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ESPIONAGE – MIDDLE EAST & TURKEY:

THE AUGUSTE SARROU ARCHIVE

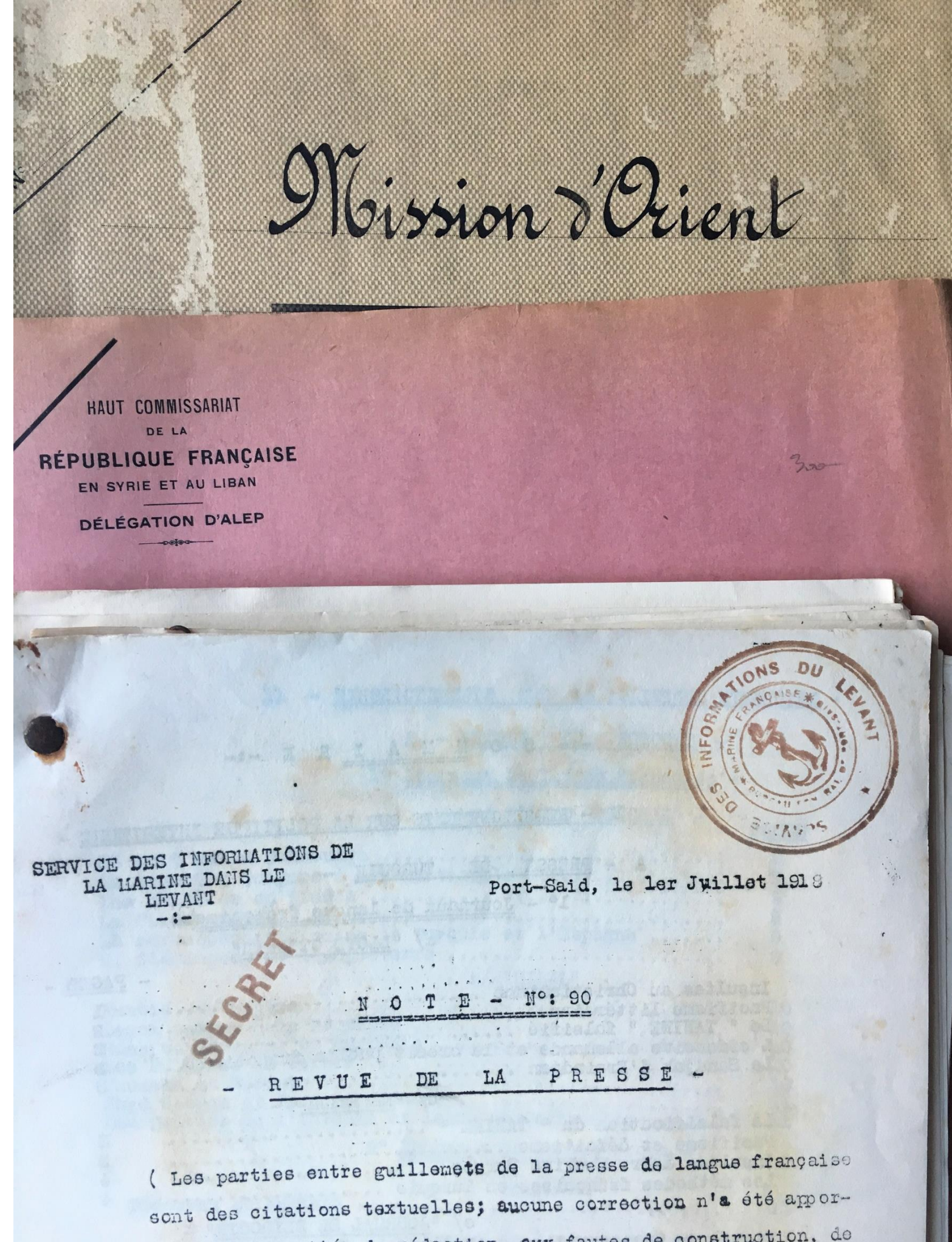
U.S. \$14,500.

A highly important and extensive archive from the secret papers of General August Sarrou (1874 - 1968), France's chief spymaster in the Levant and Turkey during the critical period between 1917 and 1923, when the Near and Middle East were completely reordered following the demise of the Ottoman Empire at the hands of the Entente Powers. It features numerous 'top secret' spy reports, correspondence and political analysis dossiers, providing a stellar insight into France's central role in shaping the destiny of Syria, Lebanon and Turkey, initially working to counteract the forces unleashed by Lawrence of Arabia during the Arab Revolt.

During the height of World War I, the Entente Powers forged a top secret accord, the Sykes-Picot Agreement (signed May 16, 1916), to carve up the Ottoman Empire if the Central Powers were vanquished. Britain was to be awarded hegemony over Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine, while France was to be given control of Syria and Lebanon. Additionally, Anatolia was to be cleaved into zones of foreign occupation, with France being promised the region of Cilicia, adjacent to Syria.

France had strong historical ties to Turkey and the Levant. From the time that François I and Suleiman the Magnificent formed the Franco-Ottoman Alliance in the 1530s, all the way up the period immediately before World War I, France was the Sublime Porte's principal foreign ally and a leading source of direct investment and technology transfer. France also assumed a role as the 'guardian' of the Ottoman Empire's Christian communities (especially Roman Catholics and Maronites), as well as enjoying special trading privileges in key Ottoman ports, the *Echelles du Levant*.

France's connection to the Levant was especially strong, as she possessed close ties to the region's large Christian minority (in Lebanon, Christians were in the majority), while maintaining important trading links with ports such as Beirut, Tripoli, Latakia and Alexandretta (Iskenderun). More recently, France was the dominant source of foreign direct investment in the region, notably financing most of the region's railways.



During World War I, Britain assumed a muscular approach towards its territorial ambitions in the Middle East. It sent large armies to invade Mesopotamia and Palestine, while supporting the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans, famously spurred by Lawrence of Arabia. While the British-Arab cause initially suffered many set-backs, eventually their efforts succeeded in conquering much of the Middle East.

France, conversely, was until the end of the war tied down fighting Germany on the Western Front and could spare only limited resources towards the Middle Eastern theatre; it was far from being able to muster an army to execute large-scale operations. France had to rely upon more subtle means to preserve influence and credibility in the region to ensure the preconditions necessary to gain control of Syria and Lebanon.

While smaller scale than the main British operations, and certainly far less ‘romantic’ than the saga of Lawrence of Arabia, the French efforts in the Middle East during and after World War I were largely successful in their initial objectives, although they left a controversial legacy that resonates to this day.

During the latter part of World War I, France established extensive and effective espionage apparatuses, using its vast network of historical connections to Ottoman officials, Christians, Alawites and even sympathetic Muslims to win support for French hegemony in Syria and Lebanon. This included a sophisticated mixture of working old friendships, espionage and counterespionage operations, propaganda campaigns, as well as outright bribery and coercion.

In the spring of 1917, France formed a special espionage command base, known as the Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant (S.I.L.), operating out of Port Said, at the mouth of the Suez Canal (then the only place in the Middle East where France enjoyed extra-territorial privileges). The S.I.L.’s mandate was to gather and analyse raw intelligence from the field and synthesize the resulting information into reports for the consumption of top-level French officials to implement policy or guide military operations.

Running in cooperation with the S.I.L.’s operations, in September 1917, Lieutenant Colonel Auguste Sarrou, a Greek-born French officer with almost a generation of professional experience operating in the Ottoman Empire, was given a ‘top secret’ assignment to develop intelligence assets in the Levant in anticipation of the Entente’s victory, as well as to develop an irregular armed force to conduct sabotage and reconnaissance operations in Cilicia. Most notably, Sarrou was charged to contact Djemal Pasha, the Ottoman War Minister, to convince him to make a separate peace with the Entente Powers, so hopefully ending the war in the Middle East. While this effort was ultimately unsuccessful, it was indicative of the high importance of Sarrou’s mandate. During the ‘Mission d’Orient’, Sarrou acted as France’s chief spymaster in the Middle East, and while not as high profile as some of his British counterparts, he was arguably more effective. A brilliant analyst of the scene, his recommendations for the future development of Syria and Lebanon served as the blueprints for French policy in the post war period.

Upon the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, Britain found itself in pole position. British-Arab forces had conquered Iraq, Palestine and, to the detriment of France, were the first to march into Damascus. In the wake of the Paris Peace Conference, the Entente Powers enforced the Treaties of Sèvres (August 10, 1920) upon the doomed Sublime Porte, which largely followed the designs of the formerly secret Sykes-Picot Agreement. It was ordained that Britain would be given custodianship of Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan as League of Nations ‘Mandates’, implying that

the lands would not be colonies, but rather semi-autonomous domains in a state of transition towards full independence. France was to be given a similar authority over Syria and Lebanon, although, as we will see, France had a different interpretation of the term ‘mandate’, preferring to see the designation akin to colonial hegemony. Constantinople, Eastern Thrace and Anatolia were to be de-cleaved up into zones of foreign occupation, variously controlled by the Western Entente Powers and Greece.

However, there were two realities that challenged this envisaged new order. First, Britain had dramatically ‘overpromised’ concessions to its main Arab allies, the Hashemites of Hejaz, as well as the Zionists in Palestine. To make a long story short, they had pledged Lawrence of Arabia’s old comrade, Emir Faisal of Hejaz, the throne of Syria and Lebanon, while also pledging to make a large part of Palestine into a Jewish homeland, against the interests of the region’s Arab population.

