to these themes: *al-Iṣtirākīyyah* (Socialism, 1920) and *al-Dīmuqrāṭīyyah: ta'rīḥuhā wa maṣīruhā* [in some sources: *masīruhā*] (Democracy: Its History and its Future).