Second, while the ailing and discredited Ottoman regime reluctantly accepted the dismemberment of both its empire and Anatolia, the later design was resolutely opposed by the rising Turkish nationalist movement led by the war hero of Gallipoli, Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Atatürk), who mounted effective military opposition to the Entente and Greek occupation of Turkey, eventually evicting the foreigners from the country.

France found Britain’s concessions to Emir Faisal to be unacceptable. France had long distrusted Lawrence of Arabia and the Hashemites and generally had poor relations with the Sunni Muslims on the Levant. France and Britain became “frenemies” in the Middle East; while technically still allies, their mutual interests often clashed as they supported opposing camps. French attempts to forge an agreement with Faisal and his regional allies always seemed doomed and a large and well-trained French force decidedly defeated Faisal at the Battle of Maysalun (July 24, 1920), removing the Hashemite regime from Syria and Lebanon once and for all. France then proceeded to install a quasi-colonial rule over the country (while sectioning Lebanon into a separate state, in the interests of her pro-French Christian majority). France would proceed to dominate Syria and Lebanon for the next generation into World War II.

In the wake of Atatürk’s victory, and his foundation of the Republic of Turkey in October 1923, France, in good part due to Sarrou’s urging, mounted a volte-face, henceforth seeking to become a major economic and political supporter of the new Turkey.

The policies of Britain and France during the heady period in the wake of World War I had profound and long-lasting consequences. The interference of the Western powers in the Levant exacerbated and normalized existing sectarian tensions with consequences that have even persisted to fuel today’s Syrian Civil War.

Auguste Sarrou: France’s Chief Spymaster in the Middle East and Turkey

Auguste Sarrou (1874 – 1968) was one of the most consequential figures in espionage and diplomacy in the Middle East and Turkey over a career spanning an incredible 60 years! Born to French parents in Patras, Greece, he was largely raised in the francophone Catholic community of Pera, Constantinople, before training to join the French Army in 1899.

In 1904, Sarrou returned to the Ottoman Empire to serve as a gendarme in Macedonia (near today’s Thessaloniki, Greece). At the time, Macedonia was riven by inter-communal conflict, as

intense international pressure compelled the Ottoman Empire to allow a multi-national force of gendarmes to patrol the region and restore order. During this period, Sarrou befriended several of the leaders of the 'Young Turk' movement, most notably Djemal Pasha (the future Ottoman War Minister), who would in 1908-9 assume control to the Ottoman Empire. The present archive includes the typescript draft of the preface and first chapter of Sarrou's important book on the Young Turks, *La Jeune-Turquie et la révolution* (Paris, 1912), predicated upon his privileged access to the key players.

Leaving Constantinople just as the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers against France, Sarrou fought along the Western Front before assisting Entente troops in the evacuation from the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Sarrou, with his specialized knowledge of the Ottoman Empire and his innumerable personal contacts cultivated over many years in Constantinople and Macedonia, gained the notice of officials at the highest echelons in Paris. In 1917, France held bold ambitions to gain control over Syria, Lebanon and portions of Anatolia in the wake of an anticipated Entente victory; however, she had limited resources to enforce her claims. France desperately needed to play 'catch up', and in a bold step forwards, selected Sarrou to lead a top-secret espionage operation in Syria and Lebanon. Sarrou served as France's chief spymaster in the Middle East and Turkey from 1917 to 1923, cultivating key assets, analysing intelligence and delivering recommendations to the Quay d'Orsay that were imbued with tremendous authority, often forming the basis of official French policy.

Following Mustafa Kemal's Atatürks's complete takeover of Turkey in 1923, Sarrou served as the military attaché to the French Embassy in Ankara, and subsequently as a senior advisor to the French government, whereupon he was intermetal in solidifying the Franco-Turkish, considered to be a major diplomatic accomplishment with global implications. Sarrou remained a key player in both Turkish and Middle Eastern affairs right up past his ninetieth birthday, capping a career unrivalled in its length and diversity of action. The present archive provides precious insights into the history of the world's most dramatic region through the eyes of one of the great clandestine operators of the 20th Century; it will surely become a source for much further academic discovery.

The Auguste Sarrou Archive in Focus

The present archive consists of dozens of top-secret intelligence reports, political masterplans and field notes from the personal archive of August Sarrou. Most of the documents are typescripts or carbon copies of typescripts (many written by Sarrou), intended for distribution amongst only the most senior French military and political officials. The documents span virtually Sarrou's entire career, dating from 1908 to the 1960s, although the bulk of the documents concern the critical period from 1917 to 1923, which saw the reordering the Middle East and Turkey.

We have divided the archive into eight parts for the purpose of thematic and chronological coherence. First, is a typescript copy of Sarrou's autobiography, written at the end of his incredible 60-year-long career in espionage and diplomacy in Turkey, the Balkans and the Middle East. Second, are a series of papers relating to Sarrou's time serving as a gendarme in Macedonia in the decade prior to World War I, when he notably befriended the leaders of 'Young Turks', the movement which in 1908-9 took over the Ottoman government, before plunging the empire into global conflict.

FAYSSAL

FAYSSAL a peu de volonté. Il n'a rien des
d'un grand chef militaire ou politique. Les bédouins
"La langue d'ABOU RAZI ne sait exprimer ce qu'il a d
coeur ". Effectivement FAYSSAL bégaie et cela le dim
sidérablement aux yeux des arabes pour lesquels l'éle
un don précieux indispensable avant tout. FAYSSAL n'a
persuadé qui que ce soit par ses discours. S'il a réu
peu (très peu) à obtenir la collaboration guerrière d
tribus durant la guerre (14-18) ce n'est en aucune fa
qualités de politicien presque inexistantes qu'il le
Sans l'or anglais FAYSSAL n'aurait pas eu un bédouin
et partout où l'or lui a fait défaut ses échecs ont é
tissants.

Voici une histoire (entre nombre d'autres) qui p
édifiante et dont je garantis point pour point l'auth
ayant moi-même été témoin des faits.

En décembre 1917 FAYSSAL sous l'impulsion du Gén
ALLENBY Commandant les troupes alliées de Palestine d

Third, is a series of papers that outline Sarrou's top-secret 'Mission d'Orient', the grand espionage operation to support France's ambitions in Syria, Lebanon and Anatolia.

Fourth, are a series of highly important and secret analytical reports written by Sarrou providing a 'game plan' for how France should rule Syria and Lebanon. Importantly, the Quay d'Orsay largely followed Sarrou's advice as matters unfolded. Notable, is Sarrou's brutally unflattering assessment of Emir Faisal, Lawrence of Arabia's old comrade, who briefly became the King of Syria. Additionally, there is an intriguing manuscript report of a meeting held between Arab intellectuals and Djemal Pasha, the Ottoman War Minister, the day before the fall of Damascus; as well as a series of fascinating reports concerning the 1921 attempted assassination of General Henri Gouraud, the French High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon, one of the most dramatic events in the Middle East during the period.

Fifth, are a series of 25 typescript "Secret" spy reports compiled by the Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant (S.I.L.) in Port Said in 1918 and 1919. These communiqués contain fascinating and highly valuable raw field intelligence on Anti-French elements throughout the Middle East, as well as the efforts of French assets to counteract these forces through counterespionage and propaganda. Many of the reports are predicated upon information supplied by the super-spy Antonin Jaussen, a Dominican priest based in Jerusalem, who maintained one of the most fruitful intelligence networks ever assembled in the region.

Sixth, is a diverse collection of typescript and manuscript research documents, as well as correspondence from key assets, assembled by Sarrou from 1919 to 1922.

Seventh, is a series of highly insightful typescript reports, written by Sarrou to advise the French government, on the situation in Turkey from 1921 to 1931, covering the rise of Atatürk's new republic and France's efforts to gain influence in Ankara.

Eighth, and finally, is a collection of letters, documents and postcards from Sarrou's mid to later career, spanning from the late 1920s until his retirement in the mid-1960s.

Many of the elements of the present archive are likely unique survivors, while a couple examples of some of the typescripts may exist in various French official archives. Importantly, the present reports written by Sarrou personally are complementary to the archive of Sarrou's documents scanned online by the SALT Galata (Ottoman Bank Museum, Istanbul), please see link:

<https://archives.saltresearch.org/simple-search?query=sarrou>

Importantly, there is not much overlap between the SALT collection and the present papers, which is appropriate given that they were all once all part of Sarrou's personal archive. The archives of the French *Ministère* des Affaires étrangères (MEA) hold a complete set of the S.I.L. reports detailed in Part V.

PART I: **SARROU'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

1.
[Auguste SARROU'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY].
Auguste SARROU.

'Souvenirs de Missions du Général Sarrou durant les années 1904 à 1964 au Moyen-Orient'. [Istanbul, 1964 or shortly thereafter].

Carbon copy of typescript, 17 pp. quarto, bound in original green card covers with typed title (Very Good).

This is an abbreviated, but detailed, account of Sarrou's life and amazing 60-year long career in his own words.

PART II: **MACEDONIA & THE 'YOUNG TURKS'**

1.
[SARROU'S EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT WITH THE MACEDONIAN GENDARMERIE].

'Entre Monsieur Hariri Pasha...Lieutenant Sarrou...'. Salonika [today Thessaloniki, Greece], May 14, 1904.

Printed form with details filled in manuscript, 1 p. large quarto (legal letter size) (Very Good, old folds).

This is the original French language version of then Lieutenant Sarrou's employment contract to join the Ottoman Gendarmerie in Macedonia in May 1904; it is signed by the local Ottoman commander, Hariri Pasha.

2.
Colonel BAUMANN.
'Mission Française de Macédonie / Rapport du Colonel Baumann, chef de la mission française en Macédonie, au sujet du mouvement national turc dans le sandjak de Serrès. (Suite au rapport no.11-A du Julliet 1908)'. Serrès, Ottoman Macedonia [Sérres, Central Macedonia, Greece], July 25, 1908.

Carbon Copy of typescript, quarto, [6 pp.], old staple upper-left corner, labelled in manuscript "annexe II" in pink crayon to first page (Very Good, first page detached).

This is an interesting account, written by Colonel Baumann, the commander of the French gendarmes in Macedonia, of some of the events that occurred in the wake of the 'Young Turk Revolution' of July 1908, whereby a group of Ottoman Army officers mounted a successful coup in Constantinople, effectively making Sultan Abdul Hamid II their puppet (they would overthrow the Sultan the following year after he attempted a counter-coup). Baumann, like Sarrou, was personally acquainted with many of the Young Turk leaders and this report is a valuable eyewitness account of events that occurred in Macedonia, an area with and restless and ethnically mixed population.

3.
Auguste SARROU:
[Draft Book Chapter]: 'Les Phases de la Révolution turque et al manoeuvre du Comité "Union et Progrès"'. [n.d., circa 1911].

Carbon copy of typescript, 11 pp. quarto, with contemporary manuscript corrections (Very Good).

In 1908-9, a group of Ottoman army officers based in Macedonia, in two actions, overthrew the government of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Formally called the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), but better known as the ‘Young Turks’, they started out supporting progressive ideals, but soon came to promote a dangerous mix of nationalism and militarism that hurtled the empire headlong into World War I. During his years in Macedonia, Sarrou formed a close personal relationships with several of the Young Turk leaders, most notably Djemal Pasha, who would later become part of the Triumvirate that ruled the Ottoman Empire during World War I.

Capitalizing upon his incredible access to the Young Turk leaders, Sarrou published *La jeune-Turquie et la révolution* (Paris, 1912), which remains a seminal academic source on the revolutionary Ottoman regime.

Present here, is one of Sarrou’s late drafts, with manuscript corrections, for what became the preface and first chapter of *La jeune-Turquie*. The draft is like, although not identical, to the text as finally published in the finished book (as pp. 1-18).

4.

Agence Télégraphique Ottomane / Péra-Constantinople, ‘Troisième Editions du 5 Aout 1914’ marked ‘3010’.

Indigo copy, 1 p. large quarto, on ‘Agence Télégraphique Ottomane / Péra-Constantinople’ letterhead (Fair, quite stained, old folds, small loss to centre of document).

This item, and the one following, are news telegrams relating to events during the opening days of World War I (importantly, the Ottoman Empire would not join the conflict until November 1914).

5.

Agence Télégraphique Ottomane / Péra-Constantinople ‘Troisième Editions du 5 Aout 1914’ marked ‘3011’.

Indigo copy, 1 p. large quarto, on ‘Agence Télégraphique Ottomane / Péra-Constantinople’ letterhead (Fair, quite stained, old folds, small loss to centre of document).

PART III:

THE ASSIGNMENT

1.

**‘La Mission d’Orient – Plan’
Paris, September 10, 1917.**

Carbon Copy of Typescript, 17 pp. quarto, bound in original card covers bearing title in mss., document signed “A. Sarrou” in mss. on final page.

This ultra-top-secret document is the official blueprint for Sarrou’s “Mission d’Orient”, as ordained by the highest levels of the French government. In anticipation of the Ottoman Empire’s defeat in World War I, Sarrou was to organize and lead an ambitious intelligence organization with a pan-Middle Eastern scope. The endeavour’s goals were to employ sophisticated and wide-ranging designs of reconnaissance, human intelligence, propaganda and counterespionage to weaken the ailing Ottoman regime, while advancing French influence throughout the region. The plan commences by setting out the seven main objectives of Sarrou’s mission, many of which were conceived as result of Sarrou’s own recommendations.

First, Sarrou was to seek out “useful people” thought the region, namely Turkish officials who might be amenable to becoming intelligence assets, or even French allies, in the event of the Ottoman Empire’s collapse. Sarrou had forged close personal relationships with innumerable Ottoman officials, most notably Djemal Pasha, the Ottoman War Minister and one member of the triumvirate the governed the empire. Second, Sarrou was to organize intelligence networks along the coasts of Turkey and the Levant for gaining economic and military information. Third, he was to create counterintelligence and reconnaissance operations relating to submarines. Fourth, Sarrou was to develop contacts with various Arab tribes in Syria and Lebanon. Fifth, he was to develop connections with Christians in Syria and well as Muslim in Egypt and Syria who might be open to cooperating with France. Sixth, Sarrou was to organize irregular armed units composed of Anatolian Greeks and others to conduct sabotage and reconnaissance operations in Anatolia. Seventh, and finally, he was to mount a propaganda campaign to harm Turkish morale, encouraging defections to the Entente side.

The body of the report provides an extremely detailed blueprint for Sarrou’s operations, including the nature of its bureaucracy and command structure; the locations of regional branch offices; the names of division commanders; as well as the budget for the enterprise.

2.

[SARROU’S MISSION OBJECTIVES].

3-Part Document:

a.)

‘But de la Mission de Commandant Sarrou’.

[n.d., but Early 1918].

Carbon Copy of Typescript, 3pp. quarto (Very Good, fixed by original pin in lower-left corner, pin a little rusty).

b.) **‘Note No. 1 / Programme d’Action’.**

[n.d., but Early 1918].

Carbon Copy of Typescript, 2 pp. quarto (Very Good).

c.)

‘Note No. 2 / Fonctionnement et dependences administratives’.

[n.d., but Early 1918].

Carbon Copy of Typescript, 2 pp. quarto (Very Good).

This is an intriguing trio of documents, made in the early months of 1918, elaborating upon the objectives and nature of Sarrou’s top secret Middle Eastern assignment, providing details on specific actions. In addition to the objectives articulated in the original September 1917 plan, these papers note that one of Sarrou’s main goals should be to try to form a schism between the Ottoman Empire and Germany, towards encouraging the Constantinople to sue for a separate peace. The Entente war effort in the Middle East was proving costly and difficult, and while eventual victory over the Turks was anticipated, the Western powers desired an early peace with the Ottomans such that they could concentrate on the conflict against Germany along the Western Front. The first document notes that British Prime Minister David Lloyd George was aware of Sarrou’s mission, viewing it as critical to the Entente powers objectives.

PART IV:

THE FRENCH TAKEOVER OF SYRIA & LEBANON

1.

[REPORT OF A MEETING WITH DJEMAL PASHA].

[Manuscript Document in Arabic text].

[Damascus, 1918].

Manuscript in indigo pen, 5 pp. quarto, with attached French “Traduction”, 17 pp. octavo, on ‘Administration Ennemie Occupées’ letterhead, all attached with original paperclip (Very Good, paperclip a touch rusty).

This important and fascinating manuscript, in Arabic text, is a report describing a meeting held between a delegation of Syrian intellectuals and Djemal Pasha, the Ottoman War Minister, on September 30, 1918 – the day before the city fell to British forces! Attached is a manuscript translation of the text in French. The meeting must have been more than a little awkward, as the departing Djemal was known in Damascus as “Jamal Basha al-Saffah” [Jamal Pasha the Bloodthirsty] due to the horrific atrocities he conducted against that city’s Arab notables.

2.

[Auguste SARROU].

‘Rapport du Chef de Batallion X sur le regime future de Syrie.’

‘Ministère de la Marine / Mission Speciale de Syrie / Object: Régime, future de la Syrie’ / Annexe No. 4

Paris, September 25, 1917.

Copy of typescript, 8 pp. quarto (printed single-sided) (Very Good, some stains from former paperclip in upper-left corner).

This important analytical work concerns the future of Syria and Lebanon and was written by Sarrou in September 1917, over year before the Entente powers conquered the region. While not publicly known, Sarrou and this report’s select readership were well-aware that Syria and Lebanon had been designated as a region of French influence should the Ottoman Empire be defeated and dismembered. However, the Quay d’Orsay was yet undecided as to what form of governance she should impose upon post-war Syria.

Here Sarrou addresses five main points: 1) the overall form of government, or the nature of the Syrian political entity; 2) the form of administration; 3) the level of French control; 4) the role of the French Army; and, finally, 5) the role of the French Navy.

On the first point, Sarrou recommends that Syria become a ‘French Protectorate’. He surmises that the Syrians would bitterly resent being designated as a ‘colony’, as they hold that their august history and high level of civilization do not merit being categorized as a entity meant for “inferior peoples”. Moreover, the Syrians will expect a high degree of internal autonomy. French power in the proposed Syrian Protectorate should be invested in the Resident General, who should be advised by delegates representing local communities. This civil administration should be supported by a standing French army of 20-30,000 troops, while gendarmes, largely formed from the local population, should maintain public order on a day-to-day basis.

On the second point, Sarrou recommends that the old Ottoman forms of jurisdictions should generally be maintained, as this accords to traditions that the people are comfortable with.

On the third point, Sarrou describes how French civil servants should be dispersed throughout Syria’s administrative organs to maintain French control.

Addressing both the fourth and fifth points, Sarrou notes that the army and navy forces stationed in Syria should be French dominated, but that they should feature sizeable Syrian contingents to ensure they gain broad public acceptance.

3.

[Auguste SARROU].

[Military and Political Critique of Emir Faisal bin Hussein].

‘Fayssal’

[n.d., likely 1919].

Copy of typescript, 5 pp. large quarto (legal letter size, printed single-sided), several minor contemporary manuscript corrections, with old pin in upper-left corner (Very Good, light even toning, pin rusty).

This is certainly one of the most important and entertaining components of the entire archive. It is a brutal takedown of France’s new arch-enemy in the Middle East, Emir Faisal, who was tipped by the British and much of its Arab population to become the new King of Syria. In devastating detail, the assessment picks apart the Hejazi prince, opining that “Faisal has little will. He has none of the qualities of a great military or political leader”.

In a detailed point-by-point attack, the document essentially portrays Faisal as a callow tool of Britain, who during the Arab Revolt of World War I was able to rally Arabs tribes and the Bedouins only by scattering British gold. The document questions Faisal’s military competence, especially with respect to his supposed famed exploits against Ottoman positions along the Hejaz Railway, and painting as an ineffective tool and follower of General Allenby and Colonel Lawrence, who were the ones truly responsible for defeating the Ottomans in the Levant and taking Damascus.

The purpose of the piece is to totally discredit Emir Faisal in the eyes of the French government. The message being that Paris should neither fear nor support such a figure.

While the document is anonymous, it was most likely penned by Auguste Sarrou, as it is in line with his sentiments towards Faisal and consistent with his writing style.

4.

[Auguste SARROU].

[Untitled Treatise on Lebanese Nationalism].

[n.d., but late 1920 or 1921].

Copy of typescript, 5 pp. large quarto (legal letter size, printed single-sided), affixed by contemporary paperclip in upper-left corner (Good, some wear and small tears to outer margins of last 2 leaves but with no loss to text, paperclip a little rusty).

This is a fascinating treatise on Lebanese nationalism, likely written by Sarrou shortly after France consented to separating Lebanon from Syria in September 1920. Unlike Syria, Lebanon was majority Christian and France had a long history protecting that community in the Levant. The analysis notes that, in addition to the Maronite Christians, the country’s sizable Muslim minority also harbours strong nationalist sentiments.

The work provides a detailed and engaging account of the nature of Lebanese nationalism and concludes with recommendations for how France should support Lebanon's ambitions as they naturally align with those of France.

5.

[Auguste SARROU].

'Musulmans et la France en Syrie'

"No. 85 de l'Index / Rédigé en décembre 1920".

[Damascus, December 1920].

Typescript in indigo and red, [1], 9 pp. large quarto (legal letter size, printed single-sided), partially titled in manuscript, tied with tricolour ribbon in upper-left corner (Very Good, light even toning, old horizontal fold).

This report, almost certainly written by Auguste Sarrou some months after France forcibly assumed complete control over Syria, contains a highly insightful and detailed game plan for bringing Syria's Muslim majority to tolerate, if not support, French rule.

It starts out by explaining how Syria's Muslims are inherently distrustful of France; they are wedded to their own customs and are used to being ruled by those of their own faith. Moreover, they resent France's traditional alliances with other communities, namely the Christians. Notably, France's tactic support of Greece in their war against Turkey is not helpful in this regard. These problems are charted in exacting detail, with considerable sensitivity.

While the challenge will be great, Sarrou holds out hope that France can eventually win the tolerance, if not the cooperation, of most of the Syrian Muslims if it follows a series of recommendations as outlined here. He suggests that the French regime openly pay its respects to key Muslim tribal and religious leaders, giving them places of honour at official ceremonies and places upon government committees. The autonomy of Muslim religious institutions must be honoured and French figures must be careful to pay all due respect to their customs. France must also give significant financial tribute to Muslim causes.

Importantly, France must actively manage propaganda, placing articles encouraging Franco-Muslim amity within popular Arabic language journals and newspapers. The French regime must also ban all books and the like that contain anti-Muslim sentiments. While France must not abandon its precious ties to Christian and other non-Muslim communities, it must refrain from being as openly partisan to their interests at the expense of the Muslims. If France seeks to actively engage the Syrian Muslims in a generous, gentle and even-handed fashion, over time the Mandatory regime will be able to gain a critical level of acceptance and cooperation.

6.

[Auguste SARROU].

[Collection of Raw Spy Reports].

[Damascus, 1920].

All carbon copies of typescripts on irregular-sized paper, many bearing dates in Mss.

i.) Small scrap – dated in mss. (pink crayon) "B.R. 24 Février 1920".

ii.) 2 pp., second page trimmed – dated in mss. (pink crayon) "B.R. 1er Mars 1920".

iii.) 2 pp., – dated in mss. (pink crayon) "30 Mars 1920".

iv.) 2 pp. trimmed scraps, – dated in mss. (pink crayon) "13 Aout 1920".

v.) 5 pp., first and last page trimmed – dated in mss. (pink crayon) "20 Aout 1920".

vi.) "B) Zone Est", 4 pp., first page trimmed scrap, N.D.

vii.) "Zone Est", 2 pp., second page trimmed scrap, N.D.

viii.) "Zone Est", 4 pp., first page trimmed scrap, N.D.

This is a series of raw intelligence reports from the critical early months of 1920, concerning affairs in Syria and Lebanon, often noting the activities of Emir Faisal, being carbon copies of typescripts on irregular-sized scraps of paper, some with dates in manuscript. They provide an interesting snapshot into the day-to-day nature of intelligence gathering.

7.

[Auguste SARROU].

[PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF GENERAL GOURAUD].

'Note sur les Responsabilités de l'attentat commis contre le Général Gouraud et les sanctions qu'elles comportent'.

[Damascus, late June of early July 1921].

Typescript, 7 pp. large quarto (legal letter size, printed single-sided) (Very Good, some rust stains from paperclips in upper-left corner).

General Henri Gouraud (1867 - 1946) was the face of the French design to occupy Syria and Lebanon in the wake of World War I. An esteemed veteran of campaigns in Africa, as well as a war hero of the Western Front, on paper Gouraud was the ideal man to serve as France's supreme representative in the Middle East, holding the title of the as the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army of the Levant from 1919 to 1923. However, while highly technically competent, his haughty demeanour and Gallic-chauvinism unnecessarily alienated many key stakeholders in Syria, most notably members of the Muslim and Druze communities. A comment he reportedly made while visiting Saladin's Tomb in Damascus has forever darkened his name with Muslims: "Awake, Saladin. We have returned. My presence here consecrates the victory of the Cross over the Crescent."

In March 1920, Emir Faisal, the British-backed Hashemite claimant to the Syrian throne declared himself King of Syria, sparking the Franco-Syrian War. Gouraud vigorously opposed the rebellion, decisively defeating and dethroning Faisal at the Battle of Maysalun (July 24, 1920). Thereupon, Gouraud became the French High Commissioner in Syria and Lebanon, assuming dictatorial powers and instituting heavy-handed French rule. He separated Lebanon from Syria in September 1920 and proceeded to 'divide and rule' Syria's various ethnic communities, so exacerbating already serious sectarian tensions.

On June 23, 1921, a group of six Syrian revolutionaries led by Ahmed Mreywed mounted a brazen attempt to assassinate General Gouraud. Their plan was to ambush Gouraud's car as it was driving from Damascus to Quneitra, on the Golan Heights. The group managed to hit the car with a stream of bullets; however, Gouraud's chauffeur succeeded in maintaining control of the vehicle, speedily driving away, so truncating the attack. Gouraud escaped significant injury, although one of his fellow passengers, Commandant Branet was killed, while the Governor of Damascus was seriously wounded.

In the wake of the attack, the perpetrators fled to Transjordan, feeding the French suspicion that they were acting upon the orders of the British-backed Emir Hussein of Transjordan, who happened to be the brother of the former Syrian king, Faisal. While Mreywed's design was

undoubtedly part of a much larger conspiracy, Abdullah denied all involvement, and the exact nature of the plot will likely never be known. In any event, Gouraud's near-death experience encouraged him to further tighten the French vice upon Syria, while many of the would-be assassins were eventually hunted down and executed.

This fascinating report, likely written by Auguste Sarrou shortly after the attempted assassination of Gouraud, provides initial hypotheses with regards the conspiracy behind the attack. Here a circumstantial, but compelling, case is articulated pointing to the attackers as acting at the behest of Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, and perhaps more chillingly, with the advance knowledge of Britain. While far from an airtight case, the report features many fascinating missives, such as a reference to a secret meeting between Abdullah and Winston Churchill held in Jerusalem on March 28, 1921. While it is unlikely that Britain did sanction in the attempted assassination of a senior French official, the fact that the question was even seriously raised is indicative of how far the Anglo-French relationship had slipped into the realm of mutual distrust.

8. [FOLLOW-UP REPORTS ON THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF GENERAL GOURAUD].

'Dossier Attentat'.
[Damascus, Summer 1921].

Typescript consisting of 24 separate sections ('Annexes'), each fastened by original pins, all loose within original paper covers bearing typed title; it is noted on the title that the photographs that would otherwise be included within Annexes no. 20 and 22 are lacking from this example of the report; Collations: Annexe 1: 2 pp.; 2: 1 p.; 3: 3 pp.; 4: 1 p.; 5: 1 p.; 6: 1 p.; 7: 2 pp., plus attached mss. slip; 8: 2 pp.; 9: 2 pp.; 10: 1 p., plus attached mss. slip; 11: 3 pp., plus attached mss. slip; 12: 1 p., plus attached mss. slip; 13: 1 p.; 14: 1 p., plus attached mss. slip; 15: 1 p., plus attached mss. slip; 16: 1 p.; 17: 1 p.; 18: 1 p., plus attached mss. slip; 19: 1p., plus attached mss. slip; 20: 2 pp.; 21: 2 pp.; 22: 2 pp.; 23: 1 p., plus attached mss. slip; 24: 2pp. (Very Good, pins a little rusty).

This is a collection of extremely detailed investigative reports compiled from a variety of sources (French gendarmes, soldiers and officials, as well as Syrian witnesses, etc.) concerning the attempted assassination of General Gouraud. The reports make engaging reading, covering the execution of the attack itself, as well as seeking to answer salient questions concerning the assailants and the extent of the supposed conspiracy behind the design. Of particular interest are reports from witnesses, usually translated from Arabic, that point to the Hashemites and maybe even the British, as being the true masterminds of the attack. These reports contain explosive accusations, and would certainly have been considered top secret, at it would be extremely damaging if they ever ended up in Hashemite or British hands.

PART V:
S.I.L. SPY REPORTS

This is a collection of original spy reports compiled by the Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant (S.I.L.), France's special intelligence unit headquartered in Port Said, Egypt. The reports, dated between June 1918 and August 1919, feature amazing revelations on a diverse array of critical issues throughout the Middle East, plus the involvement of overseas stakeholders. The reports were classified as 'Secret' and were made in only 8 to 16 copies each, for distribution only

ZONE NOIR
ADMINISTRATION GENERALE
COMMISSION
DES
DOMMAGES DE GUERRE
Beyrouth, le 191
N° / D. S. M. le
Officier rapporteur à la Commission
des Dommages de Guerre,
à M.
Traduction
Le 30 septembre 1918, des intellectuels
et des notables de la Nation se
réunirent dans l'immeuble de feu
Mahmoud el Baroudy, à Kakaouat,
et décidèrent d'envoyer une
délégation s'entretenir avec le petit
Djénal Pacha, Commandant du 6^{ème}
Corps d'armée, pour le décider à
quitter Damas afin d'éviter tout
désastre.
Le Colonel Fou Chouci Pacha Ayoubi
se rendit donc chez Djénal et ~~lui~~
~~lui~~ lui fit connaître les
désirs des intellectuels et des notables
damaïcains.

دمشق
رقم
1 - بيريم
بدر الدين في
بجيرة كيبية
في زحف الحرد
خرافة عمان باش
صحة وظيفة
بدر الدين في
شرف باش مع
هاد الشريف ناه
الطهور حتى ظهر
بها كما عانا ولما جاء
السرور كان بلور
الحرب الطي به
الغشاء (جملتي ا)
اما الكونسا
عند الاميرة رجا
كوسسات
بماض وزارة
اما كيبية
سبا قط من
بم صلا مشيت

واقم في مركز ولاية حلب وشهديات عماد وانكران وحمات وهوران
مكاه عسكريه و...
بم صلا مشيت

to high-level French authorities (the 'Amplification', or list of recipients for each report, is featured on the final pages of each issue). The S.I.L. issued these numbered reports roughly once every two days, and while the present collection features only 25 issues out of hundreds it provides an excellent and diverse selection of subjects. A full set of the reports is preserved today at the archives of the French *Ministère des Affaires étrangères* (MAE, Syrie-Liban 7). Today, the reports are often sighted in academic works as seminal sources on the Middle East during the late World War I and post-war period.

1.

'Revue le la Presse / Presse de Turquie'.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 61.

Port Said, June 7, 1918.

Carbon copy of typescript, 30 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary brass brace.

This intelligence report is a fascinating and detailed overview of the press in the Ottoman Empire, including that published in Turkish, Arabic and various Western languages during the twilight days of the World War I. It includes entertaining highlights from dailies such as *Lloyd Ottoman*; *Hilal*; *Journal de Beyrouth*; and *El Chark*. As the Sublime Porte was facing defeat, as the behest of its Information Ministry, the press engaged in 'Tendentious propaganda' and the 'Propagation of False News'. The report is divided into 'I. Renseignements sur la politique interieur' (interior politics); 'II. Renseignements sur la politique exterieur' (exterior politics); 'III. Renseignements economiques' (economic news); and 'IV. Renseignements militaires et maritimes' (military and maritime news). An analysis of the Ottoman press and propaganda as conveyed in the the popular papers was critically important to French intelligence, as the media shaped public perceptions in the regions that France hoped to soon occupy.

2.

'Revue le la Presse'

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 90.

Port Said, July 1, 1918.

Carbon copy of typescript, 25 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary brass brace.

This is another intriguing analysis of the Ottoman Press. Numerous topics are covered, as itemized in a table of contents, including 'Pacifism and defeatism'; 'Brigandage in Lebanon'; 'Bedouin protests in Damascus'; 'Venereal Disease in Damascus'; 'The Moral Force of Turkey'; and the 'Condemnation of Marxist Doctrine'. Curiously, it is observed that the Greek language press in Smyrna (Izmir) is printing some vaguely pro-Entente articles, in defiance of the Ottoman censors.

3.

'Note sur la Situation Politique de la Syrie',

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 156.

Port Said, November 22, 1918.

Carbon copy of typescript, 6 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary paper clip.

According to the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), upon an Entente victory in World War I, Syria (which then included Lebanon) were to become a zone of French influence. However, the British, along with their Arab ally, Emir Faisal of Mecca, captured Damascus on October 1, 1918, beating France to the punch.

This intelligence report was written less than two months after the capture of Damascus, when France faced the difficult question of how to assert its authority over a land that that it had no physical possession thereof. Here is a captivating analysis of the political situation in Syria, distilled from a variety of authoritative sources, including, as noted, many carefully placed S.I.L. assets. At the beginning, the document notes that there are two main trends afoot in Syria; the first, aims to follow President Wilson's call for national self-determination as ordained by plebiscites. The second, is a tendency towards demagoguery, creating a situation which is hard to control.

The subjects covered in the analysis are 'The Negative reaction to the Franco-British declaration'; 'The Arab Petition to President Wilson'; 'The Press in Syria'; 'Resurrection of Arab Nationalism'; 'The High Cost of Living'; 'The Situation in *Zahlé*' (*the Francophile main town of the Beqaa region of Lebanon*).

4.

'La situation politique en Syrie',

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 157.

Port Said, November 26, 1918.

Carbon copy of typescript, 5 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary paper clip.

This fascinating intelligence report discusses the two great problems challenging French ambitions in Syria-Lebanon. The first, concerns the "bloody brawl" that has developed between the Arab Christians and the Armenian soldiers that were serving in the French army in the region. The second, concerns Emir Faisal's visit to Beirut, which riled up all kinds of troublesome political currents.

5.

'Question Syrienne',

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 179.

Port Said, December 24, 1918.

Carbon copy of typescript, 1 p. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret'.

This short, but important, report notes the formation of two new political parties in Syria-Lebanon. The first is the 'Lebanese Alliance'. The second, is a new Syrian party supported by "very rich personalities" and "Syrian journalists living in Egypt". Named here are many of the principals of the Syrian party, noting that the group has strong pro-British allegiances, and is opposed to French ambitions.

6.

'(Renseignements fournis par le R.P. Jausson de Jérusalem) - Damas et le Hedjaz'. Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 180.

Port Said, December 27, 1918.

Carbon copy of typescript, 5 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary paper clip.

This is a scholarly analysis on the general attitudes of Arab Muslims in the Middle East written by Père Antonin Jaussen, a Jerusalem-based Dominican priest, archaeologist and theology professor, who was one of the most important spies operating in the Middle East during the era.

Here Jaussen explains that there are three factors that determine the distinct nationalities in the Middle East: 1) natural frontiers and the qualities of the soil; 2) the different customs and habits that result; and 3) history. He proceeds to give a succinct history of the Arab peoples, before focussing upon the history of Damascus and its region, including its ancient history and the its course following the arrival of Islam.

Jaussen then discusses that while the Arab World may, at first, seem monolithic to Westerners, it was riven by great cleavages of language, race and religion. He details how Arab communities are multi-racial, and while the Arab language is a unifying degree, the regional dialects are dramatically different. The Arab World, while majority Muslim, is divided into Sunnis and Shias (in addition to other sects), while large minorities in key areas are Christians.

A key problem for Europeans who wished to rule parts of the Maghreb and Middle East was that to the Muslim Arabs: "Any non-Muslim Western power is for them a Christian power that oppresses true believers. Hence, their unacknowledged, but profound, and active tendency to prefer any Muslim-dominated social order over what might otherwise produce all the conceivable advantages of civilization".

Jaussen continues that "Europe did not seek to replace the Turks [in the Middle East] in order to revive ...an empire that was even more closed than theirs to civilizing influences, and less secular than the Ottoman Empire to install an ultra-clericalism that would be a complete confusion between civil and religious powers."

Jaussen concludes with a rather harsh indictment of Britain and her ambitions in the Middle East, noting that London "possessed no notion of the history" that has been explained here. Britain simply desires to increase its global empire with little regard to the unique challenges posed by Middle Eastern history, such that conquering Syria was akin to controlling Canada or India.

Finally, the "the shadow of the phantom" created by Colonel Lawrence, being the erection of Hashemite regime in Syria and the severance of Palestine from Syria, would prove to be a "great threat to the rest of the world".

7.

'Renseignements sur Madaba & La Transjordanie – (Agente A.S.) (Renseignements fournis par le Père Jaussen)'.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 191.

Port Said, January 14, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', fixed in top left corner with contemporary brass brace.

In this report Père Jaussen relays fresh field intelligence from one of his assets "Agent A.S.", who had arrived in Jerusalem on January 7 last, from Madaba, Transjordan (modern Jordan).

A.S. had related valuable and detailed information on the emergence of a British-backed Hashemite reign in Jordan, led by Emir Abdullah. He notes that in many places the locals' acceptance of the new administration had simply supplanted their 'support' for the former Ottoman regime due to the continuance of "bribery". However, the Christian community is said to be weary of Hashemite rule.

8.

'Lettre d'Iskander Ammoun',

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, "Note No. 206".

Port Said, January 24, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', glued at upper-left corner.

This is a French transcription, followed by the original Arabic text, of a letter written by Iskander Ammoun, a prominent Lebanese patriotic leader. It indicates that France will face considerable challenges should it wish to enforce any form of direct rule over Lebanon.

9.

[Untitled, Unnumbered S.I.L. Report on Syrian Intelligence],

[Port Said,] "février 1919".

Carbon copy of typescript, 3 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary paper clip.

This untitled and unnumbered S.I.L. intelligence report, simply dated "February 1919", features updates on the rise of political movements in Syria and Lebanon which potentially pose grave threats to French interests in the region. It notes five elements that endanger French ambitions: 1) The Syrian Muslims have transferred their hatred of Turkish domination to a dislike of European hegemony, and French rule especially; 2) Due to religious fanaticism, there is a tendency for Muslim domination to replace Turkish rule; 3) There is natural conflict between the ambitions of Syrian Muslims and Syrian Christians which has created a cycle of revenge; 4) The patriotic and religious movements in Syria are backed by prominent old families; 5) Wealthy sponsors of factions can supply their parties with arms.

It continued that some Syrian nationalists are supporting Emir Faisal for the sake of convenience (even though they dislike him), as they fear French intervention far more. The report concludes by recommending that France amass a military force sufficient to crush all opposition if necessary. However, soft power initiatives should also be attempted, such as developing forums for dialogue between France and various regional stakeholders, as well as initiating programmes of reconciliation between Muslims and Christian youth.

10.

'Requete présentée par les délégués des villes et districts de la Syrie Méridionale (Palestine) à la Conférence de la Paix (Transmise par le R.P. Jaussen)'.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 228.

Port Said, March 2, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked 'Secret', fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

Here Jaussen relates the submissions of a Palestinian delegation to the ongoing Paris Peace Conference. Here Palestine is reference to as a “district of Sothern Syria”, implying that the region’s political status was still undetermined.

The Palestinian delegates assert that: A) Palestine is a indivisible part of Syria, with the whole country linked by religious, linguistic, national, economic and geographical ties; B) France’s ambitions in the region are totally incorrect (i.e. to divide Palestine from Syria and Lebanon, and to place the latter two lands under French control), as Syria should be untied and independent; C) Syria should be ruled in the spirit of “Arab unity” and should not be a foreign protectorate; D) President Wilson’s doctrine of self-determination for the peoples of the Middle East should take precedence over all other decrees and designs; E) While the future Syrian government may be British-backed, the British should not interfere in the exercise of its sovereignty and the new regime should preserve good relations with all the Allied powers. The Palestinian delegates are them named.

An addendum (correction) to the delegates’ report is noted. While they wished Palestine to remain a part of Syria, they asserted that the region should possess some form of local self-government under loose British supervision.

An addendum features sentiments from other Palestinian entities to the above, namely a Muslim-Christian committee. While the committee agrees that Palestine should be a self-governing part of an independent Syrian state, it calls for Britain to halt all Jewish immigration to the region, seeing it as a grave threat to Palestinian self-determination.

11.

‘Renseignements dur La Trasnjourdane (Transmise par R.P. Jaussen)’.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 229.

Port Said, March 1, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

Here Jaussen relates fresh field intelligence from “Agent A.S.” who has just returned from another mission to Transjordan. A.S. details the increasingly severe disputes between Christians and Muslims in the country.

12.

‘Résumé des derniers agissements politiques à Jérusalem (Transmise par R.P. Jaussen)’

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 230.

Port Said, March 1, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

In this briefing, Jaussen reports upon a recent meeting held by Palestinian deputies in Jerusalem. The body came to some conclusions: 1) It protests the call for Palestine to become the future home to a Jewish state; 2) It presents a petition to all of the Entente Powers calling to an end to Jewish immigration to Palestine; 3) It presents another petition, this time addressed only to the British government, calling for the land rights of Arab villagers to be recognized; 4) It assets that Palestine should be considered an indivisible part of Syria, known as “Southern Syria”; 5) It

appoints three representatives to travel to the Paris Peace Conference; 6) It designates five representatives to travel to Damascus to voice Palestinian interests there.

Secondly, Jaussen relays a summary of a conversation his asset “Agent L” had with two important named Palestinian figures. These individuals suspect that the British are engaged in a devious behind-the-scenes scheme to provoke discord between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine, while publicly pretending to promote harmony between the two communities. This is apparently another instance of the old British colonial game of ‘divide and conquer’. The Islamic-Christian committee of Palestine has made a series of demands to the British regime in favour of the civil rights of the communities they represent; however, no response had yet been received.

13.

‘Nouvelles de Jerusalem (Transmise par R.P. Jaussen)’.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 231.

Port Said, March 2, 1918.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

Here Jaussen relates that the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem favours British suzerainty in the region over the alternatives. While a small constituency, the Greek Orthodox community was quite influential.

Also noted are snippets of intelligence on the British military administration, as well as certain Jewish-backed infrastructure and business ventures in Palestine.

In Jordan, it seems that some disagreements are breaking out between the Hashemite officers and the British (their supposed sponsors).

14.

‘Resaignements concernant la Syrie fournis – par le service de Beyrouth.’

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 246. Port Said, March 30, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

This reports relays intriguing and diverse intelligence from French assets in Beirut.

First, it discusses ‘Foreign Propaganda’, including a) Interests calling for a British protectorate over Syria and Lebanon and b) Pro-American interests in Syria and their support of both Emir Faisal’s regime and Britain. Second, the dossier analyses the ‘Les Chérifiens’, or the Hashemite regime of Emir Faisal in Syria, revealing how they are trying to win over the support of various regional chiefs. Third, the document discusses French influence in Syria, noting how Paris’s interests are simultaneously meeting resistance from British, American and Hashemite concerns.

15.

‘Dans la contrée à l’est de Jourdain’ (transmise par le R.P. Jaussen)’.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 251.

Port Said, April 3, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 3 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

This intelligence brief, by Père Jaussen, concerns the powerful Arab nationalist movements in the Middle East. First, it notes a petition by local potentates in Jordan calling for 1) The complete independence of Syria, Palestine, Hejaz and Iraq; 2) The immediate evacuation of Western troops from these lands; 3) The end of all foreign surveillance of their territories; and 4) The abolition of all special privileges that foreigners have hitherto enjoyed. It also discusses the upcoming visit to Transjordan by Hussein, the Hashemite King of Hejaz.

16.

‘(De Larnaka – Chypre) d’un Syrien venu d’Alep à Larnaka’.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 254.

Port Said, April 6, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 1 p. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’.

This curious report features fresh intelligence from Syrians who had recently arrived in Cyprus. It notes the points of view of various communities, especially in Aleppo, Latakia and Alexandretta (Iskenderun), the latter being a majority-ethnic Turkish city whose political status was hotly contested.

17.

‘Propagande hostile à la France en Syrie’.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 255.

Port Said, April 9, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 1 p. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’.

This short, but sharp, report concerns the powerful anti-French propaganda that is being supported by three powerful named Syrian figures who had recently returned to the country from exile in Egypt. This campaign seems to have links to Emir Faisal.

18.

‘(Renseignements de Beyrouth)’.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 259.

Port Said, April 29, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

This fascinating report features intelligence from Beirut. It notes the furore that erupted upon news that the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed VI and King Hussein of Hejaz had corresponded, discussing a political alliance. Meanwhile, the Lebanese community in Cairo is calling for Lebanon’s separation from Syria and its independence. Egypt’s emerging independence from British rule is inspiring other Arab polities.

The report also details the operations of the Arab nationalist movement and the Hashemite regime in Damascus, as well as providing up-dates on the local scene from places such as Tripoli (Lebanon) and the Beqaa Valley. Generally, Arab nationalist sentiment runs contrary to French interests, while Lebanese Christians are strongly in favour of French intervention.

19.

‘(Renseignements de Beyrouth) - Texte résumé au programme du nouveau parti nationaliste arabe (Buenos-Aires) adressée dans toute les arabes de Syrie, du Liban, de la Palestine et disperses dans tout l’univers – (Arrivé d’Amérique par courrier du 19 Avril).’

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Not Numbered.

Port Said, May 5, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

This intriguing report concerns the activities of a group of Arab expatriates in Buenos Aires who are raising funds and lobbying for the Arab nationalist cause in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine.

20.

‘Rapport sur la situation actuelle du S.I.L. et proposition d’organisation nouvelle’.

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 269.

Port Said, June 1, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 9 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary paper clip.

This extremely detailed report features a highly confidential assessment of the organizational structure of the Service des Informations de la Marine dans le Levant (S.I.L.) and advances recommendations for how the entity should be reorganized to better serve post-war priorities. It includes precise breakdowns of specialized functions, the geographical distribution of personnel, as well as budgets, etc.

21.

‘Renseignements extraits des rapports fournis par les agents du haute commissaire (Syrie-Palestine-Liban) - 2ème Quinzaine de Mai.’

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 273.

Port Said, June 15, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary paper clip.

This important report gives an overview of the continually changing situation in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. Foremost, Emir Faisal is raising a volunteer army of 50,000 men, with British assistance. It describes the state of anarchy and Anti-Christian violence that has broken out in many areas.

22.

‘Copie d’une étude faite par un notable Syrien, member du comite libano-syrien’ and ‘Note supplémentaire sur l’intervention des Indiens Musulmans en faveur du Sultan de Turquie.’

Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, “Note No. 279”.

Port Said, May 1, 1919.

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 Parts; 7 pp. and 3 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), some details filled out in contemporary manuscript, with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary paper clip.

This detailed report features two parts. The first conveys the thoughts of the Syrian members of an Arab nationalist committee. It notes the influence of Islamism in the region as well as local

reactions to the policies of Western powers. The second part concerns the designs of certain Indian Muslims to support the preservation of the Ottoman Sultanate.

23.

**‘(Lettre de notre informateur d’Alep, Prêtre dominicaine.)’,
Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 288.
Port Said, July 5, 1919.**

Carbon copy of typescript, 5 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’, fixed in upper-left corner with contemporary pin.

Here an asset of French intelligence, identified only as a “Dominican priest”, provides an analysis of the situation along the borderlands between Anatolia and Syria and Iraq. The political fate of these ethnically diverse territories was yet to be decided. Aleppo is claimed as part of the French mandate of Syria but was still in a state of turmoil; Mardine, in southern Anatolia was claimed as part of the French occupation zone (but this was disputed by the Turks); while Britain coveted oil-rich Mosul as part of its Iraqi mandate (although this was also disputed by the Turks). France and Britain were rallying their indigenous support bases (the French were supported by the Christians; while the British relied upon Sunni Muslims) to advance their causes.

24.

**(Rapport du Service des Renseignements du Haut Commissariat de Syrie.) / Rapport No. 87
du 1er au 19 Julliet 1919’
Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 295.
Port Said, July 18, 1919.**

Carbon copy of typescript, 9 pp. (but mispaginated with a double page 6) large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’.

This captivating report details the reactions of the various communities within Syria to the arrival of an American Commission sent by President Woodrow Wilson to assess the situation and to make recommendations as to the future of the country. The various groups were in the process of lobbying the Americans to gain preference for their mutual causes of self-determination. While complete outsiders, the Americans were viewed as having immense influence over both Britain and France, and it was hoped by some (notably the supporters of Emir Faisal) that Washington might be convinced to pressure France to drop its plans to rule Syria.

25.

**‘Renseignements recuillis sur l’Affaire des Ausariéhs par un de nos informateurs les plus sûrs’.
Service des informations de la Marine dans le Levant, Note no. 320.
Port Said, August 20, 1919.**

Carbon copy of typescript, 2 pp. large quarto (legal letter size), with S.I.L. stamp, marked ‘Secret’.

This intriguing report concerns the duelling attempts of France and Emir Faisal to gain the support of the Alawites, a community of 300,000 people who lived in the strategically crucial coastal region of Syria.

PART VI:

SARROU’S RESEARCH DOCUMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE, 1919 - 1922

This is a curious collection of items relating to Sarrou’s intelligence gathering and research activities. Notably, it includes a series of letters dated 1922 from several of Sarrou’s high-level contacts and intelligence assets, some typed, some in manuscript. There is a suite of 4 typed letters from Mansour N. Shakour Pasha, the prominent Egyptian businessman, with three addressed to Sarrou, and one being a copy of letter addressed to the French parliamentarian Henry Franklin-Bouillon. Additionally, there is a collection of Sarrou’s notes on the press, including a large collection of manuscript pages concerning information gleaned from the Damascus journal *Asmale*, dating from February 1919 to March 1920. Also, there is a series of typescript extracts from the influential Paris-based journal, *Correspondence d’Orient*, from May 1919 to August 1920. There are additional research materials, such as Sarrou’s manuscript notes on the “Mémoires de l’Ambassadeur Morgenthau, as well as a hectographed copy of the Ottoman administrative law of 1909, ‘Loi sur l’Administration des Vilayets (3 Août 1325)’.

Additionally, there are four letters related to the French mission to supervise the Ottoman Gendarmerie in regions of Turkey that were under Entente occupation, or occupation by nations allied to the Entente powers (such as Greece). The letters focus upon the evacuation of ethnic Greeks from Anatolia following Turkey’s string of victories in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-22). The correspondents include Captain Guilbert, the head of the French gendarmerie mission in Smyrna (Izmir) and Sarrou, while a recipient of much of the correspondence was Maurice César Joseph *Pellé* (1863 – 1924), who served as the French High Commissioner for the Orient and Ambassador in Constantinople. Please view or enquire to gain a complete inventory of this section.

PART VII:

THE RISE OF ATATÜRK’S TURKEY

1.

[Auguste SARROU].

**‘Situation de la Turquie Depuis Septembre 1920 (Suite au Rapport du 8 Septembre).’
Constantinople, February 6, 1921.**

Carbon Copy of typescript, 18 pp. + 13 pp. large quarto (legal letter size, printed single-sided), adhered by remains of old bolt in upper-left corner, marked “Secret”, in manuscript, in crayon, to title (Very Good, light even toning, remains of bolt rusty).

In this engaging “Secret” report, Sarrou provides a brilliant analysis of the volatile situation in Turkey as it stood in February 1920. The Treaty of Sèvres (August 20, 1920), whereby the Entente powers called for the dissection of Turkey into zones of foreign occupation (essentially preventing Turkey from becoming a sovereign state) was reluctantly accepted by the ailing Ottoman regime of Grand Vizier Ahmet Tevfik Pasha. However, these terms were utterly rejected by Mustafa Kemal Pasha’s (Atatürk’s) nationalists who were steadily gaining in power at the expense of the Ottoman regime, from their base in Ankara. Sarrou clearly considers the Treaty of Sèvres not to be viable; its provisions need to be abandoned for the sake of peace in the Near and Middle East. Sarrou senses that France is backing the wrong horse in Turkey and suggests that more deference needs to be paid to Atatürk. This intuition proved correct, as France and her allies

came to suffer severe reversals later in 1921, and through 1922 Atatürk consolidated his control over Turkey.

2.

[Auguste SARROU].

‘Note sur la situation économique de la Turquie et les possibilités d’affaires à réaliser dans ce pays.’

[n.d., but likely 1922].

Carbon Copy of Typescript, 15 pp. quarto (printed single-sided) (Very Good).

This is a detailed and interesting report on the economic and political potential of the emerging Turkish state and the possibilities for France to forge diplomatic inroads.

3.

[PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE TREATY OF SEVRES]:

‘Modifications au Traité de Sèvres à proposer à la date ‘Octobre 1922’.

Carbon Copy of Typescript, [1], 32 pp. quarto (printed single-sided), fixed by original pin (Very Good, pin a little rusty).

This clearly top-secret document suggests specific, clause-by-clause modifications to the Treaty of Sèvres (1920), the Entente-backed accord that called for the dismemberment of Turkey, placing sections under western control. Since that time, Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Atatürk) had consolidated his control over the country, while Turkish forces had vanquished the armies of the foreign powers in Anatolia. By this time, it was obvious to all that the Treaty of Sèvres needed to be dramatically overhauled (if not nullified), dramatically altering its terms in Turkey’s favour.

The present document is an attempt to overhaul the Sèvres terms in hopes of making the treaty acceptable to Atatürk in anticipation of the resumption of Entente-Turkish negotiations in Lausanne (which would commence the following month). It would conceivably have been useful as a ‘stating point’ to the deliberations. However, as it turned out, Atatürk’s increasingly strong hand ensured that the Sèvres treaty would be nullified altogether and replaced with the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923), that largely accorded to Atatürk’s demands, recognizing the new nation’s complete sovereignty within ample borders.

4.

Auguste SARROU.

‘Note sur la situation actuelle de la Turquie par Lieutenant-Colonel Sarrou’

“Fevrier 1923”.

Carbon Copy of Typescript, [1], 32 pp. quarto (printed single-sided), fixed by original paperclip in upper/left corner, within original paper wrappers bearing carbon copied title and date in Mss., some manuscript addition and corrections (Very Good, a few marginal tears to covers; paperclip a touch rusty).

This is a very thorough and valuable analysis of the state of affairs in Turkey as they stood in February 1923, written by Sarrou, who by this time possessed almost 20 years of professional experience in the region. It comes as Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Atatürk) had consolidated his control over the nation, having abolished the Ottoman Empire, as well as defeating Greece, France and her allies who had sought to dismember Anatolia. Kemal was soon to secure international recognition for the new reality of a sovereign republican Turkey with ample boundaries upon the

ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923), which superseded the discredited Treaty of Sèvres (1920).

Sarrou starts out by saying that the “Actual situation in Turkey is not well understood by Europeans” who must now accept the realization of Atatürk’s complete victory, instead of continuing to fight against the tide of history. First, he proceeds to provide an insightful analysis of Turkey’s political situation. He systematically addresses Turkey’s relationships with all its significant interlocutors, including Russia, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, various Balkan states, Poland, Central Asian states; Japan; Persia, Afghanistan, the Caucasian republics; as well as various other Muslim nations. Next, he elaborates upon Turkey’s internal affairs, including its condition and its administration.

Second, Sarrou analyses the military situation in Turkey, whereby Atatürk had either vanquished or made an advantageous peace with all his external enemies, while securing civil control over all Anatolia.

Third, is an analysis of the social order of Turkey which was in a state of rapid change in the wake of the collapse of the old Ottoman order, and in anticipation of new more liberal-Western regime. This includes specific discussions of the Turkish masses, the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy, modern ideas and, interestingly, feminism.

Fourth, Sarrou covers the economic circumstances of Turkey, which needs to rebuild itself in the wake of a decade of war.

Fifth and sixth, Sarrou analyses the specific challenges facing France’s future relations with Turkey. While France had faced the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in wars since 1914, prior to that time France had almost four centuries of largely positive experiences with the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, many important figures in the new Turkey were by inclination Francophiles. With deft moves and sensitivity, France could build upon its ancient ties to forge stellar relations with Atatürk’s regime.

5.

[Auguste SARROU’s Interview with TEVFIK RÜŞTÜ ARAS].

‘A.S. [Auguste Sarrou]: Affaires de Syrie – Inexécution du traité Turco-Syrien – éventualité de troubles prochains – l’activité égyptienne.’

No. 548/927 Cf. / Angora – 21/7/1927.

Ankara, July 21, 1927.

Carbon Copy of Typescript, 10 pp. large quarto (legal letter size, printed single-sided), fastened with original pin in upper-left corner (Very Good, old vertical fold).

This is the text of an interview Auguste Sarrou conducted with Tevfik Rüştü Aras (1883 - 1972), who served as the Turkish Foreign Minister from 1925 to 1938, conducted in Ankara on the evening of July 20, 1927. In a candid conversation lasting almost two hours, the minister provides a fascinating exposé on Turkey’s difficult relations with French-controlled Syria and British-controlled Iraq. Tevfik Rüştü was a highly astute diplomat who succeeded in meeting most of Turkey’s foreign policy objectives against strong headwinds. While Sarrou was an agent of France (a nation distrusted by many in Ankara), he was exceedingly well-liked on a personal level by members of the Turkish establishment and this allowed him to have candid such conversations with key players.

6.

'Rapport du Coronel Sarrou, Attache Militaire de France en Turquie sur la 2eme Conference Balkanique tenue a Stamboul et Ankara du 20 au 26 Octobre 1931'. Istanbul, November 5, 1931.

Carbon Copy of typescript, [2], 54, pp. large quarto (legal letter size, printed single-sided), bound in original buff card covers bearing typed title (Very Good, covers slightly frayed along margins).

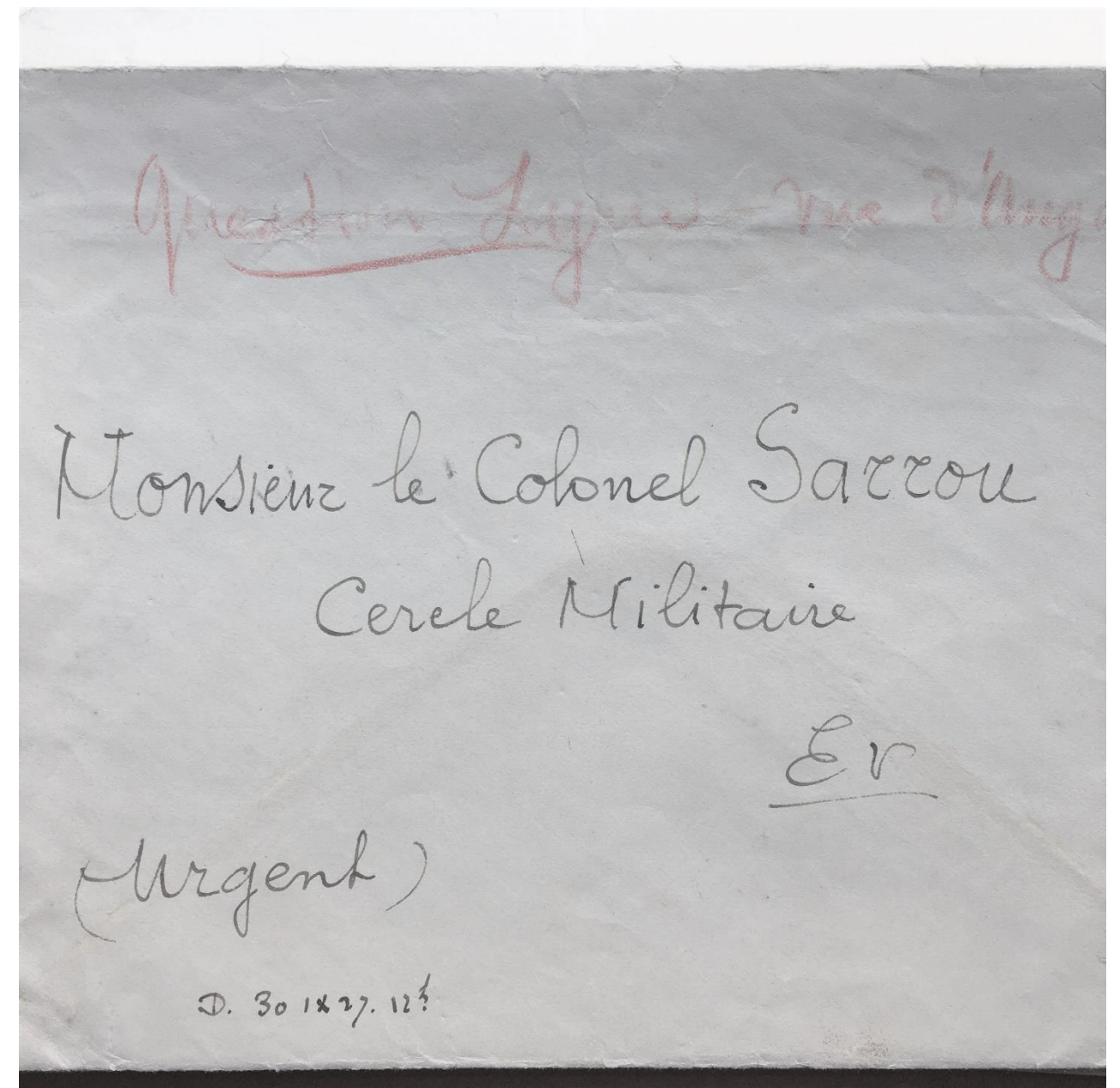
In 1931, Turkey was firmly under the control of President Atatürk and was enjoying an unprecedented period of economic and political stability, as well as relatively good relations with its neighbours. As the French military attaché in Ankara, Sarrou was instrumental in organizing the 2nd Balkan Conference, a meeting of the leaders of Turkey, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece Romain and Yugoslavia; the conference was held at venues in both Istanbul and Ankara between October 20 and 26, 1931. The purpose of the summit was to organize the 'Balkan Union', envisaged as a loose commercial and diplomatic alliance of the Balkan nations, many of which had once been part of the Ottoman Empire and all of which had a long history of warfare against each other. Atatürk's extraordinary leadership made such a union a possibility, and there was a great deal of goodwill towards the initiative. Here Sarrou provides a detailed analysis of the objectives of the project as well as the concerns, aspirations and fears of the key players. In the end, the political and cultural differences between the Balkan states were too great to bridge in order to create a cohesive union. However, the exercise succeeded in ensuring that the Balkan countries maintaining civil relations for the remainder of the 1930s.

PART VIII:

SARROU'S CORRESPONDENCE & c. FROM HIS LATER LIFE

This section includes a series of documents and correspondence from the late 1920s up until 1963, covering Sarrou's later career as a major diplomatic figure in Ankara and Istanbul. Please view or enquire to gain a complete inventory of this section.

References: Cf. **Comparative Archival Sources:** Auguste Sarrou Papers, SALT Galata Archives (Ottoman Bank Museum, Istanbul); France – Archives of the *Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères* (MEA); France - Service Historique de la Marine (SHM); France - MEA. **Published Sources:** Raouf Abujaber, *Antonin Jaussen, sciences sociales occidentales et patrimoine arabe* (Paris, 2014); [Antoine Hokayem](#) et al., *Documents diplomatiques français relatifs à l'histoire du Liban et de la Syrie à l'époque du mandat: 1914-1946* (Paris, 2003 – 2016); Henry Laurens, *La Question de Palestine - Tome 1 - L'invention de la Terre sainte (1799-1922)* (Paris, 2016); Roberto Mazza. 'For the Love of France: Père Antonin Jaussen in Jerusalem, 1914-1920', in *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 66 (2016), pp. 75-86; Eliezer Tauber, *The Formation of Modern Iraq and Syria* (Cambridge, 1995); İpek Yosmaoğlu, "Logic and Legitimacy in Violence", in *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908*, (Ithaca, NY, 2014), pp. 209-288; Meir Zamir, "Faisal and the Lebanese Question, 1918-20", in *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 3 (1991), pp. 404-26; Meir Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY, 1988).



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